



A Study on Criminal Trials and Media Sensationalism in India

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the complex relationship between criminal trials and media sensationalism in India, exploring how media coverage impacts judicial fairness, public opinion, and the larger justice system. The main aim is to understand the complex relationship between criminal trials and media sensationalism in India, highlighting how media coverage can influence public opinion, judicial processes, and the right to a fair trial. The government aims to balance the act between protecting the freedom of the press under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution and ensuring the right to a fair trial under Article 21. The Press Council of India, a quasi-judicial body, monitors the press and can censure media outlets that breach journalistic ethics. It has issued various advisories cautioning the media against sensationalism, especially in ongoing investigations or trials. However, the PCI's powers are advisory in nature and lack strong enforcement mechanisms. Through a combination of case law analysis, media content review, and legal commentary, the paper identifies key instances where media intervention has seemingly impacted trial outcomes or public perception. The methodology is an empirical study conducted using a convenient sampling method and collected a poll of 210 responses from the general public. The findings suggest that while media plays a critical role in informing citizens and promoting transparency, excessive sensationalism often leads to trial by media, potentially compromising the integrity of legal proceedings. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for stricter regulatory frameworks, ethical journalism, and judicial safeguards to balance freedom of the press with the fundamental rights of the accused.

Keywords: Criminal trials, media sensationalism, judicial fairness, freedom of speech and expression, Judiciary

1. Introduction

In a democratic society, the media serves as the fourth pillar, playing a critical role in shaping public opinion and ensuring transparency in governance. However, with the growing influence of television channels, digital platforms, and social media, a troubling trend has emerged, the sensationalism of criminal trials. The main aim of the study is to identify the negative impact, measures to improve ethical media reporting and effectiveness of current regulations on media reporting. In India, this phenomenon has raised serious concerns about the integrity of judicial proceedings, the right to a fair trial, and the ethical responsibilities of the media. Media sensationalism refers to the practice of exaggerating or dramatizing news content to attract viewers, often at the expense of objectivity and accuracy. In high-profile criminal cases, this tendency can lead to "trial by media," where public perception is shaped before the courts have had the opportunity to deliver a verdict. This not only prejudices the rights of the accused but also undermines the sanctity of the legal process. The Indian criminal justice system has evolved significantly since colonial times, rooted in principles of fairness, due process, and the presumption of innocence. Over the decades, criminal trials in India have undergone reforms to uphold transparency, ensure accountability, and protect the rights of both the accused and the victims. However, parallel to this evolution has been the rapid transformation of media—from print journalism to the 24/7 television news cycle and now, to the digital age dominated by social media platforms. In the early post-independence era, the media played a more restrained and informative role, reporting on criminal trials with journalistic integrity and respect for legal boundaries. However, with the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s came the explosion of private news channels and a fierce competition for ratings, which paved the way for a more sensationalist approach to crime reporting. High-profile cases such as the Jessica Lal murder case, the Aarushi Talwar case, the Nirbhaya gangrape case, and more recently, the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, have highlighted how media sensationalism can influence public discourse and, in some instances, even judicial outcomes. In these cases, media trials not only impacted the perception of the accused but also placed immense pressure on law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. Recognizing the growing concern over media sensationalism and its potential to interfere with the administration of justice, the Indian government and judiciary have taken several governmental initiatives aimed at maintaining the sanctity of criminal trials and regulating irresponsible media conduct. These efforts reflect a balancing act between protecting the freedom of the press under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution and ensuring the right to a fair trial under Article 21. The Supreme Court of India has played a crucial role in laying down principles to curb media interference in criminal trials. In several landmark judgments, the Court has emphasized the need for responsible reporting and cautioned against "trial by media." For example, in *Sahara India Real Estate Corp. Ltd. v. SEBI* (2012), the Court held that courts could impose temporary postponement orders on media coverage to prevent prejudice during a trial. The 200th Law Commission Report (2006) titled "Trial by Media: Free Speech and Fair Trial under the Criminal Procedure Code" highlighted the dangers of prejudicial media coverage and recommended amendments to restrict such reporting during the pendency of trials. To preserve judicial authority and prevent interference in trials, the Contempt of

Courts Act empowers courts to take action against publications that may "prejudice, interfere with, or obstruct" the course of justice. The Press Council of India, a quasi-judicial body, monitors the press and can censure media outlets that breach journalistic ethics. It has issued various advisories cautioning the media against sensationalism, especially in ongoing investigations or trials. However, the PCI's powers are advisory in nature and lack strong enforcement mechanisms. The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, modernizes India's criminal procedure laws, indirectly addressing concerns about media sensationalism in criminal trials through the key provisions including Victim Identity Protection (Section 37): Prohibits disclosure of identity in sexual offence cases, restricting media from publishing names, photos, or personal details. In-Camera Trials (Section 369): Mandates private court proceedings in sensitive cases (like sexual offences), preventing media access and preserving confidentiality. Ban on Trial Recordings for Public Use: Court proceedings can be recorded for official use but cannot be broadcast or shared with the media. The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, This Act empowers the government to regulate the content of television broadcasts. It includes a Programme Code that prohibits content that is defamatory, obscene, or likely to incite violence or disrupt public order. Channels can be penalized or banned for violating the code. The Information Technology Act, 2000, this law applies to digital media and regulates online content, Under Section 69A, the government can block websites or online content in the interest of public order or morality. Provisions also exist for penalizing the spread of fake news or objectionable content. Broadcasting and Digital Media Regulations (Proposed) The government has proposed various mechanisms, such as, Digital Media Guidelines (2021) under the IT Rules, which include a self-regulatory framework for online content publishers.

Discussions on creating a Media Council or Broadcasting Regulatory Authority are ongoing, aimed at providing comprehensive oversight.

The several factors affecting the public perception and justice system includes, Television news channels often prioritize high ratings (TRPs) over responsible journalism. Sensational or emotionally charged crime stories attract more viewers, which translates to higher ad revenue. There is no single independent regulatory authority overseeing all media formats. Self-regulation bodies like the Press Council of India and News Broadcasters & Digital Association (NBDA) lack enforcement powers, allowing media outlets to overstep ethical boundaries with minimal consequences. The audience's interest in crime stories creates demand for entertaining narratives over factual reporting. This leads to dramatization, speculation, and premature judgments in the media space. In some cases, media coverage is influenced by political affiliations, which can skew reporting and create biased narratives that serve particular interests. Long trial durations and investigation delays leave space for media speculation and parallel public trials. The vacuum created by a slow justice system often gets filled by media commentary and assumptions. Platforms like Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram allow rapid and widespread circulation of information — often without fact-checking. Citizen journalism and influencer commentary can blur the line between opinion and evidence. Many journalists and media personnel lack training in legal reporting and may unintentionally report sub judice matters or violate confidentiality norms. Crime reporting often appeals to emotions rather than facts, creating a hostile environment for the accused and pressuring investigators and the judiciary. The current trends in criminal trials have increasingly become media spectacles, with extensive coverage often leading to what is termed as "trial by media." News outlets and social media platforms frequently discuss ongoing cases in a sensationalized manner, sometimes portraying the accused as guilty even before the courts reach a verdict. This undermines the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" and can seriously compromise the right to a fair trial. The rise of social media has further amplified this trend, turning court proceedings into viral content, as seen in cases like Johnny Depp vs Amber Heard, where public perception was heavily influenced by memes and livestreams. In India, cases like the Aarushi Talwar murder and Sushant Singh Rajput's death highlighted how media narratives could overpower legal processes. Such reporting often violates the sub judice principle and impacts the mental well-being of victims and witnesses, sometimes causing them to turn hostile. Despite occasional judicial interventions, the lack of strict regulatory enforcement continues to allow media sensationalism to interfere with the administration of justice. In different countries like, United States, Strong First Amendment protections for press freedom. Courts use gag orders, change of venue, or sequestration of jury to ensure fair trials. High tolerance for media scrutiny, but defamation laws and contempt powers exist. Trial by media is a known issue, especially in televised trials (e.g., O.J. Simpson case). In the United Kingdom, Strict sub judice rules under the Contempt of Court Act, 1981. Human Rights Act, 1998 (Article 6), Media cannot publish anything that could prejudice an ongoing trial. Violations can result in fines or criminal charges. The UK balances media freedom with strong legal deterrents to protect trial integrity. In Australia, Similar to the UK, with sub judice contempt laws. Judiciary Act, 1903, State-based Contempt Laws, Suppression Orders, Media must avoid reporting that might influence jurors. Courts can issue suppression orders to restrict publication of sensitive information. Emphasis on jury protection and fair trial rights.

Objectives

- To analyze public opinion on the influence of the media before court verdict.
- To identify the major negative impact of media sensationalism.
- To identify the major method to improve ethical media reporting.
- To gain public opinion on the effectiveness of current regulatory authorities on preventing media sensationalism.

