

CIVIL SOCIETY CONTACT GROUP

The coverage of economic issues in contemporary print media in Tajikistan

Shakhlo Akobirova

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About the Civil Society Contact Group

This paper is one of a series of research papers produced by the Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG). The CSCG was established by International Alert within the framework of the EU-funded project 'Building Bridges: Promoting the role and capacity of civil society in Tajikistan', aiming to develop the analytical, research and reporting skills of Tajik civil society and to generate evidence-based and constructive recommendations on issues of acute importance to contemporary Tajik society. The CSCG is made up of representatives of local civil society, ranging from research NGOs and analytical agencies to independent mass media.

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Executive summary

This study focuses on one of the most challenging areas of analytical journalism – coverage of economic issues – in Tajikistan. Two leading Tajikistan newspapers mainly comprise the contemporary Tajik press – the largest independent Russian-language newspaper *Asia-Plus*, and the leading government newspaper *Jumhuriyat*. This study used a range of methods of information gathering, including an analysis of the aforementioned publications' content, focus groups, and individual in-depth interviews and surveys, to analyse the level and quality of Tajik media's coverage of the economy.

The main finding of the study was that publications on economic issues are in great demand among the public in Tajikistan. However, Tajik journalists are unable to fully meet the demand for quality and timely coverage of socio-economic issues. In addition, the study revealed that, to date, there has been little cooperation between journalists, local experts and economists in Tajikistan. All these factors affect both the overall quantity and quality of publications in the contemporary Tajik press.

This study made it possible to carry out a comparative analysis of analytical content published in the independent press and in government-sponsored, official publications. The author concludes with a number of recommendations to the main institutions working with the media, such as professional associations of journalists and official agencies. This study may not only be of interest to representatives of various stakeholder institutions, international agencies and local NGOs, but also to a wide range of experts and specialists.

1. Introduction

The most important aspect in the development of any country is the level of its economic development, and the welfare of its population and society. In this regard, a strong and independent media – capable of carrying out investigations and making well-founded and objective forecasts – plays an equally important part. Developing analytical journalism to cover socio-economic issues is vital, as these issues are particularly sensitive and important for the majority of the population.

Reading newspapers and other sources of analytical content is the initial basis of economic education for most people. It is the public's increase in the level of economic education and awareness that can enhance processes such as democratisation, transparency and public accountability, including matters of national budget transparency. However, awareness and participation of citizens in decision-making processes directly depends on the quality of the information provided to them.

One of the objectives of this study was to examine the trends and quality of analytical economic reporting in two leading Tajikistan newspapers – the largest independent Russian-language newspaper *Asia-Plus*, and the leading government newspaper *Jumhuriyat* – in the first trimester of 2015. A survey was conducted of media consumers and focus group discussions were conducted among journalists and economists. A special approach to the study of content covering economic issues was required.

The relationship between economic processes and the media is obvious. How the economy develops has an influence on what the media covers; the media, in turn, affects the level of economic development and, ultimately, society's welfare.

The importance of the study lies in the fact that both civil society and the government are interested in the public having a better awareness and understanding of the country's economic processes, for the public to be able to cooperate better with the government. Professional presentation, validity, timeliness and clarity of information constitute the notion of 'quality' of content, all of which are important for enhancing the economic literacy of the general public. Only in such a case will analytical observations about the economy be desired by and become accessible to an increasing number of people.

2. Methodology

The study's objectives were to:

- identify the main trends that arise when media consumers are provided with 1) general information about the economy, 2) analyses of the causes of different economic phenomena and 3) economic forecasts;
- evaluate the quality and availability of economic content: successes and gaps; and
- develop recommendations for journalists and editors on the coverage of economic issues, in order to increase said content's relevance and accessibility.

The research aimed to answer the question: **“What are the main trends in, and how accessible is, the coverage of economic issues in Tajikistan?”**

The study used qualitative and quantitative methods. The online survey system, SurveyMonkey, was used to conduct the survey of media consumers in Tajikistan. As well as that, we conducted one focus group consisting of journalists who write about the economy and one focus group comprised economists writing for the media, and analysed the content of the *Asia-Plus* and the *Jumhuriyat* newspapers covering the period from 1 January to 31 March 2015.

Journalists who write about the economy were asked the following questions:

Why do you write about economic issues?	Who are your readers? Who are your audiences/target audiences?
Why do you think economic news is important for the public?	Problems related to getting access to information.
What challenges do you encounter while collecting information?	Types of resources: government, non-government, international data
What areas of the economy are difficult to obtain data on?	Audiences' feedback, comments, call-ins.
What data do you refer to?	
Which topics are the most popular?	
What topics is it very difficult to get information on?	
Do you get any feedback and what is your readers' reaction to your publication overall?	
What do you think can be improved? (Provide recommendations.)	

The economists writing for the media were asked the following questions:

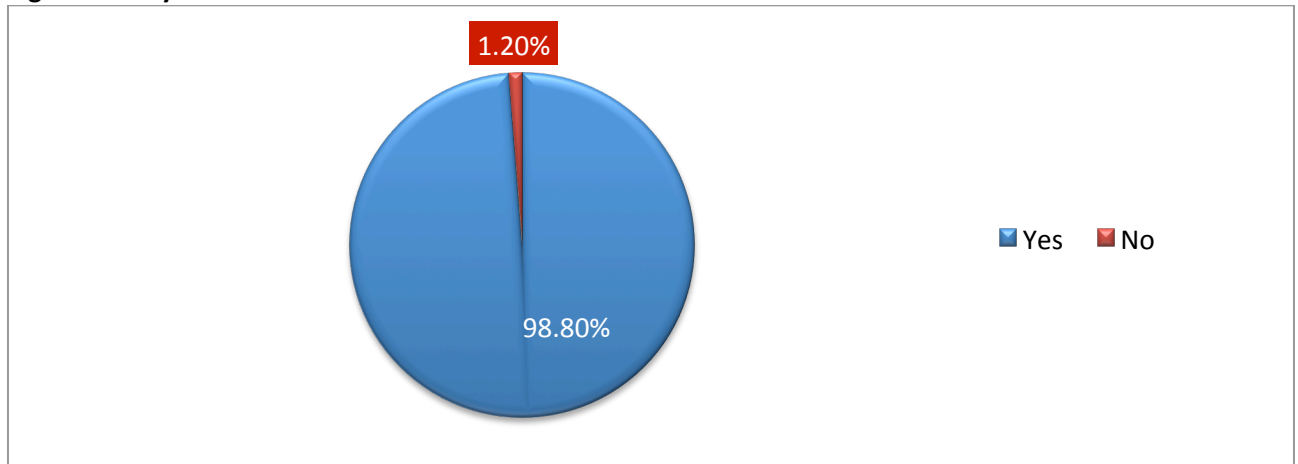
How do you cooperate with the media?	Do you go to the media with content, or does the media commission you to prepare content?
How often do you write for the media?	What do you write about? Do you think journalists can write competently on economic issues?
What skills or knowledge do you lack in the preparation of content?	What challenges do you face when writing content?
Do you know your readers?	Do you think economic news is important to people? Why?
Do you experience difficulties in collecting information?	What data do you use as reference material? Do you look for alternative sources of information?
What data do you refer to?	What resources? Government? Non-government? International data?
What topics are in greatest demand?	Audiences' feedback, comments, call-ins
What topics are very difficult to get information on?	
Do you get any feedback and how do your readers assess your publication overall?	
What do you think can be improved? (Provide recommendations.)	

3. Findings of the survey of media consumers

The survey of media consumers was conducted in the cities of Dushanbe, Khujand, Kurgan-Tyube, Kulyab and Khorog. One hundred and six participants took part in the survey, most of whom actively consume print media products.

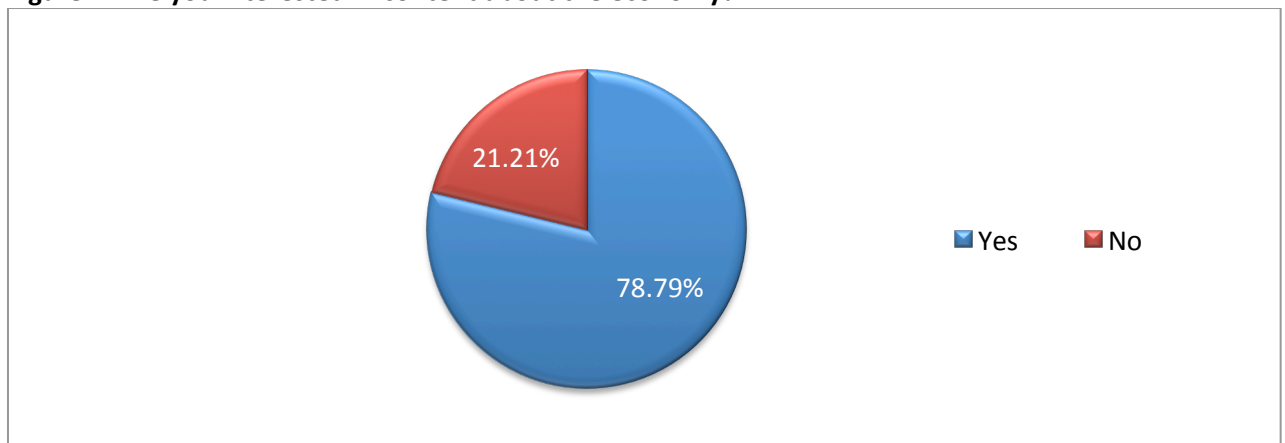
Almost all (98.80%) of the respondents said they want information on economic issues (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Do you want information on economic issues?



