

Professional Controls Governing Palestinian Journalists' Reliance on Israeli Sources During the 2023 Gaza War

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the professional controls that govern Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources during the Gaza War 2023, within the framework of Social Responsibility Theory. The study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach and is based on field data collected from a sample of Palestinian journalists working in various media institutions.

The findings indicate that the level of commitment to social responsibility among Palestinian journalists is moderate to high, with accuracy and verification emerging as the most prominent dimensions, while balance

appears to be relatively weaker under the pressures of war coverage. The results also reveal that reliance on Israeli sources is generally low to moderate, and does not take the form of direct dependence. Instead, it reflects a cautious and selective use, primarily aimed at understanding the opposing narrative or supplementing unavailable local information.

Furthermore, the study shows that the main reasons for avoiding Israeli sources include their perceived bias, subjection to military censorship, and inconsistency with national responsibility and professional ethics. At the same time, journalists adhere to a set of professional

standards when dealing with such sources, including verification, cross-checking, clear attribution, cautious handling, and limiting their use to necessity.

Overall, the findings suggest an inverse directional relationship between journalists' commitment to social responsibility and their reliance on Israeli sources. The study highlights the role of social responsibility as a regulatory framework guiding journalistic practices in conflict environments, where professionals strive to balance ethical standards with national considerations.

Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its reliance on descriptive data without inferential statistical testing, which calls for future research employing more advanced analytical methods to further examine these relationships.

Keywords:

Social Responsibility, Palestinian Journalists, Israeli Sources, Media Ethics, War Coverage, Gaza 2023

*** Introduction**

The contemporary media environment, particularly in contexts of conflict and war, faces increasing challenges related to information credibility and the multiplicity of news sources (Allan & Zelizer, 2004). Journalists are often required

to deal with diverse sources that may differ in their orientations and objectives, which imposes selective practices in choosing information (Gans, 1979).

Wars, including the Israeli war on Gaza in 2023, represent some of the most complex environments in which reliance on diverse sources increases. This is due to the rapid pace of events and the difficulty of accessing field information, which may lead some journalists to rely on Israeli sources to cover ongoing developments. This reliance occurs within a framework of professional complexities related to accuracy, objectivity, and verification of information, in addition to national and professional considerations.

Moreover, the relationship between journalists and their news sources is inherently complex and interactive, as journalists are influenced by their sources while simultaneously influencing them. This makes the issue of “controls governing reliance on sources” a central concern in media studies, particularly during times of crises and conflicts.

Within this context, the importance of examining the controls that govern Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources during the Gaza War 2023 becomes evident.

This study seeks to explore the nature of these controls, the level of adherence to them, and the factors influencing them, in a way that contributes to improving professional performance and enhancing responsible journalistic practices in conflict environments.

* **Literature Review**

Previous studies related to the subject can be classified into three main areas as follows: -

First: Reliance on News Sources

Numerous studies have addressed the nature of the relationship between journalists and their news sources. Bobkar (2017) indicated that this relationship is based on a form of mutual dependence, where each party influences the other within the process of news production, reflecting the complexity of this relationship and its importance in shaping journalistic content.

Other studies have shown that the selection of news sources is not random but is governed by professional and organizational considerations linked to institutional policies and work pressures. This was highlighted by Gans (1979) in his study on news production, where he emphasized that journalists rely on specific sources based on criteria such as credibility and accessibility.

Similarly, Sheikh Ali (n.d.) confirmed that Palestinian audiences' reliance on Israeli media increases during times of crisis due to the need to interpret events. This can be explained through Agenda-Setting Theory, which suggests that media influence public perception by highlighting certain issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Second: Professional Responsibility and Media in Crisis Contexts

Many studies have focused on the role of professional and social responsibility in regulating media practices, particularly during crises and conflicts. Social Responsibility Theory emphasizes that media institutions bear the responsibility of providing accurate and balanced information that serves the public interest (Siebert et al., 1956; Ward, 2010).