Review of Literature

Prasanna Dasari (2025) The aim of the study is to critically evaluate the dual role of the media in shaping discourse on caste and gender in India. Using content analysis of news reports related to caste-based violence, the methodology examines journalistic trends and biases. The findings reveal that sensationalism often distracts from deeper structural injustices, and political agendas influence reporting. The study concludes that the media, while powerful in raising awareness, needs reform to prioritize justice over spectacle.

Soumit Nath (2024) This study aims to explore how media, especially social media, impacts judicial proceedings and public opinion in India. The methodology followed is a historical and legal analysis of media trials from the era of print to the rise of digital platforms, the methodology traces patterns of influence. Findings indicate that media often shapes public narratives prematurely and can influence judicial conduct in high-profile cases. It concludes that while the media is essential to democracy, its unchecked power risks compromising the justice system.

Ugwu Jovita Nnenna (2024) The aim of this research is to analyze the ethical and judicial implications of media trials at the crossroads of law and public perception. The methodology involves a historical review and legal commentary on media coverage of court proceedings. Findings show that while transparency is valuable, media sensationalism can skew perceptions and challenge impartiality. The study concludes that ethical boundaries must be enforced to prevent prejudicial reporting during ongoing trials.

Ahmad Swaiss (2024) This study aims to assess the benefits and drawbacks of media involvement in legal cases through a legal analytical framework. The methodology reviews high-profile cases and examines how media influences public and legal discourse. Findings indicate that the media can raise awareness and deter crime, but also promotes sensationalism and violates privacy rights. The conclusion stresses the need for balance between transparency and responsible reporting.

Monirmay Das (2024) The aim of this study is to understand the evolving role of media from traditional platforms to modern digital spaces in shaping democratic values. The methodology involves a historical reflection and comparative analysis of media's transformation over time. The findings affirm that the media, hailed as the "fourth pillar of democracy," remains crucial in informing the public but is vulnerable to manipulation. The conclusion calls for preserving media independence while ensuring accountability.

Ebenezer Kojo Gyasi Mensah (2024) The aim is to examine how podcasts, particularly true crime narratives like "Serial," impact public engagement with the criminal justice system. The methodology involves a case study analysis of "Serial" and its exploration of the Adnan Syed case. Findings highlight that storytelling through podcasts can revive interest in cold cases and expose flaws in legal proceedings. The conclusion suggests that digital media can play a constructive role if backed by factual integrity.

Sakkcham Singh Parmaar (2024) This study aims at the relationship between media trials and the principles of fair trial and judicial independence in modern legal systems. The methodology used is a comparative legal analysis across jurisdictions, the methodology assesses the media's influence on high-profile cases. Findings show growing concerns over compromised trial integrity due to aggressive reporting. The conclusion urges legal systems to establish stronger safeguards against media overreach in judicial matters.

Jordan Hillman (2024) The aim is to investigate the historical phenomenon of "criminal conversation" suits in England as a rational response to adultery within marriage. The study used a methodology of rational choice theory and legal-historical analysis from 1660–1857. Findings suggest that such suits reduced violence and enabled financial settlements in marital disputes. It concludes that these legal practices, though outdated today, served as structured alternatives to social chaos at the time.

Scott Franks (2024) This study aims racial bias in Canadian criminal jury trials by analyzing assumptions in Supreme Court cases like Barton and Chouhan. The methodology includes jury research and review of legal judgments. Findings indicate that jury instructions often fail to counteract racial prejudice effectively, especially for Indigenous defendants and victims. The conclusion recommends rethinking how bias is addressed in jury selection and instruction processes.

Eric S. Fish (2024) The aim is to highlight the decline of adversarial criminal trials in the U.S. and the rise of plea bargaining. The methodology involves doctrinal legal analysis and statistical review of conviction trends. Findings reveal that trials have become rare, and plea deals dominate, eroding defendants' rights and judicial scrutiny. The study concludes that this shift undermines the legitimacy of the criminal justice system and calls for systemic reform.

Brandon Draper (2024) The aim of the study is to assess the implications of conducting criminal trials via video conferencing, particularly from a prosecutorial perspective. The methodology involves legal analysis and a review of procedural challenges during the pandemic. Findings indicate that remote trials can lead to technical barriers, lenient verdicts, and potential reversible errors. The conclusion emphasizes the need for caution and improved infrastructure to safeguard justice in virtual proceedings.

Alif Ovi Dewan (2024) This study aims to propose regulatory reforms to address prejudiced media trials and enhance journalistic integrity. The methodology uses policy analysis to evaluate current media practices and suggests institutional mechanisms. Findings suggest the absence of clear digital media rules, weak regulation, and excessive police-media interaction during investigations. The study concludes that stronger regulatory frameworks and ethical training are necessary for fair media conduct.

Banuka De Silva (2023) The aim is to explore how media consumption influences public fear of crime. The methodology reviews uses comparative analysis of multiple empirical studies on media exposure and psychological outcomes. Findings show a general positive correlation between sensational media content and heightened fear, with exceptions explained by desensitization. The conclusion stresses that nuanced media literacy and balanced reporting can mitigate exaggerated public fears.

Muhammad Hamza Zakir (2023) The study aims witness protection in Pakistan's criminal justice system, highlighting legal, social, and operational challenges. Methodology includes case study analysis and a review of international practices. Findings point to systemic failures in witness safety, lack of trust, and poor coordination among stakeholders. The conclusion recommends comprehensive reforms and collaborative strategies to protect witnesses and uphold trial integrity.

Wonjae Chang (2022) This research aims to investigate media coverage of CEO pay ratio disclosures and shareholder reactions. The methodology utilizes statistical models including difference-in-differences and entropy balancing to analyze media and financial data. Findings reveal nuanced shareholder responses influenced by both expected and unexpected pay ratio components. The conclusion suggests that media framing significantly affects corporate transparency and market behavior.

Itay Ravid (2021) The aim is to determine whether media reporting affects criminal sentencing decisions in U.S. courts. The methodology uses a novel dataset linking over 43,000 sentencing records to media coverage across three states, the study performs empirical analysis. Findings reveal correlations between media intensity and sentencing severity, particularly in politically appointed courts. The conclusion highlights that media exposure can influence judicial impartiality, warranting policy attention.

Taunya Lovell Banks (2021) This article aims at the diminishing presence of civil trials in the U.S. and their representation in popular culture. The methodology involves cultural analysis of legal films and legal history. Findings reveal a disconnect between the ideal of trial by jury and its modern erosion in practice. The study concludes that films play a symbolic role in preserving trial values amid their real-world decline.

Daniel Sprick (2021) The study aims to investigate how media influences Chinese judicial processes under an authoritarian regime. The methodology uses a doctrinal analysis and media case reviews, it highlights the paradox of state-controlled but media-sensitive courts. Findings suggest media acts as a double-edged tool promoting transparency but also distorting justice through legal populism. The conclusion warns of compromised judicial independence due to performative media responsiveness.

Ahmad Swaiss (2020) This article aims to evaluate the social and legal impact of celebrity criminal cases. The methodology applies a legal-analytical approach to assess benefits and drawbacks of publicized trials. Findings indicate heightened awareness but also risks of sensationalism, unequal treatment, and privacy invasion. The conclusion calls for a balanced media approach to ensure justice without compromising individual rights.

Olubukola Olugasa (2020) The paper aims to evaluate the integration of technology in Nigeria's criminal justice system following the 2015 ACJA. The methodology conducts a legislative review and assessment of ICT implementation. Findings show gradual improvements but highlight infrastructural and adoption gaps. The conclusion advocates for enhanced digital infrastructure and training to fully realize the ACJA's objectives.

Michael Conklin (2020) The aim of this study is to emphasize the media's responsibility in accurately reporting criminal justice matters and the potential consequences of miscommunication. The methodology involves a conceptual analysis of how media representations impact public understanding. The findings reveal that even factually correct reporting can be misunderstood by lay audiences, leading to misperceptions and public outcry. The study concludes that journalists must consider not just factual accuracy, but also how reports are interpreted and the broader effects on justice.

Mark Klamberg (2019) The aim of the research is to analyze the evaluation of evidence in international criminal trials and its similarities with domestic proceedings. The methodology is comparative, examining how legal challenges manifest in different jurisdictions. The findings show that longstanding debates about evidence persist in international courts, reviving discussions once considered resolved in domestic law. The study concludes that international justice continues to grapple with evidentiary issues that demand both global dialogue and localized adaptation.

Katherine Biber (2018) The aim of this study is to explore the legal and constitutional implications of broadcasting Oscar Pistorius's 2014 trial in South Africa. The methodology involves a legal analysis of the court's deliberation and decision to permit media access. The findings highlight the court's reliance on principles of dignity, freedom, and equality as rooted in South Africa's post-apartheid constitutional framework. The study concludes that open justice through televised trials can further democratic transparency while maintaining legal safeguards.

