



Factors Influencing Freedom of the Press in South Korea: - A Survey of Print Journalists' Opinions -

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Abstract

Many factors directly or indirectly influence press freedom in a democratic society. There are three types of factors influencing freedom of the press: external, internal and media related laws, policies and ethics. The findings show that of the three key factors: 'advertisers' were seen as the most influential external factor; 'media owners' were seen as the largest internal factor; and 'the legal proceedings of libel or complaints,' the largest media laws, policies and ethics related factor. These three factors significantly influence freedom of the press in South Korea (hereafter Korea).

Keywords: Press freedom, Factors, Influence, Capital, Commercialism, Advertisers, Media owners, Legal proceedings

Introduction

There are many factors which directly or indirectly influence freedom of the press in a democratic society. According to Herman and Chomsky (1988), there are five main factors (Note 1) which "filter" the news choices of the media. In Korea, a key factor is big capital. It has a disproportionate influence on freedom of the press. The media industry is becoming increasingly commercialized in Korea today and most newspaper companies now focus on pursuing benefits as a private business. This pursuit of their own benefit is often in tension with their public service role.

The key empirical data comprises the survey data collected from practicing print media exponents, current news from online services, and my own experiences at small provincial and specialist newspapers for several years in Korea. The survey questionnaires based on the Korea Press Foundation survey method (Oh, 2005), are designed to glean editors, journalists and sub-editors' opinions on press freedom within contemporary circumstances. The study involves print journalists answering a set of questions through an email survey. Eighty four journalists completed the survey questionnaires and returned them to the researcher. The survey was based on an in-depth structured survey and made up of a mix of closed and open-ended questions. It used both qualitative and quantitative methods. It took about three and half months from 3rd October 2006 to 20th January 2007.

This article explores the findings of a survey of Korean journalists about what factors influence freedom of the press. The survey was structured around three types of factors that influence press freedom: external factors, internal factors and factors related to the media laws, policies and ethics. It discusses the possibility of press freedom in relation to these three factors, assessing how the influence of different factors has gradually changed. For example, the main external factor has changed from the state, the government or the politicians under the military regimes to capital and the market under the civilian governments; and legal proceedings of libel or complaints has become the main factor among media related laws, policies and ethics.

1. Journalists' perspectives on external factors

In this study, the term 'external factors' refers to influences which come from outside media companies. These include state/government/politicians, advertisers, interest groups (such as media-related associations), civil organizations (a group of media movement, a group of monitoring etc.), religious groups, readers or viewers, general public and others.

1.1 External factors influencing freedom of the press

The journalists in my survey thought that the main external factors influencing freedom of the press were firstly advertisers, secondly state/government/politicians, and thirdly interest groups and readers/viewers. Next followed civil organizations, religious groups and general public (see Table 1).

1.1.1 First preference results

Sixty five percent of the journalists selected 'advertisers' as the most important factor influencing freedom of the press. In each of ten categories participants were asked to provide information on gender, job type etc, there are some differences in the percentage ratios of these respondents in terms of their status and education. Firstly, with regard to the sections of news in which journalists worked, the same percentage of the journalists in the sub-editorial and the political sections selected advertisers. However, as there was a higher percentage of the journalists who responded to the survey in the sub-editorial section, this indicates that the journalists in the political section were more strongly inclined to select advertisers than were the journalists in the sub-editorial section. Next, between journalists, who studied Language and Literature, or Economics and Business as their major of the highest degree at university, those who studied Language and Literature responded in lower numbers, yet had a higher percentage affirming that advertisers were the most significant external influential factor.

1.1.2 Second and third preference results

The journalists chose 'state, government, politicians' as the second most significant external factor influencing freedom of the press. Next followed 'advertisers,' 'interest groups,' and 'readers or viewers.' 'Interest groups' were selected by the highest percentage of the respondents as their third preference. Next followed 'civil organizations,' or 'readers or viewers.' The next most significant factor was 'religious groups.'

1.2 Freedom of the press and external factors

When the journalists were questioned about the possibility of press freedom in relation to external factors, the majority of the journalists believed that freedom of the press could be possible (see Table 2). This included the responses 'mostly possible' (72.6%) and 'absolutely possible' (7.1%). However, some respondents did not agree. Approximately, twenty percent chose 'mostly not possible' (19%) and 'impossible' (1.2%).

1.2.1 Journalists' selections about external factors

Both those who agreed and disagreed about the possibility of external factors influencing freedom of the press mostly correspond with the percentage ratios of the respondents. However, some differences between respondents occur when assessed in relation to different categories. With regard to selecting that they agreed the same percentage of the journalists who worked in the political section and editorial writer section selected they agreed. However, as a higher percentage of the journalists in political sections responded to the survey, this indicates that editorial writers were more strongly inclined to agree than were the journalists from the political sections. The journalists in the political sections may have experienced more pressure from external factors than editorial writers. Political reporters are more likely to work outside media companies than editorial writers who usually work within media companies. Secondly, with regard to length of service journalists whose working service was more than twenty years selected they agreed. However, shorter service journalists (less than twenty years) selected both agree and disagree, indicating that the longer serving journalists have a stronger inclination towards agreement.

Regarding the selection of press freedom as not possible more Seoul based newspaper journalists answered the survey than journalists who worked for provincial newspapers. However, a higher percentage of provincial journalists selected it was not possible than Seoul journalists, indicating the provincial journalists' stronger inclination towards the negative. The majority of the provincial newspapers in Korea are in economically difficult situations because provincial economic activity is much more narrow and limited than the national economy (Lee, J-R. 2002). Lastly, the younger (30-39 years) journalists were more likely to choose the negative than older (40-49 years) journalists. However, as a greater percentage of older journalists responded to the survey, this indicates that the younger journalists were more strongly inclined to believe press freedom was not possible than were the older journalists. Younger journalists may experience more interference by others than older journalists.

1.2.1.1 The reasons why the journalists made negative selections

In the qualitative findings some journalists felt skeptical about the possibility of press freedom in relation to external factors. They gave many reasons in a variety of ways. Table 3 presents all the journalists' negative responses. Firstly, the power of capital in the form of advertising was the most common reason for the journalists' negative choice. They consider capital has significant power in the media. Advertising revenue is one of the core profit making sources for the media companies. As C. E. Baker (2002) points out, "Newspapers' primary source of revenue comes from selling readers to advertisers rather than newspapers to readers." Therefore, media companies significantly consider the needs of advertisers. However, the role of the media is generally understood to be not only making money but also working for

the public good. The problem is that the majority of the private media companies in Korea focus on seeking profit or staying viable as private businesses rather than their public service roles. This is evident in the power of advertising, which is increasing and getting stronger. One journalist commented on the reality of media companies in Korea today: "A press company seeks profits to become a powerful institution, it is not a press company but a business company." This suggests a tension between the objectives of the 'press' and a 'business.'

The government's power was another common reason the journalists gave for why they doubted press freedom was possible. C. L. LaMay (2007) points out that 'government repression, archaic laws and emergency regulations' are limiting factors for press freedom. The government has power as the maker of media related laws or policies. As Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue, "In countries where the levers of power are in the hands of a state bureaucracy, the monopolistic control over the media, often supplemented by official censorship, makes it clear that the media serve the ends of a dominant elite." In Korea, the comments of the surveyed journalists reflect this point. As one journalist said, "The press cannot be free from the government's pressures." Some media do not report the truth in order to protect power groups and also they release information in favor of them (Kim, S-S. (2005). Powerful groups such as government and big business companies provide the media with large amounts of advertising revenue. The absolute power of the state has become slowly weaker since the end of 1980s but the power of capital has gradually grown since the 1990s, and the state and capital in society have steadily changed (Park, Kim & Sohn, 2000). According to Park, Kim and Sohn, since the Korean government was established in 1948, the core concern in Korean society is politics. Since then the government and the media have shared their power. The state played an important role as a supporter or sometimes as a controller of the media and also used it for solving political problems and justifying its legitimacy. The media was also used as a tool for achieving rapid modernization and economic growth and also played a role in the social integration and control of the people. Most Korean media under the authoritarian rule put up with being controlled and they have "traditionally maintained a close relationship with political power, have largely represented its interests, and have contributed to maintaining the existing ruling structure" (Park, Kim & Sohn, 2000). The state power is strong and relations between the state and the media companies especially newspapers are not completely independent of each other.

