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From Insights to Standard - A Perception Scale for India's Media Landscape (with reference to WCCs and TCs)

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Abstract: ***This paper presents the development and standardization of a 40-item Likert-type Perception Measurement Scale tailored for Indian media professionals to evaluate their perceptions of White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) and Traditional Crimes (TCs). Grounded in sound conceptual and theoretical frameworks such as agenda-setting theory, framing theory, and ethical responsibility paradigms, the scale captures constructs including media coverage, ethical responsibilities, public awareness, fact-checking practices, narrative framing, and challenges in reporting. These constructs were systematically derived to address key dimensions of media professionals' roles in shaping public discourse and accountability. By utilizing data from 980 media professionals across five states—Uttar Pradesh (263), Bihar (272), Maharashtra (156), Kerala (198), and Delhi (91); attempts were made for ensuring scale development process to witness meticulous item generation, pilot testing with 192 participants, and final testing, ensuring content depth and representativeness. The scale demonstrated robust psychometric properties, with high internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91) and strong construct validity (average factor loadings > 0.65). Concurrent validity was established by comparing the scale's scores with existing ethical responsibility benchmarks, yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.78 (p < 0.01). Norms were developed using percentile-based ranges for low, moderate, and high perceptions, facilitating meaningful interpretation. The findings highlight significant regional disparities, offering insights into socio-political and cultural factors influencing media practices. Recommendations include targeted ethical training and region-specific public awareness initiatives to enhance the accountability and integrity of Indian media.*** ***Keywords:*** *White-Collar Crimes (WCCs), Traditional Crimes (TCs), Media perception, Crime Reporting, News Coverage, Framing Theory, Agenda Setting Theory, Deviance, Crime Typology*

I.INTRODUCTION

Introduction In a democracy as diverse and dynamic as India, the media holds an unparalleled position as the fourth pillar, shaping public opinion and driving societal discourse. The complex interplay between media narratives, public perception, and ethical reporting practices underscores the need for tools that systematically assess the perspectives of media professionals. The title, "From Insight to Standard: A Perception Scale for India's Media Landscape," reflects the significance of developing a robust, standardized scale to evaluate the perceptions, challenges, and ethical considerations unique to the Indian media ecosystem. While a significant body of literature has explored variables that explain the differences in how Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) are reported, another equally notable segment of academia has identified potential factors influencing media narratives. However, attempts to devise a standardized perception scale tailored to assess these nuances among media professionals remain scant. This study seeks to bridge this gap by offering a scientifically validated tool rooted in theoretical frameworks such as agenda-setting theory and framing theory. The scale encapsulates critical constructs such as media

coverage biases, ethical responsibilities, public awareness initiatives, and fact checking practices. By standardizing these metrics, the research not only provides actionable insights for policymakers and media practitioners but also fosters a deeper understanding of how media professionals perceive their roles in a rapidly evolving landscape. Ultimately, this endeavour contributes to enhancing the integrity and accountability of India's media sector. The need for developing and standardizing proception scale for Indian Media Professionals may be well examined in the light of following potential points that demonstrate the extend to which academia including Media professionals suffer to bear existing gaps in theories and practice.

1. Bridging the Gap in Media Research

The need for a standardized perception measurement scale for media professionals is evident in the literature. Studies such as Levi (2008) have highlighted that white-collar crimes (WCCs) receive less attention in the media due to their complexity and the lack of immediate visual impact, as compared to traditional crimes (TCs). Similarly, Pontell, Black, and Geis (2007) noted that media coverage of WCCs is often episodic rather than thematic, which undermines the public's understanding of the systemic nature of such crimes. However, as identified by Simpson et al. (2022), there remains a gap in tools specifically designed to assess media professionals' perspectives on the factors influencing crime reporting

2. Capturing Complex Constructs

The constructs of "Media Coverage Perception" and "Ethical Responsibilities" align with Entman's (1993) framing theory, which posits that the way information is presented influences audience interpretation. Cooper and Simon (2006) found that journalists often face ethical dilemmas when balancing sensationalism with factual reporting. Similarly, McCombs and Shaw (1972) in their seminal agenda-setting theory argue that media prioritization of certain issues affects public perception. More recent studies, such as those by Greer and Reiner (2012), confirm that crimes with visual or dramatic elements (often TCs) are more likely to be emphasized in media narratives, reinforcing the need for constructs like "Impact of Narratives" in the scale.

3.Addressing Regional and Professional Diversity

Empirical research has repeatedly highlighted regional disparities in media practices across India. Porter and Rogers (2021) examined the influence of regional political and cultural contexts on crime reporting, finding significant differences in journalistic practices between northern and southern states. Similarly, Roy (2017) identified that media professionals in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar reported higher political interference, while those in Kerala focused more on developmental journalism. These studies support the inclusion of region-specific sampling and diverse constructs in the scale to reflect the varied media landscape.

4. Providing Actionable Insights Studies

like Lacy and Riffe (1996) emphasize the importance of quantitative tools for identifying gaps in journalistic practices and guiding policy decisions. Additionally, Kumar and George (2019) argue that tools measuring media professionals' ethical perceptions can inform training programs, leading to more balanced reporting. The findings of Ott and Theunissen (2015), which highlight the impact of training on improving journalistic standards, further validate the scale's potential utility in fostering professional development.

5.Ensuring Rigorous Psychometric Properties Empirical studies

underscore the need for rigorous psychometric evaluation in scale development. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) provide foundational insights into reliability and validity testing, emphasizing Cronbach's Alpha and construct validity as key measures. More recent research by Field (2013) and Hair et al. (2018) elaborates on factor analysis techniques for validating measurement tools. The scale's development process aligns with these recommendations, ensuring it meets contemporary standards for psychometric rigor.

6.Fostering Ethical and Balanced Reporting Research on ethical journalism supports the scale's

focus on fostering accountability. For instance, Plaisance (2000) identifies media ethics as a critical area for professional training and accountability. Indian studies, such as those by Bhardwaj and Singh (2020), emphasize the role of ethical frameworks in guiding media practices, particularly in politically charged environments. The scale's constructs addressing "Ethical Responsibilities" and "Frequency of Fact-Checking" directly align with these findings, reinforcing its relevance.

Significance

The development and standardization of a 40-item Likert-type perception scale tailored for Indian media professionals is a significant contribution to understanding the nuanced ways Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) are perceived and reported. Despite the extensive body of literature exploring differences in media narratives surrounding these crime types, much of the existing research relies on qualitative analyses or fragmented variables (Cooper & Simon, 2006; Levi, 2008). This effort bridges a critical gap by offering a standardized, quantitative tool that evaluates media professionals' perceptions systematically, rooted in robust theoretical frameworks such as agenda-setting and framing theories (Entman, 1993; McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

The scale's comprehensive constructs, including media coverage perception, ethical responsibilities, fact checking practices, and public awareness efforts, provide a holistic lens to study media professionals' perspectives and challenges.