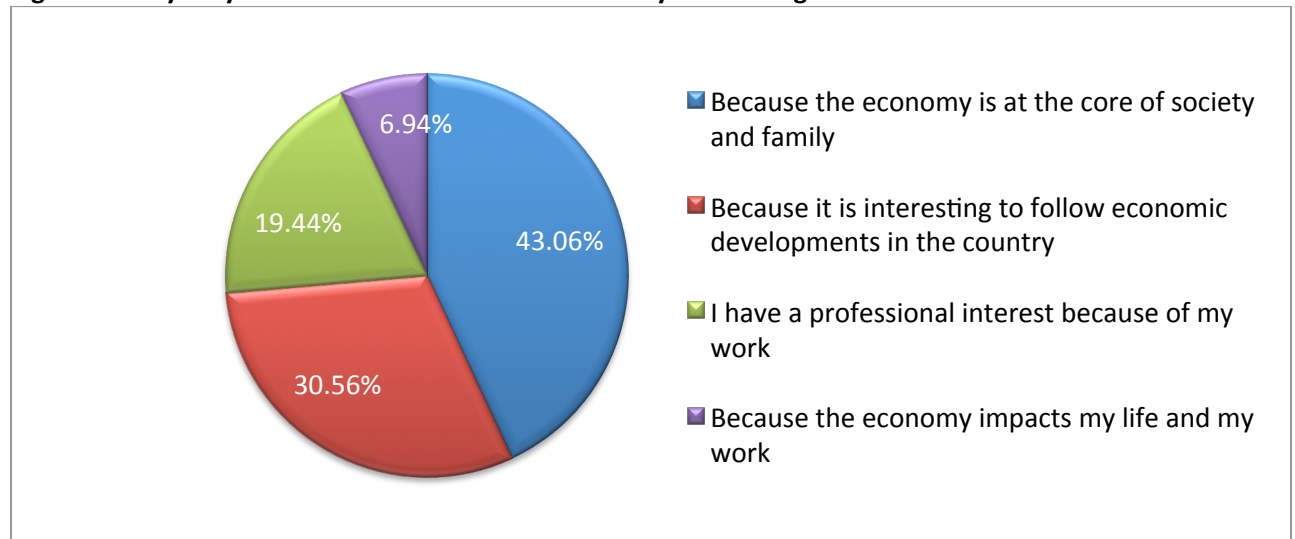
There are no specialist economic publications in Tajikistan, and those studying journalism at Tajik universities do not get special training in how to cover economic issues. All social and political publications, and radio and TV channels in the country cover economic subjects to varying degrees. Almost 80% of the respondents said they were interested in content about the economy (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Are you interested in content about the economy?



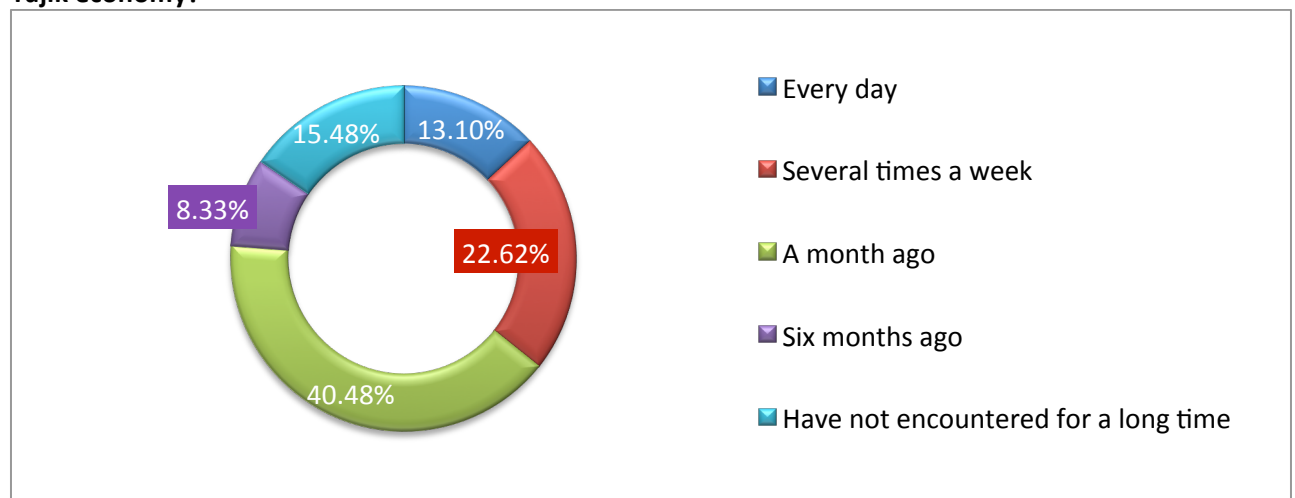
When asked why they find articles on the economy interesting, almost half the respondents (43.06%) said it is because economy is at the core of governmental affairs and family life. Over 30% find it interesting to learn about the latest economic developments in the country. Almost 20% of the respondents are interested in the economy because of the nature of their work and 7% believe that the economy affects their lives (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Why do you find content about the economy interesting?



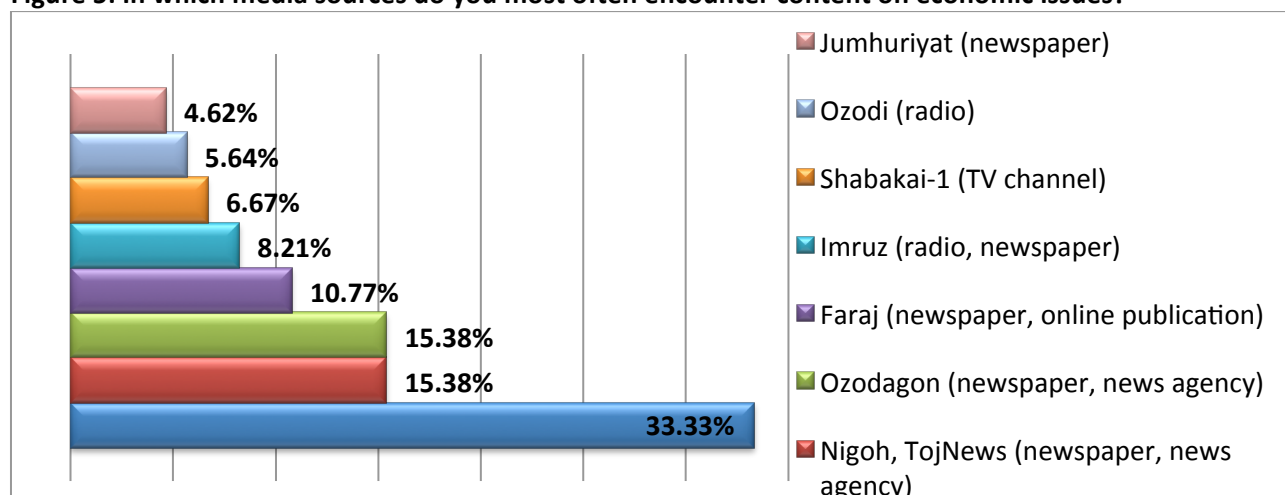
When asked about when they last encountered interesting content about the Tajik economy in the media, over 40% of the respondents said that it had been a month ago. Almost a quarter (22.62%) said they encountered it several times a week, while 13.10% found interesting content about the economy every day (Figure 4).

Figure 4: How often do you encounter, or when did you last encounter, interesting content about the Tajik economy?



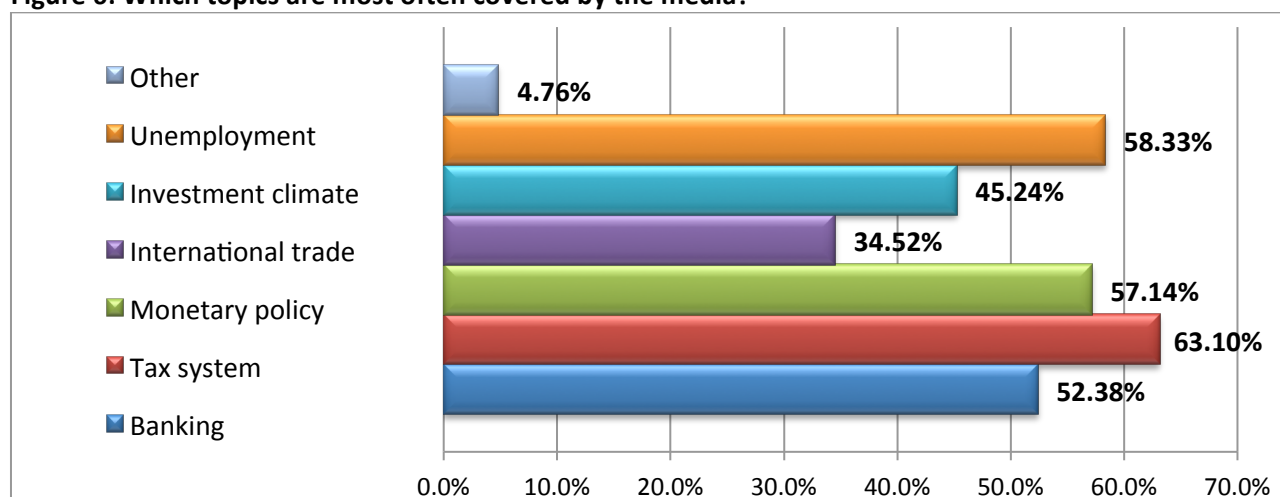
Asked in which Tajik media they often find content on economic issues, the respondents generally cited independent media. A third (33.33%) singled out the Asia-Plus media holding that consists of a newspaper, a radio channel and the Asia-Plus news agency. In shared second place were the Tochnyus agency (which publishes the *Nigoh* newspaper) and the Ozodagon news agency and newspaper, with each one being cited by 15.38% of the respondents. The independent newspaper *Faraj* and its online version were mentioned by 10.77% of the respondents. In fourth place came the only daily newspaper in the country, *Imruz News*, together with Imruz radio. The least popular sources were the Shabakai-1 national channel, Ozodi radio and the *Jumhuriyat* newspaper (Figure 5).

Figure 5: In which media sources do you most often encounter content on economic issues?