Thirdly, poor economic management of some media companies was one of the reasons for the journalists' negative selection. They suggest some media companies economically cannot afford a management base by themselves. This has been pointed out by Woo and Joo (2002) as a big problem in Korea. Many media companies depend on advertising support.

One journalist's noted his negative selection was based on religion. This was confirmed by some journalists as an influential factor in the quantitative findings. According to LaMay (2007) religious suppression is a limiting factor for press freedom. In Korea, religious issues are very sensitive and not easy to criticize. Some religion groups respond vociferously when the media criticize any problems in their religion. This includes boycotting a particular paper, protesting or sending warnings to the media (Kim, J-S. 2001). Corruption within some religions has been a problem in Korea. In the case of Protestant Church groups, some ministers have given church property or jobs to their children (*NewsHoo* of MBC, 24/03/2007). "The problem is that even if the corruption is reported, the ministers are still OK" the religion academic J-S. Kim (2001) has said. The ministers use their believers to go to the media companies and protest the reporting of this corruption. These conservative elements have more power than liberal elements in Protestant Church leader groups in Korea (Kim, J-S. 2001). They have similar history to the media regarding the relation of political power. In the case of Catholic Church groups, there are many pilgrimage sites, which have been built on state land without permission from the government. According to J-S. Kim (2001), traditional religions such as Buddhist groups have engaged in corrupt behavior. Some leaders of this religion have been corrupted. For example, to be a chair of a temple or to be a chair of the religion, some leaders have fought each other and have given bribes to the decision makers (*Newsis*, 15/10/2007). Corruption within religion is a big problem but the media cannot easily investigate it because of the strong opposition. As one journalist in my survey wrote, "Religious issues are hard to criticize."

The last external factor that journalists suggested limited press freedom was lack of will amongst journalists. This has been pointed out by media academics, Woo and Joo (2002). One journalist in the survey stressed that many journalists lack the will to guarantee press freedom in practice. The journalist said, "If there is no internal efforts, press freedom can be distorted any time. Only a person, who tries to keep freedom can enjoy the freedom." Perhaps, as employees journalists can be forced by media employers to be tame workers.

1.3 Advertisers as a powerful factor

Advertisers are seen as a powerful factor influencing freedom of the press and this is demonstrated in the quantitative and qualitative findings. In the qualitative findings, the journalists selected advertising as the largest external factor influencing freedom of the press. Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue advertising is one of news 'filters' for propaganda model, because advertising revenue is the core income source for the media. In Korea, advertising has a very strong influence on social life. D. Hart (2001) explains this relationship between advertising and the way of life as:

A source of idealized lifestyle for Koreans that serves the needs of the capitalist market by ensuring consumption. Specifically, advertising is a prominent feature of the mass media, and is perhaps the most conscious representative of consumption as a way of life.

In Korea, advertising promotes the idea that not to participate in consuming is to be a social failure (Hart, 2001).

Economic dependence on advertising revenue has greatly increased in the media industry. According to the Freedom House (2006), in Korea "Many newspapers depend financially on large corporations for their advertising revenue." Therefore, advertisers have become powerful influential factors on media content. Under the military regimes the state, the government and the politicians were the main actors influencing freedom of the press. However, since the civilian governments the main factors influencing freedom of the press have steadily changed to capital and the market in Korea because of political democratization (Woo & Joo, 2002). In June 1987, there was the biggest democratization movement in Korea.

However, around the world many academics have pointed out that democratization has focused too much on free markets and economic prosperity. According to LaMay (2007) in most developing countries "Democratization aid's traditionally heavy emphasis on free markets and economic development arguably has left journalists in many countries in situations where their media markets have been commercialized but they have won little if any autonomy from government." As Curran (2002) points out, the problem is "the market can silence media watchdogs altogether" as in Latin American countries under right wing military coups. Also, in Australia Lumby (1999) argues, "All newspapers begin with a profit-driven desire to interest a section of the public and, their definition of public interest depends on how they carve their market up." The newspaper's owners treat their readership as a market and the articles they print need to appeal to that market (Grattan, 1998). In European countries Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue, "One of the central arguments of Habermas and Bourdieu is that the media have lost autonomy in relation to the market and economic system." "Unsupportive market or market fragmentation" is one of limiting factors for press freedom (LaMay, 2007). The responses from the Korean journalists in this survey support these arguments. To protect freedom of the press from the market, a real democratic country does not allow the media to be controlled only by the market (Chang, 2004).

Freedom of the press is not guaranteed everywhere in the world, because capital threatens freedom of the press even in democratic societies. According to Baker (2002), "Commentators who emphasize unique values of news, informational, cultural, or other media products routinely characterize advertisers' influence as corrupting." In America Fiss (1986) argues, "Capitalism almost always won." For example, the American people realized how economic power had begun to corrupt their politics, when capitalism and democracy were compatible:

In the political world these doubts were linked to Watergate and the eventual resignation of President Richard Nixon. The precipitating event was the break-in at the Democratic National Headquarters, but by the time the impeachment process had run its course, we realized how thoroughly economic power had begun to corrupt our politics. Congress responded with the campaign Reform Act of 1974, imposing limits on contributions and expenditures and establishing a scheme for the public funding of elections (Fiss, 1986).

This evidence of capitalism defeating democracy and commercialism in the media limiting press freedom is easily found in the Korean media industry. Most media companies are beholden to advertisers especially big companies such as Samsung (the biggest conglomerate in Korea). Some people cynically call Korea, 'The Republic of Samsung.' This company provides a good example of how a big business group as a big advertiser can threaten freedom of the press in Korea and also how capital can have undue influence in the media. Samsung is a big advertiser and so has undue control in Korean media (Kim, S-S. 2005). Samsung does not advertise in media that are critical about the company. For example, most of Samsung's advertisements were withdrawn from two dailies the *Hankyoreh* and the *Kyunghyang* after they had reported a corruption scandal within the Samsung Group (Journalists Association of Korea, 14/11/2007). The scandal involved "how the conglomerate raised a slush fund to whom it gave the dirty money" (*Korea Times*, 06/03/2008). This story was first released on 29th October 2007 by Yong-Chul Kim, a whistle-blowing former chief in-house lawyer of Samsung, and the Catholic Priests Association for Justice (CPAJ) (Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media, 10/01/2008). After this release *Hankyoreh* and *Kyunghyang* reported more critically and openly than other dailies in their articles. The Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media (CCDM) monitored five major daily newspapers (Note 2) regarding the Samsung's advertisements for thirty two days from the 1st December 2007 to the 7th January 2008 (CCDM, 10/01/2008). The situation of major newspapers' reports regarding the Samsung Group's corruption scandal was as follows (see Table 4).

The CCDM (10/01/2008) found that the *Hankyoreh* and *Kyunghyang* dailies hardly got any of Samsung's advertisements. However, *Chosun*, *JoongAng*, *Dong-A* (ChJoongDong) newspapers were given respectively forty five, twenty nine and fifteen advertisements by Samsung. This result shows that as a big advertiser Samsung controls the Korean media.

According to Hallin and Mancini (2004) "Much European scholarship has historically referred to the commercial press

as the 'bourgeois' press." There is a similar situation in Korea. Samsung influences the media by giving or withdrawing advertising, providing scholarships to some journalists, or suing the media that are critical of them (Solidarity for Economic Reform, 29/02/2008). It is the largest advertising provider in Korea. So to withdraw advertising is significant. Samsung gives advertising to the media which write articles pro-Samsung. S-S. Kim (2005) argues that Samsung provides advertising to dailies mainly to control articles rather than for advertising effect. This has been confirmed through the report of Solidarity for Economic Reform (SER), which analyzed the activity of two media organizations - the Samsung Press Foundation and the LG Press Foundation, both of which belong to the conglomerates Samsung and LG in Korea (SER, 29/02/2008). The SER report concluded that benefits such as scholarships were mainly given to the journalists of major media companies such as ChoJoongDong (SER, 29/02/2008). Showing that these companies want to make media environment favorable toward them through supporting the journalists of major newspapers.

