

Practicing Journalism in Challenging Political Environment of Press Conferences: A Qualitative Study of Political News Reporters

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Abstract

In a democratic system, it is the core responsibility of the media to make politicians answerable for their actions and statements. A press conference is a time when journalists have the opportunity to hold politicians accountable. This is a task often seen as a core democratic function of journalism. However, it is essential to note what kind of cooperation reporters get from politicians during press conferences. This paper examines how politicians and their representatives treat political news reporters during press conferences in Pakistan. Researchers used a qualitative approach by conducting in-depth interviews with political beat reporters. A total of 10 reporters covering political beats from mainstream television networks of the Lahore district participated in the study. Results showed that reporters face different challenges in press conferences. Politicians use other evasive techniques to avoid questions if they consider them unfavorable. Reporters revealed that sometimes they have to ask planted questions at the request of politicians. However, reporters must learn how to deal with these challenges because they believe politicians will only cooperate with them if they do. The prospect is that journalists must work on their ability to ask challenging questions that politicians cannot escape. This study suggested that politicians must cooperate with reporters in press conferences because it is their constitutional right to know what they are doing as representatives of the common populace.

Keywords: Politics, Political Journalists, Political Reporters, Press Conferences.

Introduction

To ensure good governance in a democratic system, the media must be a watchdog. This is an essential function of media to keep the general public well informed about the workings of their government. Journalists must also hold politicians accountable for what they are doing to shape a healthy democracy (Curran, 2002). To cover this domain effectively, news media has especially allotted a beat of reporting to the journalists, known as a political beat.

It is the duty of reporters covering political beats to report every event related to politics fairly and objectively. Their duty also demands them to hold politicians accountable for their words and actions, due to which politicians have only sometimes good relationships with all the reporters. Journalists have to face different pressures and hostile behavior, giving them a challenging time (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Political meetups organized by politicians are events where reporters and politicians interact directly. Oxford Learner's Dictionaries (2023) defines a press conference as an event where politicians address the media and answer journalists' questions. It is organized to provide

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information or updates, announce decisions and respond to a controversy. In this way, reporters get the opportunity to ask questions from politicians regarding their actions to hold them accountable. Likewise, politicians can show their biasness towards the reporters by giving them different treatment. They behave well with those journalists who give them favorable coverage and mistreat those reporters who give them unfavorable coverage. This creates some challenges for reporters in press conferences when they have to ask questions from them.

It has been witnessed in Pakistani news channels that politicians often use interruptions at press conferences to manage the distribution of turns. Sometimes, politicians' representatives directly take the name of a specific reporter and allow him or her to ask questions. This exhibits that questions are not taken from reporters in press conferences. Politicians want to take questions from those reporters who seem supportive to them. Sometimes, politicians turn to a specific reporter to ask a question because they have fed them the questions.

A video clip from Maryam Nawaz's presser on August 11, 2020, went viral on social media and cast doubt, i.e. "Are specific questions given to the journalists in Maryam Nawaz's press conference?" In this video clip, Maryam Nawaz whispered instructions to PMLN's spokesperson, Maryam Aurangzeb. After that, the spokesperson typed a message on her phone and asked a reporter to look into his cellphone for the message. Later on, Maryam Aurangzeb asked a reporter for the question, which later turned out to be the last question of the press conference. Before answering a reporter's query, Maryam Nawaz thanked the reporter thrice for asking that question (ARY News, 2020).

Politicians do this because they arrange press conferences, not because they want to address the issues and concerns of the public. They plan to deliver a message of their concern, build a narrative, and counter the controversy against them. Hager and Sullivan (1994) found the same thing in Western nations. Press conferences organized by political leadership, presidents and prime ministers are noteworthy for setting national political agendas. Press conferences are essential for politicians because they are an effective mode of communication to create a valuable relationship with the public, where they have to go to vote in elections. However, it provides a platform for politicians and journalists to dialogue (John et al., 2007).