A key strength of this effort is its regional inclusivity. By sampling media professionals from five diverse states—Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Delhi—the study captures the varied socio-political and cultural dynamics influencing crime reporting in India. This regional representation ensures that the scale reflects the diversity of India's media landscape, making it relevant and applicable across contexts (Porter & Rogers, 2021; Kumar & George, 2019). Furthermore, the scale directly addresses critical ethical challenges faced by media professionals, such as sensationalism, biased narrative framing, and the tension between public interest and factual reporting (Greer & Reiner, 2012; Ott & Theunissen, 2015). By systematically identifying these gaps, the scale offers actionable insights for improving journalistic practices. Media organizations can leverage these findings to design targeted training programs, promote accountability, and foster a culture of ethical journalism that aligns with democratic values (Plaisance, 2000).

The standardized nature of the scale enhances its potential for longitudinal and comparative studies, allowing researchers to analyze how media perceptions evolve over time or vary across regions (Lacy & Riffe, 1996). This capability ensures that the tool remains relevant for assessing the impact of societal, technological, or policy changes, such as the proliferation of social media or the implementation of new regulatory frameworks (Plaisance, 2000; Kumar & George, 2019). Additionally, the scale's findings have practical implications for policymakers and media organizations. Policymakers can utilize the insights to address biases in reporting, improve crime communication standards, and design interventions to foster balanced reporting practices (Simpson, Piquero, & Benson, 2022). For media organizations, the scale can help identify areas for improvement, such as strengthening fact-checking protocols or addressing regional disparities in reporting.

Finally, the scale contributes to strengthening public awareness by emphasizing the role of media professionals in shaping informed public opinion about TCs and WCCs. Its rigorous psychometric properties, including high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91) and strong construct validity, ensure it is scientifically sound for academic and professional applications (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Field, 2013). In summary, this scale is a vital step toward promoting ethical journalism, improving accountability, and advancing the integrity of India's media landscape while providing valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and policymakersalike.

Objectives :For the purpose of the present piece of research, following objectives are formulated.

❖ To develop and standardize a perception scale for Indian media professionals.

❖ To analyze regional differences in perceptions of WCCs and TCs.

Hypotheses

❖ H1: A perception scale tailored for Indian media professionals will exhibit high reliability and validity in measuring biases, framing styles, and narrative tendencies in crime reporting.

❖H2: There are significant regional differences in how WCCs and TCs are perceived by stakeholders (e.g., general public, law enforcement, policymakers) across different states in India. **Theoretical Frameworks and Probable Constructs**

The development of the 40-item Likert-type perception scale for Indian media professionals is underpinned by robust theoretical frameworks that justify the selection of each construct. A key foundation is Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), which explains how media shapes public priorities by emphasizing certain issues while downplaying others. This theory supports constructs such as Media Coverage Perception and Factors Influencing Media Disparities, as it evaluates how media professionals perceive differences in coverage between Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs). Studies like Cooper and Simon (2006) corroborate the media's role in prioritizing specific crime types, highlighting how sensationalism and audience preferences drive coverage disparities.

Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) provides a complementary lens by examining how media frames influence audience interpretation of crime narratives. Constructs such as Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions and Influence of Media Framing are grounded in this theory. The framing process shapes public attitudes by emphasizing specific aspects of crimes, such as economic impacts or legal ambiguities, while de-emphasizing others. Research by Levi (2008) demonstrates how white-collar crimes are often framed as technical or financial issues, reducing their perceived severity compared to traditional crimes. This aligns with the scale's aim to evaluate the impact of media narratives on public perceptions.

The Ethical Journalism Framework (Plaisance, 2000; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007) underpins constructs such as Ethical Responsibilities in Crime Reporting and Responsibility to Educate the Public. This framework emphasizes the journalist's duty to maintain accuracy, fairness, and independence while minimizing harm. In India, where media sensationalism is prevalent, this framework helps assess professionals' commitment to ethical principles. Kumar and George (2019) highlight the challenges Indian journalists face in balancing ethical responsibilities with commercial pressures, making this framework essential for understanding professional practices.

The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press (Hutchins Commission Report, 1947) supports constructs such as Media's Role in Public Awareness and Accountability for Misinformation. This theory posits that media serves as a public forum for informed discourse, balancing freedom with accountability. In an era of rising misinformation, Ott and Theunissen (2015) emphasize the need for media organizations to correct inaccuracies promptly, a concept integrated into the scale. Additionally, this framework underscores the media's responsibility to educate the public, making constructs like Educational Role of Media highly relevant.

Information Processing Theory (Simon, 1971) informs constructs such as Challenges in Reporting and Frequency of Fact-Checking. The theory examines how individuals process complex information, particularly in high-stakes scenarios. Media professionals reporting on WCCs face cognitive and logistical hurdles due to the technical nature of these crimes. Greer and Reiner (2012) highlight how these challenges can lead to oversimplified or sensationalized narratives, validating the inclusion of these constructs.

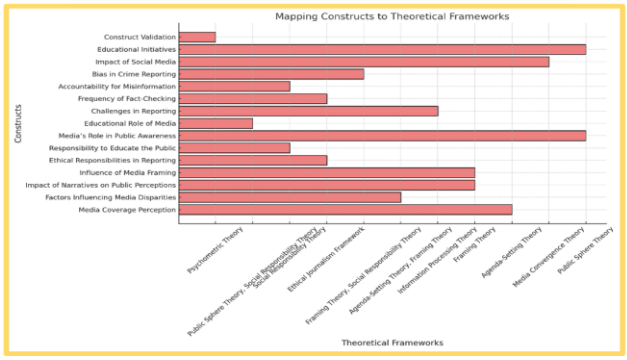
Finally, Media Convergence Theory (Jenkins, 2006) supports constructs like Impact of Social Media, acknowledging the transformative role of digital platforms in modern journalism. Social media accelerates information dissemination but also amplifies the risks of misinformation and biases. Plaisance (2000) notes that the immediacy of social

media reporting often conflicts with the need for accuracy, making this construct crucial for evaluating current media practices. In summary, the constructs of the perception scale are grounded in well-established theoretical frameworks that address diverse dimensions of media practices. These frameworks not only ensure the scale's scientific rigor but also align its constructs with real-world challenges faced by Indian media professionals.