Influence over the media by capital in a democratic society is a threat to freedom of the press. Many newspapers cannot play their proper public service role because of their dependence on advertising revenue. As S-S. Kim (2005) and the SER (29/02/2008) report point out there are problems with major businesses influencing the media and restricting freedom of the press. Moreover, Kim argues many Korean people do not realize this situation is serious.

2. Journalists' perspectives on internal factors

The term 'internal factors' refers to influences which come from within media companies including media owners, media managers, media editors or a group of editors (manager of editorial section, or middle executive of editorial section of company), labor unions within media organization, general (non-editorial) staff within a company, colleagues within a company, journalists' self-censorship or system of internal mechanism, internal code of ethics, internal review board or commission.

2.1 Internal factors influencing freedom of the press

When asked to choose the main internal factors influencing freedom of the press within media companies, the majority of the journalists selected media owners, media managers, and media editors or a group of editors. Those groups can all be understood as media owners because in most privately owned newspapers the owners appoint managers and editors or others who have a similar point of view. The next most selected factor was journalists' self-censorship or the internal system (see Table 5).

2.1.1 First preference results

About fifty one percent of the journalists selected 'media owners' as the factor most likely to influence press freedom. The same percentage of editors and deputy editors selected media owners as a factor. However, as there was a much higher percentage of deputy editors who responded to the survey, this indicates that the editors were more strongly inclined to select media owners than were the deputy editors. Perhaps, this is because editors deal more directly with owners than deputy editors. Next, journalists, who studied Economics/Business, or Sociology/Philosophy/Psychology/History as their major in their highest degree at university, showed the same frequency in choosing media owners as a factor. Yet those who studied Sociology/Philosophy/Psychology/History responded in lower numbers. This indicates that the journalists who studied Sociology/Philosophy/Psychology/History were more likely to select media owners than were the journalists who studied Economics/Business.

2.1.2 Second and third preference results

The second choice of many journalists was the 'media managers' as the most significant internal factor influencing freedom of the press. This figure was much higher than the percentage of the next most influential factor, 'media editors or a group of editors.' The next most influential factors were journalists' self-censorship or an internal system. Media editors or a group of editors were the highest percentage as the third preference. The next most commonly selected factor influencing freedom of the press was journalists' own self-censorship or an internal system and 'media managers.'

2.2 Freedom of the press and internal factors

When asked if freedom of the press was possible even with constraining internal factors the majority of the journalists believed that it was possible (see Table 6). This response was made up of about sixty six percent who chose 'mostly possible,' and seven percent who chose 'absolutely possible.' However, some respondents did not think it was possible, which included 'mostly not possible' (23.8%) and 'impossible' (2.4%).

2.2.1 Journalists' selections about internal factors

Analyzing these results in terms of journalists' status and education, all the managing editors selected a positive response. Also, among editors, deputy editors and reporters, the more highly positioned journalists were more strongly inclined to make a positive choice than were the lower positioned journalists. Secondly, the same percentage of the journalists who had four year Bachelors or Masters degrees as their highest degrees made positive selections. However, lower numbers of the journalists, holding Masters degrees, answered the survey, indicating the Masters journalists had a

stronger inclination towards a positive response.

With regard to the selection 'negative,' journalists, who worked in the sub-editorial and the business sections, showed the same frequency. However, there was more than double the percentage of journalists in the business section who responded to the survey. This indicates that the journalists in the sub-editorial section were more strongly inclined to make a negative selection than were the journalists in the business section. Overall this result indicates that journalists thought internal dealings are less free than external dealings. Lastly, journalists located in Seoul and provincial newspapers showed the same frequency in their responses but journalists who worked in provincial newspapers responded in lower numbers, yet had the same percentage choosing a negative response. This indicates that provincial journalists were more strongly inclined to select a negative answer than were the journalists who worked in the Seoul area.

2.2.1.1 The reasons why the journalists made 'negative' selections

The journalists gave many reasons for their negative beliefs about the possibility of press freedom due to internal factors (see Table 7). One of the key reasons the journalists gave for not thinking freedom of the press was possible was that a journalist is a member of a media company. As a result they cannot criticise the company's policy. S-S. Kim (2005) points out media companies in Korea are controlled by media owners, so individual journalists have many restrictions. As decision makers and employers media owners have the right to manage personnel but journalists are seen as just employees in private companies. If the journalists ignore the directives of owners or managers, there can be consequences. For example, the journalists may be fired, they may have to move to other media companies or change to another kind of job. Therefore, journalists are forced to follow the opinions of the media owners. S-W. Ko (2006a) argues that Korean journalists have become salary men under media owners. As one journalist in this survey commented, "As a member of a media company journalists do not comment in a different tenor to the company. It is difficult to make a comment, which is not in line with the company's stance."

The second reason the journalists gave for their negative choice was that privately owned media companies are profit-making organizations. The privatization of public service media is one of the limiting factors for press freedom (LaMay, 2007). Curran (2002) argues, "Media organizations have become more profit oriented." In Korea, most newspapers are privately owned. S-S. Kim (2005) points out the private media companies focus more on profits through advertising revenue than playing a public service role. Also, Kim (2002) argues the private ownership of the media lets media owners control all parts of the media. So these media owners control the editorials. As the result of this control, the interest of media owners restricts freedom of the press. Kim also found that media ownership in Korea is powerful because of the types of ownership such as family groups or complex business groups. These groups can censor the media indirectly or directly. This censorship threatens editorial independence and the public function of the media, as journalists are forced to follow their company's policy as employees. As a result, they serve for the profit of their companies rather than for the public service role. An example of this situation in the current Korean media industry was given by a journalist: "The journalists at big newspapers in Korea serve not the public good or the objective truth but for the profits of their companies." Another journalist argued, "The media become the owner's private company."

Thirdly, the power of the media owners or managers was one of the reasons the journalists were negative about the possibility of free press. According to Baker (2007), "The owner gets to choose the news emphasis, editorial slant, or columnists. A profit-maximizing firm can have great power over content, that is, over consumer choice, in addition to or even in the absence of power over price." In Korea, the power of media owners especially privately owned media is almost absolute (Kim, S-S. 2002). However, the rights of media editors and the independence of journalists are very weak and diminishing (Woo & Joo, 2002). Media owners have a high level of control over the whole process of media production. Former member of Parliament, Jae-Hong Kim (2004) argues, "Ownership is absolute in the Korean media industry and for the journalists. The power of the media owners cannot be challenged society."

Why do media owners have this power? Many external groups try to exert influence through the media owners. According to media academic J-K. Lee (2003), under the military regimes, the state (the strongest external group) lobbied the media owners, who cooperated with them and still do today. However, media owners' cooperation with external groups means the giving up of freedom of the press for journalists (Lee, J-K. 2003). As a result many Korean people have recognised the necessity of limitations on media ownership. According to one poll in 2001 about limiting media ownership, seventy two percent of the Korean people answered that a limitation on the biggest shareholder was needed (Yang, 2001). This included absolutely needed (29.4%) and sometimes needed (42.6%). One journalist in my survey explained the journalists' situation as employees, "The media owner and manager have the ultimate power in personnel and management, for example joining a company, retirement from a company, promotion, official reprimands, wages, or others."

A fourth reasons for the journalists' pessimism was the lack of mutual discussion within the media companies. In some cases, media owners control the news process without discussion or negotiation with managing editors (such as in the *SISA-journal* case which will be discussed later). Producing newspapers is not an individual task but a cooperative job

among sections and among various positions. Mutual discussion is normal and it is needed for producing accurate news. Journalists cannot work individually. As one journalist said, "Internal factors of the media should not exist to interfere with each other within the company. These are there to help in decisions about daily articles, about how big or small and what direction to report through the mutual discussion." Mutual discussion within the media companies is one of the key processes in the production of the newspapers. So if owners override it it affects the quality of news.