Barrie Sander (2018) This article aims to investigate how domestic atrocity trials are used to shape national narratives aligned with state-building efforts. The methodology combines case study analysis and theoretical frameworks on justice and identity. The findings show that such trials often prioritize state narratives over the needs of victims or fairness to the accused. The study concludes that courts can function as tools for national identity construction, which may compromise their impartial judicial role.

Paul H. Robinson (2017) The aim of this report is to address the deterioration of criminal codes in U.S. jurisdictions by proposing a revised code for Delaware. The methodology includes modern code-drafting techniques and stakeholder collaboration. The findings suggest that poorly structured laws hinder clarity and justice, whereas the proposed code provides concise and accessible rules. The study concludes that systematic reform through careful legal drafting can greatly enhance the coherence and accessibility of criminal laws.

Stuart Ford (2015) This article aims to explore why international criminal trials remain complex despite procedural reforms aimed at simplifying them. The methodology involves analyzing trial structures and procedural changes across international tribunals. The findings show that complexity is an inherent and necessary feature for such trials to achieve justice and legitimacy. The study concludes that simplification efforts have limited impact, and embracing procedural depth is essential for comprehensive adjudication.

Arun Singh (2015) The aim of this study is to analyze the evolving role of participative media in Indian democracy, especially concerning media trials in sexual offence cases. The methodology includes case analysis of high-profile Indian trials and media behavior. The findings reveal that while the media has played a positive role in public mobilization, its involvement in media trials has led to prejudiced narratives. The study concludes that the media should act responsibly and avoid influencing judicial outcomes through sensationalism.

Kenneth R. Ahern (2013) The aim of this research is to understand how media incentives for sensationalism affect the accuracy of news, specifically in merger rumors. The methodology uses a novel dataset analyzing journalist traits and media coverage characteristics. The findings show that experience,

education, and expertise improve accuracy, while ambiguity and celebrity firms correlate with misinformation. The study concludes that media economics shape reporting quality, necessitating checks to ensure accuracy in high-stakes news.

Tamás Hoffmann (2013) The aim of this chapter is to evaluate the Hungarian judiciary's application of international law in trials for 1956 revolution crimes. The methodology involves critical legal analysis and historical contextualization. The findings reveal inconsistent application of international criminal law, leading to public confusion and judicial contradictions. The study concludes that without proper legal grounding and training, the pursuit of historical justice may fail to meet legal or societal expectations.

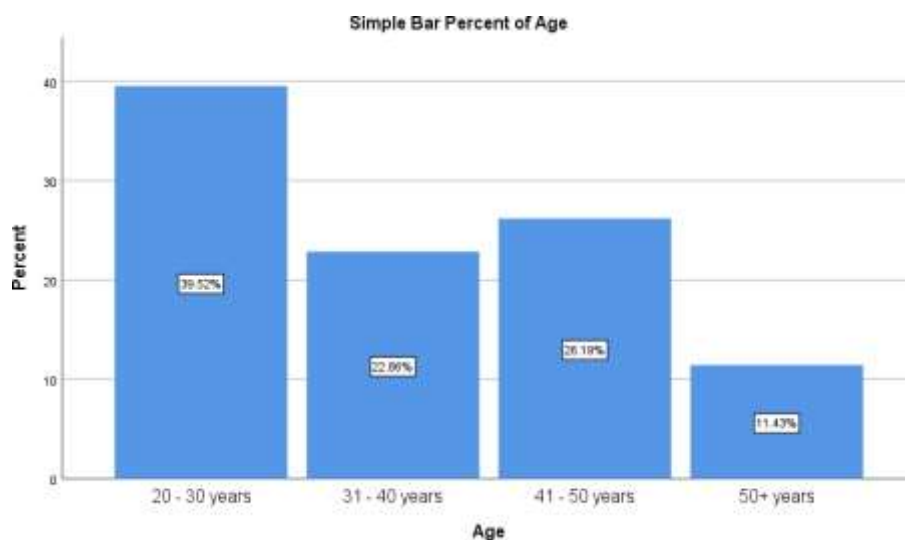
Derigan Silver (2012) The aim of this article is to apply the "social architecture" metaphor to understand legal access to terrorism trials in the U.S. The methodology involves legal analysis of Supreme Court rulings on the First Amendment and national security. The findings suggest a tension between transparency in criminal trials and restricted access in national security contexts. The study concludes that preserving trial openness is crucial for democratic accountability and must not be diluted by overly secretive national security models..

Methodology

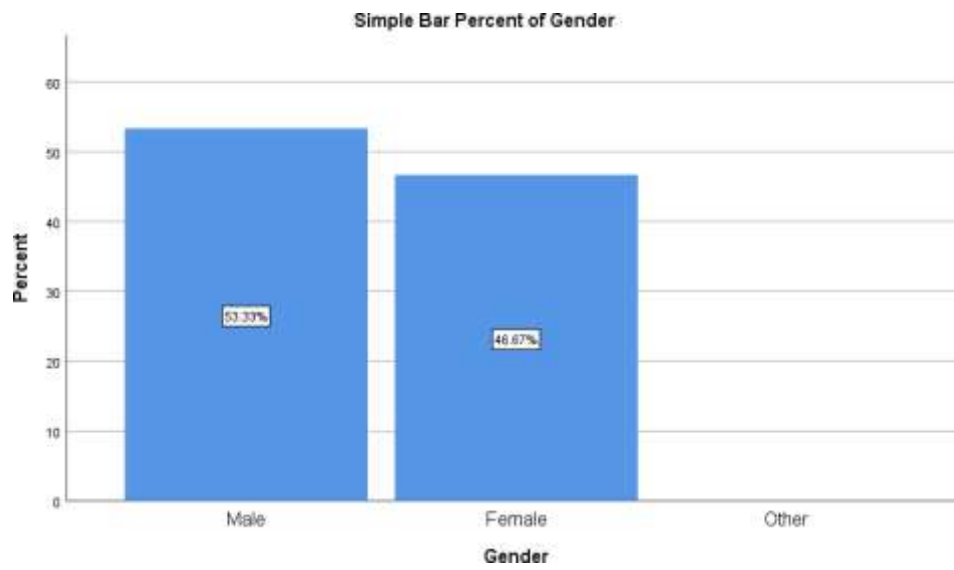
The nature of this study is empirical study. The present study is based on primary data collection by the researcher and the secondary data from books, journals, and online sources. The author carried out empirical research by a convenient sampling method. The sample frame is Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. A Total number of 210 sample respondents in the age group 20 and above years are collected. The statistical tools used are graphical representation, chi square and anova. The independent variables are age, gender, educational qualification, employment status, and work experience. The dependent variables include negative impact of media sensationalism, major methods to improve media reporting and effectiveness of current regulatory authorities in media reporting.

Analysis

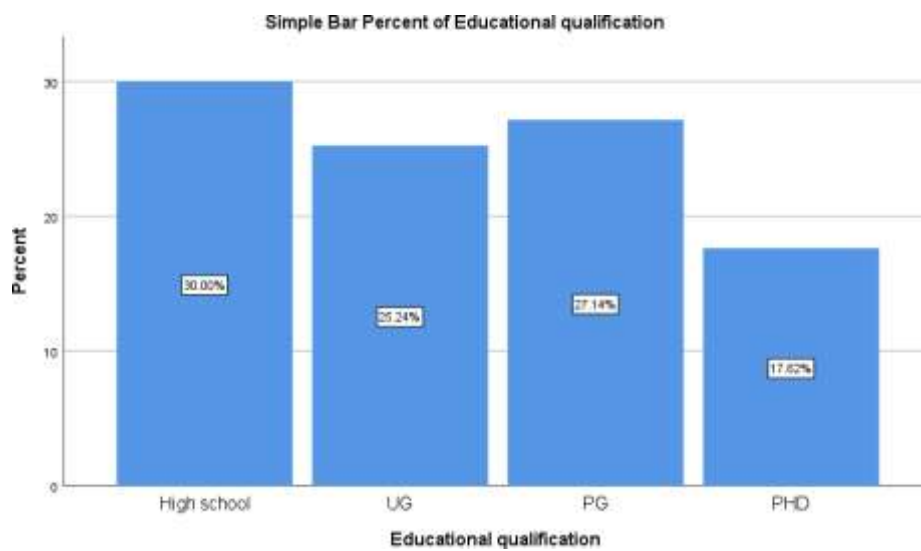
Figure 1



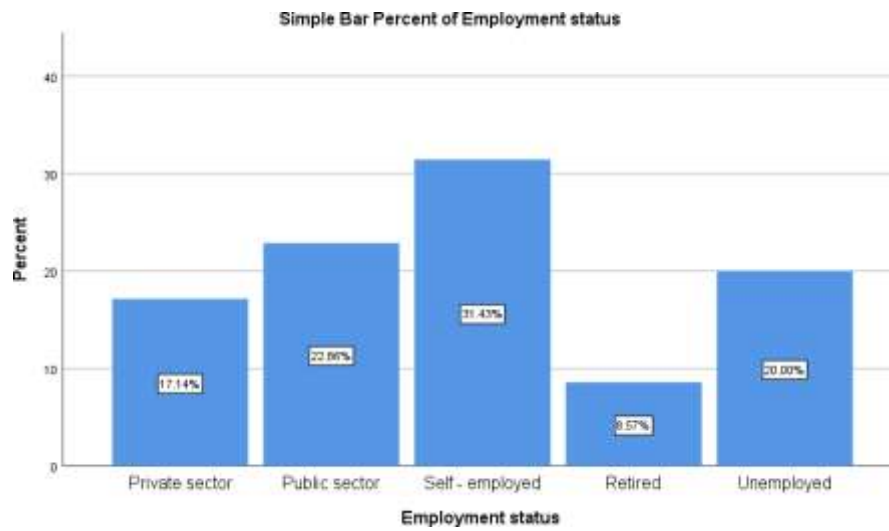
LEGEND: This graph depicts the age group of the respondents.

