



Survey Findings: Strengthening Media in the Pacific

A survey of working conditions, ethical issues and press freedom in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu



A report by the International Federation of Journalists – Asia-Pacific (IFJ), together with the Media Association Blong Vanuatu (MAV), Media Association Solomon Islands (MASI) and the Papua New Guinea Media Workers Association (PNGMWA).

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Cover photo:

VBTC journalist and TV news presenter Loic Teilemb presents the evening news in Vanuatu. Credit: Kiery Mannasah



1. A comparison of media survey results across three Pacific countries

Introduction to IFJ research

This paper has been prepared for the IFJ as part of its project “Strengthening Media and Journalism Ethics in the Pacific”, supported by UNESCO (IPDC). The project includes research on working conditions, ethics and press freedom in media in three Pacific countries: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The research results presented were obtained from surveys made available to participants in July and August 2015.

Demographics

A survey of journalists in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu was conducted over June, July and August 2015. In total, 72 surveys were completed in Papua New Guinea (25), Solomon Islands (27), and Vanuatu (20).

The gender break down of respondents was 44 percent men to 56 percent women in Papua New Guinea; 85 percent men to 15 percent women in the Solomon Islands, and 50 percent equal men and women in Vanuatu.

The majority of those surveyed were under 35 years - from the two survey age groups of 18-25 years and 26-35 years. The total of these two groups comprised 80 percent of respondents in PNG, 82 percent in the Solomon Islands and 60 percent in Vanuatu.

All survey participants, across all countries, noted their religion as Christian.

Areas of work

In all three countries, the majority of those surveyed cited their main area of work as “reporter” (60 percent in PNG, 74 percent in Solomon Islands and 75 percent in Vanuatu). Anchor/newsreader was the next most commonly selected area of work (12 percent in PNG, 18.5 percent in Solomon Islands and 20 percent in Vanuatu).

Experience in the media industry

In all three country surveys, the majority of participants have worked in the media industry for less than 10 years (88 percent in PNG, 85 percent in the Solomon Islands and 70 percent in Vanuatu).

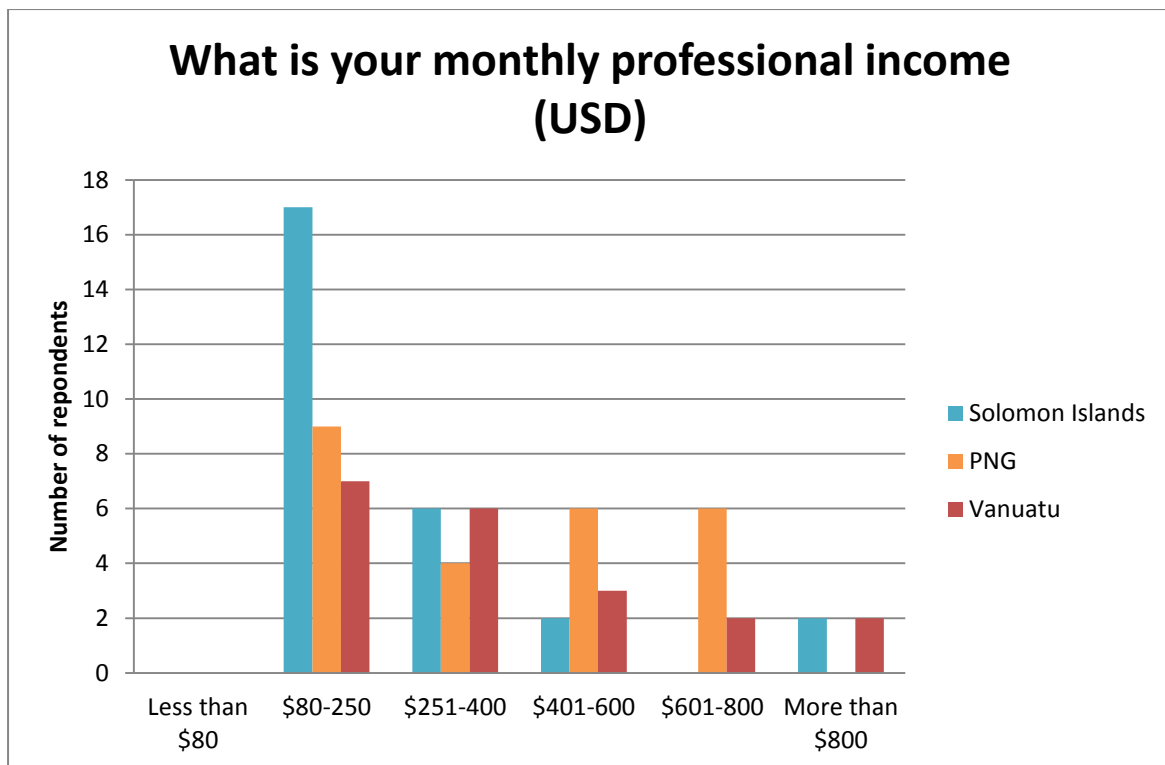
Income and working conditions

Of those surveyed, more than half in the Solomon Islands earned between USD 80-250 per month (63 percent), compared with 36 percent in PNG and 35 percent in Vanuatu. No respondents earned less than USD 80 per month.

