

Recognition and Practice of Professionalism towards Enhancing Reformation of Misleading Ethnic Media

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Abstract

Acknowledging and practicing professional media plays a significant role in promoting a reformatory vision that can face the challenges of misleading ethnic mass media in Sudan. The aim of the study was to assess the association between the explanatory variables (recognizable practice and proficiency) and the output variable (reformatory visualization). A cross-sectional survey was conducted. Respondents were 350 journalists from the 18 Sudanese states. Twenty-one survey questions, constituting three domains, were utilized to assess the reformatory vision. These domains are acknowledging the essentiality of professional media (AEPM), practicing professional media (PPM), and conceptualizing reformatory vision (CRV). There was a strong positive correlation between the two variables (AEPM and CRV), which was significant ($r = 0.852, p < .001$). There was also a strong positive correlation between the two variables (PPM and CRV), which was significant ($r = 0.945, p < .001$). The multiple regression model was significant, $F(2,347) = 2052.81, p < .001$, explaining 92.2% ($R^2 = 0.922$) of the variance in the outcome (CRV). Acknowledging and practicing professional media were found to be associated with visualizing an applicable reformatory plan.

Keywords: ethnic media, professional media, reformatory vision.

Introduction

A reformatory vision is essential to addressing the challenges and problems caused by misleading ethnic media. This vision denotes interactive processes for acknowledging and practicing professional communications. Many social science researchers are interested in studying the causes and consequences of biased media.(Adjei, 2021; Kulaszewicz, 2015; Ramasubramanian et al., 2017; Ross, 2021; Ward et al., 2009). The impact of media on multiethnic societies is remarkable and interchangeable. Likewise, examining ethnic ties is pivotal to studying the socio-political reality of a society.(Tucker et al., 2018; Voll et al., 1987). Some cases show that ethnic stacking has become a distinguishing feature of some institutions.(Allen, 2019). Therefore, increasing awareness and reducing social tensions might be achieved by prioritizing media professionalism.(UNESCO Khartoum OFFICE, 2020).

Ethnic media deal with cultural, historical, and identity issues. However, its coverage seems exclusive to matters related to particular ethnicities, overriding the coverage of national and transnational issues.(Budarick, 2016; Mareng, 2009; Nasong'o, 2015). For instance, media coverage is devoted merely to highlighting the identity of a specific

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group.(Nandi & Platt, 2020; Ogendi, 2022) . Misleading media prevails in Africa, where relations between ethnic groups seem to be complex and sensitive. Nevertheless, few studies have examined the challenges of misleading media in multi-ethnic societies like Sudan.

The lack of conceptual and practical knowledge in media applications necessitates the advancement of professionally reforming proposals. Unequal opportunities to access new media platforms strengthen the reality of socio-economic and socio-cultural disparity.(Carlsson, 2019; Musa, 2022).This study seeks to understand the impact of acknowledging the essentiality of professional media (AEPM) and the practice of professional media (PPM) on the conceptualization of reformatory vision (CRV). Professionalism refers to scientific support, high responsibility, transferable technology, and an increasingly benevolent motivation.(Masson & Ross, 2017) . The interest of the study is to know whether acknowledging the essentiality of professional media (AEPM) and the practice of professional media (PPM) are associated with the conceptualization of reformatory vision (CRV). The leading objective of the study is to examine the responsiveness of Sudanese journalists to developing and adopting the media's reformist vision. And how they use this vision to overcome the challenges of fake ethnic communications. To realize the objectives, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

- To what extent do Sudanese journalists acknowledge the essentiality of professional media?
- To what extent do Sudanese journalists practice media professionally?
- How do variables one (AEPM) and two (PPM) influence the dependent variable (CRV)? Consequently, the study attempts to test the hypotheses that AEPM and PPM positively influence CRV.

The expected addition to the study is its emphasis on the journalists' contribution to creating an impactful reformatory vision capable of reducing the negative impact of ethnic media. By doing so, they can address and tackle the problems resulting from ethnic media. To the researcher's knowledge, one can find no studies in the field to deal with Sudan.Because of the particular qualities of the case, generalizing the study's findings is not appropriate. In addition, other independent variables can influence any reformatory vision. The first part of the study introduces the topic, including a literature review. The second explains the methodology. The third part summarizes the results. The fourth discusses the results. The last one summarizes the conclusive remarks. The study ends with the reference section.