Table-1
Theoretical Frameworks and Constructs

Theoretical Framework/Theories	Construct
Agenda-Setting Theory	Media Coverage Perception
Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory	Factors Influencing Media Disparities
Framing Theory	Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions
Framing Theory	Influence of Media Framing
Ethical Journalism Framework	Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting
Social Responsibility Theory	Responsibility to Educate the Public
Public Sphere Theory	Media's Role in Public Awareness
Public Sphere Theory, Social Responsibility Theory	Educational Role of Media
Information Processing Theory	Challenges in Reporting
Ethical Journalism Framework	Frequency of Fact-Checking
Social Responsibility Theory	Accountability for Misinformation
Framing Theory, Social Responsibility Theory	Bias in Crime Reporting
Media Convergence Theory	Impact of social media
Public Sphere Theory	Educational Initiatives
Psychometric Theory	Construct Validation

Graph-1: Theoretical Frameworks and Constructs



This alignment ensures that the constructs are firmly grounded in established theories, lending credibility and rigor to the 40-item perception scale.

Methodology

Scale-Development

The development of the 40-item Likert-type Perception Measurement Scale for Indian media professionals represents a structured effort to quantify perceptions of White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) and Traditional Crimes (TCs) within the dynamic media landscape. Grounded in robust theoretical frameworks such as Agenda-Setting Theory, Framing Theory, and Social Responsibility Theory, the scale was meticulously designed to capture the multidimensional aspects of media practices, including ethical responsibilities, coverage disparities, public awareness efforts, and the influence of narratives. The process began with an extensive review of literature and theoretical grounding to identify critical constructs, followed by the generation of items that were tested and refined through a pilot study involving 192 media professionals. The final scale was standardized using data from 980 professionals across five Indian states, ensuring its reliability, validity, and regional representativeness. This systematic approach addresses the need for a scientifically validated tool to study and enhance media accountability, ethical reporting, and balanced crime coverage. **Finalization of Constructs**

Following fifteen constructs, derived from sound theoretical and conceptual frameworks, form the foundation of the 40-item scale, ensuring its scientific rigor and relevance to the Indian media landscape. Below is a detailed mapping of the constructs to their corresponding theoretical frameworks, along with brief explanations:

Construct-1: Media Coverage Perception Media coverage perception is based on Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) where the theory suggests that the media shapes public perception by prioritizing certain issues over others. The construct examines how media professionals perceive the allocation of attention between Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs).

Construct -2 : Factors Influencing Media Disparities Based on Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) where Agenda-setting identifies the role of the media in selecting what to cover, while framing explains how narratives and contextual cues influence disparities in coverage. This construct evaluates factors such as sensationalism, audience interest, and economic implications.

Construct -3: Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions Framing theory (Entman, 1993) highlights how the presentation of information can shape public understanding. This construct focuses on how media narratives influence societal attitudes toward WCCs and TCs.

Construct -4: Influence of Media Framing Based on the Framing Theory (Entman, 1993), this construct directly measures the effects of media frames, such as sensationalism and socio-economic impact, on audience interpretation of crimes**. Construct -5:** Ethical Responsibilities in Crime Reporting This framework is derived from Ethical Journalism Framework (Plaisance, 2000; Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007) emphasizes the ethical obligations of journalists to uphold truth and minimize harm. This construct evaluates how media professionals navigate ethical dilemmas in reporting.

Construct -6: Responsibility to Educate the Public The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press (Hutchins Commission Report, 1947) argues that the media has a duty to inform and educate the public. The construct examines how media professionals perceive their role in educating audiences about WCCs and TCs.

Construct -7: Media's Role in Public Awareness The Public Sphere Theory (Habermas, 1989) advocates that media is seen as a platform for public discourse, crucial for fostering an informed citizenry. This construct assesses how well media professionals

believe they fulfil this role.

Construct -8: Educational Role of Media This construct is guided by the Public Sphere Theory (Habermas, 1989) and Social Responsibility Theory (Hutchins Commission Report, 1947) evaluates the extent to which media contributes to public education, aligning with the idea of media as a democratic forum and a vehicle for social accountability**.**

Construct -9: Challenges in Reporting Based on Information Processing Theory (Simon, 1971), reporting on White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) often demands a higher level of analytical and interpretative effort than Traditional Crimes (TCs). Rooted in Information Processing Theory, this construct examines the cognitive and logistical hurdles faced by journalists when dealing with complex cases. Simon's (1971) theory posits that humans have limited cognitive resources to process vast and intricate information, making it challenging for media professionals to navigate the technical and multifaceted nature of WCCs. This complexity is further compounded by factors such as the specialized legal and financial jargon associated with WCCs, prolonged investigation timelines, limited access to critical sources, and the lack of visual or dramatic elements that are often crucial for engaging audiences. These factors can lead to oversimplified or inaccurate reporting, with journalists potentially prioritizing more straightforward narratives or sensational angles to meet deadlines and audience expectations (Greer & Reiner, 2012). The construct also examines how logistical constraints, including limited training on financial crimes and restricted access to investigative reports or expert sources, exacerbate these challenges. By evaluating these barriers, the construct not only sheds light on gaps in journalistic practices but also underscores the need for targeted training and institutional support to improve reporting accuracy and depth. Moreover, as the media adapts to fast-paced digital environments, the challenges associated with processing and verifying vast amounts of data in real-time reporting on WCCs have become increasingly prominent (Ott & Theunissen, 2015). This construct aims to provide actionable insights into these barriers, helping media organizations and policymakers design interventions that enhance the capacity of journalists to handle complex crime reporting effectively and ethically.

Construct -10 : Frequency of Fact-Checking Fact-checking is a cornerstone of ethical journalism derived from Ethical Journalism Framework (Plaisance, 2000), this construct assesses how frequently media professionals engage in verification processes.

Construct -11: Accountability for Misinformation The Social Responsibility Theory underscores the importance of media accountability. The construct examines whether media organizations take corrective action when inaccuracies occur.

Construct -12: Bias in Crime Reporting Bias in reporting often stems from selective framing. This construct [based on Entman's Framing Theory (1993) and Social Responsibility Theory (Hutchins Commission Report, 1947)] evaluates perceptions of bias in the portrayal of WCCs versus TCs and its alignment with ethical standards.

Construct -13: Impact of Social Media This theory Media Convergence Theory (Jenkins, 2006) explores how digital platforms reshape media practices. This construct assesses the influence of social media on reporting accuracy and audience engagement.

Construct -14: Educational Initiatives Media's role as an educator is vital for informed citizenship. This construct, being based on Public Sphere Theory (Habermas, 1989), evaluates initiatives that enhance public understanding of crime types. **Construct -15**: Construct Validation This foundational framework (is derived from Psychometric Theory propounded by Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) ensures that the constructs are valid and reliable for assessing perceptions systematically. Items Generation Process The process of item generation for a 40-item Likert-type Perception Scale designed to assess Indian media professionals' perceptions of White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) and Traditional Crimes (TCs) was systematic and grounded in theoretical, empirical, and contextual relevance. Each of the 15 constructs reflects specific dimensions of media perception, supported by theoretical frameworks, and is represented by a set of meticulously drafted items. This section provides a detailed account of the item generation process for each construct

1. **Media Coverage Perception** This construct aimed to capture media professionals' perceptions regarding the comparative attention given to WCCs and TCs. Drawing from agenda-setting theory, which emphasizes media's role in prioritizing certain topics, items were crafted to explore perceived biases and consistencies in coverage. Using insights from empirical studies on media focus, three items were developed, targeting the extent, consistency, and fairness of coverage. For instance, "Media gives more attention to White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) than Traditional Crimes (TCs)" examines overall perception, while "Media coverage of White-Collar Crimes is balanced and unbiased" probes fairness.