In this regard, Naji (2013) demonstrated that adherence to professional standards such as objectivity and accuracy enhances the credibility of media institutions, while the absence of such standards may lead to distortion of facts.

Bahri (2020) also found that media professionals face ethical challenges in their work environments, requiring a careful

balance between professional pressures and ethical commitments.

In the context of conflict reporting, Shahin (2014) emphasized that media institutions carry significant responsibility in covering sensitive issues, particularly those related to terrorism and conflicts, in a way that prevents misleading the audience.

Third: Journalistic Behavior and Information Sources

Several studies have shown that journalists' behavior in seeking information is influenced by multiple factors, including the speed of events, work pressure, and the availability of sources. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) indicated that media content is shaped by a combination of organizational and professional influences.

Allan and Zelizer (2004) further argue that journalists operating in conflict environments tend to rely on multiple sources while approaching them with caution, given the complexity of the media landscape.

In the Palestinian context, Ja'rou (2021) found that coverage of Israeli affairs in Palestinian media may affect national values, reflecting the sensitivity of dealing with such sources.

Additionally, Gatekeeping Theory explains that journalists play a central role in selecting and filtering information before publication, according to professional and social criteria (White, 1950), which becomes particularly evident in conflict contexts.

Research Gap: A review of previous studies shows that they have focused on several aspects, including the relationship between journalists and their sources, the role of professional responsibility in media practice, and journalistic behavior in crisis environments. However, there remains a lack of studies that directly examine the professional controls governing Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources in wartime contexts.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by linking Social Responsibility as a theoretical framework with journalists' sourcing behavior in the context of the Gaza War 2023.

Theoretical Framework: This study is grounded in a set of media theories that help explain journalists' behavior in selecting news sources, particularly in conflict contexts. The most prominent of these are Social Responsibility Theory, Gatekeeping Theory, and Agenda-Setting Theory.

1- Social Responsibility Theory

Social Responsibility Theory is one of the most prominent frameworks addressing the role of the media in society. Emerging in the mid-twentieth century as a response to classical liberal theory, it emphasizes the need for media institutions to adhere to a set of professional and ethical standards that balance freedom of expression with responsibility toward society (Siebert et al., 1956).

This theory asserts that media organizations are obligated to provide accurate and balanced information, uphold objectivity, and avoid the dissemination of misleading content, particularly in sensitive contexts such as wars and conflicts. This perspective is further supported by Ward (2010), who highlights that global journalism ethics are grounded in principles of verification, accountability, and transparency.

In light of this framework, the behavior of Palestinian journalists in dealing with Israeli sources can be interpreted as an attempt to balance professional commitment with national responsibility. This is reflected in their cautious use of such sources and their emphasis on verifying information before publication.

2- Gatekeeping Theory

Gatekeeping Theory explains the process through which information is selected and transmitted to the public. It posits that journalists play a central role in filtering and selecting news based on professional, organizational, and social criteria (White, 1950).

This perspective was later expanded to include the influence of institutional and organizational factors on media content. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue that editorial decisions are not solely determined by individual journalists, but are also shaped by organizational policies and work pressures.

Within the context of this study, Gatekeeping Theory explains how Palestinian journalists engage with Israeli sources, as information is not transmitted directly but is subjected to processes of selection and evaluation according to professional and social responsibility standards.

3- Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting Theory suggests that the media do not simply tell audiences what to think, but rather influence what they think about by prioritizing certain issues over others (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

This theory indicates that the selection of news sources plays a significant role in shaping media agendas, as the nature of the source influences the type of information presented to the public.

In the context of this study, the use of Israeli sources can be understood within this framework, as even limited reliance on such sources may introduce certain narratives or issues into media coverage. This helps explain the cautious and selective use of these sources by Palestinian journalists.