However, while responding to the reporters' queries, politicians only answer the questions based on their preferences or supporting their goals (Bhatia, 2006). Different from, politicians refuse to answer the questions reporters ask, which are challenging. They give evasive answers if they do not want to deny it directly. They create ambiguity because they know that the format of press conferences does not allow journalists to ask follow-up questions. To overcome this issue, reporters try to ask multiple things in one question (Clayman, 1993). Reporters who ask numerous questions in a single turn are viewed as being more proactive than those who ask one question (Clayman & Heritage, 2002). However, this makes the question complex. Politicians also benefit from it, and they reformulate the complex questions of the reporters according to them. They use it for evasive purposes because they know the matter cannot be pursued further. Now, politicians use subtle evasion methods to handle reporters' adversarial questions (Clayman, 1993).

Politicians also use indirect techniques to create an amiable environment during press conferences. They utilize humorous rhetoric to develop friendly relationships with journalists. So that they do not have a challenging time during reporters' questioning; this is validated by Glenn (2003) in his book, which states that laughter and humor influence the interactional process of politicians and journalists in press conferences. Jokes and laughing create a relationship of association and cooperation between journalists and politicians, which is inconsistent with their assumed relationship.

When this pleasant environment is not present in press conferences, journalists face confrontational behavior from politicians, especially when asking aversive questions. In a presser of former ministers and leaders of PTI Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhary outside the Supreme Court on 6th April 2022, a senior journalist named Matiullah Jan asked a question from Asad Umar about the corruption allegations on PTI. Instead of allowing him to answer, Fawad Chaudhary intervened and asserted that he would speak first and explain the developments in the courtroom. Matiullah Jan repeated his question and asked the PTI leaders to answer the question. After getting annoyed by this behavior, Fawad Chaudhary pointed his finger at Mr. Jan and called media persons like him "rented journalists". This led to a noisy altercation between Fawad Chaudhary and Matiullah Jan. PTI leadership had to leave the spot amid journalists' slogans (Ali, 2022).

Politicians also seemed to misbehave with the reporters because of their affiliation with the channel whose coverage is not in their favor. For instance, in a press conference organized in Lahore, Maryam Nawaz removed the mic of ARY News from the rostrum. She said she is doing it because this channel spreads misleading information against the state and PMLN on someone else's agenda (Tahir, 2022).

It shows that journalists should have a more accommodating environment. They have to face challenges that hinder the free flow of information (Bhatti et al., 2021). All these issues faced by reporters in press conferences of politicians put a question mark on the freedom and the right to know given by the constitution of Pakistan in 1973 (Pak Voter, 2023). Democracy demands from political leadership that they must be answerable for their actions to the people. It is the liability of politicians to answer reporters' questions gracefully because they are just fulfilling their duty. Journalists are responsible for educating the populace about the workings of politicians and government. To maintain this information flow, journalists deserve better cooperation and a more accessible work environment from politicians (Sonnemaker, 2015).

Press conferences symbolize the responsiveness of people in power and the right of journalists to examine things independently. This reflects the real spirit of liberal democracy (Ekström, 2006). Thus, this paper intends to explore the status of political reporters in a democratic society by examining the treatment given to them by Pakistani politicians in press conferences. This causes the political correspondents to inquire about their challenges during press conferences because of their beat.

Research Questions

This study focuses on two research questions:

RQ1. What are the challenges political journalists face from politicians during press conferences?

RQ2. How the challenges faced by political news reporters during press conferences can be reduced?

Research Methodology

This study is exploratory because the challenges reporters face during press conferences in Pakistan have yet to be explored. Researchers followed a qualitative approach to investigate the political beat reporters regarding the treatment they get from politicians in press conferences. Qualitative research investigates and delivers a thorough understanding of real-world issues. Direct personal experiences often accomplish it (Patton, 2015, p. 56). The researchers have selected the method of in-depth interviews from a qualitative approach to get detailed insights from the respondents. In-depth interviews are purposeful interactions when a researcher tries to discover what another person knows about a subject and what they have experienced and think about it

(Mears, 2012). In-depth interviews were conducted with ten reporters, including eight males and two females from Lahore. Reporters were selected through a purposive and convenient sampling technique. Only reporters who had prolonged experience in covering political beat participated in the study and were easily accessible to the researchers.

Following reporters participated in this study including Ulfat Mughal (ARY News, 24 years), Usman Bhatti (Geo News, 14 years), Arshad Chaudhary (Independent Urdu (Web-based Urdu news service), 15 years), Syed Sohail Abbas Baloch (Suno TV, 15 years), Muhammad Umar Aslam (City 42, 13 years), Adnan Sheikh (Dawn News, 12 years), Rao Dilshad (City 42, 12 years), Syed Abbas Haider (News One, 11 years), Mehwish Sohail (Gourmet News Network 8 years), Sadia Nisa (92 News HD Plus, seven years).

