Inside Newsroom: Social Media & News Production in the UAE

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Abstract

News Coverage in the Middle East has managed to break its shackles of censorship to a large extent in the last two decades. In the backdrop of Arab Spring and with the rise of Social Media, there is a genuine lack of understanding to what transpires inside a newsroom (Pintak, 2009). Although Agenda Setting which drives both journalist and public opinion has been analysed too often, yet they rarely follow up by going inside the newsroom and asking reporters and editors how they constructed their stories and how social media has influenced the news gathering tools (Klinenberg, 2005).

This study will help understand the use of Social Media by the reporters for news coverage and its limitations. The Study will draw connections between the political economy of the journalistic field, the organisational structure for news production, new communication technologies, and the qualities of content created by media workers. It will also help to demarcate the tools of social media and their mode of preferences among the journalists in the UAE.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Middle East finds itself trapped in the cataclysm of Social Media Revolution. We know that something like a "revolutionary bandwagon" occurred in Tunisia beginning in December 2011, following a seemingly insignificant event, namely, the self-immolation of a provincial fruit vendor after his business was shut down by the local police. (Goodwin, 2011). Social Media is at the forefront of this change. For instance, shadow groups such as Anonymous provided strategic assistance in the protection of the virtual territories of struggle. (Allagui & Kuebler, 2011). The profile of the most active users—young, urban, and relatively educated—fully correspond to the core of the first anti-government protesters in January that later led to a larger and more mass-based campaign. (Stepanova, 2011)

Among the strife driven hotbeds of conflict regions in Middle East: Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Bahrain & Syria, UAE is an exception. UAE is the second largest and number one knowledge based economy in the region. UAE has become one of the ideal destinations of foreign direct investment, tourism, re-exports, innovation and above all hub of all kinds of business activities in the region which has gathered momentum even during the ongoing Arab Spring. (Khan, 2012). Initially there was some speculation over how far the Arab Spring would go and whether it would reach the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and, if so, in what form. It became apparent relatively soon, however, that there was little prospect of widespread popular demand for the kind of systemic political change occurring elsewhere. (Forstenlechner, et al., 2012)

The role of analyst, academicians, intellectuals and most importantly journalist is pivotal in discussing actively the major changes affecting UAE society and polity. Although critical reporting on sensitive political, social, or religious issues is found only rarely, UAE journalists exhibit a good level of professionalism and objectivity in their reporting, considering their restrictions (Mohamed, 2009)

But what's endemic among the journalist in the UAE is the level of self-censorship. Journalists commonly practice self-censorship, and the leading media outlets frequently publish government statements without criticism or comment. Journalists tend to cover basic government news, along with local sports and international news. In terms of content, most newspapers looks very similar. (Mohamed, 2009).

Citizens of the Arab world have harnessed blogging technologies to produce and disseminate their journalism and opinions faster than governments can control, censor or regulate it. (Hamdy, 2009). As a matter of fact, the high level of media censorship in Arab countries brought citizens to increasingly distrust National media and information, leading them to rely on

self-generated news, easier to spread both on a national and international level. One protester said: "*We use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate and YouTube to tell the world*". (Al-Jenaibi, 2011).

Besides few sporadic outburst of activism which had landed UAE Nationals and expats in trouble with the law, the self-censorship is evident in the blogosphere as well. In his book, "The New Arab Journalist," Lawrence Pintak reveals many examples of self-censorship in the Arab world. An editor for a Saudi paper says "we know our limits and in a way practice self-censorship. There have been troubles when red lines have been crossed." For example, The National in the United Arab Emirates closely covers arrests in Kuwait, Oman, and other Arab countries over freedom of speech issues. However, when reporting on arrests in its own country, the paper defers to government statements or muted trial coverage. (Duffy, 2013)

Despite, all the criticisms directed towards lending a voice to citizens and journalist in the UAE media, the all-pervasive internet and online technologies have left an undistinguishable mark on the news consumption in the UAE. For those media outlets that maintain both print and online editions, about 80 percent do not differentiate content between the editions, but the trend is shifting toward more differentiation. The Gulf News is among the first to offer video news on their websites. (Ghannam, 2011). Fadi Salem, director of the governance and innovation programme at the Dubai School of Government (DSG), says any emergence of new technology usually "fulfils a social need" that is not being met otherwise. (Mustafa, 2013)

In a poll of more than 730 respondents taken by the Dubai Press Club (DPC), 53 per cent said they would like the media to focus on civics and education, family issues and health and medicine. Many respondents showed a strong reliance on social media for obtaining news. More than 60 per cent of the participants said they received more than 30 per cent of their news from social media. Another 15 per cent gathered between 30 and 69 per cent of their news from this source. (Kannan, 2012)

In sum, the objective of this study is to the influence of social media technologies in the day-to-day functioning of a journalist. *How much can we consider Social Media as a part of the Newsroom today? What really transpires inside a Newsroom? How today journalists are negotiating with this impending change?* Initially, the phenomenon of social media and its usage became a sharp focus of constant change right after the Arab Spring and most of the studies that were undertaken post the online movement were concentrated on citizens and their disenfranchised voices. Research studies were undertaken to shed light on the role of new media during these revolutionary events. (Allagui & Kuebler, 2011). Studies also sought to understand

the place of social media in the UAE, and to contribute to the analysis of the issue of social change as a whole for the region. (Al-Jenaibi, 2011). Current events are making clearer the fact that new technologies, such as the spread of the internet, social media and new mobile software applications are impacting in developing fast and lasting social changes. (Boughelaf, 2011).