Across all three countries, the majority of those surveyed were paid fortnightly (100% in PNG, 92.5 percent in the Solomon Islands, and 85 percent in Vanuatu).

When asked if they have ever been denied wages, 25 percent said ‘yes’ in Vanuatu. This compared with 11 percent in the Solomon Islands. None of the PNG respondents had ever been denied wages.

Professional training in workplaces was more common in PNG and Vanuatu with 64 percent and 63 percent of respondents being offered professional training respectively. This compared with only 30 percent in Vanuatu being offered professional training.



Ethics and standards

When asked what value is most important to them as a professional journalist, ‘truth telling and accuracy’ was selected most often across all countries (40 percent in PNG, 41 percent in the Solomon Islands and 35 percent in Vanuatu). ‘Defending the public’s right to know’ was the next most selected value in PNG and Vanuatu (24 percent in PNG, 15 percent in the Solomon Islands and 30 percent in Vanuatu). ‘Impartiality and balance’ was the second most selected value in the Solomon Islands (18.5 percent in the Solomon Islands, 8 percent in PNG and 20 percent in Vanuatu).

When asked if they ever faced an ethical dilemma at work, 45 percent in Vanuatu said ‘yes’, compared with 30 percent in Vanuatu. None of the PNG respondents had faced an ethical dilemma at work.

Survey respondents were asked what they thought were the biggest ethical challenges facing journalists in their workplace (more than one answer could be selected). ‘Low wages or non-payment of wages’ was most commonly selected across all three countries (76 percent in PNG, 59 percent in Solomon Islands and 75 percent in Vanuatu). The most commonly selected challenge in PNG was ‘sensationalist reporting and distortion of the facts’ (84 percent). ‘Political influence or pressure’ was most commonly selected in Vanuatu (85 percent). ‘Low wages or non-payment of wages’ was also selected as the most common challenge in Solomon Islands.

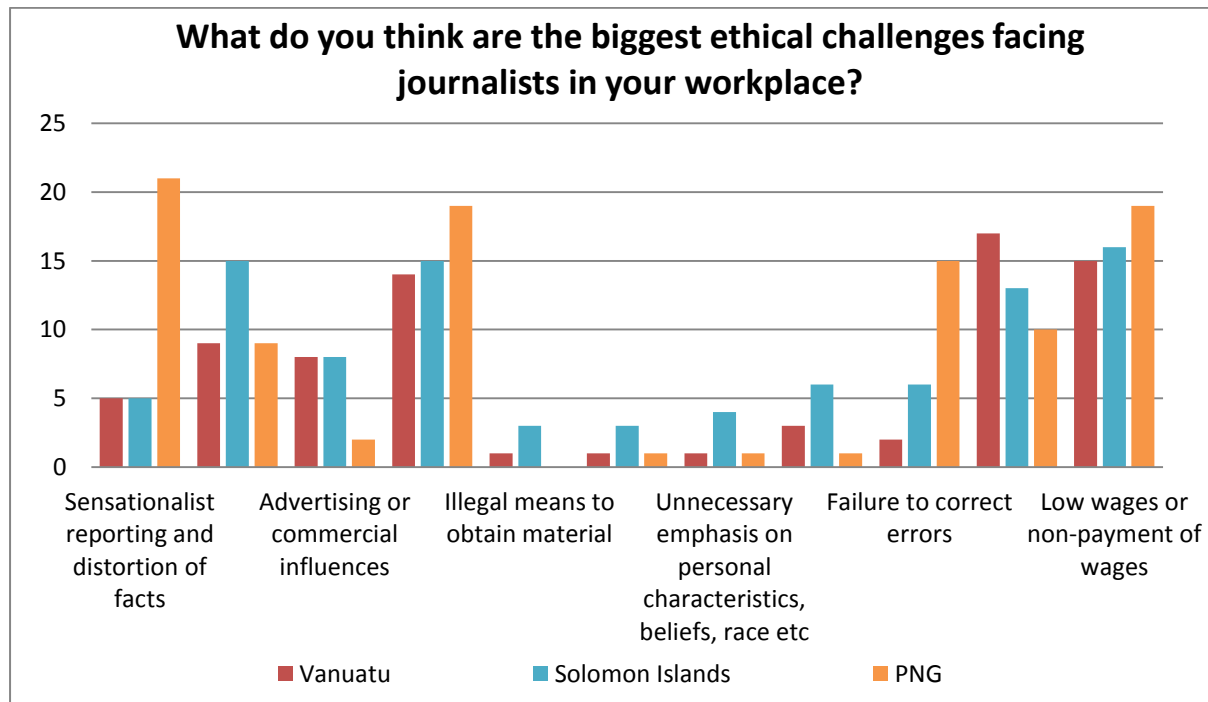
When asked if they ever had to publish/broadcast a piece which was not ethical due to internal or external pressure, most journalists said they had not. Significantly, all PNG respondents answered ‘no’ to this question. This compared with more than half in both the Solomon Islands (67 percent) and Vanuatu (70 percent).