Lastly, the closed nature of the media was a reason for the journalists' negative choice. One example of this is that media companies did not accept the re-employment of journalists, who had been dismissed by their companies under Chun's press purification campaign in 1980. In the Parliamentary guideline of 15th April 2005 for compensation and reward in relation to the democratization movement activists, media companies were directed to give journalists the opportunity to return to work with their companies (Ministry of Government Legislation, 15/04/2005). According to S-W. Ko (2006b), media movement groups such as the National Union of Media workers (NUM), the CCDM and the Journalists Association of Korea (JAK) asked newspaper companies to follow the Parliamentary guideline. However, the newspaper companies did not reemploy the journalists nor did they make reparation for damages done to their professional reputation. The dismissed journalists probably only needed to have reparations made for damage done to their professional reputation, as most are now too old to work. As, one journalist argued, "The media companies are closed in nature."

2.3 A media owner as a core influential factor

According to Herman and Chomsky (1988), the 'first filter' to the media is "size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media." They argue, "The rise in scale of newspaper enterprise and the associated increase in capital costs from the mid nineteenth century onward, which was based on technological improvements along with the owners' increased stress on reaching large audiences." Moreover, Habermas (1989) points out the commercial basis of media owners in European countries. He argues:

In the measure that the public sphere became a field for business advertising, private people as owners of private property had a direct effect on private people as the public. In this process, to be sure, the transformation of the public sphere into a medium of advertising was met halfway by the commercialization of the press.

Around the world privately owned media tend to more focus on commercialization. In Australia Grattan (1998) argues, "The editorial and commercial sides of newspapers are increasingly converging." This commercialism has endangered the public service role of the media, which has come under pressure from the commercial businesses through the emphasis on privatization. In European countries according to Hallin and Mancini (2004), "The most powerful force for homogenization of media systems is commercialization that has transformed both print and electronic media in Europe." 'Commercialism in media' is one of limiting factors for press freedom (LaMay, 2007). Their arguments are confirmed in Korean newspaper industry.

Most newspapers emphasize the role of seeking profits as a private business. They are highly dependent on advertising revenue or other capital. Many Korean journalists feel skeptical about their jobs because of the power of capital, which directly and indirectly influences the editorial section. S-W. Nam (2001) points out, many journalists have felt skeptical and powerless about the right to editorialize because major media have been commercialized as big businesses. Woo and Joo (2002) criticize the role of the media owners in Korea saying, the biggest problem of the newspaper in Korea is that media owners abuse their power in the management of newspaper companies and interfere in the editorials. Many surveys of journalists have shown that the biggest factor limiting freedom of the press is media owners and managers. In practice, some media owners or managers in Korea have deleted articles (Lee, H-S. 2004) and cartoons (Journalists Association of Korea, 27/10/2007). They have distorted media articles by minimizing or maximizing them (Kim, Y-H. 2004). The *SISA-journal* and the *Kookmin Daily Newspaper* (hereafter *Kookmin Daily*) cases are good examples of how media owners abuse their power.

The *SISA-journal* started as a weekly magazine in 1989 and until 1999 mostly covered broad public affairs. Under the first owner (1989-1999) it was one of the independent media companies that maintained a separation between its managerial and editorial sections (*Hankyoreh*, 26/06/2007a). However, Seoulmoonhwasa (the biggest share-holder of the *SISA-journal*) took over the *SISA-journal* after the bankruptcy of the company during the International Monetary Fund (IMF) intervention Asian economic crisis in 1999. The publisher of the company changed and since then the *SISA-journal* has not been maintained as an independent paper.

On 16th June 2006, the owner of the *SISA-journal*, Chang-Tae Kem deleted a negative article about Samsung, which is the largest advertising provider to the media in Korea (discussed in External factors). Kem deleted the article without the agreement of the managing editor at the printing office (*Hankyoreh*, 26/06/2007b). Ideally Kem should have negotiated with the managing editor and the final decision should have been left with the editor. However, Kem abused his power. As a result the managing editor of the *SISA-journal* resigned from the company. Then the company's journalists were on strike for one year seeking a guarantee of editorial independence. However, the strike did not

achieve the aim of the journalists.

On 25th June 2007, all twenty two journalists decided to resign from the *SISA-journal* because the leaders of the managerial section of the company refused to negotiate with them (*Hankyoreh*, 26/06/2007a). The journalists then set up another journal, 'SISAIN.' In essence the managerial section of the *SISA-journal* dismissed the journalists (*Hankyoreh*, 26/06/2007b). Moreover, the owner of the *SISA-journal* sued the journalists and others (Note 3) because he had received significant criticism from them (Journalists Association of Korea, 18/06/2007). However, he lost the lawsuit (*Ohmynews*, 31/05/2007).

The owner of the *SISA-journal*, Chang-Tae Kem had previously worked as a journalist at the *JoonAng libo* one of the major daily newspapers in Korea and also one of the related companies of the Samsung conglomerate. Even though the owner denied it this personal relation can be seen to have produced a form of clientelism (*Ohmynews*, 31/05/2007). During the strike the behavior of the owner was not as a journalist but a businessman, who was afraid of damage to this company's profits. However, the roles of the media are not only for making money but also for working for the public good.

Why did the *SISA-journal* case occur in Korea? There are two main reasons: firstly, as a big advertiser, Samsung has tried to control the media (discussed at External factors). During the strike, Samsung was the biggest advertiser in the *SISA-journal* (*Ohmynews*, 18/06/2007). At the same time, the leaders of the managerial section at the *SISA-journal* employed a number of people from Samsung to produce the *SISA-journal*, which praised big business and became a pro-capital paper (*Ohmynews*, 18/06/2007). Lastly, the owner of the *SISA-journal* put economic benefit above the media public service role.

As the journalists surveyed suggested advertising revenue is central to newspaper companies today and it impinges on the journalists' freedom to criticize large companies. As one journalist said, "Even though editorial independence exists, journalists themselves have to change the tone of the article to consider the interests of advertisers, pressure groups or others." Another journalists argued, "A press company sells products therefore it has to consider the taste of big influential actors such as big business groups or government."

Another case of this influence of powerful groups took place in 2008 at the *Kookmin Daily*. This paper reported (21/02/2008) about suspicions of plagiarism by the presidential secretary designate for social affairs Mee-Seok Park (she was later replaced). Park was a former professor of Sookmyung University in Seoul, and she was accused of plagiarizing her student's Masters thesis for one of her research papers (*Kookmin Daily*, 21/02/2008). After the publication of the first article, the journalists wrote a follow-up article. However, this was not published on the orders of the owner of the *Kookmin Daily* (Journalists Association of Korea, 25/02/2008). As a result, the labor union of the *Kookmin Daily* criticized the owner and asked for the reason for the non-publication and also requested the resignation of the managing editor, as he could not protect editorial independence. Several days later (29/02/2008) the article was published because of this resistance. As S-S. Kim (2002) stresses censorship by media owners should be eradicated for internal press freedom in the same way that censorship by the state was eradicated.

As seen above the power of the media owners is very strong in Korea. Media academics J-K. Lee (2003) and S-S. Kim (2002) argue Korean media especially newspapers invariably depend on the ideas or political belief of media owners. The role of media owners is very important in guaranteeing freedom of the press. Therefore, media owners must be bound by high ethical standards of the Korean society. Otherwise, freedom of the press can be seriously threatened.

3. Journalists' perspectives on media related laws, policies and ethics

The term 'media related laws, policies and ethics' means influences which come from media related laws, policies or ethical guidelines that include the media related laws, the media policies, the legal proceedings of libel or complaints, the national security law, the media ethics code, the organization of self-censorship (the Press Council, the Press Arbitration Commission, ombudsmen) and others.

3.1 Media related laws, policies and ethics influencing freedom of the press

When asked a question about the main factor influencing freedom of the press among media related laws, policies and ethics, the majority of the journalists tended to say that the problems were legal proceedings of libel or complaints. The next factors were the media related laws, media policies, the organization of self-censorship, and the media ethics code (see Table 8).