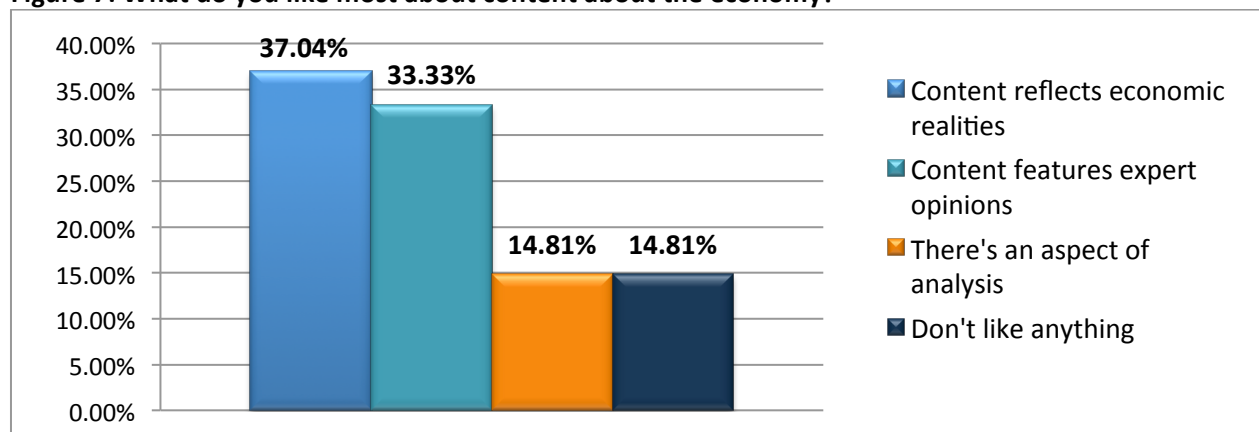
Respondents said topics such as banking, the taxation system, monetary policy, international trade, investment climate and unemployment were most often covered by the media (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Which topics are most often covered by the media?



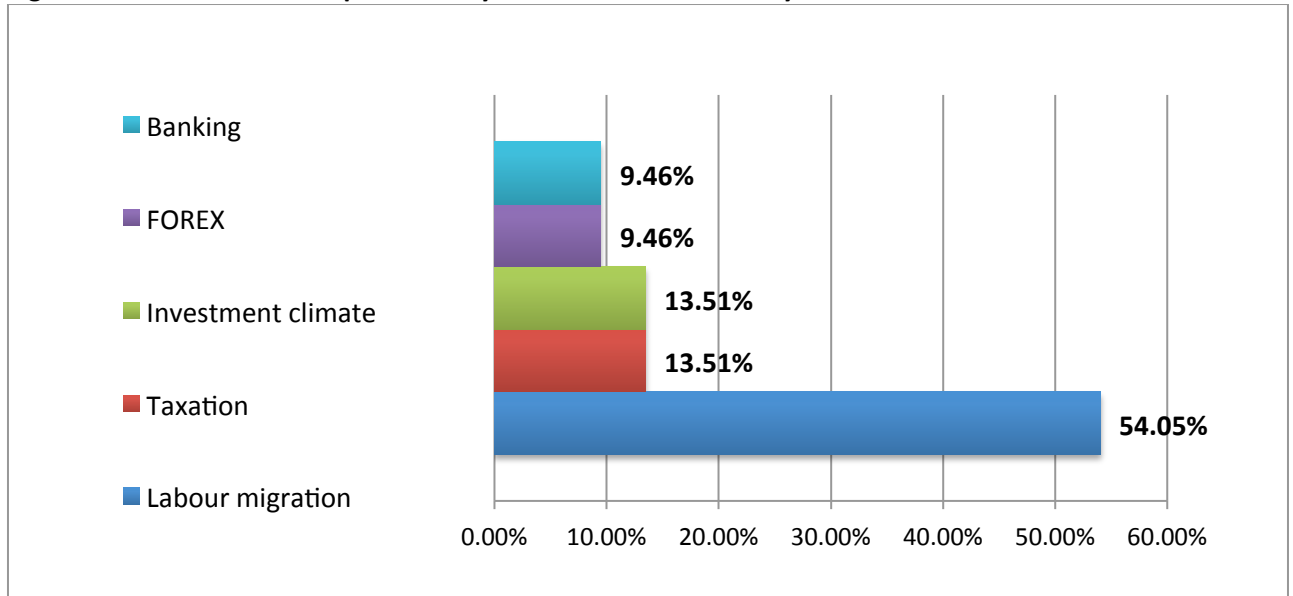
When asked about what they like most about media content on economic issues, 37.04% of the respondents said they prefer content that reflects economic realities, 33.33% said that they find expert opinions important, 14.81% liked the analytical aspect of the content and 14.81% did not like the content at all (Figure 7).

Figure 7: What do you like most about content about the economy?



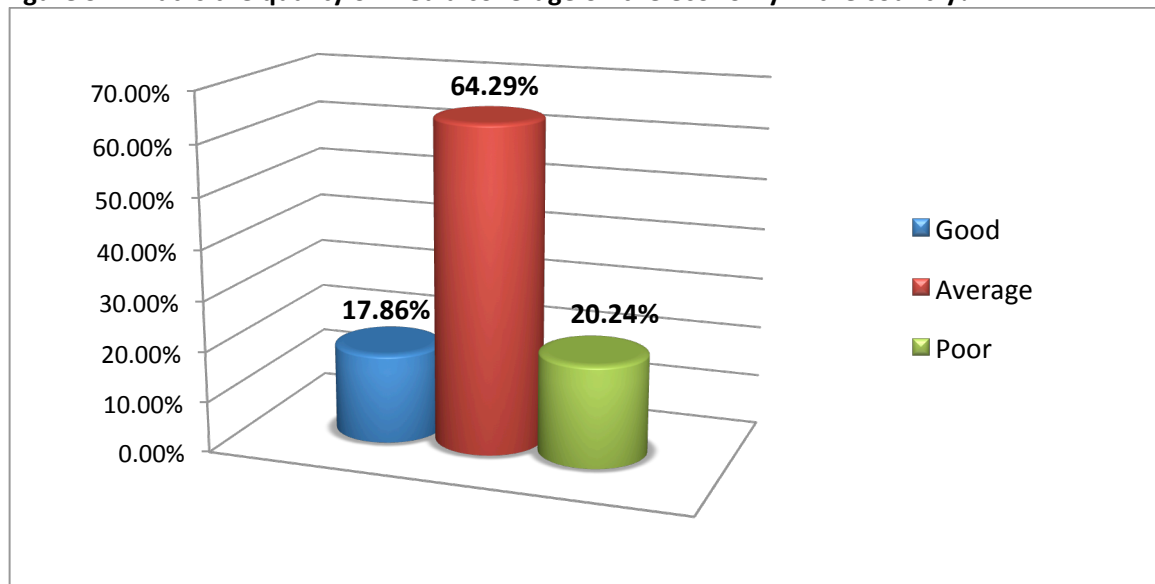
More than half (54.04%) of the respondents believe that the media does not pay enough attention to the issue of labour migration. Taxation and investment climate were less popular with the audiences – only 13.51% of the respondents wanted to see each of those issues covered by the media. Meanwhile, exchange rates and banking were each cited by only 9.46% of the respondents as being important topics (Figure 8).

Figure 8: What economic topics would you like to see covered by the media?



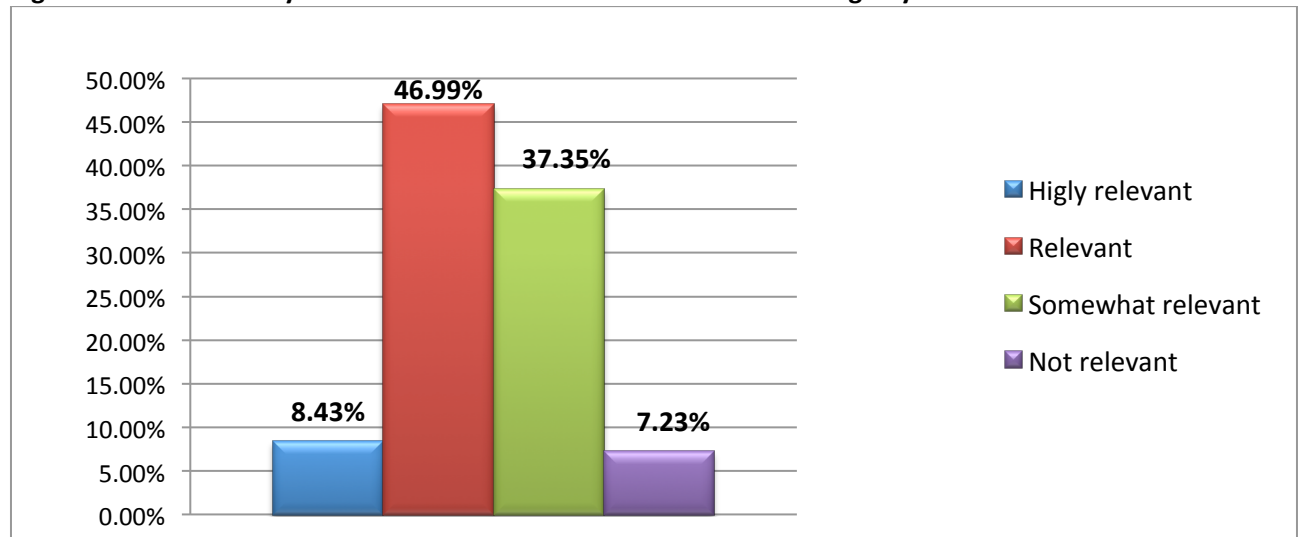
The majority of the respondents (64.29%) said they consider the media coverage of the economy to be of average quality. About a fifth (20.24%) believe that it's poor and only 17.86% consider it to be good (Figure 9).

Figure 9: What is the quality of media coverage on the economy in the country?