Most of the interviews were taken face to face. Only three interviews were taken online. Personal interviews were conducted in the field and offices of the reporters. Online interviews were conducted via Zoom meetings due to the need for more reporters available in person. For the interviews, researchers designed a self-administered questionnaire. Questionnaire was semi-structured with open ended questions.

Additionally, follow-up questions were asked from the political correspondents according to the situation. Each journalist in this study has been interviewed for around 30 mins. Interviews were conducted in the native language of journalists, i.e. Urdu. Later on, it was transcribed by the researchers in the English language. Audio interviews were recorded with the respondents' consent for the ethical consideration.

Before analysis, researchers assigned pseudo names to the interviewees using numbers ranging between 1 and 10 (i.e. interviewee 1 to interviewee 10) to ensure their safety and confidentiality. To analyze the qualitative data, researchers used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data that involves searching across a data set to identify, analyze, and report repeated patterns. It is a method for describing data but involves interpretation in selecting codes and constructing themes. Thematic analysis can be used as a standalone analytic tool in qualitative studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a prominent and common way to answer the research questions in a qualitative approach. Different studies (Ashfaq & Russomanno, 2021; Jamil, 2021) used thematic analysis to analyze qualitative data in social science studies.

The following themes were extracted from the data by considering research questions: Political bias, politicians' pressure, politicians' hostile behavior, politicians' responsiveness and journalists' professionalism. Political bias, politicians' pressure, and politicians' hostile behavior address research question 1. Meanwhile, politicians' responsible behavior and journalists' professionalism address research question 2.

Figure 1: Model 1



Figure 2: Model 2

Coding of Themes

Politicians' bias: Politicians show biased behavior towards reporters in press conferences due to their attachment.

Politicians' pressure: Reporters face pressure from politicians, their staff, or their news organizations to present a particular narrative or to avoid specific topics.

Politicians' hostile behavior: Reporters face verbal or physical violence or even threats from some groups or individuals who disagree with their coverage. They may be met with hostility or obstacles from politicians and their staff, who may view them as adversaries or threats to their agendas.

Politicians' responsible behavior: Reporters expect politicians to treat all journalists fairly. They should not be discriminated against based on the news channel they work for. They should not be mistreated for their personal beliefs. Reporters also expect politicians to respond to their questions promptly and meaningfully and provide clear and concise answers.

Journalism of journalists: Reporters should conduct themselves professionally and respectfully during press conferences to avoid issues.

Limitations of the Study

This study is qualitative. Qualitative studies have an element of subjectivity. The results of this study have limited generalizability because of two reasons. Firstly, the sample size is small. Secondly, respondents of this study were approached only from Lahore according to the researcher's convenience. Thus, the respondents of this study are not nationally representative. This research is based only on the responses of political journalists. The point of view of politicians is not added in this study.

Findings and Discussion

Politicians' Bias

In a democratic system where politicians have become electable now. They have to build good relationships with the public so they can trust them in future by electing them again. The role of media is essential as it holds politicians accountable for what they say or do. Journalists who cover the beat of politics can make or ruin the good image of politicians. In return, politicians build a relationship with political journalists. Reporters who give favorable coverage to politicians get

better treatment, and those who give negative coverage get hostile treatment. The sight of it can be vividly seen when politicians interact with journalists, especially in press conferences.

According to interviewee 6, "Pakistani channels have divided themselves into support of one political party, we are stamped basically. Politicians stop political reporters in between the questions. Suppose they see a reporter from the channel supporting opponent parties. In that case, they do not prefer taking questions from those reporters". Interviewee 7 further revealed that "Politicians consider those reporters who are in their favor. They take questions from them first. Moreover, those reporters who asked the merit-based question were given the mic at the end. He shared his personal experience in which a politician did not let him ask questions during press conferences because it was merit-based". Interviewee 3 said, "Spokespersons of the party are also present in the press conferences with politicians. They avoid those reporters who ask critical questions. He gave the example of PMLN's Maryam Aurangzeb. He said she sits alongside politicians and takes questions from only those reporters who belong to their circle. Nowadays, every political party filter out their favorite reporters through social media. Moreover, only invite them in press conferences to get a supportive environment."