4- Integration of Theoretical Perspectives

The three theories collectively provide a comprehensive framework for understanding Palestinian journalists' behavior in dealing with Israeli sources. Social Responsibility Theory explains the ethical and professional dimension, Gatekeeping Theory explains the mechanisms of information selection, and Agenda-Setting Theory explains how these choices influence media content and public perception.

Accordingly, this theoretical framework provides a solid foundation for examining the relationship between journalists' commitment to social responsibility and their degree of reliance on Israeli

sources within a complex and sensitive media environment.

*** Operational Definitions**

The study is based on a set of key concepts, which are defined operationally as follows: -

Social Responsibility: Social responsibility refers to journalists' commitment to a set of professional and ethical standards that ensure the provision of accurate, balanced, and non-misleading information in a manner that serves the public interest (Siebert et al., 1956; Ward, 2010).

Operationally: It is measured through four main dimensions: -

(accuracy, verification, balance, and national responsibility).

*** Israeli Sources**

Israeli sources refer to various media, official, or digital platforms affiliated with Israeli entities that journalists may rely on for obtaining information or following events.

Operationally: Reliance on Israeli sources is measured by the degree to which journalists use these sources in news coverage, whether directly or indirectly, or for interpretive and confirmatory purposes.

*** Reliance on News Sources**

Reliance refers to the extent to which journalists depend on a particular source for obtaining information and the influence of that

source on shaping media content (Gans, 1979).

Operationally: This variable is measured through indicators such as:-

(direct reliance, use for verification, reliance when local information is unavailable, use to understand the opposing narrative, and cautious handling).

* **Palestinian Journalist**

A Palestinian journalist refers to a communicator working within Palestinian media institutions and involved in producing journalistic content in its various forms.

Operationally: This includes the sample of journalists working in different Palestinian media organizations.

* **Gaza War 2023**

The Gaza War 2023 refers to the military conflict that began on October 7, 2023, which constitutes the field context of this study and has significantly influenced journalistic practices and information sourcing.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from a set of scientific and practical considerations, most notably: -

1- The increasing importance of Palestinian media work within the context of occupation, and the complex professional and ethical challenges it entails.

2- The need to establish a structured professional framework that guides journalistic performance in conflict environments, particularly in dealing with sources affiliated with conflicting parties.

3- The sensitivity of relying on Israeli sources for Palestinian journalists, given the associated professional risks related to credibility, media framing, and the potential reproduction of narratives.

4- The scarcity of studies addressing the professional controls governing Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources in the context of the Gaza War 2023.

5- Contributing to the development of professional standards that enhance the quality of Palestinian journalistic performance and support the construction of responsible and balanced media discourse.

* **Research Objectives**

This study aims to: -

1- Measure the level of Palestinian journalists' awareness of the concept and principles of social responsibility in media practice.

2- Analyze the extent to which social responsibility is reflected in journalists' professional practices.

3- Explore the nature and levels of Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources.

4- Identify the professional controls and criteria governing reliance on Israeli sources.

5- Examine the professional and ethical challenges associated with the use of such sources.

6- Propose a professional framework that enhances the regulation of journalists' engagement with these sources in media coverage.

*** Research Problem and Questions**

The research problem centers on examining the nature of the professional controls governing Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources during the Gaza War 2023, in light of challenges related to credibility, verification, and professional balance.

*** Main Research Question**

What controls govern Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources during the Gaza War 2023?

Sub-questions: -

1- What is the level of Palestinian journalists' awareness of social responsibility and its principles?

2- To what extent do Palestinian journalists adhere to the principles of social responsibility in their professional practice?

3- What criteria guide journalists in selecting their news sources?

4- What is the degree of Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources as a source of information?

5- What professional and ethical challenges do journalists face when using these sources?

6- What mechanisms can enhance the professional regulation of this reliance?

*** Research Design and Methods**

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, employing the media survey method as an appropriate framework for examining phenomena related to journalists' behavior within their real-world context.