More than half of those surveyed in the Solomon Islands (67 percent) and Vanuatu (65 percent) indicated that their employer had a ‘code of ethics’. In contrast, only one survey participant in PNG said their employer had a ‘code of ethics’. Interestingly, 68 percent said they did not know.

Over half of the survey participants in PNG and Vanuatu rated ethical standards among journalists as ‘good, the majority follows ethical practices’. In the Solomon Islands, over half of the participants selected ‘medium, half of the journalists follow ethical practices’. In Vanuatu and the Solomon

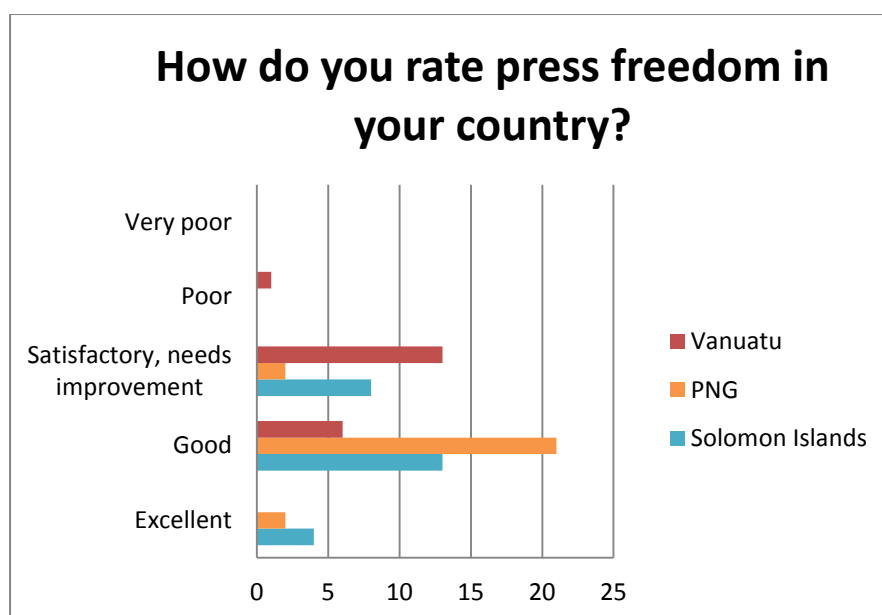
Islands, another 10 percent and 15 percent respectively selected ‘low, not many journalists follow ethical practices’.

The survey participants were asked how they thought ethical practices could be improved. In all three countries, most of the survey participants thought that standards could be improved by providing more media ethics training for journalists (56 percent in PNG, 55.5 percent in Solomon Islands, and 65 percent in Vanuatu).



Press Freedom

The majority of those surveyed in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands rated press freedom overall in their country as ‘good’, compared to the majority of those surveyed in Vanuatu who rated press freedom as ‘satisfactory, needs improvement’.



Survey participants were asked their views on the biggest challenges to press freedom in their country. 'Political influence and sanctions' rated highly in Vanuatu (60 percent) and Solomon Islands (30 percent), while this was selected by only 8 percent of those surveyed in PNG.

The most commonly selected challenge in PNG was 'media worker safety' (56 percent). Comparatively, this was selected by 20 percent in Vanuatu, and only 7.5 percent in the Solomon Islands. Those surveyed in the Solomon Islands also selected 'pay and working conditions' (22 percent). This is compared with 15 percent in Vanuatu and 28 percent in PNG.

What is the biggest challenge to press freedom in your country?	
(* respondents were asked to rank the top three answers, these are the top answer for each country)	
Vanuatu	Political influence or sanctions
Solomon Islands	Political influence or sanctions
PNG	Media worker safety

When asked if they felt restricted reporting on sensitive topics, 65 percent said 'yes' in Vanuatu and 63 percent said 'yes' in the Solomon Islands'. This is compared with PNG where 92 percent of those surveyed said 'no'.

When asked if journalists in their organisation practice self-censorship, 65 percent of those surveyed in Vanuatu said 'sometimes', compared with 48 percent in the Solomon Islands and 20 percent in PNG. 'Rarely' was selected by 32 percent in PNG and 18.5 percent in the Solomon Islands. Interestingly, 44 percent of those surveyed in PNG did not know.

Survey participants were asked whether authorities ever issued official guidelines or directives on coverage to their media outlet. 72 percent of those surveyed in PNG said 'no', compared with 22 percent in the Solomon Islands and 50 percent in Vanuatu. Interestingly, 48 percent of those surveyed in the Solomon Islands said 'yes', and 30 percent of those surveyed in Vanuatu said yes, compared to no-one in PNG selecting 'yes'.