Due to this favoritism, journalists have started supporting politicians' narratives to become their favorites. They know that this favoritism will make their identity in the field. Interviewee 2 disclosed, "A political reporter cannot make his space if he is not supporting any political party. They have to follow the instructions of politicians. For that, sometimes politicians dictate them to ask questions which create hype". Interviewee 9 also asserted that "Political reporters cannot register themselves without creating links. First, they must oblige politicians to make contacts and good links. You have to give them positive coverage on the news screen by adding their comments in news packages. Then, they develop trust in you in return. They give you protocol and listen to your questions in press conferences".

Due to these practices, the objectivity of journalists has been compromised. Interviewee 3 elucidated, "Now, very few journalists who give journalistic views are left. They have started giving their own opinions to meet their interests. Political parties prefer that reporter should become their mouthpiece. Few reporters choose biases to get admiration from politicians. Politicians also give financial benefits to their beloved journalists. They give them special posts by appointing them to government organizations. They hire only those prominent journalists who share the same viewpoints". He further said, "However, biases cannot benefit the journalists for the long term because when the government goes, their position does not remain the same.

In comparison, those journalists still have privilege and are not biased towards any political party. Thus, journalists should remain fair and objective". Skovsgaard et al. (2013) also recommended in their study that journalists should remain objective and rational during press conferences with national leaders.

Politicians' Pressure

Pakistan's constitution of 1973 gives freedom of expression and the right to know to its citizens, including people from the media. Moreover, it is essential for the health of democracy that journalists should play the watchdog role. They have to hold politicians liable for their statements and actions. When they meet with politicians in political press conferences, they can ask questions. However, in Pakistan, they have a limited amount of independence secured by the constitution. They have to be vigilant in their questions because of some pressures.

Pressures can be of different types. Interviewee 1 revealed,

Political parties are very much involved in media channels and content. Journalists must show the facts, but we have to manipulate political comments. We present news in slightly different ways to avoid any consequences. For this, our controller and director news decide to present both parties' versions to create a balance to avoid sectarianism.

Nisar et al. (2000) affirmed that influential groups in Pakistan exert pressure on the media and use it for their interests. Interviewee 8 stated that,

Political parties influence ownership of media channels. They follow political parties' agendas. They designate a bureau chief of their own choice. Sometimes, the channel asks to give negative news. Only then are we supposed to highlight the negative points from the politician's speech? Whether you support or are against the government, this channel's influence matters a lot. Reporters do not ruin their relationship with channels and follow whatever they say. If they do not do it, the channel may fire the reporters for not following the channel's policies.

Ibbi (2016) revealed that elites constantly monitor journalists. So that they can influence the news cycle, this external pressure affects the quality of the work of journalists. News correspondents have to face several issues due to this pressure.

Interviewee 6 revealed,

We usually get a call during a press conference from our organization to ask those questions which praise a particular politician. Questions are planted through us, and we are bound to do so. People are fired due to this, which is why they asked adversarial questions of that politician. Politicians called the organization that your reporter has defamed us. Unfortunately, we are in control of our owners; many owners are playing the news director role. Journalists have no freedom as news directors, and owners control us. Political reporters sometimes are reassigned to other beats if they find their performance not according to the channel policy.

Siddiqui et al. (2020) stated that practicing journalism independently has become extremely difficult for journalists because of the commercial interests of the media owners. Apart from the reality that the actual observation of a reporter is a decisive factor for a journalist, editorial policies from the newsroom play an equally important role in what they report.

Contrary to the above-stated statements, interviewees 3 and 4 claimed that "their organizations do not create any pressure on them. They are independent in asking any questions during press conferences from politicians; it is completely their choice of what kind of questions they want to ask"

There is always organizational demand from reporters to bring news because they are the backbone of news channels. For that, political reporters must have a good connection with sources. Political news journalists have a very close and dependent relationship with one of its sources, namely politicians. This relationship heavily depends on trust and professional integrity (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2021). If political journalists have no excellent connections with politicians, they will not get any news compared to their fellow journalists with good relations with politicians.