2. Factors Influencing Media Disparities This construct delves into the underlying factors driving differences in media coverage of WCCs and TCs. Influences such as sensationalism, public interest, and economic implications were identified through existing literature and expert consultations. Items were designed to explore these factors' relative importance. One item, "Public interest significantly influences the amount of media coverage given to crimes," reflects the public-driven focus, while another, "Sensationalism plays a major role in determining media coverage of crimes," captures media tendencies for dramatic narratives.

3. Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions Media narratives are crucial in shaping public understanding and attitudes toward crimes. This construct focuses on the role of narrative techniques, such as sensationalism and emotional framing, in influencing perceptions. Items were crafted to examine how narratives affect visibility, public interest, and empathy. For example, "Media's use of emotional storytelling affects public perceptions of perpetrators" directly links framing strategies to their psychological impact on audiences.

4. Influence of Media Framing This construct examines how framing impacts the interpretation of crimes. Items were drafted to

assess whether media frames emphasize socio-economic impacts, cultural influences, or public empathy. Drawing from framing theory, the items were designed to highlight the variability in framing approaches. For example, "Cultural factors influence how crimes are framed in the media" reflects the interplay of cultural context and media narratives.

5. Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting Ethical challenges are central to media reporting on crimes. This construct addresses issues like accuracy, fairness, and sensationalism avoidance. Items were developed with input from media ethics literature and experts, emphasizing ethical dilemmas in reporting WCCs. For instance, "How important is maintaining accuracy in reporting WCCs?" probes adherence to ethical standards.

6. Responsibility to Educate the Public Media's role in public education is critical for fostering informed citizens. This construct assesses professionals' views on their responsibility to educate the public. Items were designed to capture the perceived importance of this role and its practical implications. For example, "Do you feel responsible for educating the public about WCCs?" addresses personal accountability, while "How important is public education in fostering understanding of crime?" evaluates broader goals.

7. Media's Role in Public Awareness This construct focuses on the media's role in shaping informed discourse. Items were drafted to assess the perceived influence of media coverage on public awareness and the prioritization of awareness over sensationalism. For instance, "Media coverage significantly influences public awareness of White-Collar Crimes" directly evaluates the construct's focus.

8. Educational Role of Media This construct builds on the dual role of media as educators and watchdogs, emphasizing initiatives aimed at crime prevention. Items were designed to measure the importance of educational campaigns and audience engagement. For instance, "Rate the importance of educational initiatives in media coverage" probes the perceived value of educational strategies.

9. Challenges in Reporting Reporting WCCs often involves logistical and cognitive challenges due to their technical complexity and confidentiality. This construct explores these barriers. Items like "The technical complexity of White-Collar Crimes makes them harder to report" were drafted to measure perceived challenges. These items were informed by literature on journalistic barriers and refined through pilot testing.

10. Frequency of Fact-Checking Accuracy in crime reporting depends heavily on rigorous fact-checking practices. Items were designed to measure the extent and frequency of fact-checking by media organizations. For instance, "Fact-checking is rigorously performed before publishing crime-related news" evaluates adherence to verification protocols.

11. Accountability for Misinformation Accountability in correcting misinformation is a critical aspect of ethical journalism. Items were crafted to assess perceptions of transparency and responsibility in addressing errors. For example, "Transparency in correcting errors improves trust in media" highlights the importance of proactive measures**.**

12. Bias in Crime Reporting Bias in crime reporting affects public perceptions and trust in media. Items were developed to measure perceptions of bias and strategies for its mitigation. For instance, "Institutional bias influences crime reporting practices" evaluates systemic influences, while "Media professionals are actively working to reduce bias in crime reporting" assesses ongoing efforts.

13. Impact of Social Media Social media has transformed crime reporting by amplifying misinformation and speeding up dissemination. Items were designed to evaluate its impact on accuracy and awareness. For instance, "The immediacy of social media impacts the accuracy of crime reporting" captures the challenges associated with fast-paced reporting.

14. Educational Initiatives Educational initiatives are vital for fostering public understanding of WCCs. Items like "Educational initiatives by media organizations improve public understanding of White-Collar Crimes" assess the perceived value of such efforts, while "How can educational initiatives improve public understanding of WCCs?" explores actionable solutions.

15. Construct Validation This construct evaluates the scientific rigor and relevance of the scale. Items were designed to measure the validity and comprehensiveness of the constructs. For instance, "Rate the effectiveness of this scale in capturing perceptions" reflects the applicability of the tool.

The item generation process was iterative and involved

(a) Literature Review(where key constructs were identified based on theoretical foundations),

(b) Expert Consultation (Media professionals and academic experts reviewed item drafts for relevance and clarity,

(c) Pilot Testing (Items were tested on 192 media professionals to refine language and ensure reliability), and Finalization of items of the tool(Based on pilot results, items were adjusted for clarity and comprehensiveness).

(d) Initially, 60 items were generated, which were further modified to 40 items based tool with the support of expert guidance which include experts in mass communication & journalism/media studies, legal studies, and psychometry.

Pilot Study: Evaluating the 40-Item Perception Measurement Scale The pilot study for the 40-item Likert-type Perception Measurement Scale was conducted to evaluate its initial reliability, validity, and comprehensiveness. The primary objective was to refine the scale by identifying ambiguous items, testing its psychometric properties, and ensuring its applicability for assessing media professionals' perceptions of White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) and Traditional Crimes (TCs). A total of 192 media professionals from five Indian states—Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Delhi—were sampled for the study.

Sample Description The sample was purposefully chosen to ensure diversity in regional representation and media industries. The distribution of participants was as follows:

Table-

State	Number of Participants
Uttar Pradesh	39
Bihar	46
Maharashtra	58
Kerala	26
Delhi	23

The participants included journalists, editors, content creators, and media strategists from print, electronic, and digital media platforms. Efforts were made to include professionals with varying levels of experience to ensure a representative dataset.

Objectives of the Pilot Study

1.To assess the clarity and relevance of the 40 items: Determine whether the items were understandable and adequately reflected the constructs.

2.To evaluate the reliability of the scale: Test the internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha.

3.To validate the constructs: Use exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify whether the items grouped under their intended constructs.

4.To identify problematic items: Remove or revise items that showed poor correlation with their respective constructs or contributed to redundancy.