The study of newsrooms from English National dailies will open up new avenues of understanding how the journalist work culture have or are being modified due to influence of online news gathering and social media interactions. *Thus, the present study aims to investigate by meeting reporters, editors & observations on the newsroom floor.*

2.   REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As the internet has expanded and institutionalized as an alternative for the production and consumption of news, scholarship about online journalism has also increased and consolidated, especially in recent years. Yet, there have been few comprehensive assessments of what research has learned about online news production. (Boczkowski, 2002). The influence of internet on Journalism and news gathering exposes the division between production and consumption. Online journalism melted the boundaries that have traditionally delineated personal, interpersonal and mass communication. (Burnett, 2003).

The technological changes have rightfully raised questions related to the type of skills needed for this new breed of journalist. (Wenger, 2006). The study of three newsrooms by Pablo Boczkowski, establishes the lack of formal ties between the print staff and online staff. While the Internet as a platform for news has continued to expand and mature, online sites have been expected to provide the unique ability to place news stories into greater and more interactive context than in traditional media. (Fahmy, 2008). According to Boczkowski, newspapers developed online news operations as a reaction to prior moves by new competitors rather than proactively seeking new horizons. In the survey with over 245 online news professionals' respondents, Fahmy finds out that online news managers identified news judgment and grammar as required skills to work in online journalism while audio and video skills were valued less.Newspapers have responded to this shift by producing more multimedia content for their websites, a trend known as "webvergence". (Keith, 2009)

The pressure on journalists to carry out multiple tasks and try various media formats for news dissemination is imminent. Digital systems for reporting, writing, file sharing, and printing facilitate this flexibility. Klinenberg (Klinenberg, 2005) considers the implications of these

conditions for the particular forms of intellectual and cultural labor that journalists produce, drawing connections between the political economy of the journalistic field, the organizational structure of multimedia firms, new communications technologies, and the qualities of content created by news workers.

Time constraint is one major concern as online news stories turnaround time is far shorter. (Bourdieu, 2000) notes how time matters in special ways for cultural producers since incursions into the working schedule undermine one's ability to perform a craft. Young reporters are unfazed at the intensity of change and most have started to regard multiplicity of their work culture and new news forms as an integral part of the natural progression going ahead. Singer surveyed journalists in four multimedia news operations, and they acknowledged that the platforms have become less important than before (Singer, 2004). 'We're reporters. It doesn't matter which platform we're a reporter for'. Many scholars propose that online journalism has contributed to the collapse of the twice-a-day news cycle (Lawson-Borders, 2005); (Williams, 2000). Other studies also studies signal that the introduction of the internet in reporting has sped up the news process, sometimes even causing journalists to spend more time at their desks instead of going 'out on the street' (Pleijter, 2002).

According to (Curtain, 2007) news outlets are tempted to give more prominence to softer or even more sensationalised, stories, which are proven to reliably get 'clicks'. Further, these 'clicks' increase on short, bite-sized pieces of news, and decrease with longer articles (Earley, 2010), leaving very little room for depth, context or analysis. (Domingo, 2008) conducted an ethnographic study of four Spanish online newsrooms and found that, although online media made users' participation possible, 'the fact that interactivity (was) counterintuitive with the principles of traditional journalistic culture tended to diminish the willingness to explore audience participation'.

In a study of regional non-daily regional newspapers by (Vine, 2012), most of the news editors found audience interactivity a more proactive method of news-gathering that in the pre-online era. In fact, newsgathering through social media was increasing the outlet's representation of the various demographic groups within the local community.

Social media is about networking and communicating through text, video, blogs, and pictures, status updates on sites such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn or microblogs such as Twitter. (Alejandro, 2010). The claims that traditional media are the sole champions of authority, objectivity and quality will be (and is being) challenged. (Beckett, 2008).

User interactivity takes a different level with social media now making inroads to the newsroom. In traditional media, what people are exposed to, are mainly determined by editors who have control on daily news flow. Here, people passively receive news content delivered in the media channels (Lee & Long , 2012). Goode (Goode, 2009) concludes that in social media, users can actively participate in agenda-setting process by submitting, sharing, and commenting news content.

As (Bowles, 2006) notes, territories for interaction and strong reciprocity based on an altruistic sharing behaviour. Social Media too, creates its own network, and the solidarity among members of networks challenged dictators, their online censors, and the offline police. Hamdy concludes that in this climate of conflicting signals in relation to Internet freedoms, it is natural that Arab bloggers are concerned that further limits on their communicative expression are predictable (Hamdy, 2009) . Many also fear that regional regulation may in fact be in the pipeline

Can Social Media be safely labelled as 'The Fifth Estate'? Highly networked individuals (helped by new platforms like social networking and messaging) can move across, undermine and go beyond the boundaries of existing institutions." (N.Newman, 2009). According to (Haewoon , et al., 2010), the role of traditional news media is played by traditional news accounts in Twitter. Moreover, based on their findings, these news accounts are more powerful than traditional news media. Their study argues that for politically inattentive citizens, soft news is more effective than traditional news. Both a short message (tweet) and social interaction (retweet) among users puts Twitter ahead of other sources of news.

Thus, Twitter can be an effective medium to disseminate political messages. Social media in the Arab world has come of age since blogging and the creation of networks by social media has put most government's focus on micro blogging sites like Twitter

We need to welcome to new entrant to the newsroom – 'the social media editor'. Social media editors (SMEs) can be loosely defined as tech savvy journalists appointed by news agencies to act as the newsroom liaisons to the digital world, also called the social mediasphere. They go by different monikers such as: Social media editor, social media strategist, digital editor, social media manager, social media producer, digital news editor, etc. (Wasike, 2013).