Literature Review

The primary goal of this study is to discover how willing Sudanese journalists are to establish and implement a reformist perspective to address the difficulties generated by fake ethnic media. Thus, investigating the impact of professionalism on the execution of reforming action plans appears thematic. The literature review discusses the reform and practice of professionalism in the media. It also emphasizes journalists' participation in such reforming practices. The literature review highlights various paradigms and theories and discusses the causes of ethnic media. It also describes the research gap and urgent potential studies. Various writings stress the creation, dissemination, and effect of ethnic media. Numerous examples show how ethnic tensions fuel extremism, conflict, and instability. As a result, threats to peaceful coexistence appear. (Rovny, 2023). (Hewstone et al., 2008). Ethnic violence causes strife in many African countries. (Wani & Suwirta, 2013). Therefore, media should reflect the diversity of society and highlight the issues of the underrepresented. (UNESCO Khartoum OFFICE, 2020).

Many paradigms explain the spread of ethnic media and provide a reason for ethnic media discourse. Wimmer's institutionalist paradigm for nationalism and ethnic politics identifies the motives of participants involved in ethnic politics. This paradigm assumes that modern nation-state leaders are willing to care for their ethnically distinct people.(Erik Cederman et al., 2010).Nevertheless, media influence in every society is supposed to involve a vast, ever-changing communication mechanism that covers interests, opinions, and conflicts.(Van Aelst, 2017).Theories explaining "conflicts" among ethnic groups are numerous. For some writers, the lack of professional media justifies the cause and escalation of conflict. According to the "collective action theory," group motivations are insufficient to produce violent political mobilization and competition. Therefore, motive consideration is essential but insufficient to explain ethnic conflicts.(Erik Cederman et al., 2010) . The influence of ethnic media depends on the qualities a specific group possesses. Social constructionists view ethnicity as a social construction that relies on conciliating the dominant groups in a particular community. This argument comes from social structuralism theory. It appeared about thirty years ago and has roots in sociology. Furthermore, research and studies in the postmodern era have seen broad use of such a theory. (Andrews, 2012; Madut, 2017)

Different causes explain the use and implementation of misleading media. These causes are historical, political, social, and economic. The resultant consequences are negative in general, whether these factors work independently or interactively. The mere existence of ethnic pluralism is not the reason for the dispute. Sometimes, especially when governments adopt discriminatory policies, inequalities exist, and accordingly, conflicts emerge.(Etefa, 2019). Historically, colonial rulers built a stable ethnic hierarchy.(Allen, 2019; Idris, 2019). Postcolonial politics exploited cultural differences and led to the politicization of race and ethnicity. The ethnicization of public media is among the causes of internal turmoil and civil wars. Mass protests and internal civil conflict led to significant changes in the political regimes of the newly independent states. (Weber et al., 2016). Each ethnic group in Sudan has its own geographical area, along with distinct cultural and economic characteristics.

Many writers attribute the widespread use of ethnic media to political causes because ethnic conflicts reflect political differences.(Tomiak, 2018). The debates about political development challenges in third-world countries are profound and intense. Many African countries experience military coups because of ethnic politics. (Harkness, 2014) . In real terms, the ethnic elements have caused power struggles in Sudanese communities.(Mareng, 2009). Political leaders organize, unite, and mobilize people along ethnic lines to ensure their loyalty. Such a political strategy would lead to the preclusion of certain ethnic groups from public participation.(Soro, 2021; Wucherpfennig et al., 2012). Thus, more loyalty to co-ethnic groups polarizes ethnic communities, making them more likely to engage in violent confrontations.(Abbs et al., 2019).

From a social point of view, some authors consider ethnic media equally important as a tool to accomplish specific tasks. Its mission is to protect the vitality of ethnic pluralism, promote coexistence, and present different ethnic cultures on an equal footing.(Gladkova & Jamil, 2021). Most likely, misleading information affects social interactions.(Jackson, 2017). On the other hand, the media discourses aimed at categorizing societies into separate ethnic and tribal groups have led to attempts to revise the development of nationalism.(Madut, 2017).

