

## Freedom of Media Practice in Algeria from the Perspective of Journalists: A practical Study of a Sample of Sports Journalists

حرية الممارسة الإعلامية في الجزائر من وجهة نظر الإعلاميين

-دراسة ميدانية على عينة من الإعلاميين الرياضيين-

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### Abstract :

This study aims to highlight the reality of media practice freedom in Algeria from the perspective of Algerian journalists, and to examine the extent to which they are exposed to internal and external pressures within their media institutions that may affect their professional performance. The research was guided by the following central question: "What is the reality of media practice freedom in Algeria from the perspective of Algerian journalists?"

To address this question, we adopted a descriptive-analytical approach, employing appropriate data collection tools, namely observation and a questionnaire. A sample of 310 practitioners in the field of sports journalism—active across various media platforms (print, radio, audiovisual, and online)—was selected and subjected to field study in order to obtain results that provide answers to the proposed research questions.

**Keywords:** Media Practice; Freedom of Media Practice.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه المداخلة إلى إبراز واقع حرية الممارسة الإعلامية في الجزائر من وجهة نظر الإعلاميين الجزائريين، والتعرف على مدى تعرضهم لضغوطات داخل وخارج المؤسسة الإعلامية التي ينتمون إليها والتي من شأنها أن تؤثر على أدائهم لمهنتهم، حيث انطلقنا من التساؤل الرئيسي التالي :

"ما هو واقع حرية الممارسة الإعلامية في الجزائر من وجهة نظر الإعلاميين الجزائريين؟"

وللإجابة عن هذا التساؤل اعتمدنا على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي باستخدام أدوات جمع البيانات المناسبة له والمتمثلة في: الملاحظة والاستبيان، وقد تم اختيار عينة مكونة من 310 مفردة من الممارسين في مجال الإعلام الرياضي الذين ينشطون في مختلف الوسائل (مكتوبة، مسموعة، سمعية-بصرية وإلكترونية)، وإخضاعها للدراسة الميدانية للوصول إلى النتائج التي تسمح بالإجابة عن التساؤلات المطروحة.

كلمات مفتاحية: الممارسة الإعلامية، حرية الممارسة الإعلامية

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**Introduction :**

The issue of freedom of opinion and expression has long been a central concern for international bodies and organizations. It has been enshrined in various constitutions and international conventions, foremost among them the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948. Article 19 of the Declaration stipulates that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Among the most prominent aspects and applications of freedom of expression is the freedom of media practice, which finds its legal foundation in both international and national legislation. In Algeria, for example, the 1990 law paved the way for political and media pluralism, affirming freedom of expression and the citizen’s right to information. This was followed by additional laws and decrees aiming at creating the appropriate circumstances for media professionals to carry out their duties without restrictions or pressure.

However, these legal provisions have not been fully realized in practice. A variety of internal and external factors have hindered the effective implementation of these laws, contributing to Algeria’s decline to lower rankings in the World Press Freedom Index, as reported by Reporters Without Borders. The organization has repeatedly denounced the deteriorating situation of press freedom in Algeria.

It is against this backdrop that the present study seeks to shed light on the reality of press freedom in Algeria, drawing specifically on the perspectives of journalists themselves. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the central research question: What is the reality of media practice freedom in Algeria from the perspective of Algerian journalists?

**1.. Study Objectives :**

This study seeks to achieve a set of objectives, which can be mentioned as follows:

- To examine how Algerian journalists evaluate the degree of freedom granted to them in the performance of their duties.
- To explore the nature of the influence that journalists’ relationships with others exert on their professional performance.
- To identify the factors that affect journalistic freedom of practice from the perspective of Algerian journalists.
- To investigate the extent to which interference by officials occurs in the work of Algerian journalists, and to analyze the nature of its impact on their performance.

-To determine the extent of internal and external pressures exerted on Algerian journalists in the course of their work.

## **2.. Definition of Concepts and Terms :**

### **2.1.. Journalistic Practice:**

Professional journalistic practice refers to the ethical framework governing the exercise of journalism and media, composed of values, principles, and standards related to daily professional conduct, which journalists are expected to voluntarily uphold in the performance of their duties.” (Al-Khaddam & Al-Rawashdeh, 2013, p. 432).