Multimedia Journalism is also a well-accepted and well-defined job role in the today's media organisation. However, obstacles do remain, such as, newspaper journalists were considered to have higher status than their internet counterparts. This was partly because the newspaper was still considered to be the core product and the web site merely a lighter, less significant medium. (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008)

Mobile phones have become one unifying tool for all new technologies surrounding the changing role of a journalist. This also covers the delivery end as well. Saltzis and Dickonson also mentiones the convergence happening at the delivery end as well. Apart from delivering news to web sites, output is to a growing number of new media platforms such as mobile phones, PDAs and interactive television services. If it is true (as many commentators have stated) that Twitter and Facebook are just an intermediary tool to share pre-created information, it is also true, and really important to mention, that mobile phones were creating those news and information. This study employs the redefining roles of a journalist from the various dimensions of technology, role delegation and help to demarcate the tools of social media and their mode of preferences among the journalists in the UAE.

3.   METHODOLOGY

3.1 A Brief Overview

The study was conducted in three strategic phases. Phase I constituted of exploratory literature reviews with the purpose of finding the gaps in the research (thereby leading to the formation of the study objectives) and to develop the survey instrument. Phase II is concerning survey instrument design and development and data collection. Phase III is more epistemological. The psychology behind news production, its factors, effecting variables, barriers and road blocks were to be identified through meetings with personnel in the news industry.

The initial phase included comprehensive reading and an exhaustive search for articles, documents (virtual and printed), videos, documentaries, films and information a propos news, news room, news coverage, factors for news production or lack of it and news gathering tools to name a few.

 In the second phase a questionnaire was designed based and the consolidated information through the readings. Aligning by the key objectives of the study, the questionnaire inquired a range of facets specific to the psyche of news production and what conceptualizes within a news room before news is published.

The third phase of this study included in-depth interview sessions with Editors, journalists and reporters of leading news production agencies in the country. This was to supplement the information gathered in Phase II. This also included a component of observational study where the researcher observed the complete process of news production within the news room recording details of edition, inclusion and rejection of news. An interview with an IT professional working within the news room helped understand the effectiveness of technology in news production.

Interactions aimed at understanding the respondent's motivation towards being in the news industry, the rationale of news selection, challenges of working within the peripheral of the state/agency and the barriers to news production owing to personal beliefs etc to name a few!

3.2. Population description

The UAE has primarily three leading English dailies The Gulf News, The Khaleej times and The National and an online publication Emirate 24/7

The Gulf news has established itself as the leading English language newspaper of the region - a position it has occupied since 1978. Validated by the IPSOS MediaCT – NRS-UAE 2011 survey, and the BPA Worldwide audit Gulf News caters to an average daily circulation of 107,403 from Saturdays to Thursdays, and 107,994 on Fridays. (GulfNews.com)

Khaleej Times is the first English newspaper to be launched in the UAE in 1978 by the Galadari Printing and Publishing Co. L.L.C. With a multinational readership of 450,000, Khaleej Times Special Reports and Supplements are regarded as part of a valuable service to the community. (KhaleejTimes.com)

The National (www.thenational.ae) - This Abu Dhabi based broadsheet owned by the Abu Dhabi government, published by Abu Dhabi Media Company, was Launched in 17 April 2008 under close scrutiny in the Middle East and abroad. With its pledge to emulate Western newspaper standards and to "help society evolve, (Wikipedia)

 Emirates 24|7 is Dubai Media Incorporated news website and television news programme, respectively. The televised news programme, Emirates 24/7, is a 30 minute segment broadcast weekly on Dubai Media Inc.'s television channel Dubai One, presenting news and business stories of the week and UAE viewers' reactions. (Wikipedia)

The respondents (Journalists, reporters & Editors) evidently are limited to these four agencies alone.

3.3 Sample Selection

As a foresight it was evident that approaching journalists to converse and discuss about inside news room activities was not going to be free of difficulties. Hence a convenience sampling technique was used to approach the respondents. The initial approaches were politely declined quoting lack of time, non-availability, company policies and confidentiality issues. Eventually 17 individuals consented to participate in this study. With an assurance of anonymity, the sample was finalized.

3.4 Survey Instrument

The questionnaire was designed questioning the dynamics of news production. The demographic details were the opening queries, including education & years of service in the industry. The criterion for news projection was questioned from three points of view. 9 factors were identified as important for news projection. The respondent was asked to rate these factors (on a scale of 1: least important to 7: most important, firstly as a journalist (personal opinion), secondly from the requirement point of view of the agency she/he works in and thirdly the consumer's point of view.

The third section of the questionnaire was about the respondents agreement (5 point likert's scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree) to five specific parameters. Each parameter was treated as a construct with four items under each of them.

Online news production formed the fourth component of the questionnaire. The questions inquired the respondent's engagement in online production, criteria for news selection for online/social media platforms and time spent in production of online news, sources and categories of news production,

The fifth component addressed online interactivity with Consumers with responses to frequency of interaction with consumers and speed of feedback/comments from consumers for various categories of news. The sixth section was about tools and platforms used by the respondent for news collection and the last two sections questioned the inherent role of the reporter while producing news and the gadgets used for covering news.

4.   ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic details

17 journalists (2 editors and 15 reporters) participated in this study. Owing to confidentiality policies their identities are required to be kept in discretion.
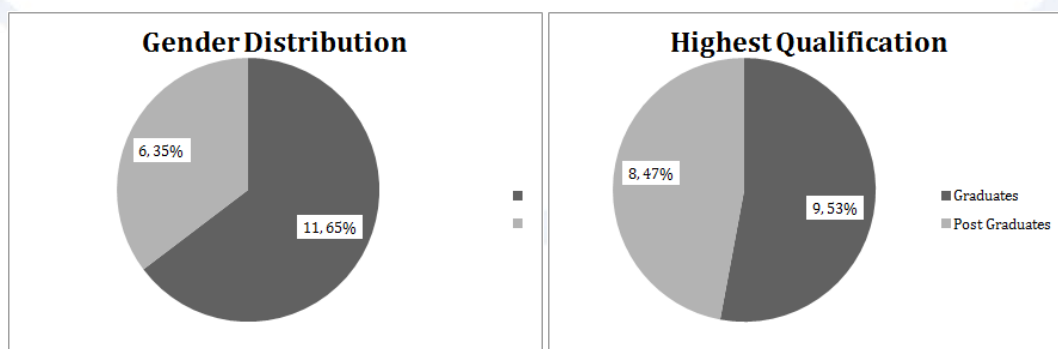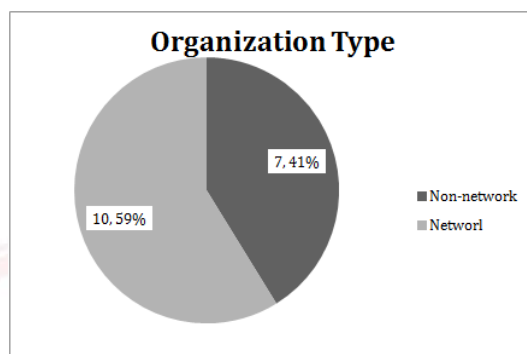
Figure 1 : Demographic description