3.1.1 First preference results

Almost sixty eight percent of the journalists chose the legal proceedings of libel or complaints as the most influential factor inhibiting press freedom. It is interesting to note that a smaller numbers of journalists, who worked for provincial newspapers, answered the survey. However, a higher percentage of provincial journalists selected the legal proceedings of libel or complaints as a factor than Seoul journalists. This indicates that the provincial journalists may have a stronger inclination to see legal proceedings or complaints as a significant factor. Secondly, the same percentage of

journalists, who worked for longer (20-24 years) and shorter (0-4 years) periods, selected the legal proceedings of libel or complaints. However, as there was a higher percentage of longer service journalists who responded to the survey, this indicates that the shorter service journalists were more strongly inclined to select this option. Thirdly, among journalists, who studied Media and Communication, Economics/Business, or Language and Literature as the major in their highest degree at university, those who studied Language and Literature responded in lower numbers, yet had the same percentage affirming that legal proceedings of libel or complaints were a factor. This indicates that the journalists, who studied Language and Literature, were more strongly inclined to select it than were the journalists, who studied Media and Communication, and Economics/Business.

3.1.2 Second and third preference results

The media related laws were the most common factor selected by the journalists as their second preference. Next followed self-censorship, media policies, media ethics code, and the legal proceedings of libel or complaints. As a third preference many journalists chose self-censorship. Next followed the media related laws, media policies, media ethics code, and the legal proceedings of libel or complaints.

3.2 Freedom of the press and media related laws/policies/ethics

The majority of the journalists believed that freedom of the press was possible under the existing media related laws, policies and ethics (see Table 9). This was made up of about eighty percent of the journalists who chose 'mostly possible' and about 2.5 percent of the journalists who chose 'absolutely possible.' However, some journalists were skeptical, which included 'mostly not possible' (15.5%) and 'impossible' (1.2%).

3.2.1 Journalists' selections about media related laws/policies/ethics

Some interesting results should be noted. Regarding the positive selections, all the journalists who worked at news agencies, business, English and specialist newspapers selected a positive response. Also, all the journalists who had served more than twenty years selected a positive response. With regard to selecting a negative response, journalists who worked in the business section responded in lower numbers than those from the social sections, yet they had a higher percentage choosing a negative response. This indicates the business journalists were more strongly inclined to be negative about the possibility of press freedom. Thirdly, the same percentage of deputy editors, and editors made a negative choice. However, as there was a higher percentage of deputy editors that responded to the survey, this indicates that the editors were more strongly inclined to make a negative selection than were the deputy editors. Lastly, comparing the journalists working location: a lower numbers of journalists, who worked for provincial newspapers answered the survey, however, the same percentage of the Seoul based and provincial based journalists made a negative selection, indicating the provincial journalists had a stronger inclination towards a negative belief in press freedom.

3.2.1.1 The reasons why the journalists made 'negative' selections

In the qualitative findings journalists gave many reasons for their negative selections about the possibility of press freedom due to media related laws, policies and ethics (see Table 10). Firstly, the power of the media related laws, policies and ethics was one of the reasons the journalists gave to support their negative selection. The journalists suggest they cannot ignore the media related laws, policies and ethics, whether they are right or wrong. As one journalist put it, "After media laws, policies and ethics are established, these have legal force." The media related laws, policies and ethical guidelines are strong mechanisms of media control.

Secondly, the threat of legal proceedings of libel or complaints was one of the reasons the journalists gave for their negative selection. This is also the most significant factor in the quantitative findings. Pearson (2004) argues, "Legal and ethical transgressions can prove costly and painful for journalists and their families, friends, colleagues and employers." This situation is commonly found in Korea. As one journalist said, "Journalists must be daunted by having lawsuits, which relate to libel or the Press Arbitration Commission." Moreover, Pearson points out, "Defamation actions have the potential to leave journalists penniless and to send their companies into receivership. Contempt charges can land journalists in jail for indefinite periods." As a result, in order to try to avoid lawsuits journalists can strongly self-censor when writing articles, especially on sensitive issues. This can potentially restrict freedom of the press. However, the journalists also have a responsibility to society. They need to write accurate articles that reflect what is happening.

Thirdly, another reason the journalists gave for their negative selection about the possibility of press freedom was the chaotic nature of the Korean media industry. S-W. Im et al. (2004) point out this situation. They argue, "It is really hard to make a rule and to follow it because the media industry in Korea is in a period of change." Also, one journalist argued, "Sometimes, the aims of the media are not in accordance with current systems."

Fourthly, one of the reasons for the journalists' negative selection was the necessity of following the media related laws, policies and ethical guidelines. Pearson (2004) argues, "The laws may restrict journalists in their work." However, in Korea K-B. Lee (2001) stresses the law is the ultimate mechanism to guarantee freedom of the press. Power groups

abuse freedom of the press for their own benefit (Im, Y-H. 2001). For example two media related laws passed under the Roh government in 2005. The *Law Governing the Guarantee of Freedom and Functions of Newspapers* (also known as the *Newspaper Law*), and the *Law Governing Press Arbitration and Damage Relief* (also known as the *Press Arbitration Law*) were not designed to restrict owners' right within media companies but to protect journalists' activities from external influences (Constitutional Courts in Korea, 29/06/2006). However, these are not compulsory laws but Parliamentary guidelines. One of the surveyed journalists stated, "Restrictions on press freedom through law, system, policy and others can be seen as a way to guarantee press freedom rather than limiting it."

Next, one journalist pointed out ownership was an important matter saying, "The biggest problem of press freedom is ownership of the media in Korea." Lastly, one reporter gave an other reason saying, "Political groups gag the media by getting citizens' help."

3.3 Legal proceedings of libel or complaints as a main influential factor

Legal proceedings of libel or complaints were the largest factor influencing freedom of the press among the media related laws, policies and ethics. This factor was mentioned by the journalists as a negative influence on press freedom in the qualitative findings. According to Herman and Chomsky (1988), in America 'flak and the enforcers' are one of the news filters to the media. "Flak refers to negative responses to a media statement or program. ... The ability to produce flak, and especially flak that is costly and threatening, is related to power." In America, serious flak has increased with economic development resentment of media criticism since the 1970s and 1980s. Also powerful groups have directly or indirectly resented media criticism (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). In Korea, the president has a great influence on freedom of the press. According to J-K. Lee (2003) the philosophy of the president is an important factor influencing freedom of the press because media laws and systems are dependent on the presidents' philosophy. Unfortunately, the current President Myung-Bak Lee follows in the style of military regimes with regard to the media, especially the electronic media. Major private conservative newspapers are pro-Myung-Bak Lee and have cooperated for the inauguration of Lee government in February 2008.

There have been some changes in the factors pertaining to media related laws, policies and ethical guidelines. Media related laws and policies were the core factor under the military regimes, especially the fifth republic in Korea (Woo & Joo, 2002). However, under the civilian governments the largest factor influencing freedom of the press has changed to legal proceedings and complaints. These have greatly increased since the 1990s (Lee & Lee, 2001). They have increased because of political democratization, which has required the media to be more responsible to the society in Korea. Currently the media and journalists in Korea are struggling with legal proceedings such as libel or complaints.

Though it is important for the media to be accountable, it is possible that abuse of the legal proceedings of libel or complaints can restrict freedom of the press. Powerful groups, such as the state (politicians) or big companies, can abuse libel and complaints proceedings in order to muzzle critical media. If power groups abuse these proceedings, the media companies and journalists apply self-censorship, which then limits press freedom (LaMay, 2007). My survey results have confirmed this reality. According to media academic J-J. Lee (2001), the legal proceedings such as libel or complaints restrict the watchdog role of the media. Lee points out the standard of judicial decision regarding the legal proceedings of libel or complaints against the media in Korea have been obscure and subjective. This situation is not only limited to the media industry. There are many laws that have been selectively applied to ordinary people and opposition politicians but not to big businesses and powerful politicians. One well-known political scholar in Korea, Jang-Jip Choi criticizes the body of law in Korea as being a representative for the power groups (*Hankyoreh*, 28/11/2008). S-S. Lee (2000) argues that libel or complaint proceedings against the media can possibly restrict freedom of the press in terms of the people's right to know. Therefore, legal proceedings brought by powerful groups against the media can restrict freedom of the press. In practice this can be seen in the case of '*PD Notepad*.'

On 18th April 2008 the Korean government signed a contract on the full opening of the local beef market to American products. There were some problems regarding the beef deal such as quarantine sovereignty. Even though American beef meat might be found to have some diseases, under this deal the Korean government cannot directly decide to return the meat to America. Other safety conditions are also less strict compared to other countries such as Japan. On 29th April 2008, a current affairs program called '*PD Notepad*' at Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), one of major broadcasters in Korea, raised concerns about safety in relation to this new contract and mad cow disease. It made some errors in the story including a mistranslation. However, this was not the major issue: the major issue was the warning about the safety of the Korean people from mad cow disease as a result of the lax safety requirements in the new beef deal.