Viewing media from a social angle is simultaneously functional and instrumental. It emphasizes the impact of media usage on interactions among different ethnic groups. For example, social commentators have noticed that members of various ethnic groups don't always describe themselves based on their skin color or religion.(Ratcliffe, 2013) . Numerous studies have documented the impact of media stereotypes, indicating that media is simply a social tool that works to make ethnic groups famous and well-known both internally and externally. (Ramasubramanian et al., 2017).

Some writers present economic reasons for ethnic media deception. In some African countries, for example, the unequal distribution of resources has resulted in ethnic polarization and claims. Certain ethnic groups have tried to change power relations and serve their economic interests, regardless of the interests of other groups. (Weber et al., 2016). Furthermore, the uneven distribution of wealth and power has led to competition between elites who expect better influence.(Ejami, 2020). Sudan, for example, has witnessed the use of ethnic affiliation to recruit military officers and fighters into irregular forces.(Allen, 2019). In a similar context, there are few studies on the relationship between ethnic minority groups. (Mittelstädt & Odag, 2015) The sources of potential threats to the stability of Sudanese society are numerous and active. Considering power-sharing dynamics, these sources are decisive and affect the appearance of unrest and internal instability.(Rahim et al., 2019; Uzonyi & Demir, 2020) . The literature review answered the question, why does misleading ethnic media operate. It also explained some paradigms, theories, and causes. This study attempts to add something feasible to the previous valuable efforts. It emphasizes the creation of an influential reformatory vision to fill the gap resulting from the lack of studies about the challenges and consequences of ethnic media. The focus of the study is the Sudanese case.

Method

The study's design is a descriptive-correlational type that shows whether and how strongly multiple variables are related. The study aimed to understand the relationship between two independent variables (AEPM and PPM) and one dependent variable (CRV). In such a correlational design, researchers observe variables as they happen naturally. The population size of this study indicates Sudanese journalists. Everyone in the population cares about tracking and evaluating the influence of the content produced. The survey was conducted among journalists aged 23–71 from the eighteen states of federal Sudan. They represent females and males belonging to the public and private media. The questionnaire was used to assess how recognizing the essentiality and practice of professional media affects Sudanese journalists' evaluations and perceptions. How much will they be willing to adopt a reformatory vision to overcome the challenges of misleading ethnic media? The official number of journalists registered was about 1314, according to the last syndicate elections (2021).(Sudanese Syndicate Home page, 2023), but the total number is about 2000 members. (D. Y. Malik, personal communication, November 15, 2023). A majority of Sudanese journalists are members of social media platforms. Concerning the groups (WhatsApp and Facebook), the number of members of each of these groups is around 1000 and 1500, respectively.

The study found it realizable to recruit journalists to answer an online questionnaire. The researcher had previous successful experience in that regard. The survey was widely distributed after being presented to journalists' social media platforms. A probability sampling method and simple random sampling were used in the study. The study randomly selected 350 as a sample size. It used a statistical sample size calculator(Sample Size Calculator, 2024) to specify the sample size. The most important tool for data collection was the online survey distributed via WhatsApp and Facebook. Also, there was data collected from journals and books. The researcher did not need to ask for ethical approval.The study used IBM SPSS version 26 for analysis. The multiple linear regression method was applied to demonstrate the relationship between the two (predictors or explanatory) variables and the dependent variable (outcome or response). The independent variables symbolize acknowledging the essentiality of professional media (AEPM) and the practice of professional media (PPM). The dependent one is the conceptualization of a reformatory vision (CRV). The objective of the multiple linear regression is to examine and assess the contribution of the predictors (AEPM and PPM) to the variation in the (CRV). The descriptive statistics of the study point to the values of the mean (M) and the standard deviation (SD), respectively. For the inferential statistics,

the study pointed out the values of multiple regression analysis.