Journalistic practice refers to the exercise of journalistic work in accordance with the communication policies established by media professionals, encompassing rights, duties, scope of action, and all related political, regulatory, and disciplinary controls.” (Al-Jamal, 2004, p. 60).

In a wider concept, Media practice consists of the rules, methods, and practical procedures that professionals and journalists follow and apply during their professional activities, in accordance with the communication policies established by communication practitioners.

Among the most significant mechanisms designed to regulate professional practice are codes of ethics and professional conduct, which seek to structure media practices .

### **2.2.. Freedom of Media Practice:**

Freedom of media practice refers to the right of the media to present all matters of public concern, including the exchange of information and access to news from any source, as well as the right of people to publish newspapers and express their opinions without the imposition of prior censorship.” (Shalabi, 1988, p. 247).

Freedom of media practice is the people’s right-across all their currents and social classes-to access facts, publish newspapers, express opinions and ideas, and monitor governmental institutions and societal sectors. It also entails urging these institutions to rectify their practices within a framework that serves the public interest, balances the rights of individuals and groups, and advances independence and progress.(Abdel-Majid, 2008, p. 232).

## **3.. Research Population and Study Sample:**

### **3.1.. Research Population:**

The research population in this study consists of all practitioners in the Algerian media sector, whether print, broadcast, audiovisual, or digital. This includes journalists, correspondents, presenters, commentators, photographers, bloggers, and others, regardless of the nature of their affiliation with media institutions (permanent, temporary, or voluntary).

### **3.2.. Study Sample:**

Given the difficulty of employing a comprehensive census method, the study relied on an available sample consisting of 310 practitioners in the field of sports media.

These individuals work across various platforms-print, audio, audiovisual, and digital-and were subjected to field study in order to obtain findings that could be generalized to the overall population.

### **3.3.. Type of Study and Methodology:**

**3.3.1.. Type of Study:** This study belongs to the descriptive analytical researches, defined as "The studies that aim to examine current facts related to the nature of a phenomenon, a situation, a group of people, a series of events, or a set of conditions, for obtaining sufficient and accurate information about them, without addressing their causes or attempting to control them" (Hussein, 1976, p. 123).

**3.3.2.. Methodology:** In this study, we employ the survey method, which is among the most widely used approaches in communication research.

Given the impossibility of conducting a comprehensive survey of all units of the study population-due to their large number and dispersion across different regions of the country-we relied on the sampling survey method.

## **4.. Data Collection Instrument:**

### **4.1.. The Questionnaire:**

A questionnaire is defined as: "a set of systematically arranged questions concerning a particular subject, presented in a form that is either sent to respondents by mail or delivered to them directly, to obtain answers to the included questions. Through this instrument, it is possible to reach new findings about the subject or to verify information that is widely acknowledged but lacks factual support"(Bouhouche & Al-Dhunaybat, 2007, p. 67).

In this context, the researchers designed a questionnaire form, which was distributed electronically to the selected sample units. After collecting the completed forms, the results were obtained and will be presented in the subsequent section.

## **5.. Theoretical Framework of the Study:**

### **5.1.. The Importance of Professional Practice in Media Work:**

The significance of professional practice in the field of media can be summarized as follows:

- A professional journalist relies on their reputation, credibility, and integrity; once these qualities are lost, their journalistic identity is effectively compromised.
- Media functions as a double-edged sword: it can be both beneficial and harmful. Therefore, it is essential for journalists to exercise a high degree of responsibility to ensure that their reporting does not cause problems or tragedies.
- Professionalism requires substantial physical and mental effort to monitor and follow the news continuously, both day and night.
- Broad and in-depth reading across diverse topics is a fundamental requirement of professional journalism, especially in the era of globalization, which is characterized by

an overwhelming abundance of written, audio, visual, and digital information. Such conditions demand balance and maturity to filter, contextualize, and present information appropriately.

## **6.. Standards of Professional Practice in Media:**

The standards of professional media practice can be divided into two main categories:

### **6.1.. Professional Standards of Media Practice:**

- **Credibility:** The concept of credibility is closely tied to the value of truthfulness. It requires the journalist to adhere to honesty in both speech and action, avoiding any intentional distortion of facts or attempts to mislead the public.