FIGURE 2

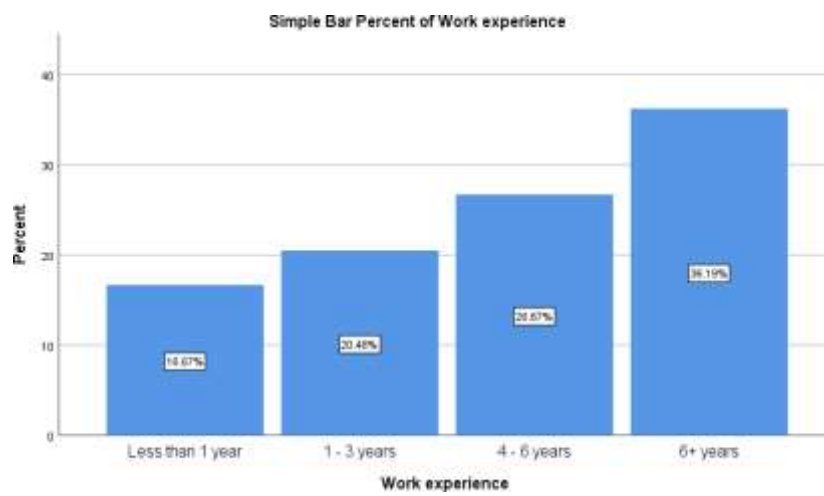
LEGEND: This graph depicts the gender of the respondents.

FIGURE 3

LEGEND: This graph shows the educational qualification of the respondents.

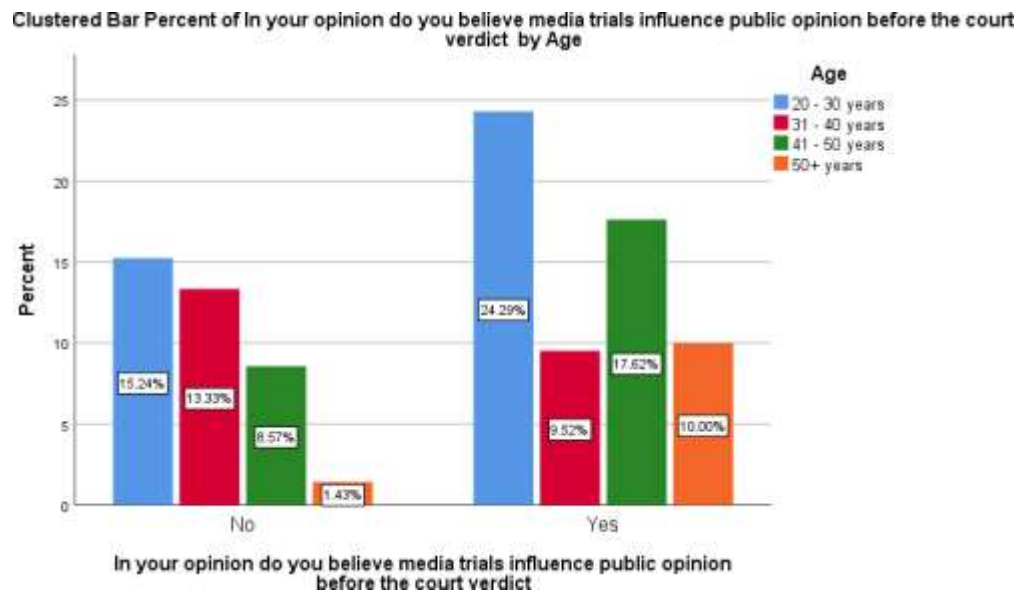
FIGURE 4

LEGEND: This graph shows the employment status of the respondents.

FIGURE 5

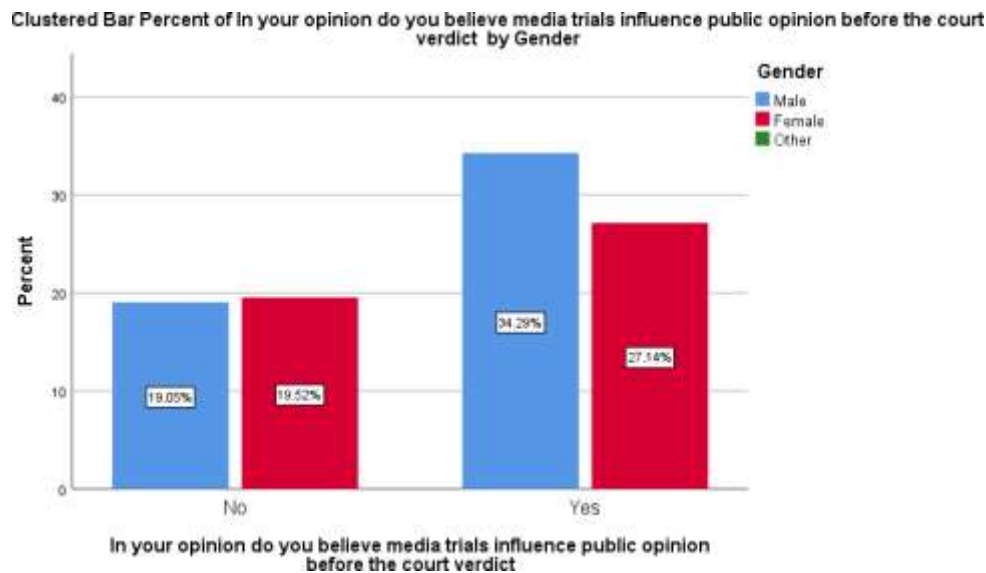
LEGEND: This graph shows the work experience of the respondents.

FIGURE 6



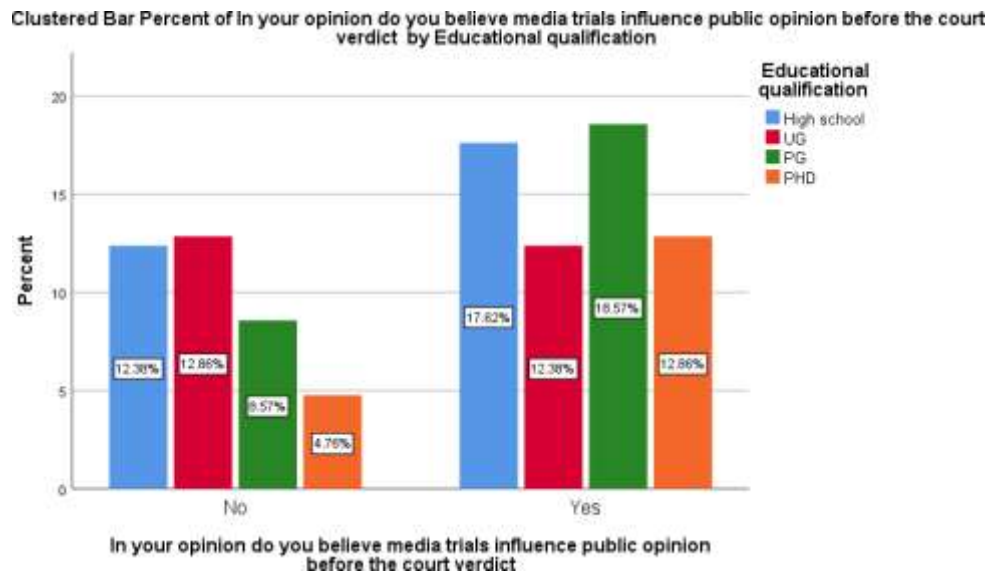
LEGEND: This graph shows the public opinion on influence of media before court verdict.