A Survey of Media Practices approach was utilized to collect both quantitative and qualitative data regarding Palestinian journalists' attitudes and behaviors in dealing with Israeli sources. These data were analyzed in light of the professional frameworks governing journalistic practice.

*** Data Collection Tools**

The study relied on the following tools: -

Questionnaire: Used as the primary instrument for collecting quantitative data from the study sample.

Structured Interviews: Five field journalists were interviewed to support and interpret the quantitative

findings. The interview data were analyzed using a thematic approach.

* **Theoretical Foundations**

The study is grounded in the following theoretical frameworks: -

- 1- Agenda-Setting Theory
- 2- Gatekeeping / Communicator Approach

* **Population and Sample**

The study population consists of journalists working in Palestinian media institutions within Palestine.

Due to the difficulty of accessing the full population under wartime conditions, a **convenience sampling technique** was employed. The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Google Forms after being reviewed and validated by a panel of academic experts.

The final sample consisted of **90 journalists** who have direct experience in media coverage and engagement with Israeli sources. Only complete and valid responses were included in the statistical analysis.

* **Variables of the Study**

* **Independent Variable**

1- Social Responsibility: The variable of social responsibility was measured through a set of items distributed across four dimensions: (accuracy, verification, balance, and national responsibility), using a five-

point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

* **Dependent Variable**

Degree of Journalists' Reliance on Israeli Sources: This variable was measured through a set of items related to patterns of use, including: (direct reliance, use for confirmation, interpretive use, and cautious engagement), using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

* **Moderating Variables**

The study also considered the following moderating variables: -

- 1- Years of experience
- 2- Type of media institution
- 3- Type of media platform (digital vs. traditional)

* **Conceptual Model**

Accordingly, the conceptual model of the study can be illustrated as follows: -

Social Responsibility (influences) → Reliance on Israeli Sources

With moderating variables affecting this relationship, the study assumes that a higher level of Palestinian journalists' commitment to social responsibility leads to a lower level of unregulated reliance on Israeli sources. In other words, as professional commitment increases, reliance on such sources becomes more controlled and selective.

* Hypotheses

* Main Hypothesis

There is a statistically significant relationship between Palestinian journalists' level of commitment to social responsibility and their degree of reliance on Israeli sources.

* Sub-Hypotheses

1- There is a statistically significant relationship between professional accuracy and reliance on Israeli sources.

2- There is a statistically significant relationship between verification of information and reliance on Israeli sources.

3- There is a statistically significant relationship between balance in coverage and reliance on Israeli sources.

4- There is a statistically significant relationship between national responsibility and reliance on Israeli sources.

Research Question: Are there differences in the degree of reliance on Israeli sources attributable to (years of experience, type of media platform, and type of institution)?

* Validity and Reliability

* Validity

The validity of the research instrument was ensured through a set of scientific procedures aimed at confirming its appropriateness for

measuring the study variables, as follows: -

1- Face Validity: The questionnaire was reviewed by a panel of experts in media studies to ensure the clarity of items, soundness of wording, and relevance to the study objectives.

2- Content Validity: The instrument was designed to comprehensively cover all dimensions of the study variables, ensuring accurate representation of constructs related to social responsibility and journalists' reliance on Israeli sources.

* Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The reliability coefficient reached 0.82, which is considered high and indicates strong internal consistency, confirming the suitability of the instrument for field application.

* Methodological Note

The study adopts an explanatory model linking journalists' level of commitment to social responsibility with their behavior in selecting news sources, aiming to understand the factors influencing professional practice in conflict contexts.

* Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing

descriptive statistical methods appropriate to the nature and objectives of the study, as follows: -

1- Descriptive Statistics:

Frequencies and percentages, means, and relative weights

2- Internal Consistency Test:

Cronbach's Alpha

3- Normality Test: Kolmogorov–Smirnov test

*** Methodological Note**

Given that the study relies on aggregated descriptive data, the statistical analysis was limited to descriptive methods. Inferential statistical tests (such as correlation, regression, or group comparison tests) were not conducted, in accordance with the nature of the available data and the study objectives.