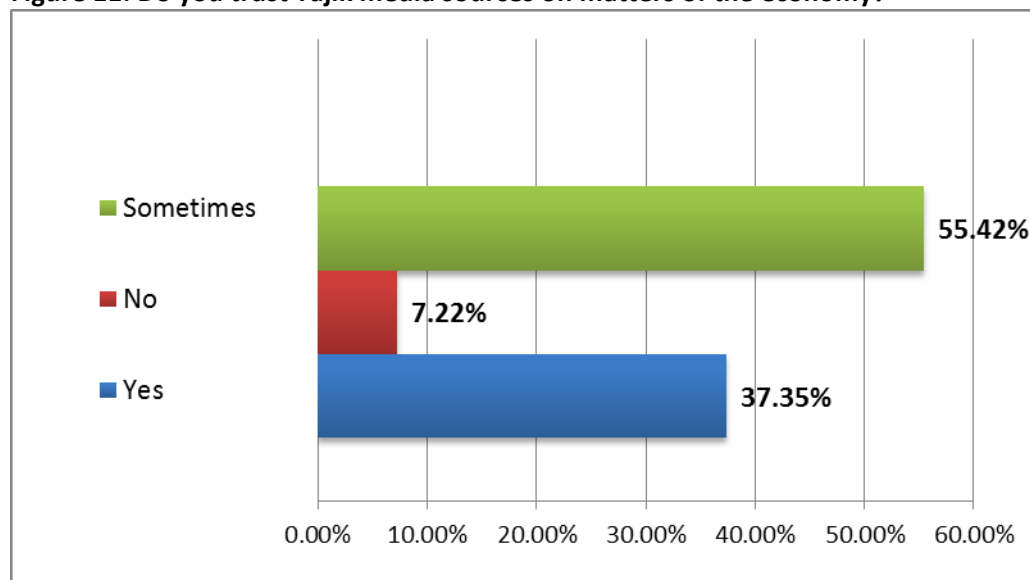
In terms of relevance, 46.99% of the respondents believe that the media covers topical/relevant issues, 37.35% said the topics covered are somewhat relevant and only 8.43% consider the subject matters to be highly relevant (Figure 10).

Figure 10: How would you rate the relevance of the economic coverage by the media?



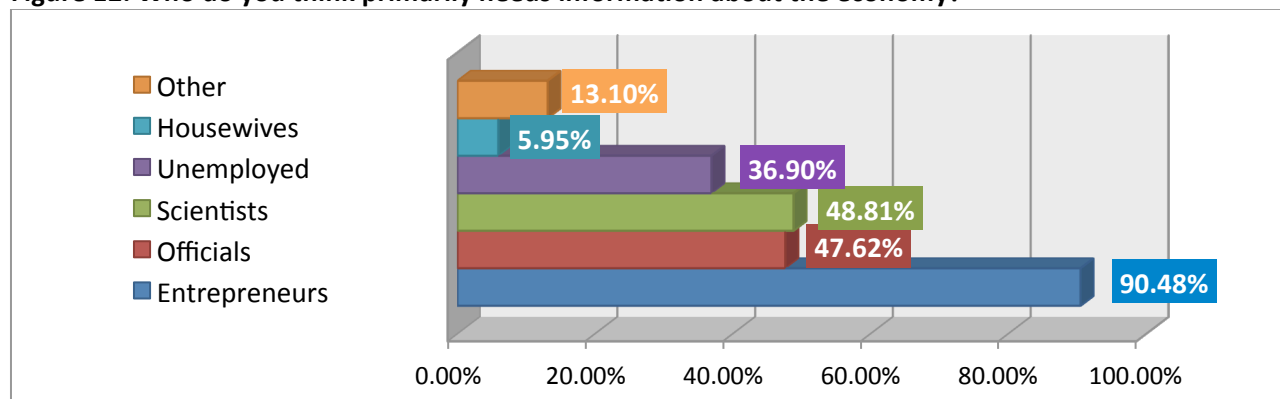
The level of public confidence in economic content in the media is not very high. More than half (55.42%) of the respondents said that they sometimes rely on the media, while 37.35% claimed to have trust in the media (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Do you trust Tajik media sources on matters of the economy?



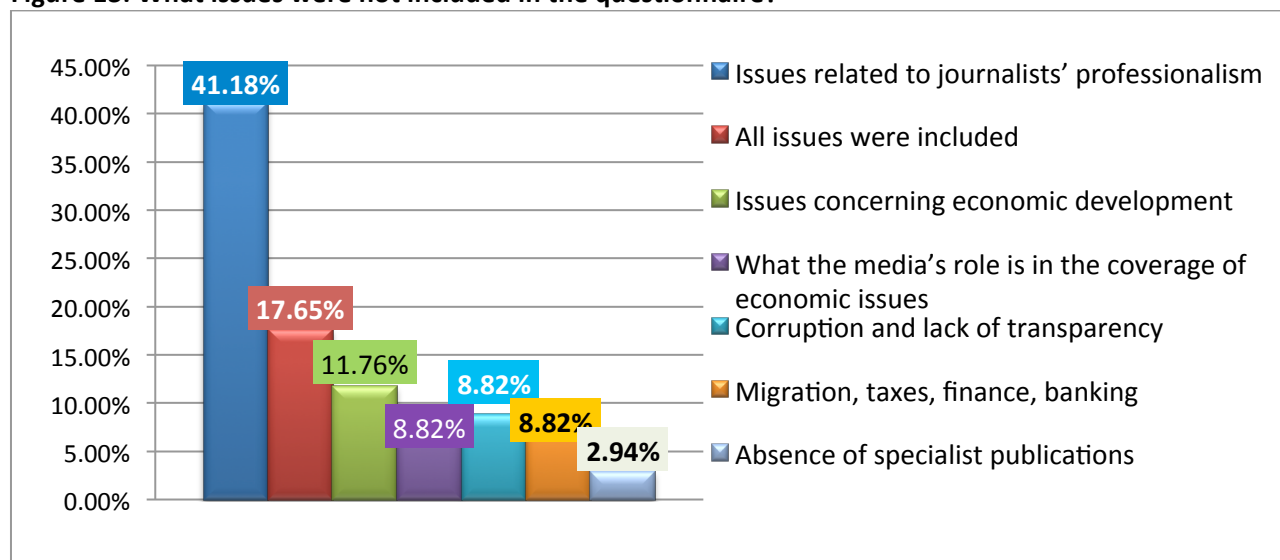
Almost all (90.48%) of the respondents claimed entrepreneurs are those who would particularly need information about the economy, but they also said it was important for scientists (48.81%) and officials (47.62%). More than a third (36.90%) of the respondents believe economic information also has a special value for the unemployed (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Who do you think primarily needs information about the economy?



Almost half of respondents (41.18%) cited that questions about the issues associated with journalists' professionalism were absent from the questionnaire. This was followed by questions about the media's role in the coverage of economic issues, and questions about corruption and lack of transparency of government agencies and the media itself; each one was cited by 8.82% of the respondents. A small number (2.94%) said the question of why there is an absence of specialist publications in the country was missing from the questionnaire (Figure 13).

Figure 13: What issues were not included in the questionnaire?



4. Content analysis of the *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat* newspapers

To determine the quality of economic coverage in the *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat* newspapers,¹ the author analysed their content from January 1 to March 31, 2015. We used content analysis methodology, developing a set of matrices that included parameters for comparison. We defined what media content must have to be of good quality, namely accessibility, validity, clarity and an evidence base.

The following two matrices were developed to perform the content analysis.

Matrix 1:

No	Date	Name	Author	Author's position/title	Genre	Subject matter	Scope	Feedback

Matrix 2:

No	Date	Publication	Author	Article title
Availability of content for an audience without specialist knowledge of the subject		Language	Terminology	Definitions
Clarity		Leads	Subtitles	Highlighted text/sections
Quality of the content's structure		Storyline	Development	Forecast
Balance in presenting the material		Several sources of information	Different views	Expert opinions

¹ The *Asia-Plus* newspaper was established by the news agency Asia-Plus in 2000. Its initial circulation was 1,500 copies. The newspaper's current circulation is 13,000 copies. *Asia-Plus* is the most widely read independent publication in Tajikistan. It is part of the Asia-Plus media holding which includes a news agency, a radio channel and a newspaper. The *Jumhuriyat* newspaper first appeared on 15 March 1925 under the name *Idi Tojik*. From its second issue, it changed its name to *Bedorii Tojik*. Over the 90 years of its existence, the newspaper has changed its name and alphabet several times. Famous Tajik personalities, such as Sadridin Aini, Bobojon Gafurov, Mirzo Tursunzoda and others, regularly published their articles in the newspaper. Post-independence, in the early 1990s, *Jumhuriyat* went through difficult times and was published irregularly. In 1995 the newspaper received the status of a Tajik government publication, and on 14 March 2000, by the order of President Emomali Rahmon, the newspaper was given the status of an official government publication. The newspaper comes out five days a week.

Evidence base	Official statistics	Specific story	Graphics	Photos	Figures	Anonymous sources
Relevance	Timeliness	Affects the lives of many people			Informs readers about new developments	
This is what people must know						
This is what people should know						
This is what people want to know						
This is something that is interesting to know						
The scope of the material	Socially significant			For a narrow circle of readers		
Feedback	Target audience’s reaction			Responses from readers		
Article’s characteristics	Provides results of analysis	Contains an element of prediction			Contains extra information to aid in the understanding of the story/issue	
Articles featuring content about companies	Large companies	Medium-sized companies			Small companies	