4.2 News Values in the UAE

Reporters learn to choose stories which are most likely to get selected. The Govt. bodies often fund a lot of stories as well and supplements are a major component in the entire news space. Understanding the consumer base well was one of the proud retorts by a young journalist in 'The Khaleej Times', the reporter adds, *"We have got statistics telling us this is our audience, this is the expat rate population among which there is number of Asian expats and western expats, so do have an idea of whom we are writing, which in turn leads to its importance and finally it drives the news values of your organization"*. With ratings on a scale of 1(least important) to 7 (most important) the following figure states the perceived notions of reporters from three points of view aka personal, agency and consumer!
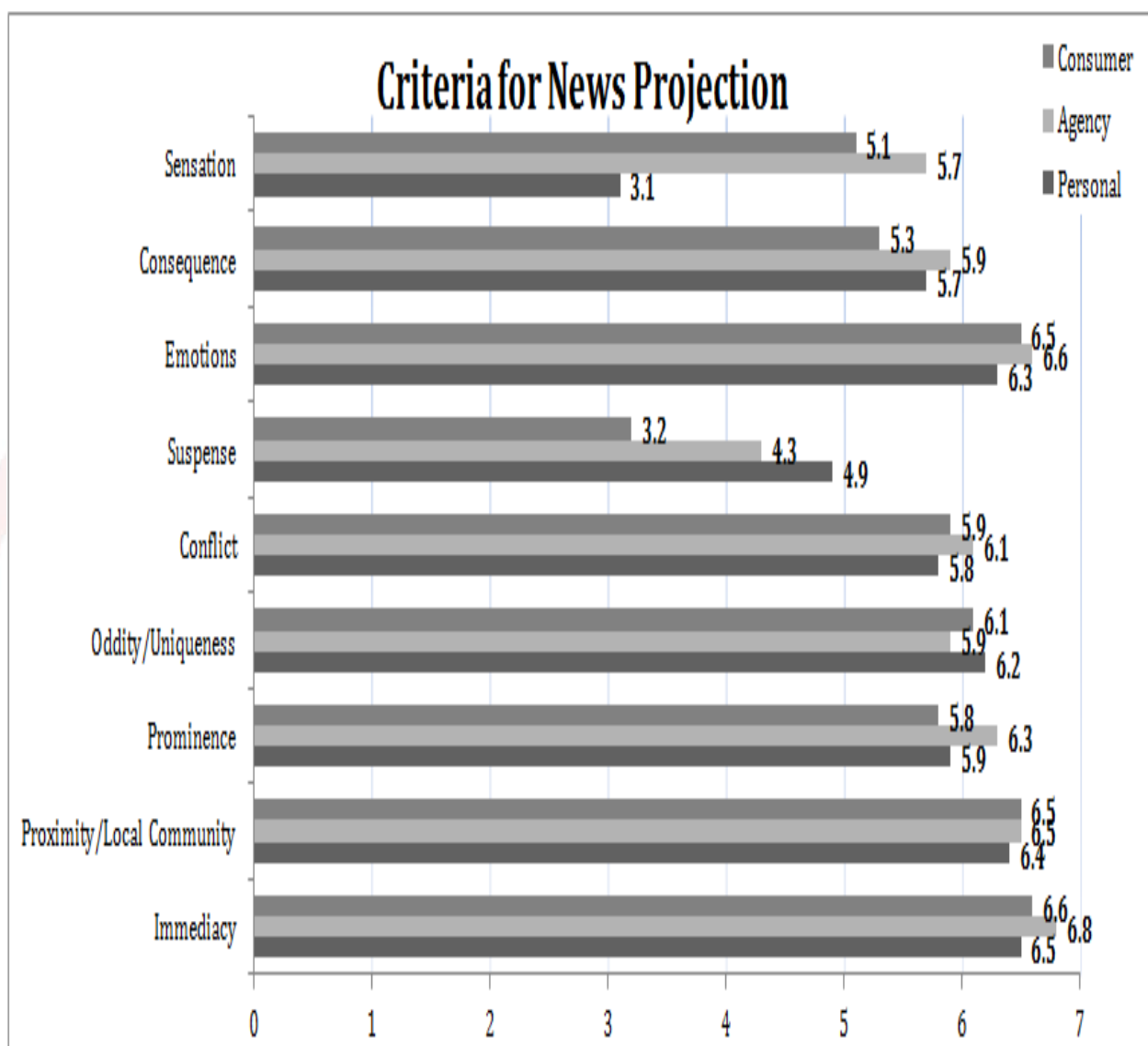
Figure 2 : Graph showing average ratings of importance

Five attributes of news projection were questioned for the perceptions of the respondents.