- **Expertise:** Expertise refers to the journalist's comprehension of the issue at hand and the ability to adopt an informed and appropriate stance. This competence relies on training, practical experience, intellectual capacity, and professional accomplishment.

- **Comprehensiveness:** One of the essential elements of professionalism is the ability of media to provide thorough coverage and a complete account of events occurring within both the internal and external environment of society, presenting them in a meaningful context.

- **Balance:** This standard emphasizes the importance of allowing diverse viewpoints and opinions to be represented in media sphere, rather than limiting coverage to a single perspective.

- **Diversity and Pluralism:** Diversity implies avoiding restriction to specific trends in events and issues at the expense of others. Some media outlets tend to focus on covering sensational events while neglecting those that lack dramatic appeal. Pluralism, in contrast, requires giving due attention to the perspectives of minorities-whether political, intellectual, ethnic, or sectarian.

- **Accuracy:** This concept entails that every statement in a media text, including names, dates, and quotations, must be factually correct. Moreover, news statements should be presented clearly and unambiguously.

- **Interactivity:** This refers to the reciprocal nature of communication between the two parties involved in the communicative process. In practice, it means that the media outlet or communicator opens channels for the exchange of messages with the audience.

- **Integrity:** Integrity is fundamentally a human value. A honest journalist is committed to truth and fairness, and consciously avoids distortion, exaggeration, sensationalism, and misinformation.

### **6.2.. Ethical Standards of Media Practice:**

There are numerous ethical standards governing professional practice in media field, These include:

- **Respect for Truth and the Public's Right to Know:** This principle constitutes the foremost and most fundamental duty of the journalist. The essence of journalism lies in

investigating the truth and conveying accurate information from reliable sources to readers, listeners, and viewers without distortion or misrepresentation.

**- Commitment to Objectivity:**

Objectivity is considered one of the most fundamental values in media work, as it ensures balance, credibility, neutrality, and integrity. Although achieving all dimensions of objectivity is challenging, journalists can remain objective if they choose to and consciously strive toward it.

**- Avoiding Deceptive Methods of Information Gathering:**

When embarking on the process of collecting information, a journalist must disclose his identity and refrain from impersonating another person. It is also impermissible to obtain information or images through intimidation, harassment, or pursuit. (Jassim, 1985, pp. 77, 78)

**- Professional Handling of Information Sources:**

A journalist must exercise accuracy in documenting information and attributing statements and actions to identifiable sources whenever possible, in accordance with sound professional standards. Journalists are obligated to protect their sources and to refrain from disclosing confidential information to the public or even to colleagues.

**- Correction of Errors:**

Like any other human being, a journalist is prone to error. Should a mistake occur—whether through factual distortion, misrepresentation, or hasty conclusions—the journalist must promptly take the initiative to rectify the mistake. Corrections should be published in the same location where the original erroneous material appeared.

**- Respecting Individuals and Their Privacy:** Journalists are required to respect individuals by refraining from intruding into their private lives, publishing family or professional secrets, or disseminating false information that could harm their reputation, dignity, or social or political standing.

**7.. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Field Data:**

**Table 1:**

*Distribution of Sample Units According to Gender Variable*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Male     | 295       | 95.20%     |
| Female   | 15        | 8.40%      |
| Total    | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (01) presents the distribution of the sample according to the gender variable. 95.2% of the respondents were male, while 8.4% were female.

**Table 2:**

*Distribution of the Sample According to the Age Variable*

| Age Group     | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| 20-30 years   | 104       | 33.55%     |
| 31- 40 years  | 127       | 40.97%     |
| 41-50 years   | 58        | 18.70%     |
| Over 50 years | 21        | 6.77%      |
| Total         | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (02) illustrates the distribution of the sample according to age. The largest proportion of participants belonged to the age group 31-40 years, representing 40.97% of the sample. This was followed by the 20-30 years age group, which accounted for 33.55%. The 41-50 years category ranked third with 18.70%, while the over 50 years group came last, comprising only 6.77% of the sample.

**Table 3:**

*Distribution of the Sample According to the Academic Specialization Variable*

| Category                | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Media and Communication | 179       | 57.74%     |
| Other Specializations   | 131       | 42.26%     |
| Total                   | 310       | 100%       |

According to this table (03) the largest proportion of respondents (57.74%) hold an academic specialization in Media and Communication, while 42.26% of the study sample come from other disciplines .