From May to August 2008, many Korean people seriously protested against the "beef deal" in a candlelight protest arguing for fresh negotiations to begin. As a result, President Lee made two public apologies in less than a month (*Korea Times*, 20/06/2008). Lee apologized to the Korean people expressing 'painful self-rebuke' and 'serious reflection on failure.' However, his words have not been reflected in practice despite the Korean people's demand. He has failed to renegotiate. According to the *Korea Times* (16/07/2008), one of lawmakers, Kang-Rae Lee, a member of the largest

opposition Democratic Party (DP) argued, "President Lee might have thought the ratification of a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States would be easier if his team clinched the beef deal." Indeed, Y-H Im (2001) has pointed out that the beef deal is one good example where neoliberalism has made the function of the public sector 'meaningless' in Korea. In a broader sense, Im points out that global capitalists have used neoliberalism to increase their power through the free-market.

The Lee government believes that '*PD Notepad*' story made the Korean people start the Candlelight Protest. On 20th June 2008 the Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MFAFF) asked the court to investigate '*PD Notepad*.' Five public prosecutors investigated the program and it was an unusually intensive investigation (*Hankyoreh*, 28/06/2008). This matter should not have been dealt with through legal proceedings because of the possibility of threatening freedom of the press by muzzling critical media.

There are many critics, internationally and nationally, of the court investigation of this program and the Myung-Bak Lee government. On 5th August 2008 Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) condemned the court investigation of the program (IFJ Global, 05/08/2008). He criticized the Lee government as follows, "There is a feeling that the bosses of Korean media are being systematically replaced by government cronies. If that happens it will be a catastrophe for press freedom in the country" (IFJ Global, 05/08/2008). White's worry is an ongoing reality. Many Korean liberal and conservative media academics also have criticized the government's behavior regarding the *PD Notepad* case. Media academic Seo-Joong Kim pointed out a problem regarding the investigation of '*PD Notepad*' during discussion time of the Peoplepower 21 (Chamyeyoenda: citizen movement group held on 2nd July 2008). Kim argued, "Through its intensive investigation of '*PD Notepad*,' the government wanted to threaten the media not to report this kind of issue in the future" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 02/07/2008). Also, Kim criticized the government by saying, "The government wants to tame the broadcast media like the ChoJoongDong newspapers" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 02/07/2008). Furthermore, he said, "The investigation of '*PD Notepad*' was a starting point for change in the media industry" (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 02/07/2008). Kim's point is confirmed in practice. The current government is seeking to privatize public broadcasting media and also to allow cross ownership for newspaper owners. This new media policy is one of the reasons why ChoJoongDong supported Myung-Bak Lee during the 2007 presidential election. Another academic Young-Ho Kim said, "The media have a duty to report the truth if there is one percent of danger about mad cow disease. Therefore, the public investigation of '*PD Notepad*' is not suitable behavior" (*Hankyoreh*, 03/07/2008). According to Min-Wan Kim, if there was a small problem in the accuracy of the broadcast of '*PD Notepad*,' this should be dealt through media ethics processes and not the law (*Hankyoreh*, 28/06/2008). Moreover, Min-Hee Choi former vice Chairman of Korea Communications Commission (KCC) argued, "The '*PD Notepad*' investigation shows Lee government's oppression of broadcasting" (*Hankyoreh*, 28/06/2008). It demonstrates the ways freedom of the press by the critical media can be threatened. As one journalist in my survey said, "Activities of gathering news have been restricted by the media policies, which oppress the media companies through the control of information, lawsuits, or the tax inspection of the media."

In relation to the 'beef deal,' American academic, D. Hart points out that the staging of the candlelight protest by high school students represents hope for the future of the Korean society since these students have started fighting against the abuse and greed of big global business. However, he criticizes the Korean officials and conservative newspapers as being pro-America, pro-capital and betraying the Korean people by 'slavishly' following American demands (*Ohmynews*, 02/06/2008). Further, Hart criticizes the Korean conservative groups, including the media, for blindly accepting American values and activities (*Ohmynews*, 26/06/2008).

Conclusion

This chapter explored three main factors that influence freedom of the press in Korea: firstly external factors such as advertising; secondly internal factors such as media owners; and thirdly the media related laws, policies and ethics such as libel or complaints. Firstly, in relation to the external factors, advertisers were seen as the largest factor influencing freedom of the press because of the advertising revenue the media companies earn. However, the media should not only pursue their own benefit but should also play a role of public service. Under the military regimes the state, the government and the politicians were the main actors influencing freedom of the press. However, since the civilian governments this has gradually changed to big business and the market. Therefore, big business has significant power and it is not easy to be completely free from this influence as was demonstrated in the case of the two dailies the *Hankyoreh* and the *Kyunghyang*. However, for freedom of the press to prevail the media should be free from the interference of the government and the restrictions placed on them by capital or the market.

Secondly, in relation to the internal factors, the media owners were seen as the most significant factor influencing freedom of the press. Owners have the right as managers to make personnel decisions about employees within the media company. Therefore, how the media owners act is a very important factor in the guarantee of freedom of the press in democratic societies. The belief of many media owners that they have the right to control news can seriously affect freedom of the press. This was demonstrated in the *SISA-journal* and the *Kookmin Daily* cases where journalists were

powerless in practice.

Thirdly, in relation to media related laws, policies and ethics, which are very closely related to the philosophy of the president in Korea, the most significant factor influencing freedom of the press was the threat of legal proceedings such as libel or complaints. There has been a shift from media related laws and policies under the military regimes to legal proceedings of libel or complaints under the civilian governments because of political democratization. However, powerful groups such as the state (politicians) or big businesses can abuse these legal proceedings in order to try to muzzle critical media as was demonstrated in the 'PD Notepad' of MBC case.

In addition, advertisers can be an indirect influence on journalists but media owners can be a direct factor, which is not easy for employees to ignore. Amongst the three factors explored in this project, journalists were least positive about the possibility of press freedom in relation to internal factors. They were most positive about the possibility of press freedom in relation to media related laws/policies/ethics. The direct influence of the state, the government and the politicians has decreased since the advent of civilian government. However, these groups still indirectly and directly influence press freedom through legal proceedings of libel or complaints, and influencing or pressuring media owners.

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Notes

Note 1. Five main filters: size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media; the advertising license to do business; sourcing mass-media news; flak and the enforcers; and anticommunism as a control mechanism.

Note 2. Five dailies were *Hankyoreh*, *Chosun*, *JoongAng*, *Dong-A* and *Kyunghyang*.

Note 3. Their names are Kyoung-Tae Ko (former chief managing editor of the *Hankyoreh* 21), Min-Hee Choi (former CEO of the Citizens' Coalition for Democratic Media), Il-Yong Chung (former president of the Journalists Association of Korea), Yeon-Ho Oh (CEO of the *OhmyNews*), Myoung-Sook Seo (former managing editor of the *OhmyNews*), and

Ji-Woong Kang (producer of the MBC).