The first variable is acknowledging the essentiality of professional media (AEPM). This variable indicates that misleading ethnic media is complex, systematic, instrumental, and delusive. The activities of fake media are not ethical. Journalists should be aware of the root causes of ethnic media. The second variable is professional media practice (PPM). Sharing information about misleading broadcasts in general and ethnic media is emphasized. Initiatives against misleading ethnic media are of paramount importance. The conceptualization of reformatory vision (CRV) is dependent on the dependent variable. The significance of this variable comes from the outcome. The priority for journalists in this situation is to keep an eye on the results of ethnic media. Journalists need to do a lot of analysis of ethnic media coverage. They can see a reformatory vision that addresses bias and deception. The design of the survey helps gather information from journalists. Excluding questions about demographic information, the survey consists of 21 questions with five response options (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree). The survey's questions include the built-in characteristics of misleading ethnic media. These are the journalists' knowledge of deceptive and professional transmission and the ability of Sudanese journalists to evaluate fake ethnic publications. The study confirms that the answers on the questionnaire "should be those of active and registered Sudanese journalists.(Bujang et al., 2022). Translating the survey questions into Arabic made it easier for participants to understand them in English. The participants answered honestly and critically. A pilot test was conducted on 40 responses, and it was found that all the alpha values were above 0.70. It indicated that the measures were reliable.(Taber, 2018). Further, testing the Cronbach's alpha of the entire sample indicated that the values are within the range of good to excellent reliability (see Table 1).

Table 1 Reliability Test

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
AEPM	50.8600	160.854	.837	.953
PPM	55.8714	376.044	.878	.846
CRV	55.6686	307.007	.921	.733

Results

The study used the multiple linear regression model to see how the explanatory variables (AEPM and PPM) affect the dependent variable (CRV). The results of the regression model showed that there was a significant relationship. This paragraph presents demographic data to understand the sample's composition and representativeness. More than half of the respondents (56.9%) were female (Galander et al., 2016). About 72% of the respondents belonged to public media institutions, and 74.3% have postgraduate degrees (see Table 2).

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sex type	Male	151	43.1	43.1	43.1
	Female	199	56.9	56.9	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	
Sector type	Public Media Institution	99	28.3	28.3	28.3
	Private Media	251	71.7	71.7	100.0

		Institution			
Level of education	Total	350	100.0	100.0	
	Undergraduate	90	25.7	25.7	25.7
	Postgraduate	260	74.3	74.3	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Twenty-one statements were used to assess the correlation between the independent variables (AEPM and PPM) and the dependent variable (CRV). The answers' options took the form of a Likert-type scale. A linear scale shows the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with a statement. For example, a generic response continuum is (one=strongly disagree, two=disagree, three=neutral, four=agree, and five=strongly agree). 350 Sudanese journalists responded to the survey. Replies changed into discrete values. The answers from one to nine denote the first explanatory variable (AEPM). The second set of answers from ten to fifteen signifies the second explanatory variable (PPM). The last answers from sixteen to twenty-one stand for the dependent variable (CRV). The descriptive statistics of the study include the mean (M) and the standard deviation (SD). The values for acknowledging the essentiality of professional media are M = 30.34 and SD = 12.80. The values for professional practices are M = 25.33 and SD = 5.56. And for envisioning a reformatory vision, M = 25.53 and SD = 7.30, respectively. (See Table 3).

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CRV	25.5314	7.30215	350
AEPM	30.3400	12.79176	350
PPM	25.3286	5.55442	350

The hypothesized relationship between the two independent variables (AEPM and PPM) and the dependent variable (CRV) can be tested statistically. To ensure that there was no multicollinearity, a Pearson correlation was calculated to examine the relationship between the predictors. The coefficient ($r=0.792$) suggests that the assumption of multicollinearity was not violated. Moreover, tolerance (0.373) and variance inflation factor (2.681) values did not indicate a violation of this assumption (see table 4).

Table 4 Correlations

		CRV	AEPM	PPM
Pearson Correlation	CRV	1.000	.852	.945
	AEPM	.852	1.000	.792
	PPM	.945	.792	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	CRV	.	.000	.000
	AEPM	.000	.	.000
	PPM	.000	.000	.
N	CRV	350	350	350
	AEPM	350	350	350
	PPM	350	350	350

Durbin-Watson statistics was calculated to assess the assumption that the values of the residuals are independent, which suggested that this assumption was not violated (.036)

(see Table 5).