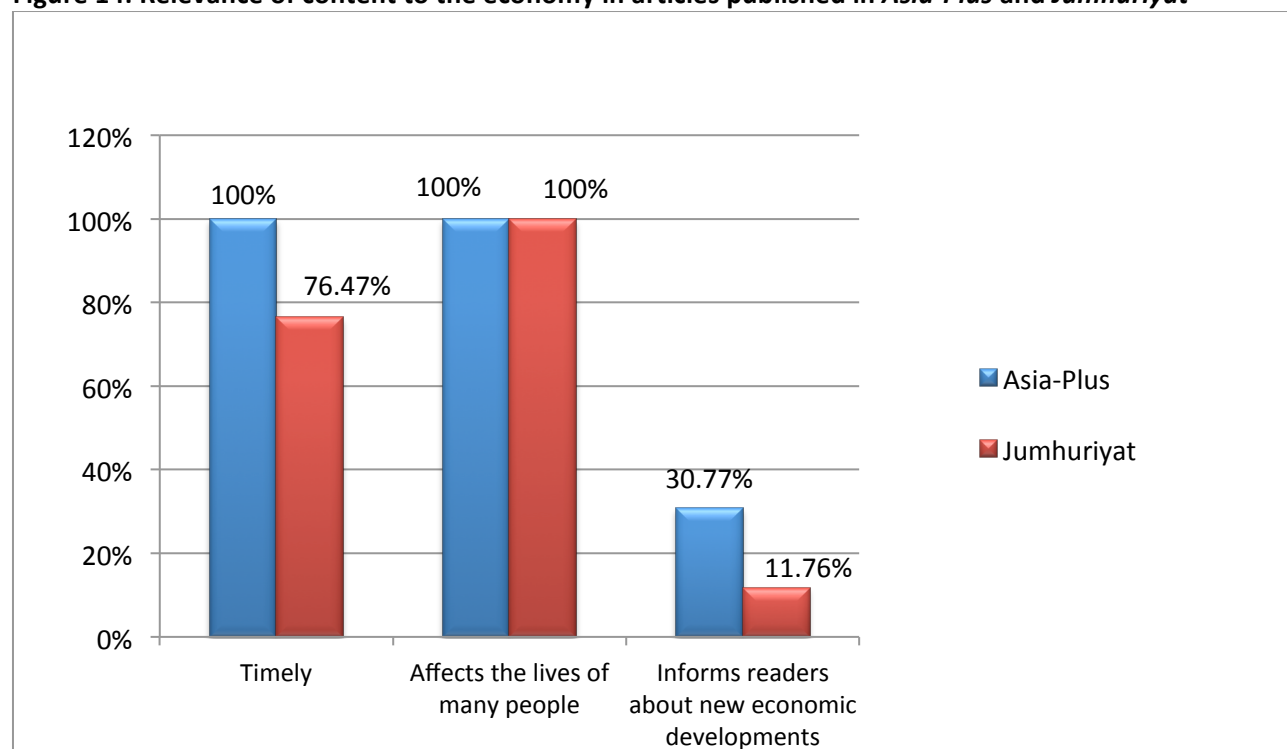
To carry out the analysis, we studied issues of the two newspapers during the first trimester of 2015. This comprised: the first to the 22nd issue of *Asia-Plus* (from number 984 to number 1005), and the first to the 66th issue of *Jumhuriyat* (from number 22563 to number 22628).

We found 14 articles that featured economic analysis in *Asia-Plus* during this time period. We reviewed 19 publications in *Jumhuriyat* that attempted to provide economic analysis over the same period. The author conducted this study independently, using the aforementioned matrices. We investigated around a dozen parameters, each of which is important for understanding the special characteristics of analytical journalism. The results are sufficient to get an idea of the fundamental differences between the country's two leading publications.

To carry out the content analysis of *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*, we identified a number of different parameters to assess the quality of economic analysis in the two sources and then compared the approaches adopted by the publications. In the below graphs, data pertaining to *Asia-Plus* is connoted in red, while that of the *Jumhuriyat* is marked in blue.

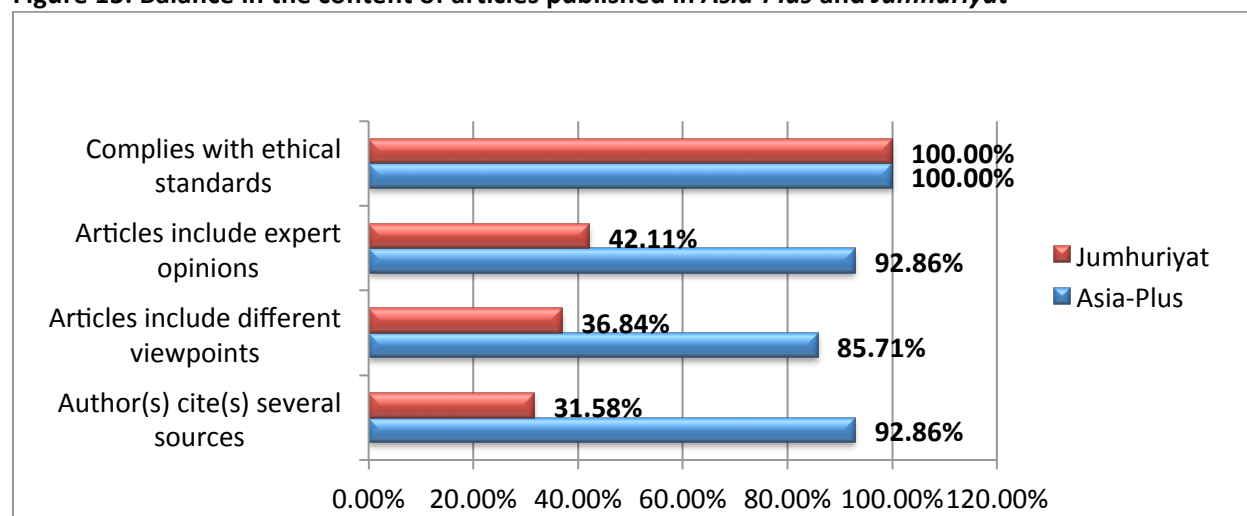
All topics concerned with the economy covered in *Asia-Plus* were timely and were of importance to the public. Although 100% of the articles that were studied from *Jumhuriyat* had the potential to affect the lives of many people, a smaller percentage (76.47%) was found to be timely. More than 30% of *Asia-Plus*'s articles informed readers about new developments in the Tajik economy, however, the same was true for only 12% of *Jumhuriyat*'s articles on economic issues (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Relevance of content to the economy in articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*



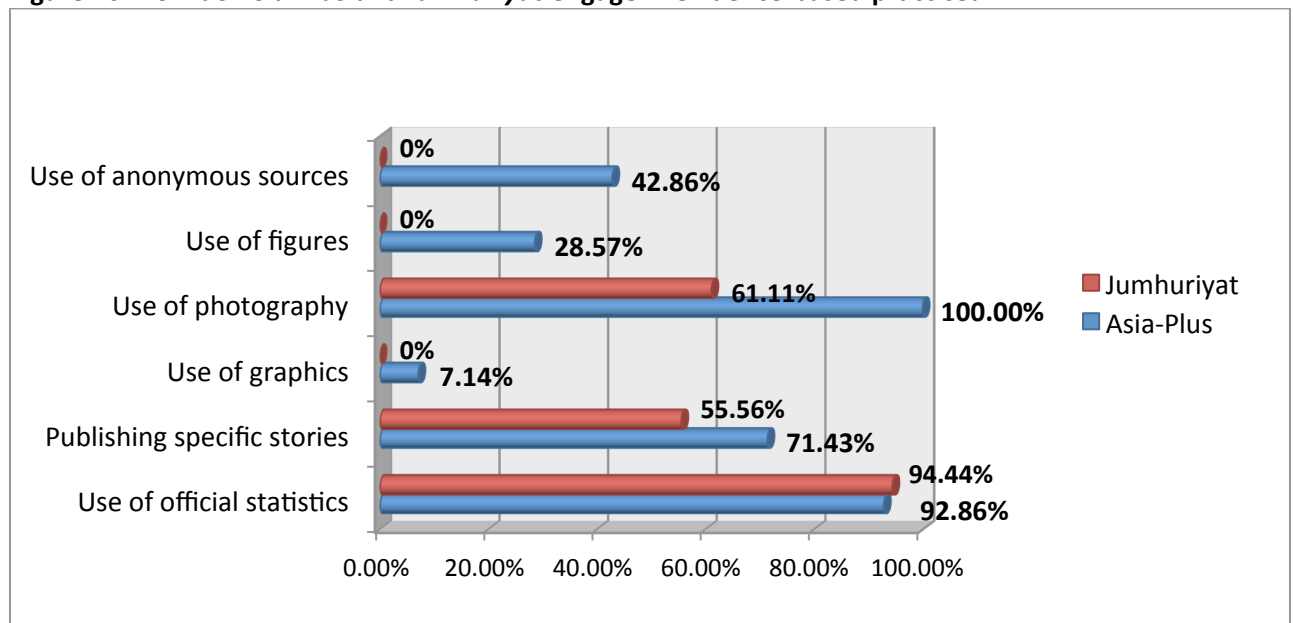
The balance in the presentation of content is determined by the author(s) of the article citing multiple sources, presenting different viewpoints and including expert opinions. Articles in both newspapers complied with ethical standards (100%). *Asia-Plus* was found to be considerably more balanced due to its more frequent use of alternative views, multiple sources and expert opinions (range of 86–93%, as compared to 32–42% for *Jumhuriyat*) (Figure 16).

Figure 15: Balance in the content of articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*



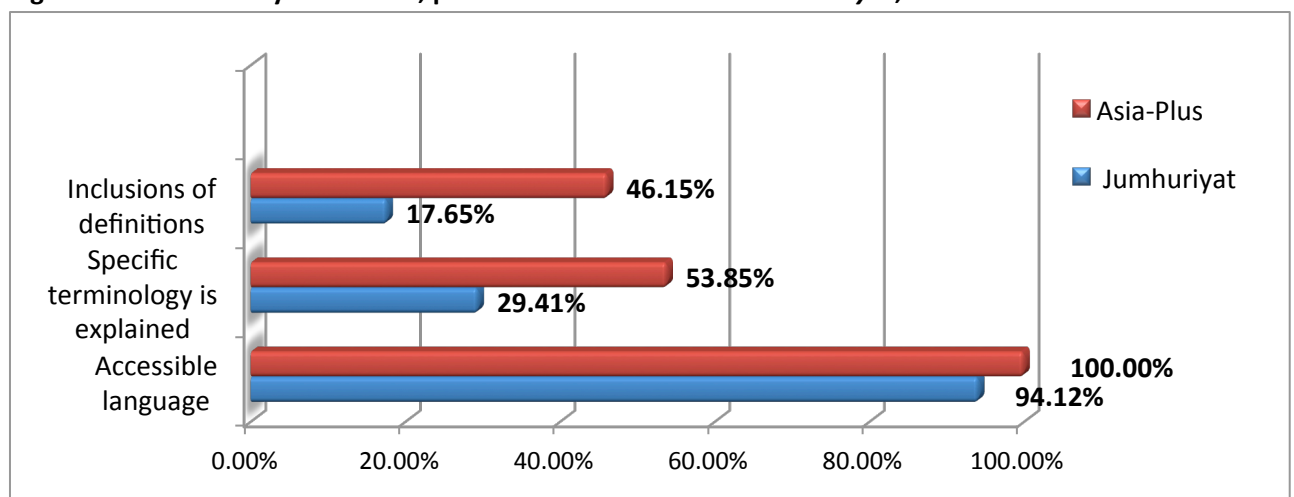
Journalistic theory encourages journalists to use a specific set of tools to put together an evidence base for their content. As shown in Figure 16, articles published in *Asia-Plus* during the study period had a stronger evidence base, as compared with *Jumhuriyat*.