Interviewee 4 revealed,

You are Pakistani politicians who do not receive your calls and ignore you if you have a bad relationship with them. They do not give you news, being an important source for political reporters, if you ask aversive questions of them. They also ignore us if we ask them questions in a harsh tone. So, we have to compromise

because I know they will not receive my call, which will create problems for me. It will create hurdles in my professional life because fellow reporters manipulate and misuse us if we ask them to share content with us.

Interviewees 2 and 9 revealed,

But when they start making a good connection with politicians to get the news from them. In return, they also start taking favors from them. In this friendly relationship, they tell the reporters specific questions they should ask during press conferences. Sometimes, they send the questions to the reporters to meet their specific political agenda.

Interviewee 2 took the name of a politician in this regard. "Sheikh Rasheed tells him to ask specific questions during press conferences. So that he can create hype from it". A study by Hager and Sullivan (1994) also stated that press conferences conducted by the political leadership are essential in setting national political agendas.

Politicians' Hostile Behavior

In Pakistan, politicians behave ill-mannered in assemblies, talk shows or press briefings. There are also so many cases in which politicians misbehaved with journalists during live press conferences. From verbal to physical abuse, Pakistani politicians start harassing reporters when they ask unfavorable questions. Politicians also remove mics of specific channels to show their outrage towards opposing coverage.

Interviewee 4 claimed, "I was threatened by MQM once on asking an aversive question in its press conference when he was doing political reporting in Karachi. He further said that he was continuously monitored. He was also abused by them physically" Interviewee 2 stated,

Once, I asked an aversive question from a politician, and I was stopped from taking questions for the next six years in that party's conferences. I was insulted. They said to ask questions according to us. I was depressed and disheartened due to this mistreatment. In one more case, I could not attend the PTI's press conference. I was doing PMLN's beat. They thought that I was giving them supportive coverage. They affiliated me with PMLN. Due to this affiliation, they stopped me from entering the PTI's press conference.

Interviewee 1 said,

Most powerful and influential people come into politics. They cannot bear if we say anything challenging to their image. They approach our channels directly as they have connections with higher authorities. They threaten us that they will create financial problems for our organization. Due to this pressure, we have the biggest threat of becoming jobless. This way, we face harassment every other day in the field.

Journalists also have to face physical abuse from the forces when a politician is in custody or presented in trials. Interviewee 5 revealed that

Political reporting is a difficult task. He shared his experience of covering hearings of court cases like the NAB case of Shahbaz Sharif. Afterwards, he organized a press briefing in which he was told not to ask harsh questions from Shahbaz Sharif. However, he asked a challenging question because he considered it his duty to get information from politicians. For this, police hit him badly.

Apart from these severe attitude issues, reporters also face mistreatment due to politicians' mismanagement in organizing press conferences. Interviewee two asserted,

Normally, they do not get a proper place to sit in the press conferences. When the politicians are in government, they give us protocol. When their government ends, they stop giving us good treatment. They also have to face technical issues because of the mismanagement in press conferences because some are arranged in a state of emergency or on a concise notice.

Politicians' Responsible Behavior

Being part of a democratic society, the media has the constitutional rights of free speech and the right to know. So, when journalists ask questions from politicians, they must respect the right to know of every citizen being a public representative. If the media rights are upheld, they can fully utilize their ability to support the development of democracy (Coronel, 2023).

Interviewee 6 revealed, "Here is a 40-minute maximum for the conference, and we are told to ask only one question per reporter within 25 minutes. Politicians say they will answer only 5 to 10 questions. On any follow-up question, we only get the answer, "No more questions I will take from you" sorry", and "next" answer is given to different controversial questions. Sometimes, politicians need to take our questions in press conferences. They give their briefing and say clearly to us before starting the question-answer session during the conference, "I am done with a press briefing; you people may leave", "thank you" Okay, I am done", and "no comments" In this situation, journalists cannot do anything at that time" For this, politicians must be responsible for taking questions from the journalists. Interviewee 1 stated, "During press conferences, a party leader must have a question and answer session. Due to lack of time, he must listen to every journalist attentively and take valid questions only."

It is the demand of democracy that public representatives must be answerable for their every action. It is their responsibility to answer every question of journalists whether it favors them. Politicians should also take questions from every reporter apart from their likes or dislikes. However, interviewee 3 uttered, "There is no democracy in Pakistan's political parties. When you criticize their party leader and spokesperson, they start avoiding you. They do not tolerate that you ask challenging questions from them".