Level of Significance

The level of statistical significance was set at: ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Results of the Field Study

Sample Characteristics

Table 1. Distribution of the Sample by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	72	80%
Female	18	20%
Total	90	100%

The results in Table 1 indicate that male journalists constitute the majority of the study sample, accounting for 80% of the total

respondents, compared to 20% for female journalists. This finding is consistent with the labor market context in Palestine. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2020), female participation in the labor force remains relatively low compared to males, with approximately 18% participation among females versus 70% among males.

Table 2. Distribution of the Sample by Workplace

Workplace	Frequency	Percentage
Newspapers & Magazines	18	20%
News Agencies	9	10%
Television Channels	18	20%
Radio Stations	9	10%
News Websites	24	26.7%
Digital Media Platforms	12	13.3%
Total	90	100%

The findings reveal a diverse distribution of respondents across media institutions. News websites ranked first (26.7%), followed by television channels and newspapers/magazines (20% each), then digital media platforms (13.3%), and finally news agencies and radio stations (10% each). This distribution reflects the growing prominence of digital journalism within the Palestinian media landscape.

Table 3. Distribution of the Sample by Job Role

Job Role	Frequency	Percentage
Editor	24	26.7%
Reporter	6	6.7%
Producer/Director	9	10%
Manager/Head of Department	21	23.3%
Editorial Supervisor	12	13.3%
Writer/Analyst	12	13.3%
Publisher	6	6.7%
Total	90	100%

Regarding job roles, the largest proportion of respondents work in editorial positions, alongside a considerable percentage occupying supervisory roles. This enhances the credibility of the data, given their direct involvement in editorial decision-making, particularly in relation to source selection.

This distribution is also consistent with the structure of media employment across different platforms, as reported by the Palestinian Ministry of Information.

Table 4. Distribution of the Sample by Years of Experience

Years of Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	15	16.7%
5 to <10 years	15	16.7%
10 to <20 years	33	36.6%
20 years or more	27	30%
Total	90	100%

In terms of professional experience, 66.6% of respondents have more than ten years of experience, indicating a high level of

professional maturity. This adds further reliability to their evaluation of journalistic practices in the context of war coverage.

Level of Social Responsibility (Independent Variable)

Table 5. Social Responsibility among Palestinian Journalists

Dimension	Mean (%)	Mean (Likert)
Accuracy	75.3	3.76
Verification	67.0	3.35
Balance	58.7	2.93
National Responsibility	66.25	3.31

Overall Mean = 3.33 (Moderately High Level)

The results indicate that the level of Palestinian journalists' commitment to social responsibility is moderate to high. The dimension of professional accuracy ranked highest, followed by verification and national responsibility, while balance ranked lowest.

This suggests that Palestinian journalists place significant emphasis on ensuring the accuracy and verification of information. However, achieving balance appears to be relatively challenging, particularly within the context of war coverage, where time pressure and situational constraints may limit the ability to present multiple perspectives.

* **Reliance on Israeli Sources (Dependent Variable)**

Table 6. Level of Reliance on Israeli Sources

Item	Mean (%)	Mean (Likert)
Direct reliance on Israeli sources	36.0	1.80
Use of sources for confirmation	52.0	2.60
Reliance when local information is unavailable	48.0	2.40
Use of sources to understand the opposing narrative	61.0	3.05
Cautious handling of Israeli information	72.0	3.60

Overall Mean = 2.69 (Low to Moderate Level)

*** Revised Final Version**

The results indicate that Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources is generally low to moderate. Direct reliance on these sources remains limited, whereas their use for interpretive purposes—such as understanding the opposing narrative—is comparatively higher. Moreover, a high level of professional caution is evident in dealing with these sources.