Figure 16: How do *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat* engage in evidence-based practice?



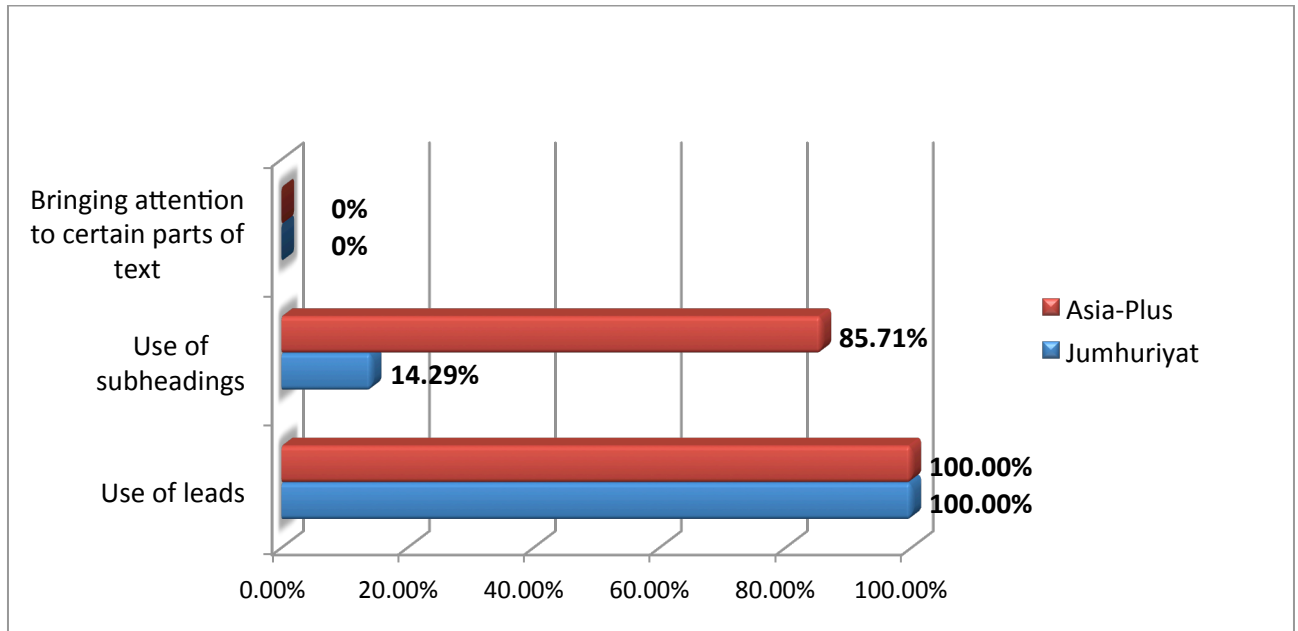
Because the articles we studied were intended for a wide range of readers, it was very important that the language used was accessible for that audience. There are many new developments taking place in the area of the economy that ordinary people are not familiar with, which makes it particularly important to define processes, specific terminology, etc. Our analysis showed that articles in *Jumhuriyat* don't always provide such definitions, which makes these articles less accessible and understandable to a broader audience (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Accessibility of content, published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*, for a broader audience



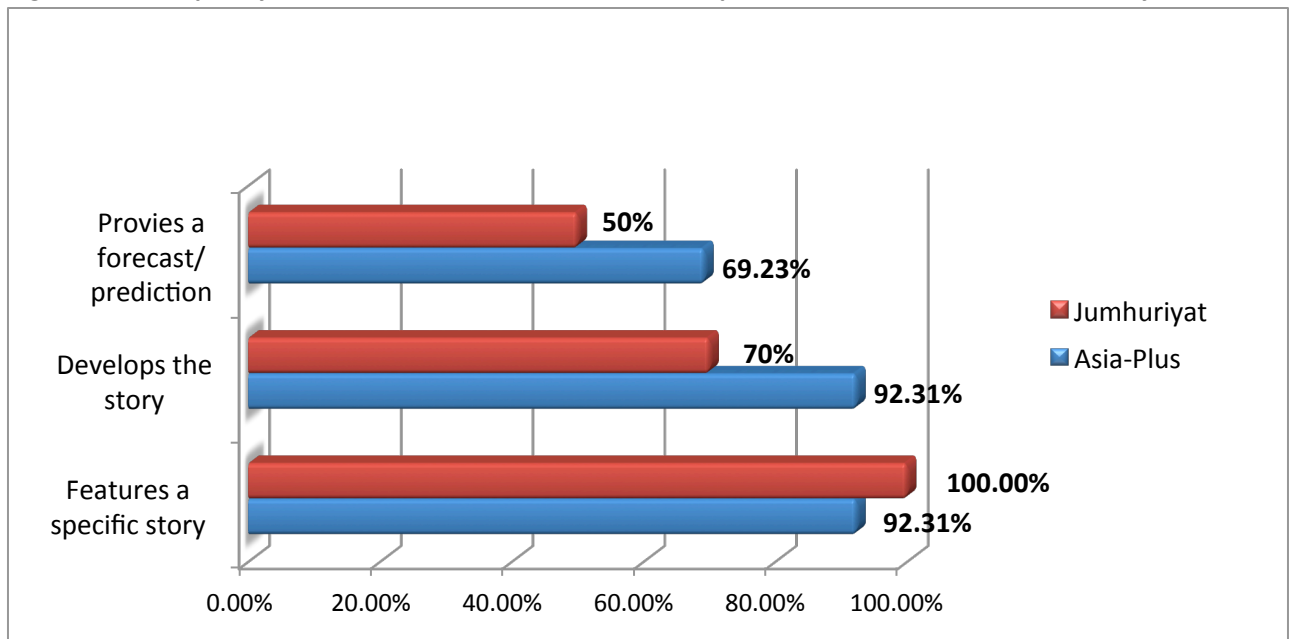
A lead (a short summary at the beginning of an article), subheadings and different fonts are used in articles for a more intelligible presentation of the material and to draw particular attention to certain parts of the text. All articles in both publications were found to contain leads, while subheadings were much more frequently used in *Asia-Plus* (86%) than in *Jumhuriyat* (14%). Any form of highlighting of the text to draw attention to it was not used in either newspaper (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Clarity of articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*



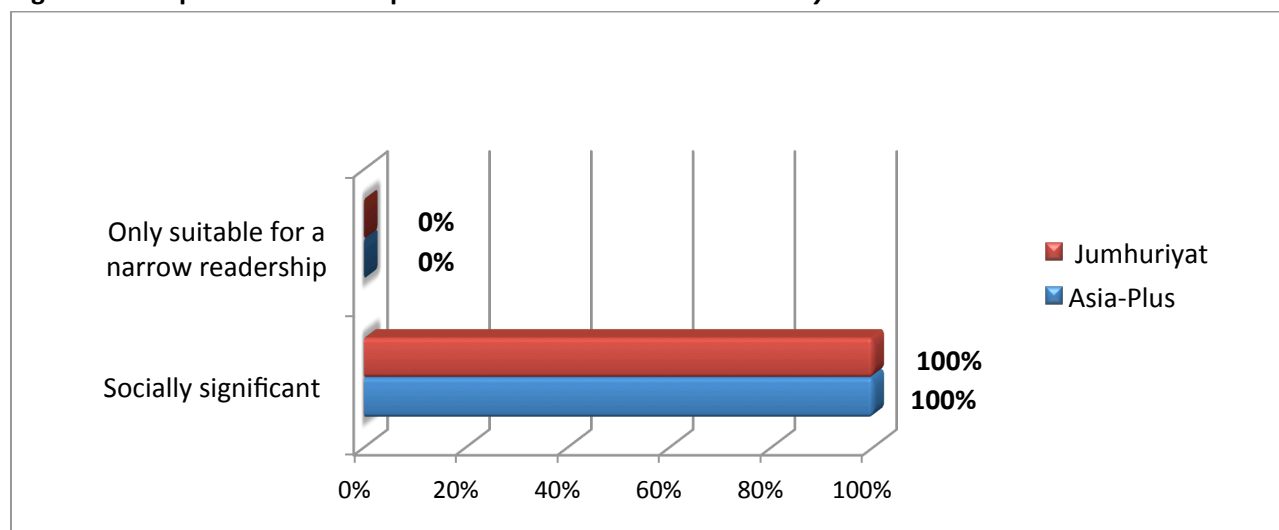
All articles in *Jumhuriyat* contained specific stories, yet the stories were developed in only 70% of the articles and just 50% provided forecasts. Articles in *Asia-Plus* usually contained a specific story (92%) that was developed (92%) and the majority also provided a forecast (almost 70%) (Figure 19).