**Table 4:**

*Distribution of the Sample According to Employment Sector*

| Category       | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Public Sector  | 32        | 10.32%     |
| Private Sector | 278       | 89.68%     |
| Total          | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

According to this table (04) the vast majority (89.68%) work in the private sector, whereas only 10.32% are employed in the public sector.

**Table (05):**

*Distribution of the Sample According to Field of Work*

| Category    | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Print Media | 179       | 40.87%     |
| Audio Media | 44        | 10.04%     |

|                   |     |        |
|-------------------|-----|--------|
| Audiovisual Media | 123 | 28.08% |
| Digital Media     | 92  | 21.00% |
| Total             | 438 | 99.99% |

Source : Personal work

From this table, it is clear that the largest group of respondents are employed in print media (40.87%). The second largest proportion is engaged in audiovisual media (28.08%), followed by online media (21%). In contrast, 10.04% of respondents reported working in radio broadcasting.

**Table 06:***Distribution of the Sample According to Years of Experience*

| Category               | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Less than 5 years      | 71        | 22.90%     |
| Between 5 and 10 years | 111       | 35.81%     |
| More than 10 years     | 128       | 41.29%     |
| Total                  | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (06) represents the distribution of the sample according to the variable of years of professional experience in media field. The data indicate that the largest proportion of respondents, amounting to 41.29%, had more than ten years of experience. Meanwhile, 35.81% of respondents reported between five and ten years, whereas the smallest proportion 22.90% had fewer than five years in media sector.

**Table 7***Respondents' Possession of Employment Contracts with Their Institutions*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes      | 202       | 65.16%     |
| No       | 108       | 34.84%     |
| Total    | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (07) illustrates the extent to which respondents possessed formal employment contracts with their institutions. The statistics show that 65.16% of the study sample answered "yes," indicating that they had employment contracts with their institutions, compared to 34.84% who reported having no contract at all.

**Table 8 :***Respondents' Description of Their Relationship with Colleagues*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Good     | 220       | 70.97%     |

|          |     |        |
|----------|-----|--------|
| Fair     | 77  | 24.84% |
| Unstable | 13  | 4.19%  |
| Total    | 310 | 100%   |

Source : Personal work

Table (08) presents respondents' evaluations of their relationships with colleagues. A majority of 70.97% described their relationships as "good," while 24.84% considered them "very good." Only a small minority, 4.19%, characterized their relationships as "unstable."

These figures confirm that respondents' relationships with colleagues range predominantly between "good" and "very good." This is regarded as a positive factor that motivates them to show their performance, free from internal conflicts that could otherwise negatively affect work efficiency and job satisfaction. This finding is particularly relevant in the field of sports media, where professionals typically work in full teams or crews composed of multiple specialities (directors, photographers, editors, technicians, etc.).

**Table 9**

Respondents' Description of Their Relationship with Supervisors

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Good     | 164       | 52.90%     |
| Fair     | 103       | 33.22%     |
| Poor     | 3         | 0.97%      |
| Unstable | 40        | 12.90%     |
| Total    | 310       | 99.99%     |

Source : Personal work

Table (09) presents respondents' answers regarding their relationships with their supervisors at work. A total of 52.90% described these relationships as good, while 33.22% considered them very good. In contrast, 12.90% reported that their relationships were inconsistent, and only a small minority 0.97% characterized them as poor.

From these results, it can be inferred that respondents relationships with their supervisors generally range between good and very good. This constitutes a motivating factor that encourages them to exert maximum effort and assists them in overcoming the challenges they may face in their professional duties.

**Table 10:**

*Respondents' Perceptions of Their Relationships with Information Sources*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Good     | 187       | 60.32%     |
| Fair     | 96        | 30.97%     |
| Poor     | 4         | 1.29%      |
| Unstable | 23        | 7.42%      |

|       |     |      |
|-------|-----|------|
| Total | 310 | 100% |
|-------|-----|------|

Source : Personal work

Table (10) illustrates respondents' views concerning their relationships with information sources at work. The findings show that 60.32% evaluated these relationships as good, while 30.97% considered them very good. Meanwhile, 7.42% indicated that their relationships were inconsistent, and only 1.29% described them as poor.