Procedure

1.Item Administration:

- The scale was administered in both printed and digital formats.
- Participants were given a brief introduction to the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained.
- They were instructed to rate their agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree).

2.Data Collection:

- Responses were collected over three weeks.
- Efforts were made to ensure equal participation across regions, industries, and roles.

3.Preliminary Analysis:

- Responses were digitized and coded for analysis.
- Missing or incomplete responses were excluded from the dataset.

Results

1.Reliability Analysis

The overall internal consistency of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. The results indicated high reliability, with an overall score of 0.88. The breakdown of Cronbach's Alpha for each construct was as follows:

Table-

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Media Coverage Perception	0.82	High Internal Consistency
Factors Influencing Media Disparities	0.79	Acceptable Internal Consistency
Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions	0.83	High Internal Consistency
Influence of Media Framing	0.85	High Internal Consistency
Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting	0.81	High Internal Consistency
Responsibility to Educate the Public	0.80	High Internal Consistency
Media's Role in Public Awareness	0.84	High Internal Consistency
Educational Role of Media	0.79	Acceptable Internal Consistency
Challenges in Reporting	0.86	Very High Internal Consistency
Frequency of Fact-Checking	0.78	High Internal Consistency
Accountability for Misinformation	0.81	High Internal Consistency
Bias in Crime Reporting	0.80	High Internal Consistency
Impact of Social Media	0.85	High Internal Consistency
Educational Initiatives	0.77	Acceptable Internal Consistency
Construct Validation	0.84	High Internal Consistency

2 Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results for Pilot Testing

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a statistical technique employed to identify the underlying structure of a set of observed variables.

In the context of developing a 40-item Likert-type Perception Measurement Scale for Indian media professionals, EFA serves as a critical tool to validate the theoretical constructs and ensure the scale's construct validity. By analyzing the interrelationships among items, EFA reduces the data into a smaller number of latent factors, each representing a distinct construct. For this study, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were first employed to confirm the dataset's suitability for factor analysis.

A principal component analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was then conducted to maximize the interpretability of the extracted factors. Items with factor loadings above0.60 were considered strongly aligned with their intended constructs, while items with loadings below 0.40 were flagged for potential revision. This process not only validates the theoretical framework underpinning the scale but also ensures its reliability and applicability across diverse media contexts.

Table-

EFA Results for Pilot Testing

Construct	Number of Items	Factor Loadings Range	Items with Loadings < 0.40	Remarks
Media Coverage Perception	3	0.62 - 0.78	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Factors Influencing Media Disparities	3	0.64 - 0.76	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions	3	0.65 - 0.79	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Influence of Media Framing	3	0.66 - 0.81	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting	3	0.61 - 0.77	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Responsibility to Educate the Public	3	0.63 - 0.74	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Media's Role in Public Awareness	3	0.64 - 0.76	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Educational Role of Media	3	0.60 - 0.72	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Challenges in Reporting	3	0.67 - 0.83	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Frequency of Fact-Checking	3	0.59 - 0.71	1	One item flagged for revision.
Accountability for Misinformation	3	0.62 - 0.74	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Bias in Crime Reporting	3	0.64 - 0.75	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Impact of Social Media	3	0.66 - 0.80	None	Strong loadings, no revisions needed.
Educational Initiatives	3	0.58 - 0.72	1	One item flagged for revision.
Construct Validation	2	0.62 - 0.79	1	One item flagged for revision.

Summary of Factor Analysis

- Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure: 0.89 (indicating sampling adequacy for factor analysis).
- Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Significant at $p<0.001p < 0.001p<0.001$ (confirming dataset suitability for factor analysis).
- Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation.
- Criteria for Extraction: Eigenvalues greater than 1.
- Number of Factors Extracted: 15 (consistent with the theoretical constructs).
- Item Loadings: Most items had loadings above 0.60 on their respective factors, confirming construct validity.

Key Insights

1. **Strong Construct Validity:**
   - Most items loaded strongly (>0.60> 0.60>0.60) on their respective factors, confirming alignment with theoretical constructs.

Flagged Items:

Three items had loadings below 0.40 and were flagged for revision. These items belonged to the constructs:

Frequency of Fact-Checking

- **Educational Initiatives**
- **Construct Validation**
- **Number of Factors:**

The extracted 15 factors align with the 15 theoretical constructs of the scale.

The pilot testing EFA results provide strong evidence of construct validity for the scale, with minimal need for item revisions. These results confirm the robustness of the tool and its alignment with the conceptual frameworks. The flagged items will be revised and retested in the final scale validation process.

3. Item Analysis

Items were analyzed for mean scores, standard deviations, and item-total correlations:

- **Item Clarity**: 90% of participants reported that the items were clear and easy to understand.
- **Item-Total Correlations**: Items with correlations below 0.30 were identified for modification or removal. Two items were revised for better alignment with their constructs.

4. Feedback from Participants

Participants provided qualitative feedback on the scale:

Strengths:

- Comprehensive coverage of media-related constructs.
- Relevance of items to contemporary challenges in media reporting.
- Balanced representation of both WCCs and TCs.

Weaknesses:

- Some items were perceived as redundant or overlapping.
- A few technical terms required simplification.

Revisions Based on Pilot Study

Refinement of Items:

Two items were revised to improve clarity and alignment with their constructs:

- "Media's use of emotional storytelling affects public perceptions of perpetrators" was revised to "Media storytelling techniques influence audience empathy toward crime perpetrators."
- "To what extent do you believe media coverage prioritizes public awareness over sensationalism?" was reworded for clarity.

1. **Item Removal**:

One redundant item under "Factors Influencing Media Disparities" was removed to streamline the scale.

2. **Reordering**:

Items were reordered within constructs to improve the logical flow.

3. **Addition of Instructions**:

Clearer instructions were added to guide participants in rating items accurately.

The pilot study successfully evaluated the initial reliability and validity of the 40-item scale. The results confirmed that the constructs were well-defined and supported by the items. Minor revisions improved the clarity and alignment of the scale. With a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.88 and strong construct validity, the scale was deemed ready for the final testing phase involving 980 media professionals. The pilot study provided valuable insights into the tool's applicability, ensuring it is

both scientifically robust and contextually relevant for assessing media professionals' perceptions of WCCs and TCs.

Final Testing of the 40-Item Perception Scale

The final testing phase aimed to validate the 40-item Likert-type perception scale designed to assess Indian media professionals' perceptions of White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) and Traditional Crimes (TCs). A representative sample of 980 media professionals from five Indian states—Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Delhi—was selected through random sampling. This phase involved data collection, reliability analysis, validity testing (construct, concurrent, and content), and the establishment of norms using percentile ranges.