Survey participants were asked how balanced they thought media reporting was in their country. 84 percent of those surveyed in PNG thought media reporting was 'fairly balanced', compared with 70 percent in the Solomon Islands and 75 percent in Vanuatu.

2. Papua New Guinea

By Roderick Kanama

Papua New Guinea Media Workers Association (PNGMWA)

Demographics

A survey was conducted of journalists in Papua New Guinea in June 2015. In total, 31 people were surveyed with six surveys submitted incomplete. As a result, only 25 surveys were considered for this report.

Of the 25 completed surveys, 11 were men (44 percent) and 14 were women (56 percent). The age group of those surveyed varied with the majority in the 18 to 25 age group category (44 percent). This was followed by 36 percent in the 26 to 35 age group; and 20 percent in the 36 to 45 and above age groups. All those surveyed noted their religion as Christian.

Areas of work

The majority of those surveyed noted their main area of work as being a 'reporter' (60 percent). 'Anchor/newsreader' was the next most selected with 12 percent of those surveyed. The remaining participants were scattered and included 'producer', 'photographer', 'editor', 'camera/sound operator' and 'media support'.

Experience in the media industry

Most of those surveyed (88 percent) had worked in the media industry for 10 years or less. The largest proportion of these (32 percent), had worked in the media between 1 and 3 years. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) had worked for between 5 and 10 years in the media and 16 percent had worked between 3 and 5 years. Another, 16 percent had worked for less than 12 months in the media industry.

Just over a tenth of those surveyed (12 percent) had more than 10 years' experience in the industry. This equated to 8 percent had worked between 15 and 20 years, and 4 percent (1 participant) from between 15 to 20 years.

Income and working conditions

Just over a third of those surveyed (36 percent) earned between USD 80-250 per month. Sixteen percent earned between USD 251-400 per month; 24 percent earned between USD 401-600; and 24 percent earned between USD 601-800 per month. No surveyed respondents earned more than \$800 per month or less than \$80 per month.

All 25 respondents indicated they were paid fortnightly. When asked if they were paid their last wage, all responded 'yes'.

None had ever been denied wages, though one respondent noted they had hours docked for not working despite producing a medical certificate.

More than half (64 percent) said their workplace offered professional training, while 24 percent said training was not offered.

Ethics and standards

When asked what value is most important to them as a journalist, most responded by selecting 'Truth telling and accuracy' (40 percent). This was followed by 'Defending the public's right to know' (24 percent) and 'ethical reporting' (24 percent). Two participants selected 'impartiality and balance' (8 percent) and one participant selected 'independence'.

When asked if they had ever faced an ethical dilemma at work, all those surveyed said 'no'.

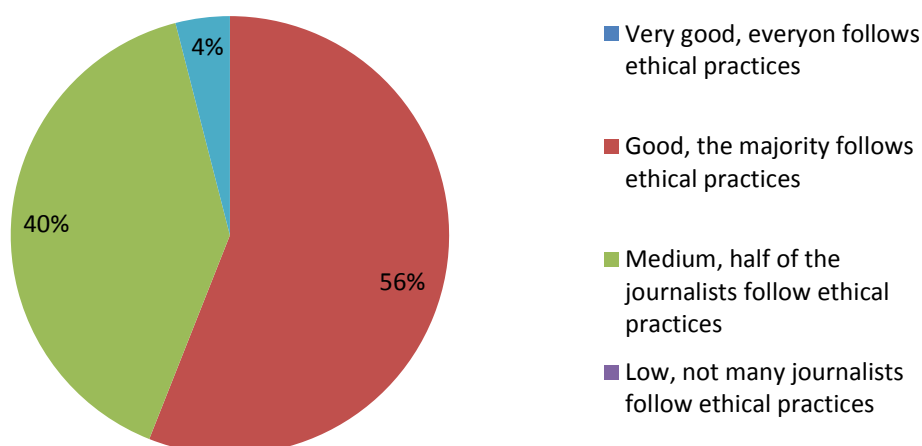
Survey respondents were also asked about the biggest ethical challenges facing journalists in their workplace (more than one answer could be selected). The most common challenge was 'sensationalist reporting and distortion of the facts' (84 percent). This was followed by 'low wages or non-payment of wages' and 'conflicts of interest' (both at 76 percent). 'Failure to correct errors' also rated highly with 60 percent of respondents selecting this as a challenge.

When asked if they ever had to publish/broadcast a piece which was not ethical due to internal or external pressure, all those surveyed said 'no'.

Of those surveyed, only one participant indicated that their employer had a 'code of ethics'. On fifth of respondents (20 percent) said their workplace did not have one, while 68 percent indicated they did not know.