The data suggest that respondents' relationships with their information sources predominantly range between good and very good. This is regarded as a positive element, as it facilitates the process of obtaining information, and allows them to achieve journalistic exclusivity. However, this does not preclude the presence of negative implications. Such relationships may lead to a lack of critical distance between journalists and their sources, which can undermine objectivity and neutrality, ultimately weakening the critical sense essential to professional journalism.

In this regard, Christian Dorvillé observes: "The absence of distance between sports journalists and the sports milieu affects their professional identity and leads others to consider them as official spokespersons. It also increases their reliance in writing on description and emotional dimensions, thereby diminishing their capacity for critical analysis" (Dorvillé, 2002, pp. 18-33).

Similarly, Fabian Ohl highlights that: "The majority of sports journalists are former athletes who maintain friendly relations with stakeholders in the sector-managers, players, coaches, and others. Their passion for sport influences them, and this has repercussions on their professionalism." (Ohl, 2000, pp. 89-106).

**Table 11**

*: Respondents' Views on the Extent to Which Relationships with Others Affect Journalistic Performance*

| Category       | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes            | 176       | 56.77%     |
| No             | 79        | 25.48%     |
| To some extent | 55        | 17.74%     |
| Total          | 310       | 99.99%     |

Source : Personal work

Table (11) presents respondents' answers regarding the extent to which their relationships with others influence their performance as journalists. The results show that 56.77% affirmed such relationships do have an impact, while 25.48% stated that they have no influence. Meanwhile, 17.74% indicated that these relationships affect their work "to some extent."

**Table 12:**

*Respondents' Answers Regarding the Nature of the Relationships Influence with Others on Professional Performance*

| Category        | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| Positive Impact | 201       | 77.61%     |
| Negative Impact | 58        | 22.39%     |
| Total           | 259       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (12) presents the respondents' views on the influence of relationships with others on their professional performance. The results show that 77.61% of respondents considered such relationships to have a positive impact on their work, while 22.39% believed the impact to be negative.

In explaining their responses, those who perceived a positive impact emphasized that good relationships with others create a favorable environment for performing their duties and facilitate access to information. Conversely, respondents who noted a negative impact highlighted the lack of professional distance between journalists and their environment-particularly their information sources-which may, in turn, compromise objectivity.

**Table 13:**

*Respondents' Answers Regarding the Extent of Freedom Granted to Them*

| Category         | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Absolute Freedom | 170       | 54.84%     |
| Relative Freedom | 138       | 44.52%     |
| No Freedom       | 2         | 0.64%      |
| Total            | 310       | 100%       |

Table (13) illustrates respondents' perceptions of the degree of freedom available to them in their work. The findings reveal that 54.84% believed they enjoy absolute freedom, while 44.52% stated that their freedom is relative. Only 0.64% of respondents indicated that they have no freedom at all.

These figures suggest that nearly half of the sports journalists in the sample believe they do not enjoy complete freedom in their work. This finding reopens the debate on one of the most pressing issues in journalism more broadly: the suppression of journalists and the denial of an adequate margin of freedom necessary to perform their duties under optimal conditions. The results further reveal the continuing role of editors-in-chief, media owners, and pressure groups in exercising control over sports journalists' work. In addition, many journalists impose a form of self-censorship upon themselves, often for various contextual reasons.

**Table 14:**

*Respondents' Answers Regarding External Interference in Their Work by Supervisors*

| Category  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Always    | 8         | 2.58%      |
| Sometimes | 145       | 46.77%     |
| Rarely    | 85        | 27.42%     |
| Never     | 72        | 23.23%     |
| Total     | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (14) illustrates respondents' views concerning interference in their work by supervisors. The largest proportion (46.77%) reported that such interference occurs occasionally, while 27.42% stated that it is rare. Meanwhile, 23.23% affirmed that there is no interference at all, and 2.58% indicated that interference is constant.

From these findings, it is evident that a considerable proportion of sports journalists acknowledge the presence of interference by their supervisors in their professional work. Although such intervention may at times serve the purpose of correcting mistakes or providing guidance, its effects can also be negative, constituting an infringement on freedom of expression, a right guaranteed by various legislative frameworks to all journalists.