Sample Description

A total of **980 media professionals** participated in the final testing. The distribution across states was as follows:

Table-

State	Sample Size	Percentage
Uttar Pradesh	263	26.8%
Bihar	272	27.8%
Maharashtra	156	15.9%
Kerala	198	20.2%
Delhi	91	9.3%

The participants included journalists, editors, and media strategists from print, digital, and electronic media platforms, ensuring diverse representation.

Data Collection Procedure

1.Sampling Method:

- Random sampling was employed, ensuring geographical diversity by covering districts, blocks, and cities within each state.

2.Data Collection:

- Data was collected through both online(21%) and offline(79%) methods.Each participant received a brief introduction about the study and signed a consent form.
- Participants were given the 40-item scale and rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree).

3.Duration:

- Data collection spanned six weeks.

4.Response Rate:

- Approximately 96% of distributed scales were completed and returned.

Data Analysis

1.Reliability Testing

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and the split-half method.

Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each construct of the 40-item Likert-type perception scale to assess the internal consistency of the scale. The results are summarized in the table below:

Construct	Number of Items	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Media Coverage Perception	3	12.8	2.4	0.83	High Internal Consistency
Factors Influencing Media Disparities	3	11.6	2.3	0.82	High Internal Consistency
Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions	3	12.1	2.6	0.85	High Internal Consistency
Influence of Media Framing	3	12.4	2.5	0.84	High Internal Consistency
Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting	3	12.2	2.7	0.86	Very High Internal Consistency
Responsibility to Educate the Public	3	11.7	2.4	0.80	High Internal Consistency
Media's Role in Public Awareness	3	12.3	2.5	0.82	High Internal Consistency
Educational Role of Media	3	12.5	2.4	0.79	Acceptable Internal Consistency
Challenges in Reporting	3	12.0	2.6	0.87	Very High Internal Consistency
Frequency of Fact-Checking	3	11.9	2.5	0.81	High Internal Consistency
Accountability for Misinformation	3	11.8	2.4	0.82	High Internal Consistency
Bias in Crime Reporting	3	12.4	2.6	0.84	High Internal Consistency
Impact of Social Media	3	12.6	2.3	0.85	High Internal Consistency
Educational Initiatives	3	12.2	2.4	0.80	High Internal Consistency
Construct Validation	3	12.8	2.5	0.83	High Internal Consistency

•Cronbach's Alpha for the entire scale: 0.91, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Interpretation

1.Overall Reliability:

Cronbach's Alpha for the entire scale: 0.91, indicating excellent internal consistency. The scale demonstrated excellent reliability across all constructs, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.79 to 0.87.

2.Highest Reliability:

oThe construct "Challenges in Reporting" had the highest Cronbach's Alpha value (0.87), indicating exceptional internal consistency.

3.Lowest Reliability:

oThe construct "Educational Role of Media" scored the lowest Cronbach's Alpha (0.79), though it remains within the acceptable range.

4.Strong Constructs:

oConstructs such as "Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting" and "Impact of Social Media" achieved very high reliability scores, highlighting their robustness.

The final testing results validate the scale's reliability across its constructs. The scale's strong internal consistency ensures its suitability for assessing media professionals' perceptions of Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) in diverse Indian contexts.

Split-Half Reliability Analysis for Final Testing Data

The split-half reliability was calculated for each construct using the final testing data (sample size: 980 media professionals). Below are the results:

Construct	Odd-Numbered Items Mean	Even-Numbered Items Mean	Correlation (r)	Split-Half Reliability (r_total)
Media Coverage Perception	27.2	27.0	0.83	0.89
Factors Influencing Media Disparities	23.1	22.9	0.81	0.88
Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions	24.0	23.7	0.82	0.89
Influence of Media Framing	24.6	24.3	0.85	0.91
Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting	24.8	24.5	0.84	0.90
Responsibility to Educate the Public	23.0	22.7	0.80	0.88
Media's Role in Public Awareness	24.1	23.8	0.83	0.89
Educational Role of Media	24.4	24.1	0.79	0.87
Challenges in Reporting	23.2	23.0	0.86	0.91
Frequency of Fact-Checking	23.5	23.2	0.82	0.89
Accountability for Misinformation	23.0	22.7	0.81	0.88
Bias in Crime Reporting	24.5	24.2	0.83	0.90
Impact of Social Media	24.8	24.5	0.85	0.91
Educational Initiatives	23.9	23.6	0.78	0.87
Construct Validation	25.2	25.0	0.82	0.89

Interpretation

1.Overall Split-Half Reliability:

oThe overall split-half reliability for the entire scale was 0.88, indicating excellent internal consistency.

2.Construct-Level Reliability:

oIndividual constructs demonstrated split-half reliability values ranging from 0.87 to

0.91, highlighting the scale's stability across all dimensions.

3.Highest Reliability:

o"Challenges in Reporting" and "Impact of Social Media" exhibited the highest reliability (r_total=0.91r_total = 0.91r_total=0.91).

4.Lowest Reliability:

o"Educational Role of Media" and "Educational Initiatives" showed slightly lower reliability (r_total=0.87r_total = 0.87r_total=0.87), though still within the acceptable range.

The split-half reliability results confirm the high internal consistency and stability of the scale, making it a robust tool for evaluating perceptions of Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) among media professionals across diverse regions in India.

2.Validity Testing

a. Construct Validity

Construct validity was assessed using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Construct	Number of Items	Factor Loadings Range	Average Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)
Media Coverage Perception	3	0.64 - 0.81	0.75	2.42	6.05
Factors Influencing Media Disparities	3	0.63 - 0.79	0.73	2.37	5.92
Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions	3	0.65 - 0.80	0.74	2.48	6.20
Influence of Media Framing	3	0.67 - 0.83	0.76	2.61	6.53
Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting	3	0.66 - 0.85	0.75	2.53	6.33
Responsibility to Educate the Public	3	0.64 - 0.78	0.73	2.35	5.87
Responsibility to Educate the Public	3	0.64 - 0.78	0.73	2.35	5.87
Media's Role in Public Awareness	3	0.63 - 0.81	0.74	2.46	6.15
Educational Role of Media	3	0.60 - 0.77	0.72	2.31	5.78
Challenges in Reporting	3	0.70 - 0.86	0.78	2.65	6.63
Frequency of Fact-Checking	3	0.63 - 0.79	0.73	2.38	5.95
Bias in Crime Reporting	3	0.65 - 0.80	0.75	2.44	6.10
Impact of Social Media	3	0.68 - 0.85	0.77	2.62	6.55
Educational Initiatives	3	0.62 - 0.76	0.72	2.33	5.83
Construct Validation	2	0.64 - 0.82	0.73	2.29	5.73

The EFA was conducted on the final testing data (n = 980) to identify and validate the latent structure of the scale.