Figure 19: The quality of the content's structure in articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*



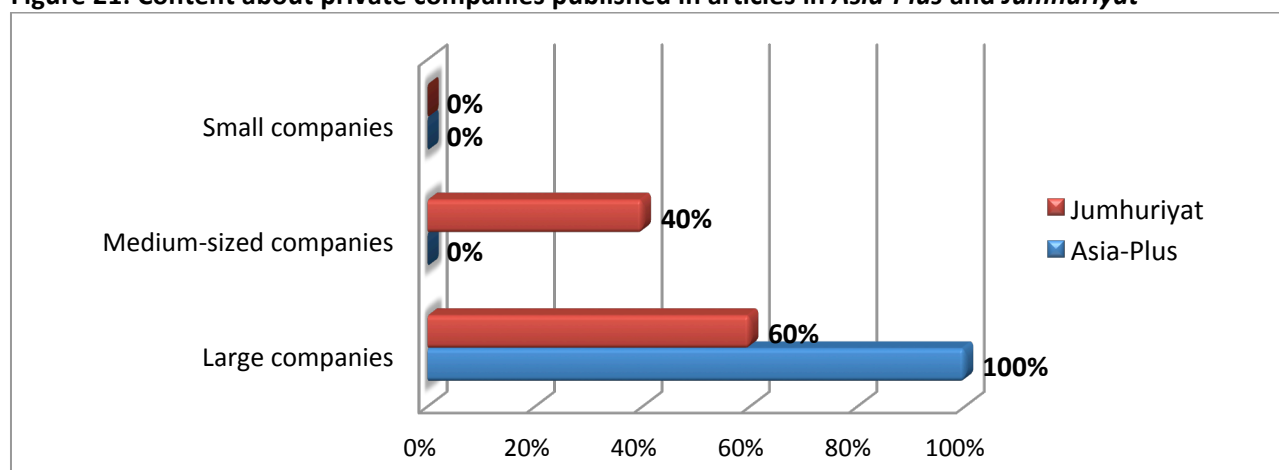
All articles on economic issues in both newspapers were found to be socially significant (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Scope of the articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*



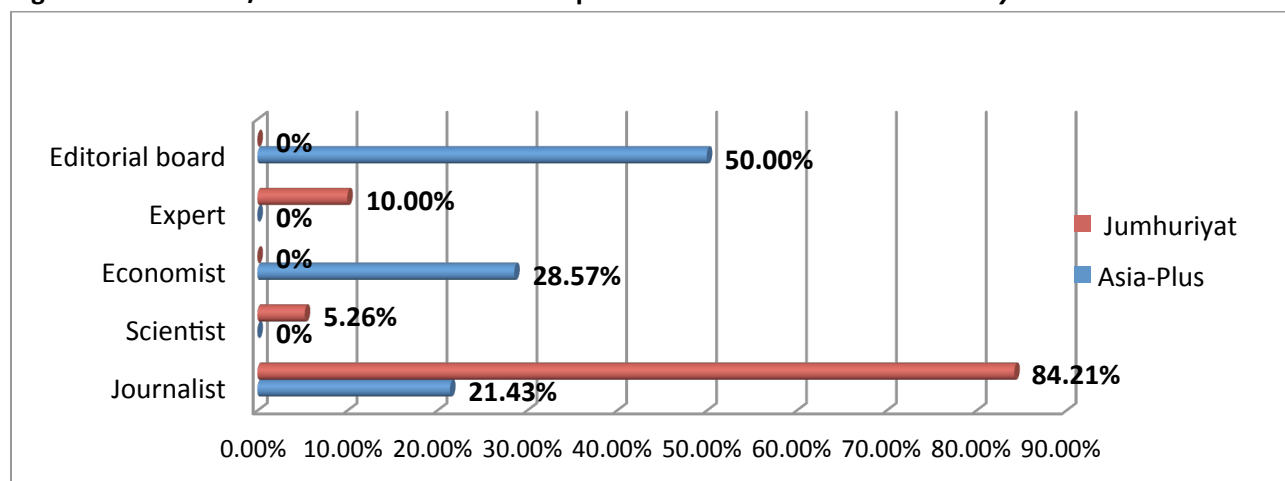
The national strategy of economic development must focus on the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. The role of the media in promoting the interests of small businesses is huge. However, our study showed that there is a lack of media interest in small businesses in the country. All articles in *Asia-Plus* were concerned with large companies, while *Jumhuriyat* published either about large (60%) or medium-sized (40%) businesses (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Content about private companies published in articles in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*



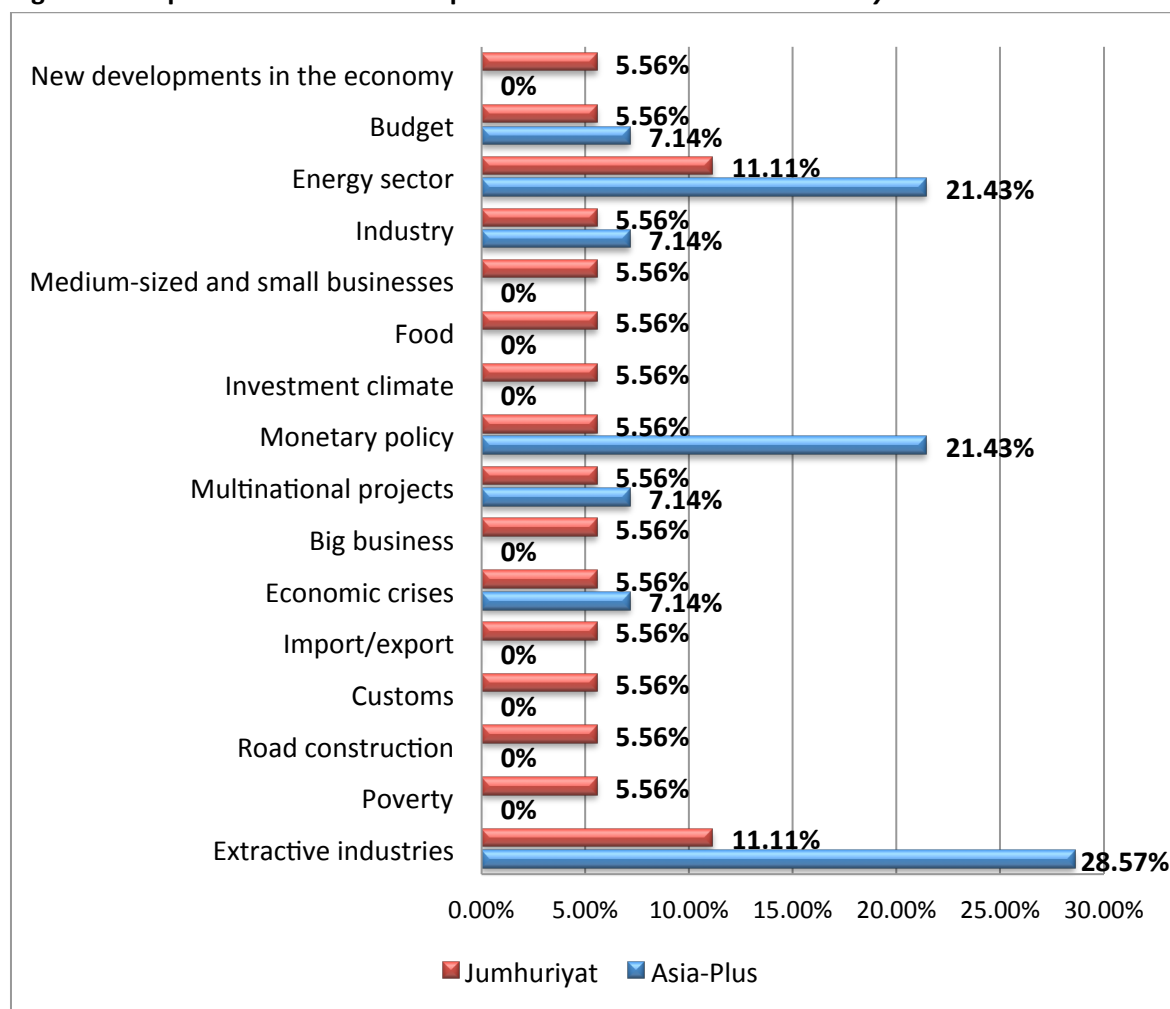
There are examples of cooperation between the media and economists who write for the press on a global scale. This trend is also characteristic of the Tajik media. In Tajikistan, there is no specialisation for journalists, and they almost always lack specific knowledge and experience to cover difficult issues, including those concerned with the economy. Because of the increased incidences of harassment of journalists in recent years, some publications publish articles without authors' names, i.e. under the editor's name. During our study period, half of the articles in *Asia-Plus* stated the editor as the author, only 21% specified the names of the journalists who wrote them, while almost 30% of the authors were economists. Almost 84% of the articles in *Jumhuriyat* were written by journalists, 5% were written by academics and 10% by specialists of other sectors of the economy (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Positions/title of authors of articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*



Topics covered in both newspapers were very diverse. Both newspapers devoted a lot of coverage to extractive industries (*Asia-Plus*: 29% and *Jumhuriyat*: 11%), monetary policy (21% and 5.56%, respectively) and the energy sector (21% and 11%, respectively) (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Topics covered in articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*

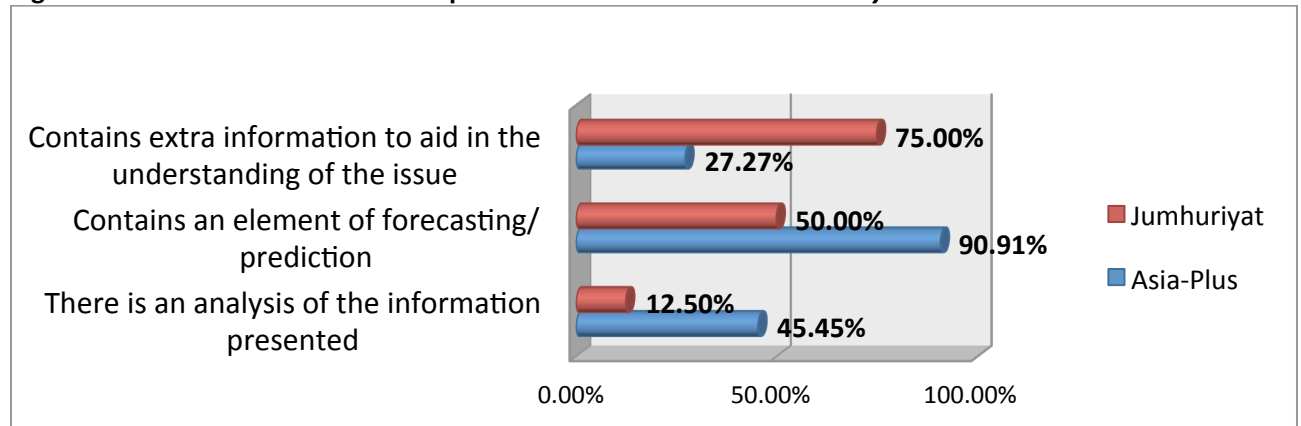


Unfortunately, Tajik society has not yet developed the practice of extensive analysis and research, even though publications that engage with this tend contribute to economic development. Almost half (45%)

of the articles in *Asia-Plus* were based on the results of particular research. This was true for only 12.5% of *Jumhuriyat*'s articles.