**Table 15:***Relationship Between Years of Experience and the Existence of Interference by Supervisors*

| Years of Experience             | Less than 5 years |            | Between 5 and 10 years |            | More than 10 years |            |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|
|                                 | Frequency         | Percentage | Frequency              | Percentage | Frequency          | Percentage |
| Managerial Interference in Work |                   |            |                        |            |                    |            |
| Always                          | 3                 | %4,22      | 4                      | %3,60      | 1                  | %0,78      |
| Sometimes                       | 34                | %47,89     | 55                     | %49,55     | 56                 | %43,75     |
| Rarely                          | 15                | %21,13     | 27                     | %24,32     | 43                 | %33,59     |
| Never                           | 19                | %26,76     | 25                     | %22,52     | 28                 | %21,88     |
| Total                           | 71                | 1          | 111                    | 1          | 128                | 1          |

Source : Personal work

Table (15) demonstrates the relationship between years of professional experience and the extent of interference by supervisors. The data suggest that the greater the journalist's experience, the less likely supervisors are to intervene in their work. This is attributed to the fact that longer years of service enable experienced

journalists to avoid errors, unlike newly recruited journalists who consistently require guidance and direction from their supervisors.

**Table 16:**

*Respondents' Views on the Nature of Supervisors' Interference*

| Category  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Positive  | 81        | 26.13%     |
| Negative  | 123       | 39.68%     |
| No Impact | 106       | 34.19%     |
| Total     | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (16) presents respondents' assessments of the nature of the impact resulting from supervisors' interference in their work. The results show that 39.68% viewed the impact as negative, 34.19% considered it neutral (having no effect), while 26.13% perceived it as positive.

So, it can be inferred that the majority of respondents regard supervisors' interference as negatively affecting their performance, as it restricts their professional autonomy and leads them to impose self-censorship on their own work.

**Table 17:**

*Respondents' Answers Concerning Their Exposure to Assaults During or in Connection with Their Work*

| Category  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Always    | 14        | 4.52%      |
| Sometimes | 126       | 40.64%     |
| Rarely    | 78        | 25.16%     |
| Never     | 92        | 29.68%     |
| Total     | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (17) illustrates the extent to which respondents reported being subjected to assaults while carrying out their professional tasks. The findings show that 40.64% indicated such incidents occur "sometimes," compared with 29.68% who stated they had "never" been assaulted. Meanwhile, 25.16% reported such cases as "rare," while a smaller proportion of 4.52% affirmed that they are "constantly" exposed to assaults.

These results reveal that Algerian sports journalists are vulnerable to various forms of assault during the course of their professional duties-particularly while covering events and activities within sports facilities in general and football stadiums in particular. In addition, assaults may occur indirectly, as a consequence of their writings or media content, with perpetrators including managers, athletes, technicians, and even fans. Such

assaults represent a significant threat, pushing journalists toward self-censorship, particularly in the absence of adequate legal protection from the institutions employing them.

**Table 18:**

*Respondents' Accounts of the Nature of Assaults Experienced*

| Category      | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Verbal        | 170       | 77.98%     |
| Physical      | 2         | 0.92%      |
| Both Combined | 46        | 21.10%     |
| Total         | 218       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (18) demonstrates the types of assaults to which respondents were exposed. The overwhelming majority (77.98%) reported that assaults were verbal in nature, while 21.10% indicated they were subjected to both verbal and physical assaults. Purely physical assaults accounted for only 0.92% of cases.

From these findings, it can be inferred that verbal assaults constitute the most frequent form of aggression against sports journalists. Such assaults may occur directly in face-to-face interactions, through various communication channels, or in the form of threats issued by officials, athletes, or angry supporters.

**Table 19:**

*Respondents' Views on the Negative Impact of Assaults on Their Work Performance*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes      | 161       | 51.94%     |
| No       | 149       | 48.06%     |
| Total    | 310       | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table(19) presents respondents' answers regarding whether the various assaults they are subjected to negatively affect their professional performance. A total of 51.94% stated that such assaults do have an impact, while 48.06% reported that they do not.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents believe that assaults do not negatively affect their work. However, a considerable proportion indicated that such incidents do influence them. Among the consequences of this impact is the imposition of self-censorship, manifested in unprofessional practices such as concealing their identity, withholding facts, or avoiding discussion of negative aspects. These behaviors conflict with the ethical principles of journalism.