FIGURE 7



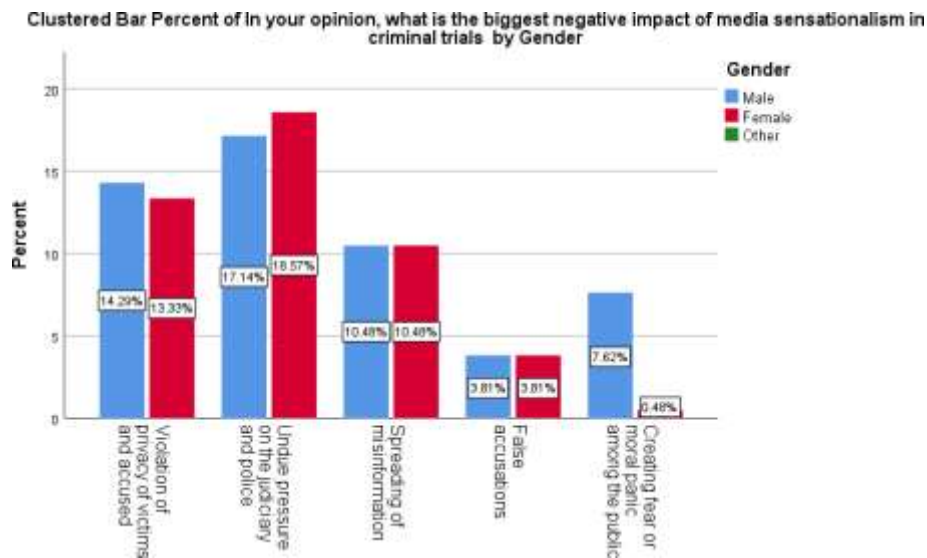
LEGEND: This graph shows the public opinion on influence of media before court verdict.

FIGURE 8



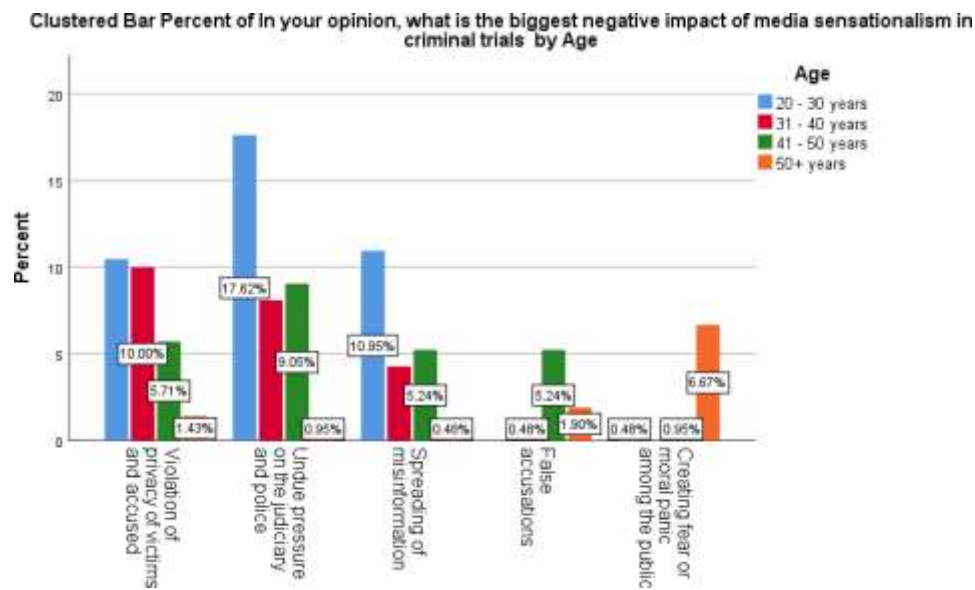
LEGEND: This graph shows the public opinion on influence of media before court verdict.

FIGURE 9



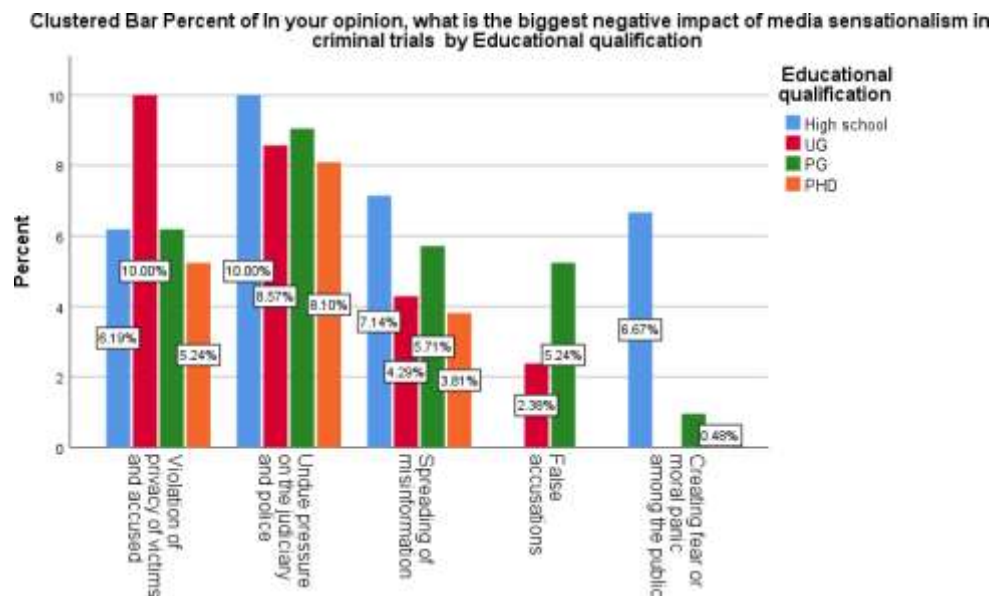
LEGEND: This graph shows the negative impact of media sensationalism.

FIGURE 10



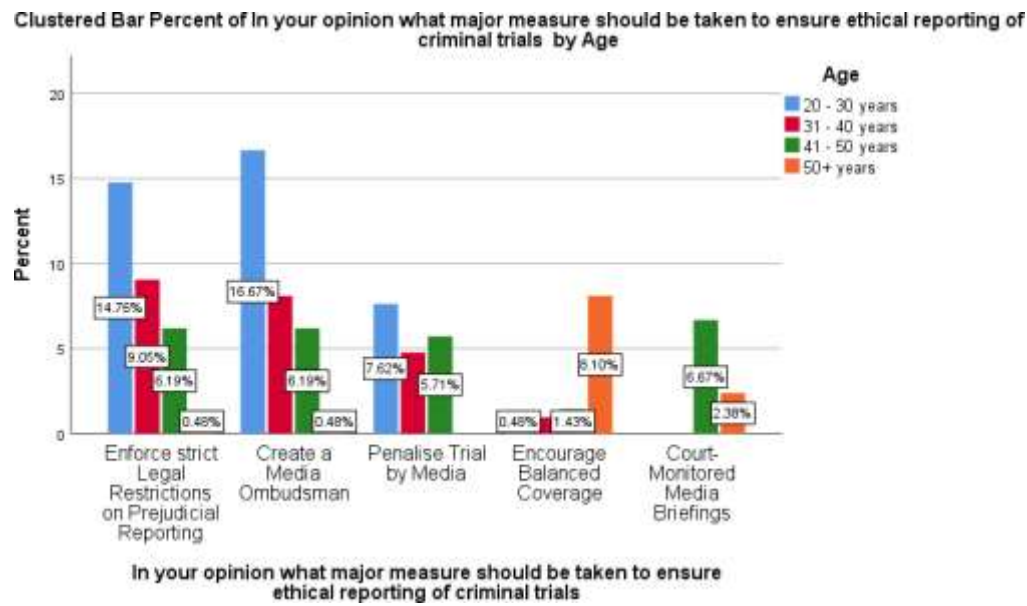
LEGEND: This graph shows the negative impact of media sensationalism.