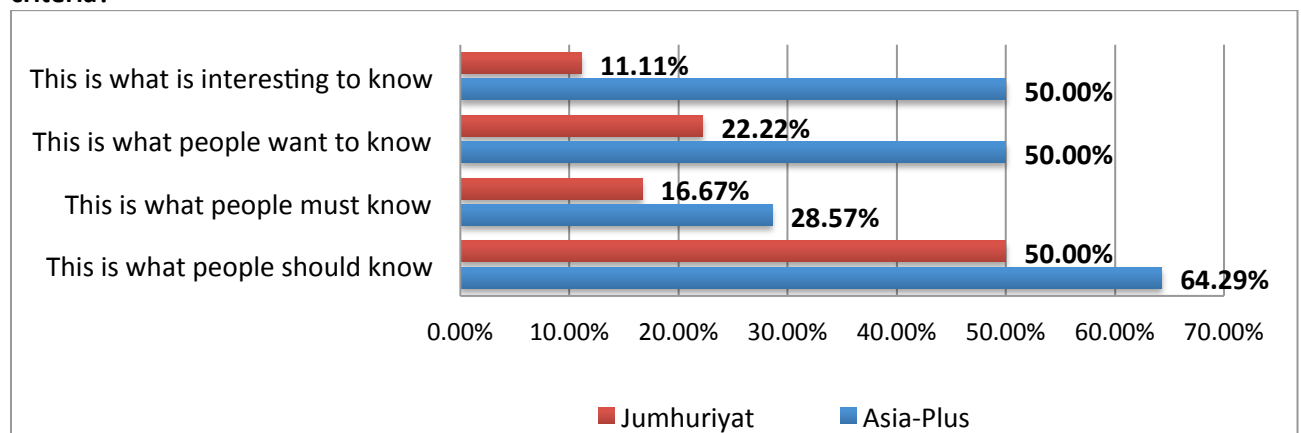
Almost all (90%) of *Asia-Plus*'s coverage contained an element of forecasting, while in *Jumhuriyat* the same applied to only 50% of the articles. However, 75% of *Jumhuriyat*'s articles contained extra information to aid in the understanding of the story/issue, while in *Asia-Plus* just 27% of the articles had this (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Characteristics of articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*



There are four basic criteria for presenting information in news articles. We felt it was important to identify the way information was presented in the articles we studied in the two newspapers in light of these criteria (Figure 25).

Figure 25: To what extent do the articles published in *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat* fulfil the news criteria?



5. Conclusions

Based on the research data – including the survey of media consumers, the content analysis of the two publications, *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat*, and focus groups with journalists who cover economic issues and economists writing for the media – we arrived at the following conclusions:

Conclusions based on the results of the survey of media consumers:

- The public craves information about the economy.
- The public finds it interesting to read articles about the economy as economy is at the core of society and family life.
- There are very few interesting publications about the economy in the Tajik press.
- Independent newspapers publish more articles covering economic issues.
- The media often covers topics such as the tax system, banking and monetary policy.
- 37% of respondents like economic content as it reflects economic realities in the country.
- The respondents believe that the Tajik media gives little coverage to vital topics such as labour migration.
- The quality of articles about the economy is average.
- The level of public confidence in media content is not very high; 55.42% sometimes trust the media, while 37.35% do trust the media at all.
- The principal consumers of economic information are believed to be entrepreneurs (90.48%), civil servants (47.62%), academics (48.81%) and unemployed (36.90%)
- Almost half (41.18%) of the respondents thought that the question regarding journalistic professionalism was absent from the questionnaire.

Conclusions based on the results of the focus group with journalists who regularly cover economic topics:

- Journalists covering economic issues need to get a second degree or attend special courses in economics.
- Journalists should specialise in how to cover socio-economic issues when doing their university degrees. The selection of future economic journalists should start happening at universities.
- To date, the majority of journalists do not know how to work with data, draw up spreadsheets and reports, make analogies, etc.
- Journalists ignore many important economic topics because their audiences have no interest in them.
- Editors-in-chief of online publications mostly favour the content that gets more ‘likes’ (on social media) from readers.
- Media consumers are more interested in family dramas than in economic problems.
- School children should be taught foundation courses in economics.
- Journalists lack knowledge and experience, as well as analytical thinking skills, to perform high-quality economic analysis.
- There are difficulties in accessing information as government officials conceal important information from journalists.
- It is difficult for journalists to publish factual articles about the economy in the state media.
- Publications don’t always follow a systematic approach in their presentation of economic issues.

Conclusions based on the results of the focus group with economists writing for the media:

- Economic news is related to everyone’s wellbeing, which makes it very important for the public.
- Publicly presented and well-founded economic news always resonates with the public.
- Everyone is interested to learn about recent developments in the economy. The most important thing is to present the information in an easily accessible way.

- In the past, economists were interested in writing for the media (mostly to promote themselves). Today, publications are aware of the need to highlight economic processes in their articles.
- The media wants to work with economists, but do not want to pay experts for quality content. As a consequence, economists do not have any incentive to regularly write for the media.
- Publications want to improve the quality of their content, but it is not a lucrative business.
- Digital publications are less professional when it comes to covering economic issues than print media.
- In most cases, journalists do not have sufficient knowledge to cover economic issues.
- Newspaper journalists often commit serious errors when they get an expert to comment on the phone, as they misinterpret facts and observations due to their lack of basic economic knowledge.
- It should be compulsory for journalists who write about the economy to have a second degree in economic subjects or appropriate specialist training.
- Government/state media often ignores alternative sources of information and refers only to official statistics.
- Authors and experts are faced with difficulties in data processing, as there are often serious discrepancies in the data provided by different government bodies.
- Taxes, inspections, trials and inflation are the topics mostly widely covered by journalists in Tajikistan.
- Many journalists are afraid to talk and write about the economy.
- There is little demand for business publications in Tajikistan.
- Putting together economic information is a costly process, with little return.
- Starting a business publication requires start-up capital to cover at least one year of subsidies to the publication so that it could become profitable later (provided staff members are sensitive to the needs and expectations of their audiences).
- The general level of education also affects how economic journalism develops.
- The literacy rate in schools is very low.
- The public does not see a direct link between information, the discussion of such information in the mass media and associated changes in real life.
- The public is passive because it does not believe it can influence decision-making processes.
- There should be a foundations economy course in secondary schools.
- Cooperation between the media and the education sector should be built by holding extracurricular classes on the economy in schools. After completing such training, many school children could consciously choose journalism as their future profession.

Conclusions based on the results of the content analysis of the *Asia-Plus* and *Jumhuriyat* newspapers:

- In most cases, economic analysis provided by the publications was timely and in all cases related to topical issues that were important to ordinary people.
- Only 30% of the analytical articles in *Asia-Plus* and 12% in *Jumhuriyat* focused on new trends and developments in the economy.
- Around 90% of the articles in *Asia-Plus* had a balanced approach, while the same was true for only about 40% of the articles published in *Jumhuriyat*.
- Evidence base was much stronger in articles that were published in *Asia-Plus* than in *Jumhuriyat*. *Asia-Plus* used official statistics, anonymous sources, photos, figures, graphics and specific stories as evidence, while *Jumhuriyat* mostly used official statistics, and only in half of the cases, stories and photos.
- *Asia-Plus*'s articles are much more accessible to a broader readership (75%) compared to *Jumhuriyat*'s coverage (42%).
- 80% of the economic content in *Asia-Plus* met the criteria of analytical journalism, in terms of the quality of developing a topic, whereas the same can be said for 60% of *Jumhuriyat*'s content.

- Articles in *Asia-Plus* mostly covered large companies, whereas *Jumhuriyat* devoted 60% of its articles to large companies and 40% to medium-sized businesses. Neither publication covered small businesses.
- Analytical articles about the economy in *Asia-Plus* were mostly written by editors (or said they were written by editors), while almost 30% were written by economists; over 84% of *Jumhuriyat*'s articles were written by journalists and only 15% were written by scientists and experts.
- The mining industry, monetary policy, energy, industry, multinational projects, poverty and the budget were the main topics of all analytical articles about the economy published in both newspapers.

6. Recommendations

Based on the study results, the following recommendations can be made for the media and the Ministry of Education.

Recommendations for the media:

- Economic information relates, in one way or another, to people's welfare so the media should pay special attention to the coverage of economic developments in the country.
- The public is always keen to know the logic behind economic developments, but it is important that that information is presented in a clear and non-biased way.
- When covering economic topics, the media should adhere to professional standards: articles should be about current issues, provide a balanced picture, build the evidence base in line with the accepted journalistic standards, present the material in a way that is accessible to a broader audience, and adhere to a certain structure when presenting information.
- The media should place emphasis on the most important issues for the country and for society, such as migration, small and medium-sized businesses, and corruption.
- Digital media should pay greater attention to the coverage of economic issues.
- State-controlled media must provide a balanced presentation of economic news.
- Media outlets should study the needs of their audiences, and include economic reviews in their schedules on certain days of the week. Print and online publications should allocate specific sections to articles about the economy.
- The media should encourage their staff to acquire additional education/receive formal training related to the economy.
- The media should return to topics and articles published earlier and inform the public about the changes or responses to the content.
- Editors-in-chief should allocate special funds to encourage economists to contribute to their publications.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education:

- Introduce a separate subject on the fundamentals of the economy for pupils in secondary schools.
- Introduce specialisation in economic or business journalism for students in faculties and departments of journalism at universities.
- Introduce an optional course in economics for school children.
- Improve the general level of education in the country.