These findings reflect a professional pattern characterized by selective and critical use rather than direct dependence. Overall, Palestinian journalists do not treat Israeli sources as primary sources of information; instead, they engage with them cautiously and selectively, primarily for purposes of interpretation and contextual understanding rather than direct reliance.

*** Reasons for Reliance on Israeli Sources**

Table 7. Reasons for Reliance on Israeli Sources

Reason	Percentage (%)
Understanding the opposing narrative	46
Identifying Israeli public opinion	44
Obtaining information directly from its source	33
Accessing information unavailable locally	31
Appearing neutral to the audience	16
Institutional requirements	15
Work pressure and speed of events	12
Perception of Israeli media as professional	7

The findings show that the primary motivations for relying on Israeli sources are related to the need to understand the opposing narrative and to gain insight into Israeli public opinion. Additionally, journalists rely on these sources to access information that may not be available locally.

In contrast, trust in the professionalism of Israeli media ranks among the lowest factors, indicating that reliance on these sources is driven more by professional necessity and situational constraints than by confidence in their credibility.

*** Reasons for Non-Reliance on Israeli Sources**

Table 8. Reasons for Avoiding Israeli Sources

Reason	Percentage (%)
Subject to Israeli military censorship	75
Perceived as biased or misleading	60
Conflict with national responsibility	58
Conflict with professional ethics	55
Lack of trust	55
Fear of professional or social accountability	35
Institutional policies prohibiting their use	25

The results indicate that the primary reasons for avoiding Israeli sources stem from journalists' awareness of their potentially biased nature and their subjection to military censorship. Additionally, these sources are perceived as conflicting with national responsibility and professional ethics.

These findings suggest that journalists' stance toward these sources is grounded in both professional critical awareness and national considerations.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that this position is not solely driven by national sentiment, but also reflects a critical professional perspective.

*** Professional Standards in Dealing with Israeli Sources**

Table 9. Professional Standards Governing the Use of Israeli Sources

Standard	Percentage (%)
Clearly identifying the source when used	65
Exercising professional caution	58
Verifying information before publication	55
Using the source only when necessary	55
Cross-checking information with other sources	44

The results indicate that Palestinian journalists' engagement with Israeli sources is governed by a set of professional standards. The most prominent among these include clearly identifying the source, verifying information prior to publication, exercising professional caution, and limiting the use of such sources to cases of necessity.

These standards reflect a level of professional awareness aimed at regulating the use of Israeli sources within journalistic practice.

*** Methodological Note**

The mean scores for the study dimensions were calculated based on the percentage distributions of responses and then converted into a five-point Likert scale. This approach was adopted to facilitate the interpretation of results and ensure consistency with the statistical analysis.

*** Professional Controls Identified by Journalists**

Based on respondents' perspectives, the key professional controls governing the use of Israeli sources include: -

- 1- Avoiding reliance on Israeli sources as sole sources and ensuring cross-verification with independent sources.
- 2- Refraining from reproducing Israeli narratives without critical analysis or contextualization.
- 3- Maintaining a balance between accurate reporting and safeguarding the national context.
- 4- Recognizing that some information may be politically or militarily motivated.
- 5- Avoiding the publication of unverified or sensitive information, particularly content that may affect resistance or security.
- 6- Adhering to professional codes of ethics, both local and international, when dealing with conflict-related sources.
- 7- Distinguishing clearly between news and opinion, and avoiding presenting Israeli interpretations as objective facts.

*** Hypotheses Testing**

*** Main Hypothesis**

The main hypothesis assumes that there is a relationship between Palestinian journalists' level of

commitment to social responsibility and their degree of reliance on Israeli sources.

*** Result**

The findings indicate that the level of social responsibility is moderately high (Mean = 3.33), while the level of reliance on Israeli sources is low to moderate (Mean = 2.69). This suggests an inverse directional relationship between the two variables.