When asked how they would rate ethical standards among journalists in Papua New Guinea, just over half (56 percent) selected 'Good, the majority follows ethical practices'. Just under half (40 percent) selected 'Medium, half of the journalists follow ethical practices'.

PNG - How would rate ethical standards among journalists in your country?



The survey participants were asked how they thought ethical practices in journalism could be improved. 56 percent indicated that standards could be improved by providing more media ethics training for journalists. 10 percent indicated this could be achieved by accepting a common code of ethics.

Press Freedom

The majority of those surveyed (84 percent) rate press freedom in Papua New Guinea as 'good'. Two participants (8 percent) rated press freedom as 'excellent', and two participants also rated press freedom as 'Satisfactory, needs improvement'. No-one rated press freedom as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

The survey participants were asked what they thought were the biggest challenges to press freedom in Papua New Guinea (ranking responses with the most important rank '1'). 56 percent indicated the biggest challenge was 'media worker safety'. 28 percent selected 'pay and working conditions', while 8 percent selected 'political influence or sanctions'.

When asked if they had ever felt restricted reporting on 'sensitive' topics, 92 percent of participants said no. When asked if journalists in their organisation practice self-censorship, 20 percent said 'sometimes' and 32 percent said 'rarely'. Only one participant said 'yes', while 44 percent of survey participants did not know.

Survey participants were also asked whether authorities ever issue official guidelines or directives on coverage to their media outlet. Nearly three quarters (72 percent) of respondents indicated they had not faced this as a challenge at work. Another 28 percent did not know.

On a scale of 1 to 5, 84 percent indicated media reporting in Papua New Guinea was 'fairly balanced'. Another 12 percent thought it was 'well balanced', while 4 percent (one participant) thought media reporting was 'poorly balanced'.

3. Solomon Islands

By Lornah Adomea

Demographics

A survey was conducted of journalists in the Solomon Islands in June 2015. In total, 32 people were surveyed with five surveys submitted incomplete. As a result, only 27 surveys were considered for the purposes of this report.

Of the 27 completed surveys, 23 were men (85 percent) and only 4 were women (15 percent). The age group of those surveyed varied, with the majority in the 26 to 35 age group category (67 percent). This was followed by 15 percent in the 18 to 25 age group, and 18 percent in the 36 to 45 age group and 56 and above age group. All people surveyed noted their religion as Christian.

Areas of work

The majority of those surveyed noted their main area of work as being a 'reporter' (74 percent). The next most popular area of work selected was 'producer' (37 percent). 'Anchor/newsreader' was selected by 18.5 percent, 'sub/copy editor' was selected by 15 percent, and 11 percent of responses including 'photographer', 'camera/sound operator', 'editor and design layout'. These results indicate that journalists often work in more than one area.

Experience in the media industry

Most of those surveyed (85 percent) had worked in the media industry for 10 years or less. A third (33 percent) had worked between 5 and 10 years and 18.5 percent worked between 3 and 5 years. Just over a quarter (26 percent) had worked between 1 and 3 years, while 7.5 percent had been working for less than 12 months in the media industry. Of the 15 percent with more than 10 years' experience, 11 percent had worked more than 20 years in the industry and 4 percent had worked between 15 and 20 years.

Income and working conditions

More than half of those surveyed earned between USD 80-250 per month (63 percent). Another 22 percent earned between USD 251-400 per month, and 15 percent earned between USD 401-600, or more than \$800 per month. No-one surveyed earned less than USD 80 per month.

The majority of those surveyed indicated they were paid fortnightly (92.5 percent). The remaining selected 'other', one stating 'after 3 months' and another 'per invoice'. When asked if they were paid their last wage, 92.5 percent said 'yes'.

When asked if they have ever been denied wages, 85 percent said they had never been denied a wage. Three respondents (11 percent) said they had been denied wages.

In terms of training in the workplace, 63 percent said their workplace offered professional training, while 33 percent said this opportunity was not offered to them.

Ethics and standards

When asked what value is most important to them as a journalist, most responded by selecting 'Truth telling and accuracy' (41 percent). This was followed by 'impartiality and balance' (18.5 percent) and 'Ethical reporting' (18.5 percent), and 'Defending the public's right to know' (15 percent). One participant selected 'Accountability'.

When asked if they had ever faced an ethical dilemma at work, 45 percent said 'yes'.