FIGURE 11



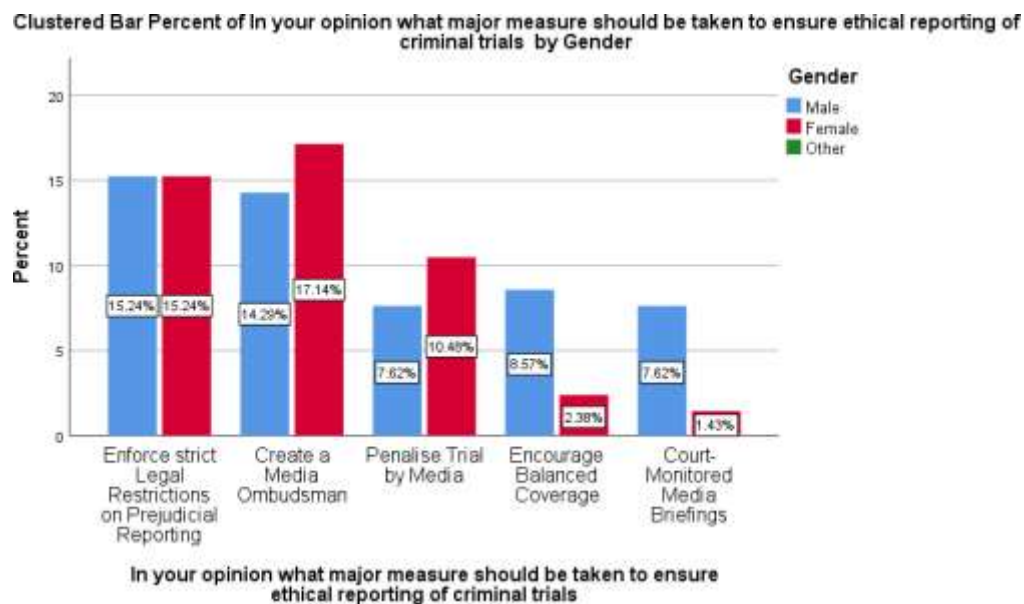
LEGEND: This graph shows the negative impact of media sensationalism.

FIGURE 12



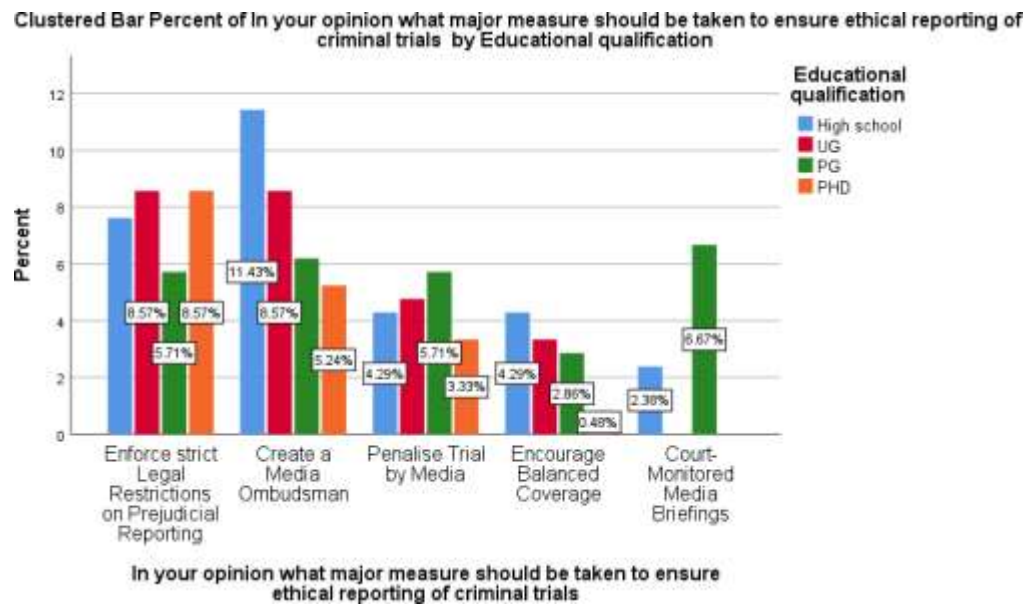
LEGEND: This graph shows the major measure to ensure ethical media reporting.

FIGURE 13



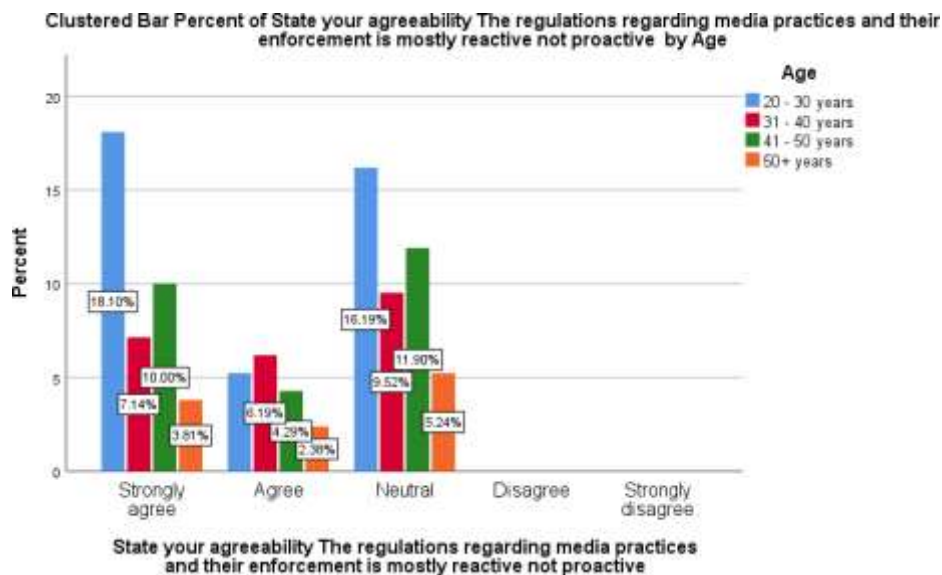
LEGEND: This graph shows the major measure to ensure ethical media reporting.

FIGURE 14



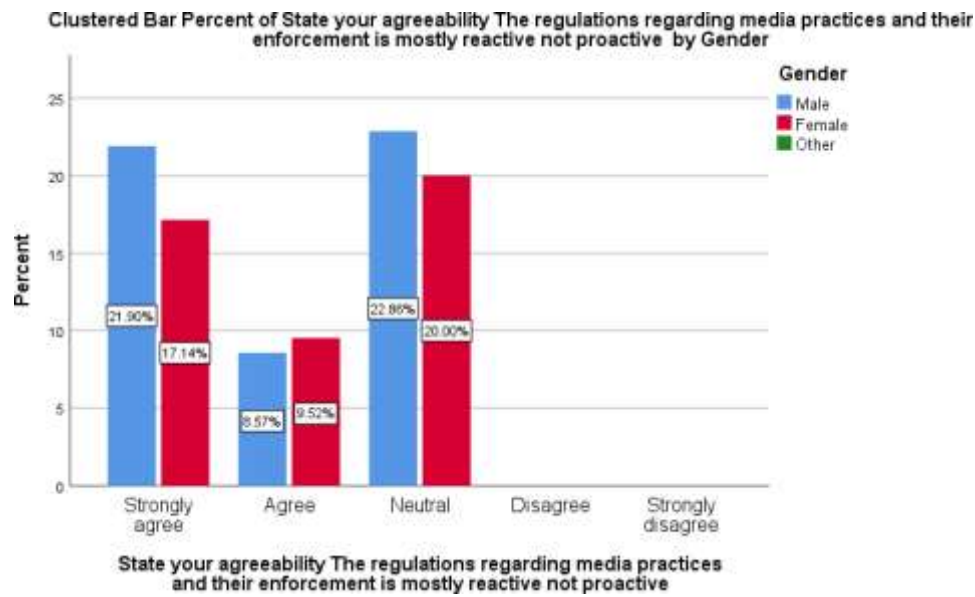
LEGEND: This graph shows the major measure to ensure ethical media reporting.

FIGURE 15



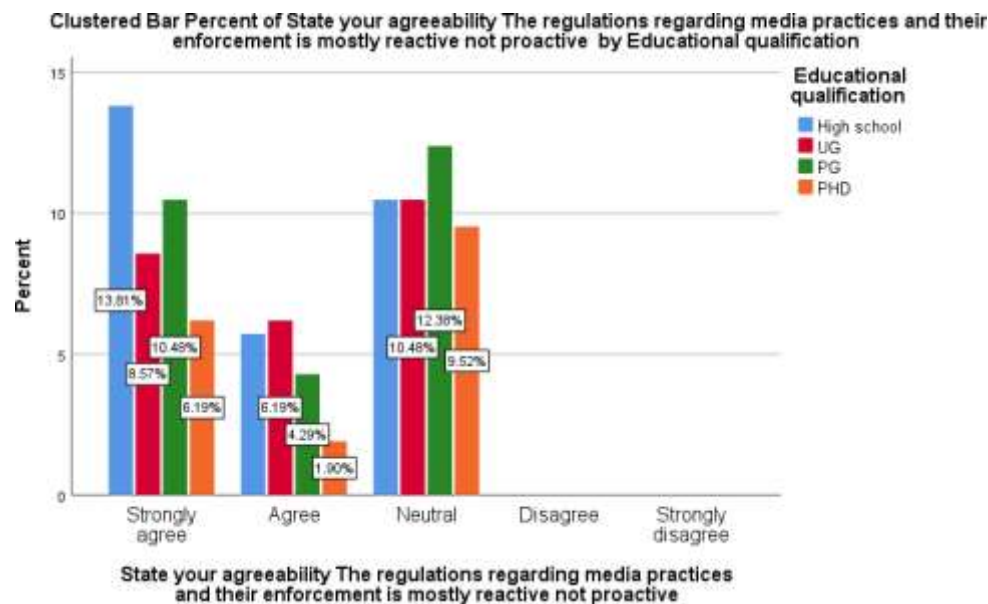
LEGEND: This graph shows the agreeability on the nature of regulations regarding media practices.