Accordingly, the results support the main hypothesis in terms of direction, indicating that higher levels of social responsibility are associated with lower reliance on Israeli sources.

*** Sub-Hypotheses**

First Hypothesis

The findings show that the dimension of accuracy recorded the highest mean (3.76), while direct reliance on Israeli sources was low (1.80). This reflects an inverse relationship between professional accuracy and reliance on these sources.

Accordingly, the results support the first hypothesis in terms of direction.

Second Hypothesis

The results indicate that the level of verification is relatively high (3.35), compared to a low-to-moderate level of reliance on Israeli

sources. This suggests that increased verification is associated with reduced reliance on these sources.

Thus, the results support the second hypothesis directionally.

Third Hypothesis

The dimension of balance recorded the lowest mean (2.93), alongside a moderate level of reliance on Israeli sources. This may indicate that lower levels of balance are associated with relatively higher reliance on such sources.

Therefore, the results support the third hypothesis in terms of direction.

Fourth Hypothesis

The results show that national responsibility scored a moderate level (3.31), while reliance on Israeli sources remained low to moderate. This reflects that higher levels of national awareness are associated with more restricted use of these sources.

Accordingly, the results support the fourth hypothesis directionally.

*** Methodological Note**

Descriptive data indicate variation in respondents' characteristics; however, the nature of the available data does not allow for inferential statistical testing of group differences. Therefore, this

question remains open for further investigation in future research.

*** Summary of Findings**

The findings suggest that Palestinian journalists operate within a complex environment that requires a careful balance between professional standards and national responsibility. The results reveal a noticeable commitment to social responsibility, accompanied by a cautious and selective approach to Israeli sources.

Such use is primarily based on verification and critical assessment rather than trust or direct reliance, reflecting a relatively mature level of professional practice in managing information sources within conflict contexts.

*** Discussion of Findings**

The results indicate that Palestinian journalists demonstrate a moderate to high level of commitment to social responsibility, with professional accuracy emerging as the most prominent dimension, followed by verification and national responsibility, while balance ranked relatively lower.

This can be explained by the nature of the media environment during wartime, where the rapid pace of events and the pressures of news coverage prioritize accuracy in information delivery, while making it

more difficult to achieve full balance in representing multiple perspectives.

These findings are consistent with Social Responsibility Theory, which emphasizes that media institutions must adhere to accuracy and verification as core principles of professional practice, particularly in crisis contexts (Siebert et al., 1956; Ward, 2010).

Regarding reliance on Israeli sources, the findings show that such reliance is low to moderate, with limited direct dependence and relatively higher use for interpretive purposes, such as understanding the opposing narrative. Additionally, a high level of caution characterizes journalists' engagement with these sources.

This can be interpreted through Gatekeeping Theory, which posits that journalists act as "gatekeepers," selecting and filtering information based on professional and national criteria (White, 1950; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

The findings also reflect a high level of professional awareness among Palestinian journalists regarding the nature of Israeli media discourse, treating it not as a neutral source but as one that requires critical evaluation and contextual interpretation. This aligns with Agenda-Setting Theory, which

suggests that sources influence the prioritization of issues in media coverage (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

In the context of war reporting, these findings are consistent with Allan and Zelizer (2004), who argue that journalists in conflict environments rely on multiple sources while approaching them with caution and subjecting them to processes of selection and interpretation.

With regard to the reasons for relying on Israeli sources, the findings indicate that the primary motivations include understanding the opposing narrative, identifying Israeli public opinion, and accessing information not available locally. In contrast, trust in the professionalism of these sources ranked among the lowest factors, indicating that reliance is driven by professional necessity rather than confidence in the source.

Conversely, the reasons for avoiding Israeli sources reveal that journalists perceive these sources as subject to military censorship, biased, and potentially misleading. They are also seen as conflicting with national responsibility and professional ethics, reflecting the intersection of professional and national considerations in shaping journalists' attitudes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate an inverse directional relationship between commitment to social responsibility and reliance on Israeli sources. Higher levels of professional commitment are associated with more regulated and limited use of these sources, highlighting the role of social responsibility as a guiding framework for journalistic behavior in conflict contexts.