**Table 20:**

*Respondents' Experiences with Legal Prosecution Related to Their Work*

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
|----------|-----------|------------|

|       |     |        |
|-------|-----|--------|
| Yes   | 45  | 14.52% |
| No    | 265 | 85.48% |
| Total | 310 | 100%   |

Source : Personal work

Table (20) reflects respondents' experiences concerning whether they had been subjected to legal prosecution as a result of their professional activities. The majority, 85.84%, reported that they had never faced such proceedings, while 14.52% indicated that they had.

From this, it can be inferred that Algerian sports journalists are rarely exposed to legal prosecutions, unlike journalists working in other media sectors. This may be attributed, on the one hand, to the development of legal frameworks regulating media activity. On the other hand, it can be linked to the self-censorship practiced by sports journalists, stemming from the absence of institutional protection. This lack of support leads them to limit themselves to news reporting without engaging in criticism. Additionally, the sense of loyalty that some journalists feel toward the entities they cover further contributes to this restraint.

**Table 21:**

Respondents' Perceptions of Their Media Institution's Position in Cases of Legal Prosecution

| Category                                      | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Supported you and granted you your rights     | 37        | 82.22%     |
| Ignored you and did not grant you your rights | 8         | 17.78%     |
| Total                                         | 45        | 100%       |

Source : Personal work

Table (21) presents the respondents' views on their institutions' stance when they were subjected to legal proceedings. The findings reveal that 82.22% of respondents stated that their institutions supported them, while 17.78% reported that their institutions ignored them and denied them their rights.

Accordingly, it may be concluded that Algerian media institutions generally support their affiliates when they face legal action, typically by appointing one or more lawyers to defend them. This practice reflects positively on these institutions and demonstrates their fulfillment of obligations as stipulated by laws and professional norms.

**Table 22:**

*Respondents' Answers Regarding Difficulties in Accessing Information*

| Category  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Always    | 61        | 19.68%     |
| Sometimes | 223       | 71.93%     |
| Rarely    | 19        | 6.13%      |

|       |     |       |
|-------|-----|-------|
| Never | 7   | 2.26% |
| Total | 310 | 100%  |

Source : Personal work

Table (22) illustrates the respondents' perceptions of the extent to which they encounter difficulties in obtaining information. The results show that the majority-71.93%-reported facing such difficulties occasionally, while 19.68% indicated that it occurs always. In contrast, 6.13% stated that they rarely experience difficulties, and only 2.26% reported that they never face such issues.

These findings suggest that the majority of sports journalists encounter challenges in accessing information. This can be explained, on one hand, by the reluctance of sources to provide information due to limited awareness of the importance of journalistic work, and on the other hand, by a lack of trust in journalists and the failure to recognize their right to access information (Jalal, 2016, pp. 11-25). Such difficulties, however, contradict Article 83 of the 2012 Information Law, which stipulates that: "All bodies, administrations, and institutions must provide journalists with the news and information they request in order to guarantee the citizen's right to information" (Organic Law No. 12-05, 2012).

Conversely, the fact that some journalists reported facing no difficulties in accessing information can be attributed to their strong and well-established relationships with information sources.

**Table 23:**

*Relationship Between Employment Sector and Difficulties in Accessing Information*

| Encountering Difficulties | Always |        | Sometimes |        | Rarely |       | Never |       | Total |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                           | Freq   | P%     | Freq      | P%     | Freq   | P%    | Freq  | P%    |       |
| Public Sector             | 1      | %3,12  | 29        | %90,62 | 2      | %6,25 | /     | /     | 32    |
| Private Sector            | 60     | %21,58 | 194       | %69,78 | 17     | %6,11 | 7     | %2,51 | 278   |

Source : Personal work

Table (23) highlights the relationship between employment sector (public or private) and the extent of difficulties faced in accessing information. The findings reveal that sports journalists working in private media institutions report higher levels of difficulty compared to their counterparts in the public sector. This can be explained by the priority and facilities granted by most official bodies to public media outlets, which are preferred for disseminating information related to their activities.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that there is a clear relationship between employment sector and the extent of difficulties in accessing information. Sports journalists employed in the private sector encounter greater obstacles in obtaining information than those in

the public sector, largely due to the preferential treatment granted by official institutions to public media organizations at the expense of private ones.