FIGURE 16



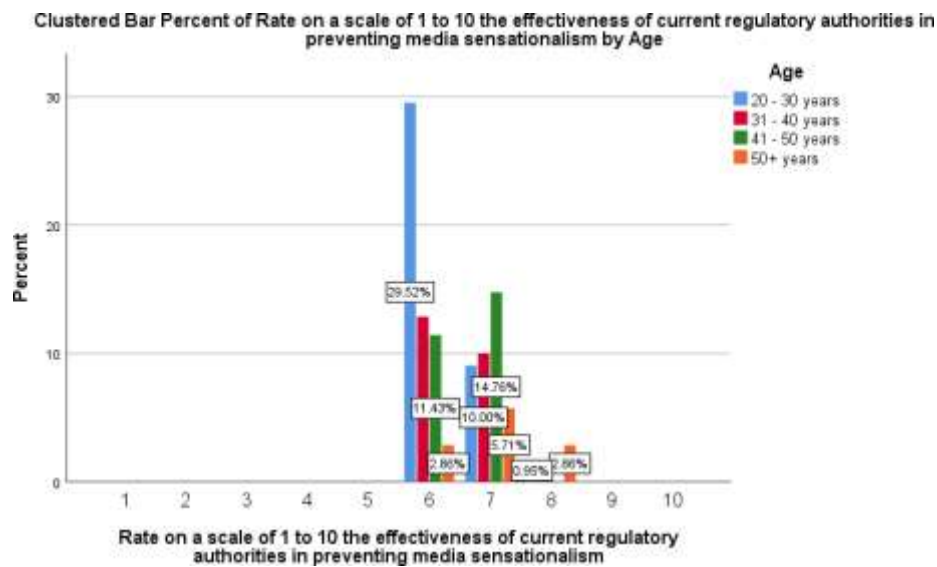
LEGEND: This graph shows the agreeability on the nature of regulations regarding media practices.

FIGURE 17



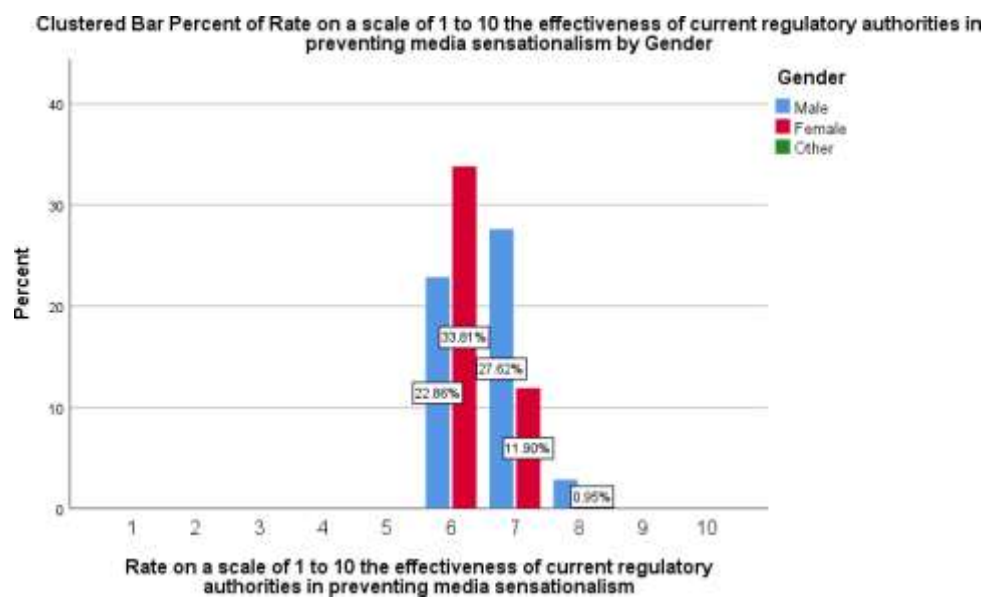
LEGEND: This graph shows the agreeability on the nature of regulations regarding media practices.

FIGURE 18



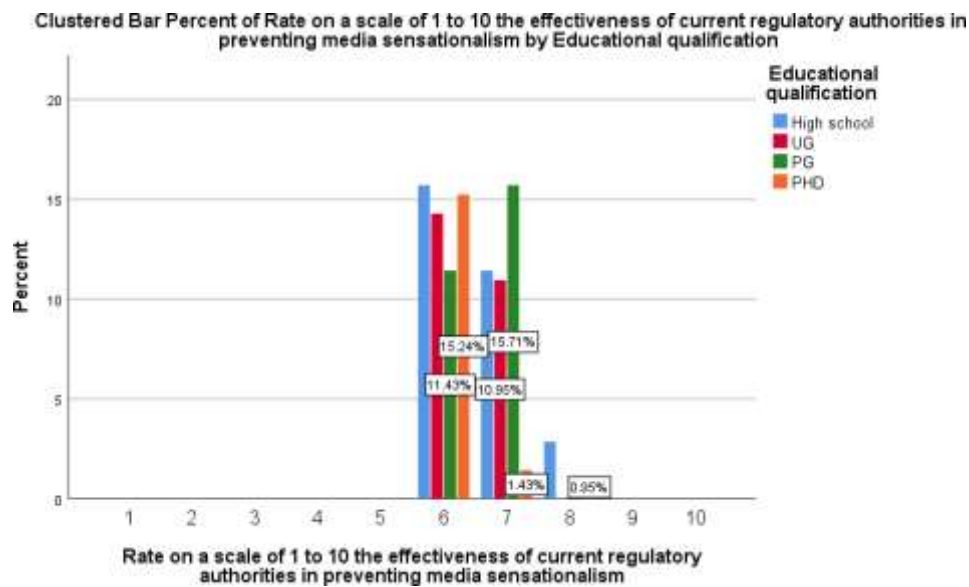
LEGEND: This graph shows the public opinion on effectiveness of current regulatory authorities in preventing media sensationalism.

FIGURE 19



LEGEND: This graph shows the public opinion on effectiveness of current regulatory authorities in preventing media sensationalism.

FIGURE 20



LEGEND: This graph shows the public opinion on effectiveness of current regulatory authorities in preventing media sensationalism.

FIGURE 21: CHI SQUARE

In your opinion do you believe media trials influence public opinion before the court verdict * Age Crosstabulation

Count

		Age				
		20 - 30 years	31 - 40 years	41 - 50 years	50+ years	Total
In your opinion do you believe media trials influence public opinion before the court verdict	Yes	32	28	18	3	81
	No	51	20	37	21	129
Total		83	48	55	24	210

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.589 ^a	3	.001
Likelihood Ratio	16.546	3	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.469	1	.035
N of Valid Cases	210		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.26.

Null hypothesis: There is no association between "In your opinion, do you believe media trials influence public opinion before court verdict and age".

Alternate hypothesis: There is an association between "In your opinion, do you believe media trials influence public opinion before court verdict and age".

Inference : The calculated p value is 0.001 Since p value is <0.05 , null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So there is an association between "In your opinion, do you believe media trials influence public opinion before court verdict and age".

FIGURE 22: ANOVA

ANOVA					
In your opinion do you believe media trials influence public opinion before the court verdict					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.694	3	1.231	5.506	.001
Within Groups	46.063	206	.224		
Total	49.757	209			

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between "In your opinion, do you believe media trials influence public opinion before court verdict and age".

Alternate hypothesis: There is a significant difference between "In your opinion, do you believe media trials influence public opinion before court verdict and age".

Inference: The calculated p-value is 0.001. Since the p-value is <0.05 , the null hypothesis is rejected. So there is a significant difference between "In your opinion, do you believe media trials influence public opinion before court verdict and age".