Survey respondents were asked what they thought were the biggest ethical challenges facing journalists in their workplace (more than one answer could be selected). The most common challenge selected was 'low wages or non-payment of wages' (59 percent). This was followed by 'personal interests undermining accuracy, fairness and independence' (55.5 percent) and 'conflicts

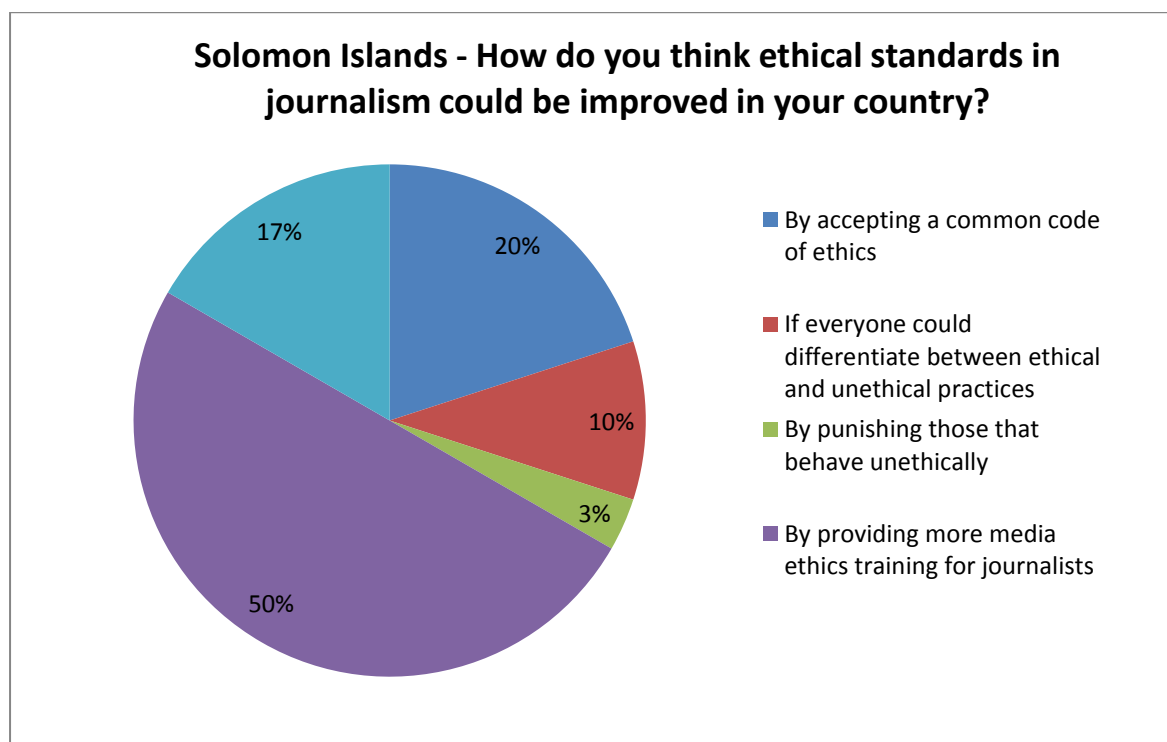
of interest' (55.5 percent). 'Political influence or pressure' also rated high with 48 percent of respondents selecting this as a challenge.

When asked if they ever had to publish/broadcast a piece which was not ethical due to 'internal or external pressure', 26 percent of respondents said 'yes'. Most (67 percent) this was not an issue.

Of those surveyed, 67 percent indicated that their employers had a 'code of ethics', 11 percent said they did not have one and 15 percent said they did not know, or 'other'.

In terms of rating ethical standards among journalists in the Solomon Islands, just under half (44.5 percent) selected 'Medium, half of the journalists follow ethical practices'. A third (33 percent) said ethical standards were either 'very good' or 'good', while 15 percent chose 'low, not many journalists follow ethical practices'.

When asked how ethical practices in journalism could be improved in the Solomon Islands, more than half (55.5 percent) indicated that standards could be improved by providing more media ethics training for journalists and 22 percent though accepting a common code of ethics would help. Only one survey respondent indicated they thought standards might be improved by punishing those that behave unethically.