Interviewee 4 said,

We do not have tolerance in our political leadership. The language they use now has never been used before. There should be a different way to talk to journalists. Politicians want us to show the attitude of "Yes sir". They must understand that we cannot follow them all the time. They must show responsible behavior.

Politicians must realize that journalists are doing their job. It is their liability to ask questions from politicians to hold them accountable. Questions cannot always be in their favor. They can be challenging and aversive. However, for this, reporters do not deserve hostile behavior from politicians. They must show some respect towards the reporters by behaving with them gently. Ekstrom (2009) advocated that politicians' polite expressions indicate their political style and degree of respect for reporters.

Professionalism of Journalists

Journalists enjoy freedom of expression as a part of the democratic system. However, Pakistan's constitution also imposes some restrictions on the freedom of expression. This is the responsibility of journalists. They must not ask questions by crossing their boundaries. As interview three said,

It is the right of politician to say "no comment" as it is freedom of expression for them also. If you are "voice of people", you are not the voice of the whole world. You have to keep that in mind.

Interviewee 6 also agrees, "It is ethically wrong to pressurize the politicians to answer their questions." However, there is a time when it becomes the need of an hour to ask challenging questions. For this, reporters can use appropriate words to ask aversive questions. Interviewee 5 endorsed this point,

Reporters must have command of their beat and profession. The reporter can get information in a balanced way. If a reporter is experienced, he will get the information, whether the politicians ignore him. A few minutes allotted to him to ask a question can provide him with information. Even the refusal of an answer or the non-verbal language of politicians can make news for you. For this, in press conferences, the reporter must focus on his work.

A study has also proposed that press conferences are the platforms where reporters can showcase their professional skills for questioning and their journalistic standing in an industry (Hager & Sullivan, 1994).

It is also the responsibility of journalists to show professional behavior towards their fellow journalists during press conferences. So that they can avoid problems for themselves. Interviewee 8 stated, "Senior reporters do not respect the newcomers. They do not allow young reporters to ask questions. They try to demotivate and target them". Interviewee 6 also accepted that the "Media Community is divided. They do not stand with each other wholeheartedly. Journalists who take a stand against politicians are tagged as violent".

Conclusion

This paper examines how political news reporters are treated and the challenges they face during press conferences. A qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews revealed that political beat reporters face political and organizational pressure while fairness and professionalism are compromised in covering press conferences. Researchers conducted interviews, analyzed the data and concluded that even though we have constitutional rights and that the public can hold elected officials accountable, our society is not genuinely democratic. It has been observed that during press conferences, reporters who oblige politicians and offer them favorable coverage receive the desired response. During press conferences, political bias has also been witnessed by reporters. Politicians choose whether to respond to a reporter's questions or to ignore them. A harsh or critical question from a reporter does not receive a suitable response. Reporters occasionally compromise on objectivity to appease politicians, who depend on news for survival and developing relationships within their profession. They believe that political parties are not entirely democratic, and reporters do not expect much from politicians in this regard. Since they are not truly democratic, they hold news conferences to promote their image instead of trying to raise the public's consciousness. Also, they think reporters should not expect politicians to behave favorably. They believe the only way to change is if they work professionally, have the necessary skills to compete with other reporters, and can get critical information from politicians during press conferences. However, this study suggests that politicians must behave responsibly in press conferences while treating reporters in question-answer sessions because, in a democracy, everyone has the right to know.

Future Research Recommendations

In this study, it is observed that reporters in Pakistan face challenges during press conferences, such as pressure from politicians and their staff. Reporters also said they face pressure from their editors or news organizations to ask specific questions. In contrast, few reporters, including females, said they are free to ask anything. It is essential for political leaders to understand the importance of a free and independent media and to respect the rights of journalists to report on issues of public interest without fear of retaliation. Political beat reporters should strive to be well-prepared, attentive, persistent, respectful, and adaptable to overcome challenges during press conferences. Also, reporters must be provided freedom of expression. It is crucial for reporters to maintain their journalistic integrity and to report objectively despite any challenges or obstacles they may face. They should also be aware of the ethical and legal boundaries. While reporters must ask tough questions and hold politicians accountable, it is also essential to be respectful and professional. Future studies could analyze politicians' perspectives regarding political press conferences.

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