4.2.1 Sensation

87% (15) of the respondents disagreed to the fact that News should be more entertaining than information, alternatively 65% (11) of them agree that the audience desire entertaining news than plain information. An equal percentage (65%) of them also is of the opinion that success of sensationalism exposes the decay of today's society. 76% (13) of them agree or strongly agree to the fact that news value is not chosen based on popularity or entertainment value. According to a senior reporter at the Gulf News, News is fairly repetitive in the UAE. And this is across all news organisations. Incidentally, the reporter had an experience of working with other news dailies as well.
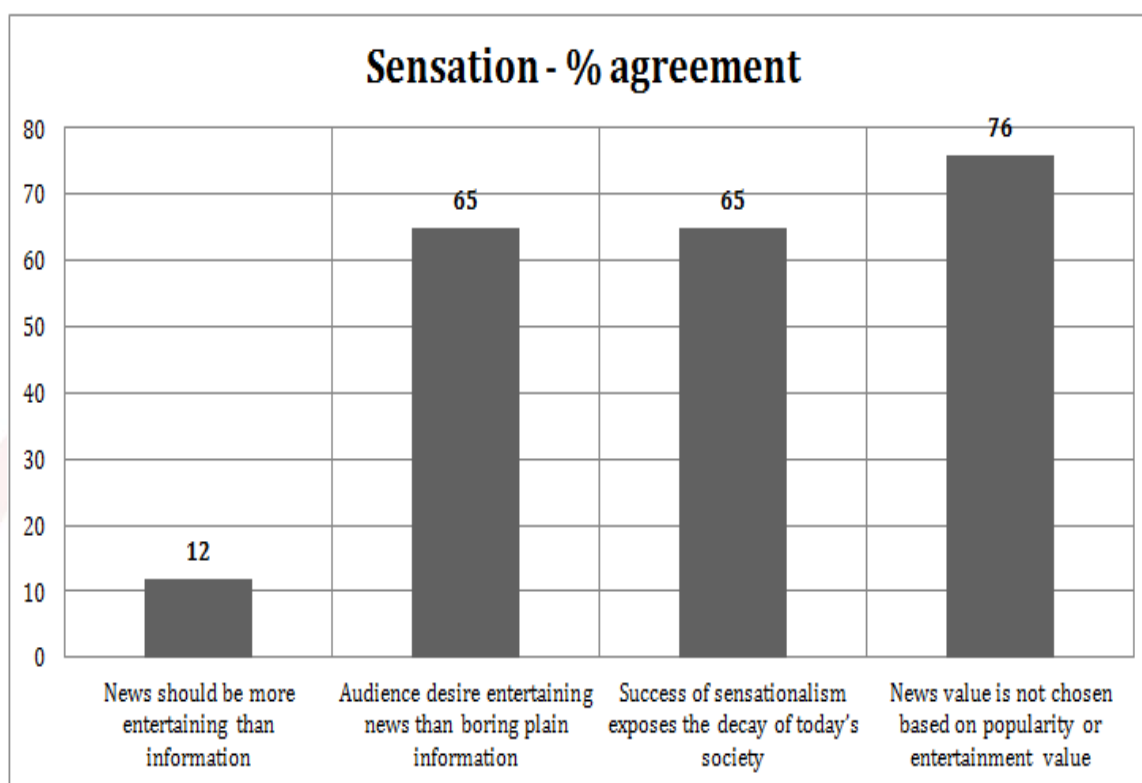
Figure 3 : Graph showing % agreement for Sensation as a criterion

4.2.2 Prominence

Except for 3 members all the respondents opined that Politics takes more prominence than Non-political news. 88% (15) of the respondents also are of view that Audience reactions are crucial in the sustenance of a news item. 71% (12) of them disagreed or are indecisive about the fact that the news organization takes a moderate view when it comes to news makers of national importance, hence emphasizing that news of such importance is highly significant as a criteria for news projection. This is also reflected with a high rating of 6.3 on 7 (refer Fig 2) for prominence. 71% (12) of the respondents also disagreed to news organizations being non-receptive to audience feedback on prominent news items. This is suggestive of audience interaction as an important follow-up of news and its lasting effect in terms of prominence. As noted earlier, high profile government initiatives, or new laws enacted are closely followed. Middle East conflict takes up most of their space and abuzz with editorials and analysis.
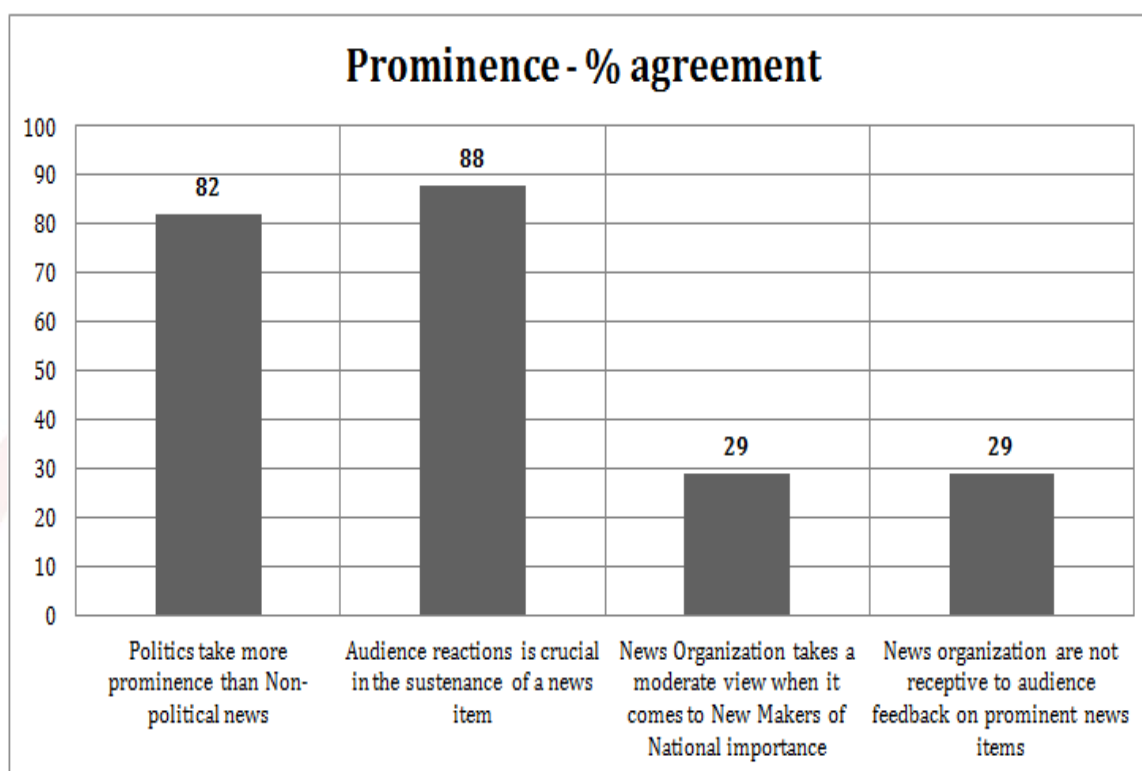
Figure 4 : Graph showing % agreement on Prominence as a criterion