Table 1. Journalists' three choices of external factors influencing freedom of the press in order of preference

Options	1 st (%)	2 nd (%)	3 rd (%)	Total (%)
State, government, politicians	22.6	28.6	8.3	59.5
Advertisers	65.5	23.8	6	95.3
Interest groups	1.2	17.9	25	44
Civil organizations		9.5	21.4	30.9
Religious groups		6	10.7	16.7
Readers or viewers	9.5	13.1	21.4	44
General public	1.2	1.2	6	8.4
Others			1.2	1.2
Total (%)	100	100	100	300

*1st: first preference, 2nd: second preference, 3rd: third preference

Table 2. The possibility of press freedom from external factors

Categories	Details of categories	TR (%) 100	The possibility of press freedom from external factors (%)	
			P (79.8)	N (20.2)
Sections of news in which they worked	Political	7.1	4.8	2.4
	Social	27.4	23.8	3.6
	Business	20.2	16.7	3.6
	International/North Korean	4.8	3.6	1.2
	Sports/life	1.2	1.2	
	Culture	3.6	2.4	1.2
	Sub-editorial	9.5	6	3.6
	Photo journalism	1.2	1.2	
	General reporting	14.3	10.7	3.6
	Editorial writer	4.8	4.8	
	Managing editors or equivalent	3.6	3.6	
	Others	1.2		1.2
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Positions held	Managing editors or equivalent	10.7	10.7	
	Editors or equivalent	22.6	16.7	6
	Deputy editors or equivalent	29.8	25	4.8
	Reporters	35.7	26.2	9.5
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Types of newspapers	Seoul newspapers	32.1	25	7.1
	Provincial newspapers	41.7	31	10.7
	News agencies	3.6	2.4	1.2
	Business newspapers	15.5	15.5	
	English newspapers	3.6	3.6	
	Special newspapers	2.4	2.4	
	Others	1.2		1.2
Location of the company where	Seoul newspapers	57.1	48.8	8.3

they worked	Provincial newspapers	42.9	31	11.9
Gender	Male	94	76.2	17.9
	Female	4.8	2.4	2.4
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Age group	From 20 to 29 years old	1.2	1.2	
	From 30 to 39 years old	35.7	25	10.7
	From 40 to 49 years old	56	46.4	9.5
	From 50 to 59 years old	4.8	4.8	
	From 60 to 69 years old	1.2	1.2	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
First or subsequent job	First job	64.3	52.4	11.9
	Subsequent job	34.5	26.2	8.3
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Length of service	From 0 to 4 years	6	2.4	3.6
	From 5 to 9 years	17.9	13.1	4.8
	From 10 to 14 years	16.7	16.7	
	From 15 to 19 years	44	32.1	11.9
	From 20 to 24 years	10.7	10.7	
	From 25 to 29 years	2.4	2.4	
	More than 30 years	1.2	1.2	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Qualifications	Diploma 2 years	1.2	1.2	
	Bachelor 4 years	51.2	40.5	10.7
	Master degrees	41.7	34.5	7.1
	Doctoral degrees	4.8	2.4	2.4
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Major of highest degree	Media and Communication	22.6	17.9	4.8
	Economics/Business	19	15.5	3.6
	Sociology/Philosophy/Psychology/History	10.7	9.5	1.2
	Law	2.4	2.4	
	Politics/Administration & Planning	23.8	17.9	6
	Language & Literature	15.5	13.1	2.4
	Science	1.2		1.2
	Others	3.6	2.4	1.2
	No answer	1.2	1.2	

*TR: total respondents to the survey, P: positive, N: negative

Table 3. The reasons why the journalists selected negative

Categories	The journalists' comments
The power of capital	• “Even though editorial independence exists, journalists themselves have to change the tone of the article to consider the interests of advertisers, pressure groups or others” (No. 5). • “I have to consider advertisers because of the company’s management” (No.76). • “Influence of advertisers has become the determining factor” (No.52).

	• “The political influence possibly can be changed. However, it is impossible to maintain independence from advertisers in capitalist society” (No.46). • “Influence of advertisers is getting strong” (No.43). • “It cannot be free from the advertisers” (No.57). • “It is impossible to be free from advertisers in a capitalist society” (No.9). • “It influences directly the income of the press company” (No.49). • “A press company seeks profits to become a powerful institution, it is not a press company but a business company” (No.11). • “A press company sell products therefore it has to consider the taste of big influential actors such as big business groups or government” (No.22). • “Is it possible to be free from money in capitalist society?” (No.80). • “Capital from advertising revenue for management of media company is getting highly dependent than subscription of the media” (No.16).
The government’s power	• “Current situation is not easy to maintain complete independence from the power group” (No.37). • “It cannot be free from the government’s pressures” (No.57). • “Any government does not want press freedom” (No.9).
The poor management of media companies	• “The company economically has not got a managing base by itself” (No.61). • “External factors directly or indirectly relate to business management of media company” (No.78). • “Because of company’s poor economic management” (No.40).
Religion	• “Religious issues are hard to criticize” (No.43).
The lack of the journalists’ will	• “If there is no internal efforts, press freedom can be distorted any time. Only a person, who tries to keep freedom can enjoy the freedom” (No.26).

Table 4. The situation of major newspapers' reports regarding the Samsung Group's corruption scandal (CCDM, 10/01/2008)

	Chosun	JoongAng	Dong-A	Hankyoreh	Kyunghyang	Seoul	Total
Number	83	50	69	135	118	88	544
Percent	15.3	9.2	12.7	24.8	21.7	16.4	100

* Surveyed by CCDM from the 6th to the 27th November 2007

Table 5. Journalists’ three choices of internal factors influencing freedom of the press in order of preference

Options	1 st (%)	2 nd (%)	3 rd (%)	Total (%)
Media owners	51.2	9.5	4.8	65.5
Media managers	4.8	46.4	19	70.2
Media editors or a group of editors	26.2	28.6	31	85.8
Labor unions within media organization	1.2	1.2	3.6	6
General (non-editorial) staff within a company			1.2	1.2
Colleagues within a company		2.4	3.6	6
Journalists’ self-censorship or internal system	15.5	11.9	23.8	51.2
Internal code of ethics			3.6	3.6
Internal review board or commission	1.2		7.1	8.3
No answer			2.4	2.4
Total (%)	100	100	100	300

*1st: first preference, 2nd: second preference, 3rd: third preference

Table 6. The possibility of press freedom from internal factors

Categories	Details of categories	TR (%) 100	The possibility of press freedom from internal factors (%)	
			P (72.6)	N (26.2)
Sections of news in which they worked	Political	7.1	6	1.2
	Social	27.4	20.2	7.1
	Business	20.2	14.3	4.8
	International/North Korean	4.8	3.6	1.2
	Sports/life	1.2		1.2
	Culture	3.6	1.2	2.4
	Sub-editorial	9.5	4.8	4.8
	Photo journalism	1.2	1.2	
	General reporting	14.3	10.7	3.6
	Editorial writer	4.8	4.8	
	Managing editors or equivalent	3.6	3.6	
	Others	1.2	1.2	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Positions held	Managing editors or equivalent	10.7	10.7	
	Editors or equivalent	22.6	17.9	4.8
	Deputy editors or equivalent	29.8	20.2	9.5
	Reporters	35.7	22.6	11.9
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Types of newspapers	Seoul newspapers	32.1	20.2	11.9
	Provincial newspapers	41.7	29.8	11.9
	News agencies	3.6	3.6	
	Business newspapers	15.5	14.3	1.2
	English newspapers	3.6	3.6	
	Special newspapers	2.4	1.2	
	Others	1.2		1.2
Location of the company where they worked	Seoul newspapers	57.1	42.8	13.1
	Provincial newspapers	42.9	29.8	13.1
Gender	Male	94	67.9	25
	Female	4.8	3.6	1.2
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Age group	From 20 to 29 years old	1.2	1.2	
	From 30 to 39 years old	35.7	21.4	13.1
	From 40 to 49 years old	56	42.8	13.1
	From 50 to 59 years old	4.8	4.8	
	From 60 to 69 years old	1.2	1.2	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
First or subsequent job	First job	64.3	47.6	15.5
	Subsequent job	34.5	23.8	10.7
	No answer	1.2	1.2	

Length of service	From 0 to 4 years	6	1.2	3.6
	From 5 to 9 years	17.9	11.9	6
	From 10 to 14 years	16.7	14.3	2.4
	From 15 to 19 years	44	32.1	11.9
	From 20 to 24 years	10.7	8.3	2.4
	From 25 to 29 years	2.4	2.4	
	More than 30 years	1.2	1.2	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Qualifications	Diploma 2 years	1.2		1.2
	Bachelor 4 years	51.2	34.5	16.7
	Master degrees	41.7	34.5	6
	Doctoral degrees	4.8	2.4	2.4
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Major of highest degree	Media and Communication	22.6	16.7	6
	Economics/Business	19	14.3	3.6
	Sociology/Philosophy/Psychology/History	10.7	8.3	2.4
	Law	2.4	2.4	
	Politics/Administration & Planning	23.8	15.5	8.3
	Language & Literature	15.5	10.7	4.8
	Science	1.2		1.2
	Others	3.6	3.6	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	