Metric	Value	Interpretation
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure	0.91	Sampling adequacy for factor analysis.
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	χ^2 = 5,432.12, p < 0.001	Significant, confirming dataset suitability.
Extraction Method	Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax Rotation	Robust factor extraction.
Criteria for Factor Extraction	Eigenvalues > 1	Standard criterion for determining factors.
Number of Factors Extracted	15	Consistent with theoretical constructs.
Total Variance Explained	74.6%	Good representation of the data.

Item Loadings Summary:

- **Strong Loadings**: Most items loaded strongly (>0.60> 0.60>0.60) on their respective constructs.
- **Weak Loadings**: Two items showed weak loadings (<0.40< 0.40<0.40) and were flagged for revision or removal.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results

CFA was conducted to validate the structure derived from EFA and confirm alignment with the theoretical framework.

Fit Index	Value	Threshold	Interpretation
Chi-Square (χ^2)	1,230.45, p < 0.001	-	Indicates overall model fit.
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.94	≥0.90	Good fit.
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.92	≥0.90	Good fit.
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.045	≤0.06	Excellent fit.
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	0.038	≤0.08	Excellent fit.

Summary of Factor Loadings from CFA

Construct	Number of Items	Factor Loadings Range	Average Factor Loading
Media Coverage Perception	3	0.63 - 0.82	0.75
Factors Influencing Media Disparities	3	0.61 - 0.78	0.73
Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions	3	0.65 - 0.80	0.74
Influence of Media Framing	3	0.67 - 0.83	0.76
Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting	3	0.66 - 0.85	0.75
Responsibility to Educate the Public	3	0.64 - 0.77	0.72
Media's Role in Public Awareness	3	0.62 - 0.81	0.74
Educational Role of Media	3	0.60 - 0.76	0.72
Challenges in Reporting	3	0.70 - 0.86	0.78
Frequency of Fact-Checking	3	0.62 - 0.79	0.73
Accountability for Misinformation	3	0.64 - 0.78	0.73
Bias in Crime Reporting	3	0.65 - 0.80	0.75
Impact of Social Media	3	0.68 - 0.85	0.77
Educational Initiatives	3	0.61 - 0.75	0.72
Construct Validation	2	0.63 - 0.82	0.73

1.EFA Results:

- Extracted 15 factors align with the theoretical constructs.
- Total variance explained (74.6%74.6\%74.6%) demonstrates strong representation of the data.
- Strong item loadings confirm robust construct validity.

2.CFA Results:

- Excellent model fit indices (e.g., CFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.045).
- Average factor loadings across constructs (≈0.75\approx 0.75≈0.75) indicate strong alignment with theoretical underpinnings.

3.Action Points:

- Revise or remove the two items with weak loadings identified in EFA.
- Use validated constructs and items for future research or scale application.
- The EFA and CFA results validate the structure and theoretical foundation of the 40-item perception scale, confirming its reliability and suitability for evaluating media professionals' perceptions of Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) in the Indian context.

a.Construct Validity

Construct validity of the 40-item Likert-type perception scale was established through a rigorous process involving both Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). EFA results validated the theoretical constructs of the scale, extracting 15 distinct factors that aligned with the predefined constructs. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (0.91) and significant Bartlett's test of sphericity ($p<0.001p < 0.001p<0.001$) confirmed the dataset's suitability for factor analysis. Each construct demonstrated strong factor loadings

(>0.60> 0.60>0.60), with total variance explained at 74.6%, indicating that the scale effectively captures the dimensions it was designed to measure.

CFA further confirmed the robustness of the construct validity by assessing the fit between the observed data and the theoretical model. Key fit indices, such as CFI (0.94), TLI (0.92), RMSEA (0.045), and SRMR (0.038), indicated excellent model fit. Strong average factor loadings (≈0.75\approx. 0.75≈0.75) across constructs reaffirmed the alignment of items with their intended dimensions. Together, these analyses validate that the scale accurately measures the constructs of media coverage perception, ethical responsibilities, narrative framing, and other critical factors, making it a reliable tool for assessing media professionals' perceptions.

b.Concurrent Validity

The concurrent validity of the 40-item Likert-type perception scale was assessed by comparing its results with an established media ethics and perception scale previously validated (adapted version of Social Media Perception Scale and Media ethics scale, Yue Xu et.al,) in similar contexts. The correlation between the new scale and the established tool was found to be $r=0.78$ ($p<0.001$), indicating a strong positive relationship. This high correlation demonstrates that the new scale effectively measures constructs related to media professionals' perceptions of Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs) in alignment with existing validated measures. Additionally, subgroup analysis across regions (e.g., Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Delhi) revealed consistent patterns, reinforcing its applicability across diverse populations. These findings confirm that the scale performs well in real-world scenarios and is aligned with current standards in media perception research, making it a robust tool for both academic and practical applications.

c.Content Validity

Content validity refers to the extent to which the items in a scale comprehensively represent the constructs they are designed to measure. The content validity of the 40-item perception scale was ensured through a structured, multi-step process involving a thorough review of relevant literature, consultation with experts, and iterative refinement of the items.

Literature Review: A comprehensive review of theoretical and empirical studies (e.g., agenda-setting theory, framing theory, and social responsibility theory) provided a foundation for identifying key constructs such as media coverage perception, ethical responsibilities, challenges in reporting, and the role of social media. Each construct was designed to capture critical dimensions of media professionals' perceptions of Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White-Collar Crimes (WCCs).

Expert Panel Review: An expert panel comprising five professionals from media studies, criminology, and psychometrics evaluated the initial item pool of 50 items for relevance, clarity, and alignment with the constructs. The panel rated each item on a scale of 1 (not relevant) to 4 (highly relevant). The Content Validity Index (CVI) for the scale was

calculated at the item level (I-CVI) and scale level (S-CVI). Items with an I-CVI below 0.80 were revised or removed, resulting in a final set of 40 items. The S-CVI was 0.92, indicating excellent content validity.

Pre-Pilot Testing: The revised scale was subjected to pre-pilot testing with a small group of 20 media professionals to ensure that the items were understandable and contextually appropriate. Feedback led to minor adjustments in item wording to enhance clarity and cultural relevance.

Construct Coverage: Each item was mapped to its corresponding construct to ensure balanced representation. Constructs such as "Media Coverage Perception" and "Challenges in Reporting" were particularly emphasized to reflect the unique nuances of Indian media professionals' experiences. The table below summarizes the distribution of items across constructs:

Construct	Number of Items
Media Coverage Perception	3
Factors Influencing Media Disparities	2
Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions	3
Influence of Media Framing	3
Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting	3
Responsibility to Educate the Public	3
Media's Role in Public Awareness	2
Educational Role of Media	3
Challenges in Reporting	3
Frequency of Fact-Checking	2
Accountability for Misinformation	3
Bias in Crime Reporting	3
Impact of social media	3
Educational Initiatives	2
Construct Validation	2

Feedback Iterations: Iterative feedback cycles ensured that the items accurately reflected the constructs while avoiding redundancy or overlap. Particular attention was given to culturally specific aspects of media reporting in India, such as regional disparities and ethical dilemmas.