4.2.3 Conflict

Reiterating the high rating of 6.1 on 7 for conflict (refer Fig 2), 95% (16) of the respondents believed that Regional conflict is more important than international conflict, while 76% (13) also agreed that News organizations follow the stand taken up by the state on issues of conflict. 71% (12) disagreed or strongly disagreed that news organizations practice self-censorship in news of such kind. Supporting the cause of local issues being more important than others, 88% (15) of the respondents disagreed to the fact that news organizations provide more space to Global news. This is also reflected with a high rating given to Proximity (refer Fig 2) as a criteria for news projection. Community & Proximity are given a lot coverage in the 'The Khaleej Times' noted one of the editors. She adds further, *"We largely dwell into smaller news value as well and how community news changes your perception of the place that you live in, new rules, new legislations, all those things count, apart from that regular stuffs go in the pages"*
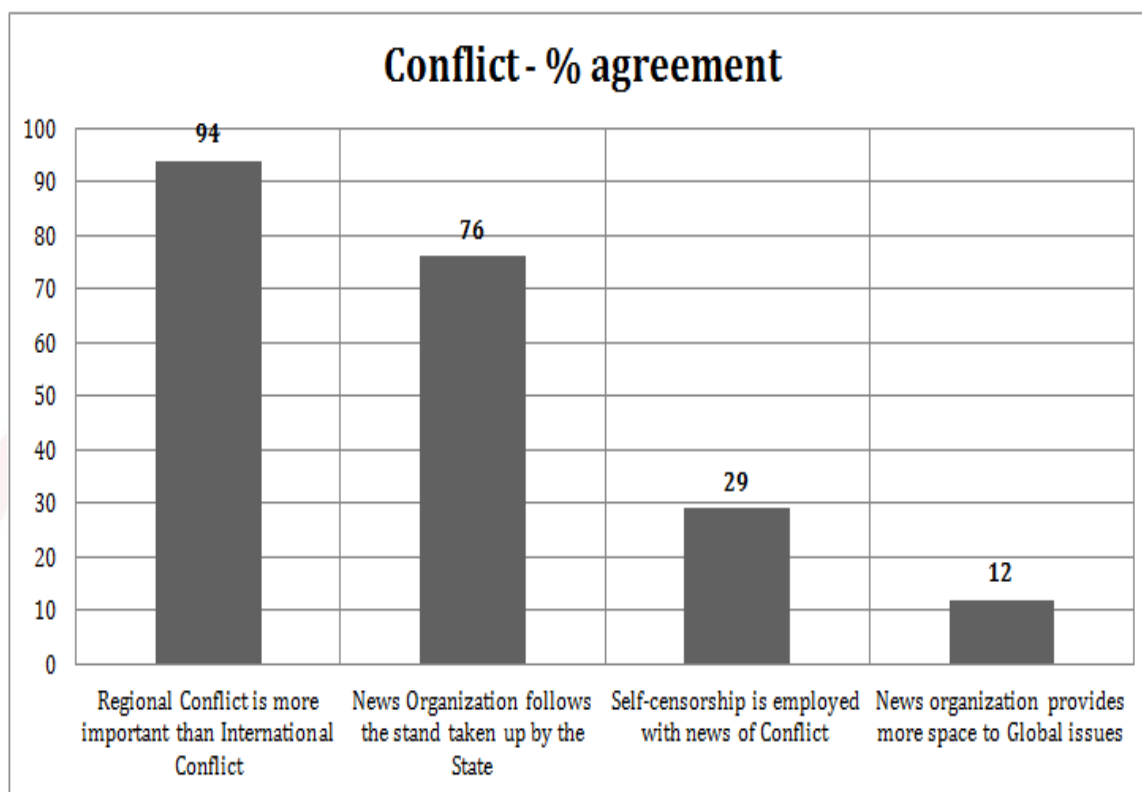
Figure 5 : Figure show % agreement to Conflict as a criterion