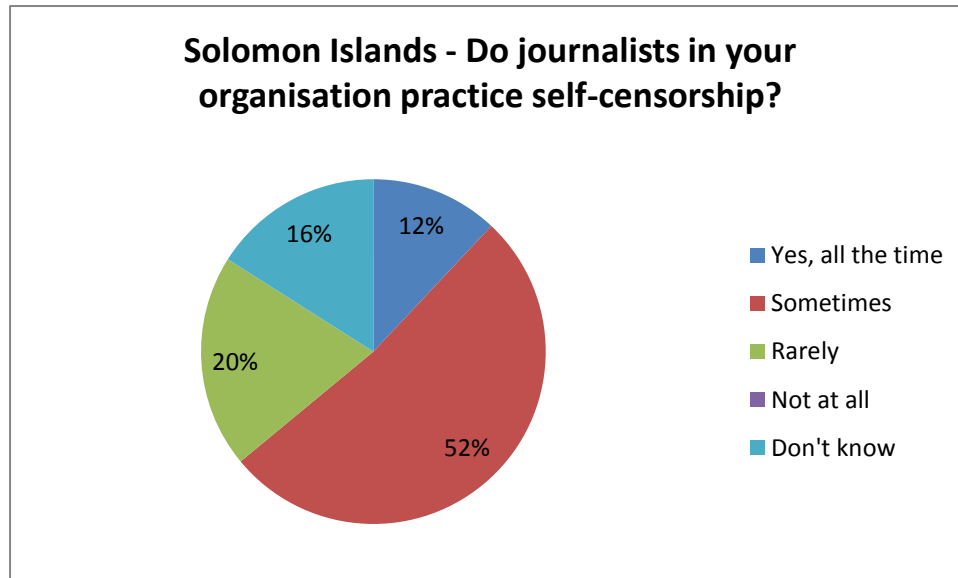
Press Freedom

Just under half of those surveyed (48 percent) rated press freedom in the Solomon Islands as 'good', with just under a third (30 percent) describing it as 'satisfactory, needs improvement'. Another 15 percent rated press freedom in the Solomon Islands as 'excellent'.

Survey participants were asked to respond on the biggest challenges to press freedom in the Solomon Islands (ranking responses with one (1) being the highest rank). 'Political influence or sanctions' was chosen by 30 percent; 'pay and working conditions' was chosen by 22 percent and 18.5 percent selected 'media ownership and/or economic influence on media operations'. Smaller numbers selected 'media worker safety' (7.5 percent); 'access to information' (7.5 percent); 'laws and legal impediments' (3.5 percent); and 'media laws' (3.5 percent).

When asked if they had ever felt restricted reporting on 'sensitive' topics, 63 percent of participants said 'yes'.

When asked if journalists in their organisation practiced self-censorship, nearly half (48 percent) said 'sometimes' and 11 percent said 'yes'. Another 18.5 percent of survey participants thought this occurred 'rarely' and 15 percent did not know.



Survey participants were asked whether authorities ever issued official guidelines or directives on coverage to their media outlet. Nearly half (48 percent) indicated 'yes', while 22 percent said 'no'. Another 11 percent did not know.

Survey participants were also asked, on a scale of 1 to 5, to rate the balance in media reporting in the Solomon Islands. Nearly three quarters (70 percent) indicated media reporting was 'fairly balanced', while 7.5 percent thought it was 'well balanced'. Another 15 percent thought reporting was 'poorly balanced' or 'not at all balanced'.

4. Vanuatu survey results

By Kiery Mannasah

Media Association Blong Vanuatu (MAV)

Demographics

A survey was conducted of journalists in Vanuatu in July and August 2015. In total, 20 people were surveyed.

Of the 20 completed surveys, 10 were men (50 percent) and 10 were women (50 percent). The age group of those surveyed varied, with the majority in the 26 to 35 age group category (35 percent). This was followed by 25 percent in the 18 to 25 age group, and 25 percent in the 36 to 45 age group. Two participants were in the 46 to 45 age group (10 percent) and one participant was in the 56 and above age group. All people surveyed noted their religion as Christian.

Areas of work

The majority of those surveyed noted their main area of work as being a 'reporter' (75 percent). The next largest area of work selected was producer (37 percent). 'Anchor/newsreader', 'producer' and 'editor' was selected by 20 percent of those surveyed, photographer and feature writer was selected

by 15 percent, and copy/sub-editor was selected by 10 percent of those surveyed. These results indicate that journalists often work in more than one area.

Experience in the media industry

Nearly three quarters (70 percent) had worked in the media industry for 10 years or less. Another 30 percent had worked in the industry between 5 and 10 years, while equal proportions (20 percent each) were evenly divided between the demographics of between 3 and 5 years; between 1 and 3 years; and less than 12 months. Of the 30 percent with more than 10 years' experience, 20 percent had worked for more than 20 years, while 5 percent had worked for between 10 and year years (one participant) and 5 percent worked between 15 and 20 years (one participant).

Income and working conditions

Thirty-five percent of those surveyed earned between USD 80-250 per month. Another 30 percent earned between USD 251-400 per month, and 15 percent earned between USD 401-600. Two respondents earned between \$601-800 per month (10 percent) and two others earned more than \$800 per month (ten percent). No-one surveyed earned less than \$80 per month.