Table 5 Model Summary^b

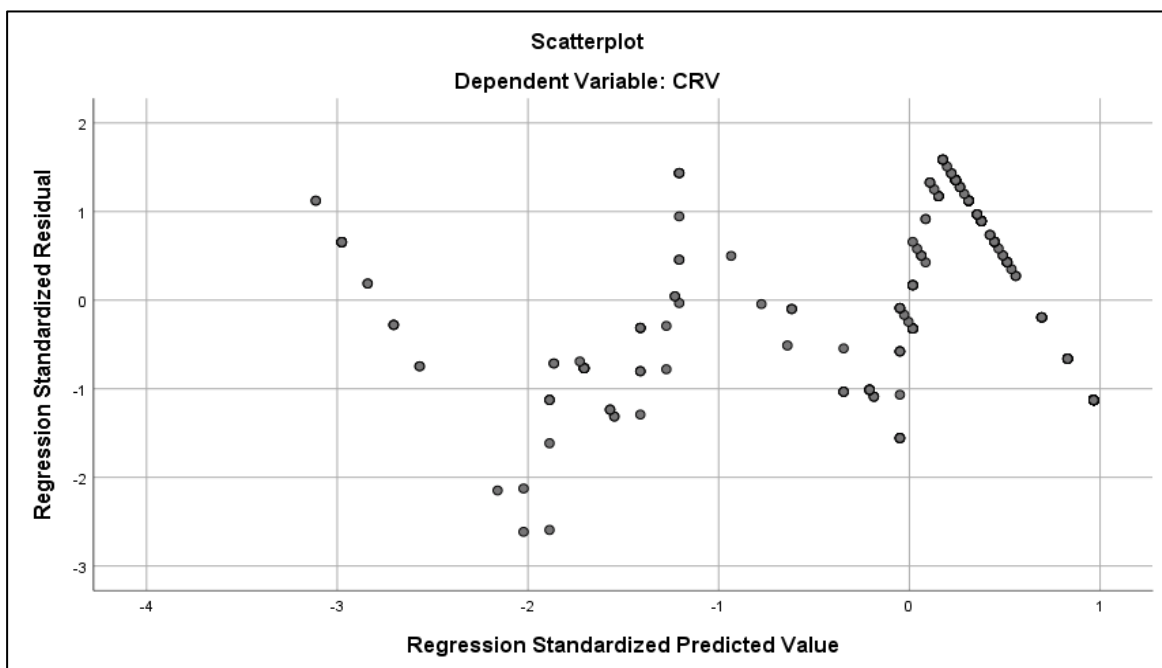
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.960 ^a	.922	.922	2.04435	.036