4.2.4   Uniqueness

With respect to oddity and novelty of news, most (88% - 15) respondents disagreed that news should aspire to be unique in terms of content. That suggestive of the fact that uniqueness should not overshadow the content and reality of news. However 82% (14) of them strongly agreed or agreed that designing and packaging is a major contributor of success in competition, while 65% (11) of them observed that the delivery of news across various platforms creates a niche audience. This is indicative of possible clusters among the audience/consumers who seek specific types of news. Contradicting their opinions about design and packaging, only 47% (8) agreed that the look and feel of a news item drives the consumption. Interestingly the remaining 52% (9) were indecisive about this criterion.
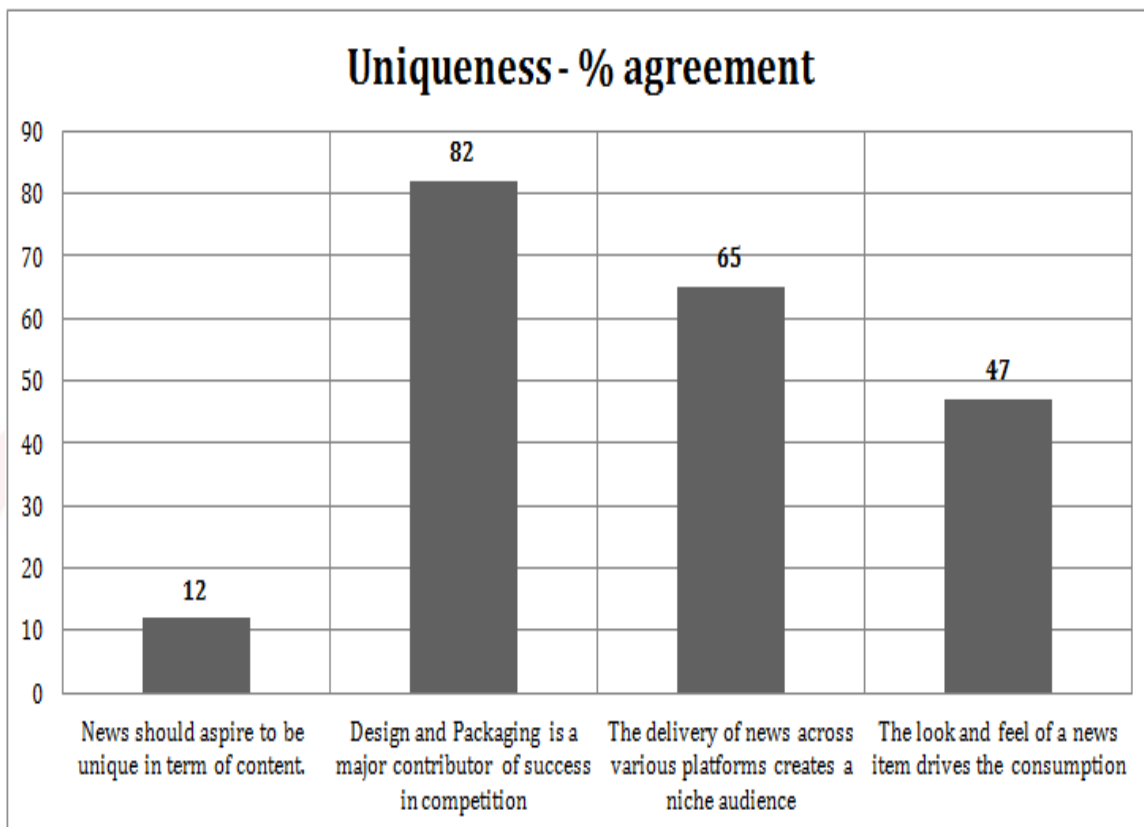
Figure 6 : Figure showing % agreement to Uniqueness as a criterion

4.2.5 Proximity

This segment of the questionnaire re-affirmed the importance of local news over global reports. 88% (15) of the respondents are of the opinion that local news has more consumption/demand. All the respondents are of the opined that care must be taken to include all major communities for their share of news, however with respect to the UAE there is an equal amount of agreement (53%) and disagreement (47%) that the expat community is well represented in new items. 88% (15) of disagreed that regional or political affiliation are major factors for news choices.
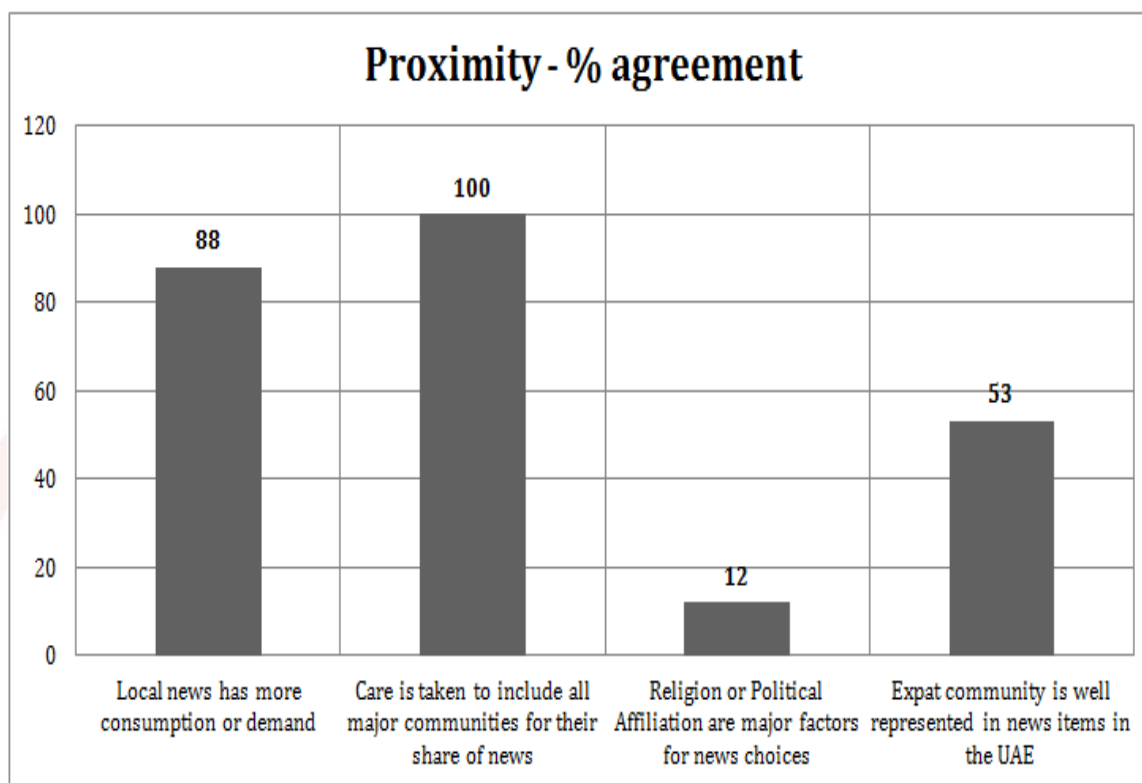
Figure 7 : Graph showing % agreement to Proximity as a criterion