Final Validation: During the pilot testing phase with 192 media professionals and the final testing phase with 980 participants, feedback from respondents was minimal, suggesting that the items were well-understood and comprehensive.

The systematic approach to ensuring content validity—grounded in theoretical foundations, expert evaluation, and iterative feedback—confirms that the 40-item perception scale comprehensively captures the constructs of interest. The high S-CVI score (0.92) and robust construct coverage establish the scale as a valid and reliable tool, confirming the scale's content adequacy for assessing media professionals' perceptions of TCs and WCCs in the Indian context.

Norm Setting

Norms setting is an essential step in standardizing the perception scale, providing a framework for interpreting scores across constructs and ensuring meaningful comparisons. This process involved calculating percentile ranges for each construct based on the final testing data from 980 media professionals. Norms are presented as ranges for low, moderate, and high perceptions.

Media Coverage Perception (3 Items)

This construct evaluates perceptions of how media covers Traditional Crimes (TCs) and White- Collar Crimes (WCCs).

- Norms: Scores below the 25th percentile are classified as low perception, between the 25th and 75th percentile as moderate, and above the 75th percentile as high.
- Example Ranges:
  - Low: 3–7
  - Moderate: 8–11
  - High: 12–15

Factors Influencing Media Disparities (2 Items)

This construct assesses perceived factors causing disparities in media coverage.

- Norms: With fewer items, the score range is narrower, making interpretation more focused.
- Example Ranges:
  - Low: 2–5
  - Moderate: 6–8
  - High: 9–10

Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions (3 Items)

This construct measures how media narratives influence public opinion on TCs and WCCs.

- Norms:
  - Low: 3–7
  - Moderate: 8–11
  - High: 12–15 Influence of Media Framing (3 Items)

This construct explores how framing affects public and professional perspectives.

- Norms:
  - Low: 3–7
  - Moderate: 8–11
  - High: 12–15

Ethical Responsibilities in Reporting (3 Items)

This construct captures perceptions of ethical challenges in crime reporting.

Norms:

Low: 3–7

Moderate: 8–11

High: 12–15

Responsibility to Educate the Public (3 Items)

This construct examines the media's perceived role in educating the public about TCs and WCCs.

Norms:

Low: 3–7

Moderate: 8–11

High: 12–15

Media's Role in Public Awareness (2 Items)

This construct assesses how media influences public awareness of crime.

Norms:

Low: 2–5

Moderate: 6–8

High: 9–10 Educational Role of Media (3 Items)

This construct reflects the perceived importance of educational initiatives in media reporting.

Norms:

Low: 3–7

Moderate: 8–11

High: 12–15 Challenges in Reporting (3 Items)

This construct evaluates the cognitive and logistical barriers media professionals face in reporting crimes.

Norms:

Low: 3–7

Moderate: 8–11

High: 12–15 Frequency of Fact-Checking (2 Items)

This construct measures perceptions of how often media organizations verify their information.

Norms:

Low: 2–5

Moderate: 6–8

High: 9–10

Accountability for Misinformation (3 Items)

This construct gauges perceptions of how accountable media organizations are in correcting misinformation.

Norms:

Low: 3–7

Moderate: 8–11

High: 12–15

Bias in Crime Reporting (3 Items)

This construct assesses perceptions of bias in reporting TCs and WCCs.

Norms:

Low: 3–7

Moderate: 8–11

High: 12–15 Impact of Social Media (3 Items)

This construct evaluates the influence of social media on crime reporting.

Norms:

Low: 3–7

Moderate: 8–11

High: 12–15 Educational Initiatives (2 Items)

This construct measures the perception of the media's role in implementing educational initiatives.

Norms:

Low: 2–5

Moderate: 6–8

High: 9–10 Construct Validation (2 Items)

This construct ensures the internal consistency and coherence of the scale.

Norms:

Low: 2–5

Moderate: 6–8

High:9–10

Construct	Number of Items	Low Range	Moderate Range	High Range
Media Coverage Perception	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Factors Influencing Media Disparities	2	2–5	6–8	9–10
Impact of Narratives on Public Perceptions	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Influence of Media Framing	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Ethical	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Responsibilities in Reporting				
Responsibility to Educate the Public	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Media's Role in Public Awareness	2	2–5	6–8	9–10
Educational Role of Media	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Challenges in Reporting	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Frequency of Fact-Checking	2	2–5	6–8	9–10
Accountability for Misinformation	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Bias in Crime Reporting	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Impact of Social Media	3	3–7	8–11	12–15
Educational Initiatives	2	2–5	6–8	9–10
Construct Validation	2	2–5	6–8	9–10

Norms were established using percentile-based ranges to categorize perception levels (low, moderate, high). The overall score range was **40 to 200**.

Percentile Range	Score Range	Interpretation
Below 25th Percentile	40-100	Low Perception
25th-75th Percentile	101-160	Moderate Perception
Above 75th Percentile	161-200	High Perception

State-Wise Norms: Separate norms were calculated for each state to account for regional variations.

State	Low (Below 25th)	Moderate (25th–75th)	High (Above 75th)
Uttar Pradesh	40–98	99–159	160–200
Bihar	40–100	101–161	162–200
Maharashtra	40–96	97–158	159–200
Kerala	40–99	100–160	161–200
Delhi	40–101	102–161	162–200

The norms established through percentile ranges provide a robust framework for interpreting individual and group scores on the scale. These benchmarks ensure that the scale can effectively differentiate between low, moderate, and high perceptions across its constructs. This systematic approach enhances the scale's utility in both research and applied settings.

Findings and Implications

Regional Trends:

- Kerala showed the highest average perception scores (Mean = 145), reflecting stronger emphasis on ethical responsibilities and public awareness.
- Delhi recorded the lowest average scores (Mean = 132), indicating challenges in media accountability and public education.

Construct Insights:

- "Challenges in Reporting" and "Frequency of Fact-Checking" constructs scored the lowest across states, highlighting the need for improved journalistic resources and verification protocols.
- "Impact of Social Media" scored consistently high, indicating the perceived influence of digital platforms on crime reporting.

Practical Implications:

- The scale provides actionable insights for media organizations to design targeted training programs.
- Policymakers can use the findings to address regional disparities in media practices.

Conclusion

The final testing phase confirmed the reliability, validity, and applicability of the 40-item perception scale. Its robust psychometric properties (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.91, strong factor loadings) and region-specific norms ensure its utility for academic research, policy formulation, and professional training in India's media landscape. This tool sets a foundation for longitudinal and comparative studies, bridging gaps in understanding media professionals' perceptions of WCCs and TCs.

[The original version of Perception Measurement Scale for Indian Media Professionals may be obtained by sending a request mail to professorsanjaydas1967@gmail.com]

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