a. Predictors: (Constant), PPM, AEPM

b. Dependent Variable: CRV

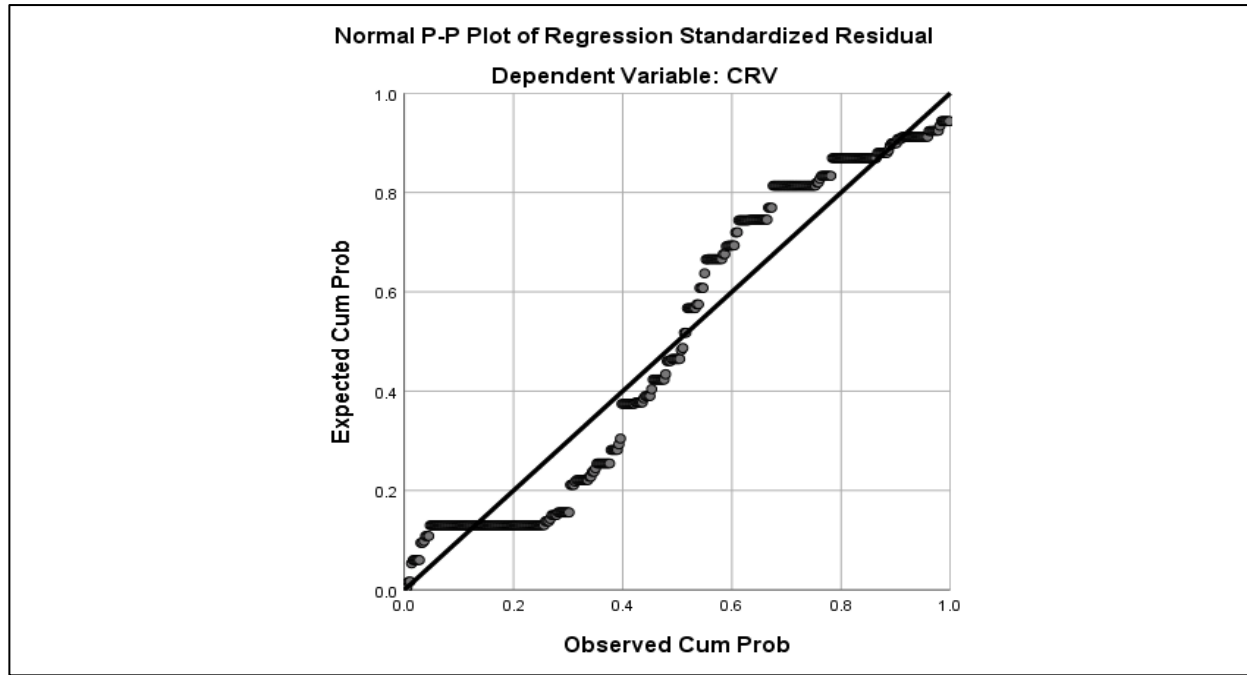
A scatterplot was created to assess the assumption that the variance of the residuals was constant (homoscedasticity). The plot did not indicate a violation of this assumption (see Fig. 1).

Fig.1



A P-P plot was created to assess the assumption that the values of the residuals are normally distributed. The plot did not indicate a violation of this assumption (see Fig. 2).

Fig.2



Cook's Distance values were calculated to ensure that no influential cases were biasing the model. All values were below one, suggesting that no cases were biasing the model (see Table 6)

Table 6 Residuals Statistics^a

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	3.7050	32.3055	25.5314	7.01184	350
Std. Predicted Value	-3.113	.966	.000	1.000	350
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.114	.441	.179	.062	350
Adjusted Predicted Value	3.5927	32.3209	25.5345	7.01425	350
Residual	-5.34560	3.24133	.00000	2.03848	350
Std. Residual	-2.615	1.586	.000	.997	350
Stud. Residual	-2.634	1.589	-.001	1.001	350
Deleted Residual	-5.42589	3.25592	-.00306	2.05419	350
Stud. Deleted Residual	-2.657	1.593	-.001	1.002	350
Mahal. Distance	.093	15.280	1.994	2.548	350
Cook's Distance	.000	.035	.003	.004	350
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.044	.006	.007	350

a. Dependent Variable: CRV

To test the hypothesis, a multiple linear regression analysis using the enter method was conducted to examine whether the conceptualization of reformatory vision (CRV) can be predicted by acknowledging the essentiality of professional media (AEPM) and by the practice of professional media (PPM). The model was significant, $F(2,347) = 2052.81$, $p < .001$, explaining 92.2% ($R^2 = 0.922$) of the variance in the outcome variable (see table 7). Accordingly, there was a strong positive relationship. (Cohen, 1988).

Table 7 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17158.913	2	8579.456	2052.811	.000 ^b
	Residual	1450.241	347	4.179		
	Total	18609.154	349			

a. Dependent Variable: CRV

b. Predictors: (Constant), PPM, AEPM

Both acknowledging the essentiality of professional media (B=0.158, t=11.26, p<.001) and practice of professional media (B=0.955, t=29.604, p<.020) contributed significantly to the model (see table 8).

Table 8 Coefficients^a

Mode	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error				Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	-3.445	.557		-6.185	.000	.373	2.681
AEPM	.158	.014	.276	11.260	.000	.373	2.681
PPM	.955	.032	.726	29.604	.000		

a. Dependent Variable: CRV

Sudanese journalists responded very positively to the enhancement and approval of a reformist media vision. Maybe they were aware of the undesirable effects of ethnic media practices. They believe in professionalism as a priority in managing their tasks. It became clear that the challenges of fake ethnic media activities motivated Sudanese journalists to approach innovative visions. The results indicate the following equation:

Predicted (CRV) = .276*(AEPM) + .726*(PPM) + error term.