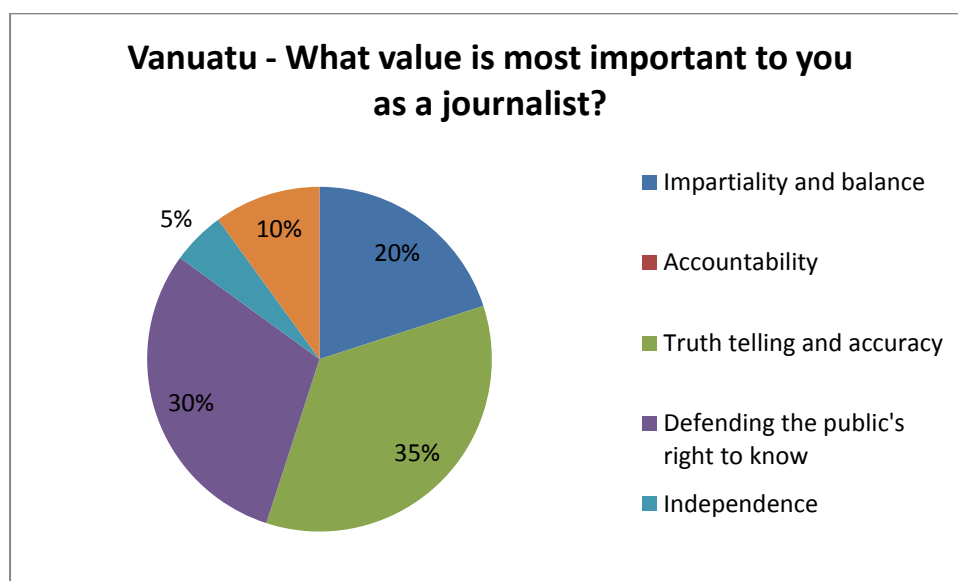
The majority of those surveyed indicated they were paid fortnightly (85 percent). One participant noted they were paid 'per story', one participant said as freelancer they were paid 'at different times', and one person did not answer this question. When asked if they were paid their last wage, 90 percent said 'yes'.

A quarter of respondents (25 percent) said they had been denied wages in their work. The reasons for this varied, including delays at the bank with transfers, not being paid during maternity leave, and payment withheld for poor performance.

Only 30 percent of those surveyed indicated that their workplace offered professional training, while 65 percent said training was not offered to them at work. One participant indicated not applicable.

Ethics and standards

When asked what value is most important to them as a journalist, most selected 'Truth telling and accuracy' (35 percent). This was followed by 'Defending the public's right to know' (30 percent), 'impartiality and balance' (20 percent) and 'Ethical reporting' (10 percent). One participant selected 'Independence'.



When asked if they had ever faced an ethical dilemma at work, 30 percent said yes.

“As the Government owns the company, when it comes to political reporting journalists sometimes must decide whether to air sensitive political stories for fear of losing their jobs or political pressure.”

“I was threatened by the Minister of Finance”

Survey respondents were asked their views on the biggest ethical challenges facing journalists in their workplace (more than one answer could be selected). The most common challenge selected was ‘political influence or pressure’ (85 percent). This was followed by ‘low wages or non-payment of wages’ (75 percent), and ‘conflicts of interest’ (70 percent). ‘Personal interests undermining accuracy, fairness and independence’ (45 percent) was also selected along with ‘advertising and commercial interests’ (40 percent) and ‘sensationalist reporting and distortion of the facts’ (25 percent).

A quarter of the respondents (25 percent) said they had previously had to publish/broadcast a piece which was not ethical due to internal or external pressure, while 70 percent said they had not.

Of those surveyed, 65 percent indicated that their employers had a ‘code of ethics’, while 20 percent said did not. Another 10 percent indicated ‘other’, indicating they used the MAV Code of Ethics or editorial guidelines. One participant did not know if their employer had a code of ethics.

Over half the participants rated ethical standards among journalists in Vanuatu as ‘Good, the majority follows ethical practices’. A quarter (25 percent) chose ‘Medium, half of the journalists follow ethical practices’, while two participants (10 percent) said ethical standards were ‘low, not many journalists follow ethical practices’.

In terms of improving ethical practices in journalism, 65 percent felt more media ethics training for journalists would help. Another 20 percent thought standards could be improved ‘if everyone could differentiate between ethical and unethical practices’ and 15 percent felt ‘accepting a common code of ethics’ would be a possible solution.

Press Freedom

Over half of those surveyed (65 percent) rated press freedom in Vanuatu as ‘satisfactory, needs improvement’, while 30 percent thought the level of press freedom in the country was ‘good’. One participant said it was ‘poor’.

Respondents were asked to give rankings to the biggest challenges to press freedom in Vanuatu (ranking responses with the most important rank ‘1’). More than half (60 percent), felt ‘political influence or sanctions’ was the biggest challenge. Another 20 percent selected ‘media worker safety’ and 15 percent selected ‘pay and working conditions’.

When asked if they had ever felt restricted reporting on sensitive topics, 65 percent of participants said ‘yes’ they had.

More than half of respondents (65 percent) felt journalists in their organisation practiced self-censorship ‘sometimes’ and another 15 percent said ‘yes’ they had. This compared to 20 percent of survey participants who thought this occurred ‘rarely’ or ‘not at all’.

Most survey respondents (50 percent) had not ever had authorities issue official guidelines or directives on coverage to their media outlet but 30 percent said ‘yes’ they had. Another 15 percent ‘did not know’.

Three quarters of respondents (75 percent) indicated media reporting was ‘fairly balanced’ in Vanuatu. Another 10 percent thought it was ‘well balanced’, while a small proportion (5 percent each) thought media reporting was ‘poorly balanced’, ‘not at all balanced’ or ‘extremely balanced’.

APPENDIX - Survey