4.3   Online & Social Media: impact & engagement

All the respondents agreed that their agency engaged in online news production. However the responses were almost equally distributed between agreement, disagreement and indecisiveness with regard to change in the importance of parameters for news value due to intrusion of Online & Social media. In an analysis of how journalism has changed in the digital environment, (Deuze, 2007) proposes, 'Technology is not an independent factor influencing journalistic work from outside, but must be seen in terms of implementation, and how it extends and amplifies previous ways of doing things.' The importance of breaking news via online is regarded as important was agreed by almost all the journalist. A senior journalist adds, *"It's just that I'm working faster, and thinking faster I mean there's pressure of course but that's the part of the game".* Immediacy is paramount in competition. She further notes, *"So that's how in terms of immediacy it works, but not all stories require that, just the one's which are really essential you know that the other publications are going to blow it up."*

The way newspapers are repackaged from one platform to another and recent applications of digital technologies to facilitate multimedia work are illustrated by both (Harper, 1998) & (Pavlik, 2001). *"We even considered supplying them with mini video cameras and place it out somewhere and have breaking news, we can film it",* a multimedia journalist from The National,

belies on how it all will be but a failed cause due to inadequacy of proper training and a technical handicap.

However, use of the internet for information-seeking has not been homogenous across national contexts. But the distrust of the internet as a source of news appears to be widespread. A study was conducted by (Jae-Hwa & Cameron, 2003) on the survey of South Korean and American journalists and found that, although journalists depend on the web for background information and story ideas, 'the majority of journalists remain sceptical about most websites. In the UAE Twitter, turned the question in its very head by becoming the trigger point for most news stories. A feature reporter from The National says, *"Twitter is a very good source especially if you are a local news reporter. You follow the right people you get the right tip first"*. A very interesting story is shared by a young reporter from The Khaleej Times. Towards the run-up to New Year last year, a random tweet catches the attention of this reporter, the tweet from a local female Emirati, questions, how New Year party are not allowed in the desert. A quick check with Tourism Department, and a news story follows, which highlights how authorities have warned tourist and locals from using the Desert as a New Year party site. The story becomes a hotbed for heated discussion in twitter and online, becoming one of the major stories during last year New Year Party season - a story solely due to a random tweet.

All respondents agreed that interacting with the consumers online was an imperative part of post-news production with the speed of feedbacks and comments turning in within 24 hours of news publication. There are not set guidelines on interacting with readers online. Most of them converse to their readers if they are emailed the comments. But, most of them took pride on the credibility of being associated with a big publication. One of the respondents says, *"During times of moon sighting for Eid, it becomes insane. People from London write to me on twitter and ask me about whether the moon has been sighted in London based on our creditability in the U.A.E"*

Feedback on social media was observed to be highly dependent of the type of news. All the respondents agreed to this.

General (Weather, Prayer times, etc)	Economic news Health & Education International News Science & Technology Politics	Business & Finance Crime Local Regional/Local National Niche Reports	Art & Culture Entertainment/Celebrities Sports News
Almost None	Slow	Moderate	Fast	Instantly

Figure 8 : Figure showing speed of feedback v/s categories of news

4.4 The Technology Bait

Mobile headsets enabled people to broadcast themselves, a factor that means that mobile phones could be depicted as one of the most powerful resources for social change. (Boughelaf, 2011) Using smart devices during news reporting and production was seen with a lot of sceptics by senior editors. Here's comes an interesting divide when seen in terms of experience gap between reporters and editors. Reporters with lesser experience/younger age groups are keener in experimenting with mobile devices and more willing to take risks. *"I still take down notes, I don't believe in technology I think they can let you down when you need it the most, so I still believe in taking notes and you know trying to be conventional about it",* cautioned one of the senior reporters.

In fact, one respondent highlights the importance of having more followers on Twitter akin to creating more changes of getting employed. "*I know that now, like when you go for an interview they would ask you how many twitter followers you have? So I know that this could happen now, they have taken this seriously because they have noticed that if they are not there, then they don't have readership"*

5   Conclusion

The advent of satellite television followed by Internet connectivity via mobile devices has had a revolutionizing effect on Arab Media. This research intends to examine journalistic production and the practices of two major news-organisations in the UAE and to show how reporters/editors manage the constraints of immediacy in news production under regimes of convergence news making. UAE has more Internet users per capita than any other country in the Gulf region, and these users tap into a plethora of electronic media. With the potential of any internet user having the potential to become a knowledge producer they have a voice in the virtual political space. At an individualistic opinion all the respondent rated the factors Immediacy, Proximity, Prominence, Oddity/Uniqueness, Conflict, Emotions and Consequence as More important (ratings of 4 and above through 7) whereas found Suspense and Sensation as not so important. However their perceptions from the agency's point of view showed Sensation to be an important parameter for news projection. The respondents were also of the opinion that from the consumer's point of view, all factors except Suspense were highly important for news projection. The study also helped intercept the importance of social media as a prominent tool in interactivity pre and post

news production - speed, immediacy and feedback marking important dynamics of news production on social media

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* Further references will be provided on request