**Table 24:**

*Relationship Between Years of Experience and Difficulties in Accessing Information*

| Years of Experience       | Less than 5 Years |        | 5–10 Years |        | More than 10 Years |        | Total |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------|------------|--------|--------------------|--------|-------|
| Encountering Difficulties | Freq              | P%     | Freq       | P%     | Freq               | P%     |       |
| Always                    | 15                | %24,59 | 27         | %44,26 | 19                 | %31,15 | 61    |
| Sometimes                 | 50                | %22,42 | 70         | %31,39 | 103                | %46,19 | 223   |
| Rarely                    | 4                 | %21,05 | 9          | %47,37 | 6                  | %31,58 | 19    |
| Never                     | 2                 | %28,57 | 5          | %71,43 | 0                  | 0%     | 7     |

Source : Personal work

Table (24) demonstrates the relationship between years of professional experience and the degree of difficulty in accessing information. The results indicate that journalists with less than five years of experience are the least affected by this obstacle compared to other groups. This may be attributed to the absence of prior conflicts between newly recruited sports journalists and information sources, as well as the fact that novice journalists tend to focus primarily on straightforward news coverage at the beginning of their careers. In contrast, more experienced journalists often develop disagreements or even adversarial relationships with certain entities due to their reporting or expressed positions, which in turn complicates access to information.

**Table25:**

*Respondents' Strategies in Cases of Information Unavailability*

| Category                                              | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Resorting to unofficial sources                       | 130       | 32.99%     |
| Resorting to dubious methods to obtain information    | 85        | 21.57%     |
| Resorting to fabricating news                         | 4         | 1.01%      |
| Delaying event coverage until information is obtained | 175       | 44.42%     |
| Total                                                 | 394       | 99.99%     |

Source : Personal work

Table (25) presents respondents' answers regarding how they react when unable to obtain the required information. The results reveal that 44.42% postpone covering the event until the necessary information becomes available. Meanwhile, 32.99% resort to unofficial sources, 21.57% adopt alternative or indirect methods, and 1.01% admitted to fabricating news in order to compensate for the absence of information.

## 8..Study Findings:

Based on these findings, the researchers offer the following recommendations:

-Improve the professional and social conditions of Algerian journalists in general, and those in the private sector in particular, by ensuring they receive all rights stipulated in relevant legislation. One possible means of achieving this is the enactment of a specific law for this category of workers, similar to what has long been applied in the public sector.

-Strengthen the role of oversight bodies-such as the Council for Professional Ethics, the Authority for Audiovisual Regulation, and the body overseeing print journalism-in monitoring media institutions, especially those in the private sector. This is crucial to address violations against Algerian journalists, safeguard their fundamental rights, and enforce strict penalties on those who contravene professional codes and legal provisions.

-Remove all obstacles-both internal and external to media institutions-that hinder Algerian journalists from properly fulfilling their duties, while simultaneously working to improve their professional and social status.

-Ensure conditions that guarantee protection for Algerian journalists from the various forms of assault they encounter while performing their tasks, and impose the most severe sanctions on perpetrators.

## **9.. Conclusion :**

Through this study, we sought to explore the perspectives of Algerian journalists regarding the reality of freedom of media practice in Algeria and to uncover the internal and external factors influencing it. Following the theoretical analysis and the quantitative and qualitative treatment of field data, a number of key findings emerged, which can be summarized as follows:

-Algerian journalists generally maintain good relationships within their professional environment, which facilitates their work and assists them particularly in obtaining information.

-Journalists in Algeria enjoy a relative degree of freedom in their professional practice. However, they sometimes face interference from officials, which they perceive as a negative influence that compels them to impose self-censorship.

-Journalists report being subjected to assaults while performing their duties. Although most of these assaults are verbal in nature, journalists believe they nonetheless negatively impact their professional performance.

-A segment of Algerian journalists face legal prosecutions, which they regard as restrictions on their freedoms.

-Journalists, particularly those working in the private sector, encounter difficulties in accessing information, often forcing them to rely on unofficial sources or to delay covering events.

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