Results

FIGURE 1: Out of 210 respondents, 39.52% of the respondents are between the age group of 20-30 years. FIGURE 2: Out of 210 respondents, 53.33% of the respondents are male and 46.67% of the respondents are female. FIGURE 3: Out of 210 respondents, 30% of the respondents are high school graduates. FIGURE 4: Out of 210 respondents, 31.43% of the respondents are currently self-employed. FIGURE 5: Out of 210 respondents, 36.19% of the respondents have more than 6 years of work experience. FIGURE 6: Out of 210 respondents, 24.29% of the respondents between the age group 20-30 years agree that media trials influence public opinion before court verdict. FIGURE 7: Out of 210 respondents, 34.29% of the male respondents agree that media trials influence public opinion before court verdict. FIGURE 8: Out of 210 respondents, 18.57% of the PG graduates and 17.62% of the High school graduates agree that media trials influence public opinion before court verdict. FIGURE 9: Out of 210 respondents, 18.57% of the female respondents state that undue pressure on the judiciary and police is a major negative impact of media sensationalism in criminal trials. FIGURE 10: Out of 210 respondents, 17.62% of the respondents between the age group 20-30 years state that undue pressure on the judiciary and police is a major negative impact of media sensationalism in criminal trials. FIGURE 11: Out of 210 respondents, 10% of the high school graduates state that undue pressure on the judiciary and police is a major negative impact of media sensationalism in criminal trials, and 10% of the UG graduates state that violation of privacy of victims and accused. FIGURE 12: Out of 210 respondents, 16.67% of the respondents between the age group 20-30 years state that creating a media ombudsman can be a major measure to ensure ethical reporting of criminal trials. FIGURE 13: Out of 210 respondents, 17.14% of the female respondents state that creating a media ombudsman can be a major measure to ensure ethical reporting of criminal trials. FIGURE 14: Out of 210 respondents, 11.43% of the high school graduates state that creating a media ombudsman can be a major measure to ensure ethical reporting of criminal trials. FIGURE 15: Out of 210 respondents, 18.10% of the respondents between the age group 20-30 years strongly agree that the regulations regarding media practices and their enforcement is mostly reactive, not proactive. FIGURE 16: Out of 210 respondents, 21.90% of the male respondents strongly agree that the regulations regarding media practices and their enforcement is mostly reactive, not proactive. FIGURE 17: Out of 210 respondents, 13.81% of the high school graduates strongly agree that the regulations regarding media practices and their enforcement is mostly reactive, not proactive. FIGURE 18: Out of 210 respondents, 29.52% of the respondents between the age group 20-30 years rate 6 (1 being lowest and 10 being highest) regarding the effectiveness of current regulatory authorities in preventing media sensationalism. FIGURE 19: Out of 210 respondents, 33.81% of the female respondents rate 6 (1 being lowest and 10 being highest) regarding the effectiveness of current regulatory authorities in preventing media sensationalism. FIGURE 20: Out of 210 respondents, 11.43% of the high school graduates rate 6 (1 being lowest and 10 being highest) regarding the effectiveness of current regulatory authorities in preventing media sensationalism.

Discussion

Figures 1 - 5 analyse the respondents in various categories like age group, gender, educational qualification, employment status, and work experience which plays a significant role in understanding their response towards understanding respondents' view on car insurance premiums and their impact. In the figures, the majority of the respondents are male and between the age group 20-30 years. The majority of the respondents are educationally qualified till high school. The majority of the respondents are currently self-employed and have more than 6+ years of work experience. Upon analysing figure 6, it is evident that a considerable number of respondents aged 20 to 30 believe that media trials influence public opinion before court verdicts. This reflects the susceptibility of younger age groups to media narratives. It also highlights the role media plays in shaping early opinions. Such influence could have implications for fair trial procedures. Upon analysing figure 7, male respondents show noticeable agreement that media trials impact public opinion prior to judicial decisions. This indicates an awareness among men about the persuasive power of media. Their perception may stem from direct exposure to such content. It underlines concerns around media objectivity. Upon analysing figure 8, both PG and high school graduates acknowledge that media trials affect public opinion before verdicts. Although the figures differ slightly, it shows cross-educational awareness. This suggests that education level does not significantly alter perception on this issue. Media influence appears widespread. Upon analysing figure 9, female respondents are concerned that media sensationalism places undue pressure on the judiciary and police. This reflects a gendered sensitivity to institutional pressures. Women may be more attuned to the social consequences of biased reporting. Their views signal demand for responsible journalism. Upon analysing figure 10, young adults aged 20 to 30 recognise that media sensationalism exerts pressure on legal institutions. This indicates a critical view among youth regarding media ethics. Their awareness may be shaped by digital literacy. It shows they are engaged with how the media affects justice. Upon analysing figure 11, high school graduates feel that media sensationalism pressures the judiciary, while UG graduates are more concerned about privacy violations. This contrast points to different focal concerns based on education levels. It suggests varied understandings of media impact. Both aspects highlight ethical lapses. Upon analysing figure 12, youth respondents believe that establishing a media ombudsman could enhance ethical reporting. This reflects a proactive mindset among younger individuals. They seek structural solutions to media malpractice. Their support indicates hope for regulatory improvement. Upon analysing figure 13, female respondents support the creation of a media ombudsman to ensure responsible journalism. Their stance suggests a preference for institutional accountability. This may stem from heightened concern about fairness and justice. Women appear invested in ethical reforms. Upon analysing figure 14, high school graduates also support the idea of a media ombudsman. This suggests that even with lower formal education, individuals value media accountability. Their support shows an understanding of ethical media practices. This indicates widespread demand for reform. Upon analysing figure 15, young respondents strongly agree that media regulations are more reactive than proactive. This suggests dissatisfaction with current enforcement strategies. The youth expect timely intervention to prevent harm. Their stance urges policy reform for better oversight. Upon analysing figure 16, male respondents perceive media regulation as largely reactive. This viewpoint underscores frustration with post-incident responses. It also suggests the need for preemptive policy action. Their opinion adds weight to calls for proactive governance. Upon analysing figure 17, high school graduates agree that media regulation lacks proactive enforcement. This demonstrates that even less formally educated individuals recognise regulatory gaps. Their awareness reflects wide public concern. It stresses the need for systemic improvement. Upon analysing figure 18, many young respondents rate regulatory authorities moderately when it comes to preventing media sensationalism. This middle-ground rating suggests perceived inefficiency but not complete failure. It reflects mixed confidence in regulatory efforts. Improvements are seen as necessary. Upon analysing figure 19, female respondents also give a moderate rating to media regulation effectiveness. This highlights skepticism about current frameworks. Their view may reflect lived experiences of sensational coverage. It supports the case for stronger safeguards. Upon analysing figure 20, high school graduates show lower confidence in regulatory bodies by giving a modest rating. This could indicate limited trust in institutional effectiveness. Their perspective adds to a broader critique. Reform and awareness seem essential.

Limitations & Scope of the Study

The major limitation of the study is the sample size. The sample size is only 210. For a metropolitan city, the Sample size is not sufficient to know the opinion of the people. The study has a limited sample frame that can hinder the opinion, methods and application of use compared to different states and countries and meet its needs and efficiency and different historical backgrounds.

Conclusion

The study underscores the significant impact of media sensationalism on criminal trials in India. While the media serves as a vital pillar of democracy by informing the public, its overreach and dramatization can jeopardize the fairness of judicial proceedings. The main objectives are to analyze and gain public opinion on effectiveness of current regulatory authorities in preventing media sensationalism and to identify the negative impact and methods to improve. The findings reveal that a considerable portion of the public recognizes how media influence can shape public opinion, create undue pressure on legal institutions, and potentially violate the rights of both victims and the accused. Therefore, it becomes imperative to strike a balance between freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial. Strengthening ethical standards, implementing regulatory frameworks, and encouraging responsible journalism are essential steps toward safeguarding the integrity of the criminal justice system. The major suggestions involve mitigating the negative impact of media sensationalism on criminal trials in India, a multi-pronged approach is necessary. First, the establishment of a media ombudsman or independent regulatory authority can ensure adherence to ethical standards in criminal case reporting. Second, mandatory training for journalists on media ethics, legal reporting, and judicial sensitivity should be introduced. Third, courts and police departments should issue timely and verified updates to discourage speculative reporting. Additionally, there should be strict enforcement of contempt and defamation laws against media outlets that compromise

the fairness of ongoing trials. Lastly, public awareness campaigns must be launched to educate viewers about distinguishing between factual reporting and sensationalism. The future scope indicates that Comparative studies can be conducted between India and other democracies to understand how different legal systems manage media influence on criminal justice. There is also scope to examine the role of social media platforms and their algorithms in amplifying sensational content. Further studies could explore judicial opinions or case laws that have set precedents on media conduct during trials. Additionally, research can be extended to assess the psychological impact on victims and the accused due to media overexposure. A deeper dive into regional media practices and their divergence from national media norms could offer more nuanced insights. In conclusion, the study highlights a growing concern in the Indian legal landscape, the increasing influence of media sensationalism on public perception and the integrity of criminal trials. While the media plays a crucial role in informing the public, unchecked and dramatic reporting can lead to prejudice, character assassination, and pressure on judicial institutions. The data reveals a clear awareness among citizens about the ethical challenges posed by media trials. For justice to truly be served, there must be a balance between press freedom and fair trial rights, enforced through robust regulations, institutional accountability, and informed public engagement.

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