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to clarify the impact of recognizing and exercising competence on establishing and implementing an amendatory media vision. It also emphasizes the journalist's obligation to address problems and face the challenges of Sudan's false ethnic media. The study asks how much Sudanese journalists are aware of the importance of professional culture and practice. In light of the core questions, the study tested two hypotheses. First, AEPM positively affects CRV. Second, PPM positively affects CRVs. The study's significant finding is the high influence of AEPM and PPM on CRM. The same result is compatible with other relevant cases. (Thanoon et al., 2015). Meanwhile, many studies examined the role of the media from different perspectives. (Goldberg, 2018; Simmons, 2023). This study is about the importance of journalists' participation in assessing the results of ethnic media and their role in facing ethnic media challenges. Professional standards are crucial for influential media. Comparatively, ethnic media encourages hostility among ethnic groups.(Drott, 2014; Olsson & Siba, 2013). What distinguishes this study is its focus on the promising role Sudanese journalists can play in making a difference.

The case of Sudan is very complicated because of many reasons. The ongoing political

instability since independence has caused mistrust among the ethnic groups. In addition, high illiteracy rates forced people to behave violently. The voice of tribes, cults, and community leaders is louder than the national voice. In such a reality, media officials, institutions, and activists should play their national roles. Changes must be made on the ground in the form of laws, regulations, and practices. Moreover, historical experiences, elite perceptions, and continuous military intervention are all factors that have hampered sociopolitical development in Sudan. The media in Sudan becomes an area of ethnic investment. In the same context, media institutions are not well equipped and have suffered structural distortions. Hence, improvement and the execution of reformatory plans are imperative and essential.

The quality of media production is likely to have advanced because journalists tend to be professionals. Caution is essential because when ethnic media dominate, the threat of national cohesion prevails. Diversified societies may be vulnerable to violence and instability.(Gleditsch & Polo, 2016). In comparison, media institutions in homogenous societies are positively effective. They present enriched content. Inversely, heterogeneous societies have to exert efforts to realize peace and stability. Sudan is an example of an ethnically pluralistic society. Most likely, ethnic media publishing is decisive when internal conflict escalates.(Abdelbagi & Literat, 2023; Shanor, 2003).

Conclusion

The essence of this study is that journalists recognize the importance of professionalism as an initial step in building a reformist vision to address media bias. It is clear from the test of hypotheses that practicing media professionalism on the ground is necessary when facing the challenges of ethnic biased media. There is ethnic conflict in Sudanese society. This observation is in line with other studies that emphasize the importance of media in achieving stability when conflict and internal turmoil persist. (Aelst & Walgrave, 2017; Gleditsch & Polo, 2016).

The study's goal was to highlight the capacity of Sudanese journalists to advance the reformatory vision of the media. The results show that both AEPM and PPM are most influential on CRV. It also helps to overcome the undesirable effects of deceptive ethnic media. The multiple regression method emphasizes the association between AEPM, PPM, and CRV. This study presents updated data on how understanding the importance of professional media and practicing professional media may influence the development and implementation of articulated reformatory goals. Journalists may play a critical role in reducing the influence of false ethnic media. There are some limitations of the study; content analysis is absent due to the quantitative tendency of the study. The limited working experience of some respondents might have affected their answers. A study about the recognition and practice of professional media towards enhancing the reformation of misleading ethnic communications is not a new trend.

There is an opportunity for future studies to develop correlations that incorporate combinations of extra inputs to get into a reformatory mechanism. Future studies may be able to build on these ideas to produce more solid theoretical and practical consequences. The study recommends conducting studies on the practices of misleading ethnic media in Sudan. Potential threats to peace and stability in Sudan were associated with ethnic media. The relationship between the explanatory variables and the dependent variable was significant. However, the challenges of misleading ethnic media seem imminent and urgent for journalists and official authorities.

This work was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia [Grant No. 5955]'.

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