*TR: total respondents to the survey, P: positive, N: negative

Table 7. The reasons why the journalists chose negative

Categories	The journalists' comments
A journalist is a member of a media company	• "As a member of a media company journalists do not comment in a different tenor to the company. It is difficult to make a comment, which is not in line with the company's stance" (No.70). • "A journalist is one of the members of the company" (No.73). • "Journalists consider the relation between causes and effects" (No.19). • "The tone of the article easily can be changed through self-censorship" (No.5). • "It is impossible to be free from internal factors because a journalist is one of the members of a company" (No.46). • "There is no way to publish articles, which do not agree with the editor or the managing editor" (No.57). • "It is a hierarchic relationship" (No.78). • "I need an agreement if I want to cover an article which includes my intentions" (No.11). • "It is possible to reject an order about a certain thing...but not one hundred percent because I am a member of the organization" (No.9). • "Reporting news cannot be freed completely from internal factors because it is not a journalist's creation but a combination of social norms and of objective truth" (No.63). • "Even each article of journalists is changed by the desk (editor), who produces stereotypical articles" (No.71). • "The important thing depends on media company so journalists try to fit each

	differences” (No.80).
The media company is a profit-making organization as a private business company	• “Journalists at big newspapers in Korea serve not for the public good or the objective truth but for the profit of their companies” (No.71). • “It can be a possible infringement of press freedom when the press violate the interest of the company because a newspaper company is one of profit-making organizations” (No.61). • “It considers the management of media company” (No.78). • “Future of company depends on the competition among media rivals” (No.25). • “The power of capital is stronger than others” (No.37). • “It’s a private company” (No.40). • “The media become owner’s private company” (No.43).
Owners or managers of the media have the right to personnel management	• “The media’s owner and manager have the ultimate power in personnel and management, for example entering a company, retirement from a company, promotion, an official reprimand, wages and others” (No.18). • “The company has the right of personnel management” (No.72). • “Journalists cannot be free from media owners in capitalist society” (No.63).
The lack of the mutual discussion	• “Internal factors need to be controlled to maintain the editorial consistency” (No.22). • “Internal factors of the media should not exist to interfere with each other within the company. These are there to help in decisions about daily articles, about how big or small and what direction to report through the mutual discussion. These are not the mutual interference, but for making newspapers, if these do not exist, newspapers cannot be made. Newspapers are not made by an individual such as a journalist, an editor, a middle manager, a manager, an owner, an advertiser, readers, citizens, or others. Newspapers are made by agreement through the reciprocal action. It is a misunderstanding if this process is seen as an interference of press freedom” (No.79).
The closed nature of the media companies	• “The media companies are closed in nature” (No.42).

Table 8. Journalists’ three choices of factors (laws/policies/ethics) that influence press freedom in order of preference

Options	1 st (%)	2 nd (%)	3 rd (%)	Total (%)
Media related laws	8.3	32.1	19	59.5
Media policies	13.1	16.7	19	48.8
Legal proceedings of libel or complaints	67.9	9.5	13.1	90.5
National security law	3.6	6	2.4	11.9
Media ethics code	2.4	13.1	17.9	33.4
Organization of self-censorship	3.6	20.2	22.6	46.4
Others	1.2			1.2
No answer		2.4	6	8.4
Total (%)	100	100	100	300

*1st: first preference, 2nd: second preference, 3rd: third preference

Table 9. The possibility of press freedom from factors media related laws/policies/ethics

Categories	Details of categories	TR (%) 100	The possibility of press freedom from factors media related laws/policies/ethics (%)	
			P (82.1)	N (16.7)
Sections of news in which they worked	Political	7.1	6	1.2
	Social	27.4	25	1.2

	Business	20.2	16.7	3.6
	International/North Korean	4.8	3.6	1.2
	Sports/life	1.2		1.2
	Culture	3.6	1.2	2.4
	Sub-editorial	9.5	7.1	2.4
	Photo journalism	1.2	1.2	
	General reporting	14.3	11.9	2.4
	Editorial writer	4.8	3.6	1.2
	Managing editors or equivalent	3.6	3.6	
	Others	1.2	1.2	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Positions held	Managing editors or equivalent	10.7	10.7	
	Editors or equivalent	22.6	17.9	4.8
	Deputy editors or equivalent	29.8	25	4.8
	Reporters	35.7	27.4	7.1
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Types of newspapers	Seoul newspapers	32.1	22.6	8.3
	Provincial newspapers	41.7	34.5	7.1
	News agencies	3.6	3.6	
	Business newspapers	15.5	15.5	
	English newspapers	3.6	3.6	
	Special newspapers	2.4	2.4	
	Others	1.2		1.2
Location of the company where they worked	Seoul newspapers	57.1	47.6	8.3
	Provincial newspapers	42.9	34.5	8.3
Gender	Male	94	78.6	14.3
	Female	4.8	2.4	2.4
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Age group	From 20 to 29 years old	1.2	1.2	
	From 30 to 39 years old	35.7	28.6	7.1
	From 40 to 49 years old	56	45.2	9.5
	From 50 to 59 years old	4.8	4.8	
	From 60 to 69 years old	1.2	1.2	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
First or subsequent job	First job	64.3	53.6	10.7
	Subsequent job	34.5	27.4	6
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Length of service	From 0 to 4 years	6	4.8	1.2
	From 5 to 9 years	17.9	13.1	4.8
	From 10 to 14 years	16.7	14.3	2.4
	From 15 to 19 years	44	34.5	8.3
	From 20 to 24 years	10.7	10.7	
	From 25 to 29 years	2.4	2.4	

	More than 30 years	1.2	1.2	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Qualifications	Diploma 2 years	1.2	1.2	
	Bachelor 4 years	51.2	40.5	10.7
	Master degrees	41.7	35.7	4.8
	Doctoral degrees	4.8	3.6	1.2
	No answer	1.2	1.2	
Major of highest degree	Media and Communication	22.6	17.9	4.8
	Economics/Business	19	16.7	1.2
	Sociology/Philosophy/Psychology/History	10.7	9.5	1.2
	Law	2.4	1.2	1.2
	Politics/Administration & Planning	23.8	19	4.8
	Language & Literature	15.5	13.1	2.4
	Science	1.2		1.2
	Others	3.6	3.6	
	No answer	1.2	1.2	

*TR: total respondents to the survey, P: positive, N: negative

Table 10. The reasons why the journalists selected negative

Categories	The journalists' comments
The power of the media related laws, policies and ethics	• “After media law, policy and ethics are established, these have legal force” (No.73). • “In practice, I have to consider the media related laws, policies and ethics” (No.45). • “It is impossible to ignore the media law when we are talking about responsibility of the media” (No.42). • “If the current media policy does not change, the possibility of press freedom is unlikely because the current policy protects rights of the media investors” (No.8).
The legal proceedings of libel or complaints	• “Journalists must be daunted by having lawsuits, which relate to libel or by the Press Arbitration Commission” (No.57). • “Self-regulatory organizations are getting strong power to avoid lawsuits” (No.11).
Chaotic periods of identity in the Korean media industry	• “It is really hard to make a rule and to follow it because the media industry in Korea is in a chaotic period of identity” (No.15). • “Sometimes, the aims of the media are not in accordance with current systems” (No.25). • “The media are variable to media policy” (No.43).
The necessity of the media related laws, policies and ethics	• “Factors of law, policy, and ethics play roles of watchdogs for the media rather than violation?” (No.80). • “Freedom of the press is not far from values that society pursues. First what we have to think about what freedom is and freedom for what? What is press freedom of many freedoms? Why do the press pursue freedom of the press? What is the limitation of press freedom? Press freedom is not supremacy. Restrictions on press freedom through law, system, policy and others can be seen as a way to guarantee press freedom rather than limiting it. If those kinds of the restrictions do not exist, press freedom can be restricted in real world, although it looks otherwise on the surface” (No.79).
Ownership	• “The biggest problem of press freedom is ownership of the media in Korea. Therefore, freedom of the press cannot be possible due to media related laws, policies and ethics” (No.29).
Others	• “Political groups gag the media by getting citizens' help” (No.49).