*** Limitations**

Despite the significant findings of this study, several methodological limitations should be considered when interpreting the results. First, the study relied on aggregated descriptive data, which limited the ability to conduct inferential statistical analyses to examine the strength and significance of relationships between variables.

Second, the findings are based on a sample of Palestinian journalists, which may restrict the generalizability of the results to other media contexts or different environments. Moreover, the sensitive nature of the research topic—situated within a conflict setting—may have influenced respondents' answers due to professional, ethical, or national considerations.

Accordingly, the study recommends that future research employ more advanced statistical analyses and larger, more diverse samples to provide a deeper understanding of the relationships between the variables under investigation.

*** Recommendations**

In light of the study findings, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance journalistic practice and strengthen professional controls in dealing with Israeli sources: -

*** At the Professional Level**

- 1- Promoting a culture of multi-source verification and avoiding reliance on any single source, particularly in conflict contexts.
- 2- Emphasizing critical engagement with Israeli sources, rather than reproducing their content without analysis or contextualization.
- 3- Ensuring clear attribution of information to its sources to enhance transparency and credibility.
- 4- Using Israeli sources only when necessary and within a well-regulated professional framework.

*** At the Institutional Level**

- 1- Developing clear editorial policies governing engagement with sources from opposing parties in conflict contexts.

2- Establishing specialized fact-checking units within media organizations.

3- Providing continuous training for journalists on reporting in crisis and war environments.

*** At the Academic Level**

1- Integrating the ethics of dealing with conflict-related sources into media and journalism curricula.

2- Encouraging future studies that employ inferential statistical analysis to examine relationships and differences more rigorously.

3- Expanding research to include comparative studies across different media environments.

*** At the Professional and Syndicate Level**

1- Activating the role of journalists' unions in developing updated codes of conduct tailored to conflict reporting.

2- Promoting awareness of social responsibility as a guiding framework for media practice.

*** Overall Conclusion**

The study concludes that Palestinian journalists do not approach Israeli sources as neutral sources of information, but rather as sources that require strict professional regulation. Social responsibility emerges as a key framework governing this engagement, enabling journalists to

balance professional requirements with national considerations.

*** Conclusion**

This study aimed to analyze the professional controls governing Palestinian journalists' reliance on Israeli sources during the Gaza War 2023, within the framework of Social Responsibility Theory. It adopted a descriptive-analytical approach based on field data collected from a sample of journalists working in Palestinian media institutions.

The findings revealed that Palestinian journalists demonstrate a moderate to high level of commitment to social responsibility, with accuracy and verification emerging as the most prominent dimensions, while achieving balance remains relatively challenging in wartime coverage.

The results also indicate that reliance on Israeli sources does not take the form of direct dependence, but rather reflects a pattern of selective and cautious use. This reliance is primarily driven by professional needs, such as understanding the opposing narrative or supplementing incomplete information, rather than trust in these sources.

Conversely, the study found that the main reasons for avoiding Israeli sources are related to

journalists' awareness of their potentially biased nature and their subjection to censorship, as well as their perceived conflict with national responsibility and professional ethics. The findings further highlight the existence of professional standards governing this engagement, including verification, cross-checking sources, clear attribution, and limited use based on necessity.

Overall, the study demonstrates that social responsibility serves as a regulatory framework shaping Palestinian journalists' behavior in dealing with information sources, particularly in conflict contexts. It also confirms the existence of an inverse relationship between commitment to social responsibility and reliance on Israeli sources.

Despite the importance of these findings, the study remains subject to certain methodological limitations, particularly its reliance on descriptive data without inferential statistical testing. This highlights the need for future research employing more advanced analytical approaches to further examine relationships and differences with greater precision.

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