

Press Institute of Mongolia

# Public awareness and Perceptions about the Media Council

Opinion poll study report

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**2015**

**One. About the study**

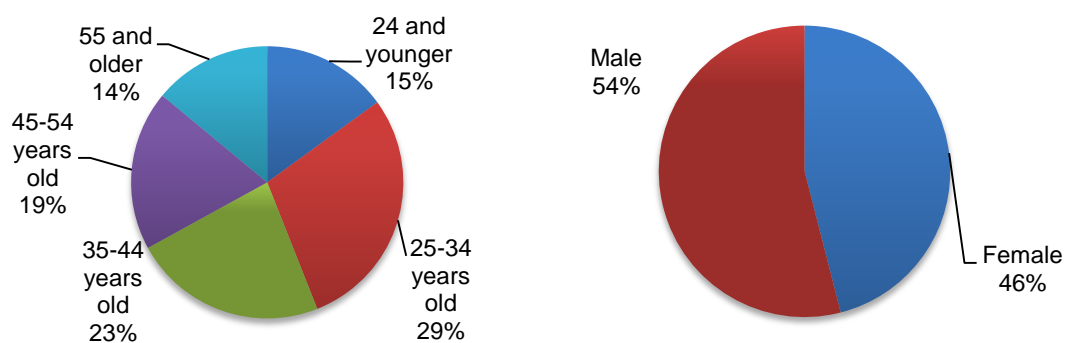
The goal of the study was to assess the level of public awareness about the newly established (January 2015) media self-regulatory body, the Media Council of Mongolia. The opinion poll study was conducted in November 2015 among 700 citizens of Ulaanbaatar and 6 provinces of Mongolia. From the 700 people involved in the study 50 are journalists from urban and rural. The respondents were selected based on a systematic random sampling method. Below please see the sample details:

Table 1. Sample structure

City & Province center	District & Soum	Sample size	
Darkhan-Uul	Province center	40	360
	Orkhon soum	20	
Dornogobi	Province center	40	
	Airag soum	20	
Orkhon	Province center	40	
	Jargalant soum	20	
Uvurkhangai	Province center	40	
	Taragt soum	20	
Sukhbaatar	Province center	40	
	Asgat soum	20	
Khovd	Province center	40	
	Buyant soum	20	
Ulaanbaatar	Bayangol	40	340
	Bayandsurkh	50	
	Chingeltei	40	
	Sukhbaatar	40	
	Songinohairhan	50	
	Khan-Uul	40	
	Nalaikh	40	
	Baganuur	40	

Chart 1.

Age and gender structure of survey participants



The age and gender structure of survey participants are similar to the age and gender structure of Mongolia population according to the census data from the Mongolian Statistical Report 2014.

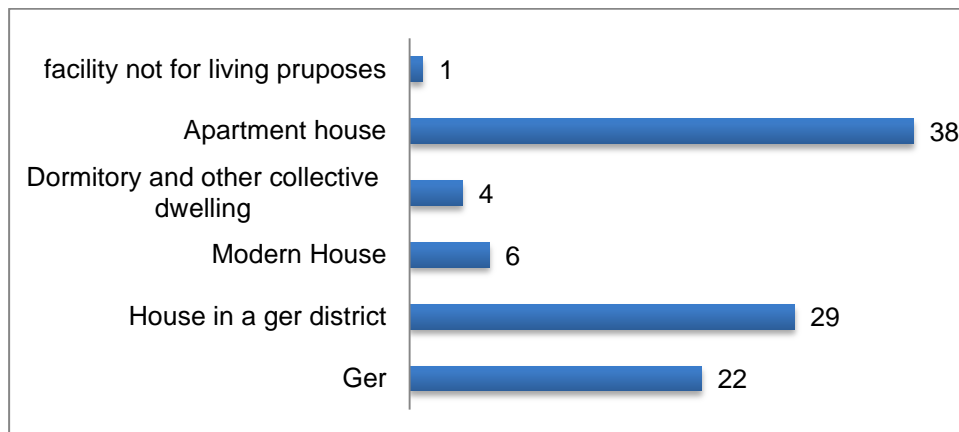
Below is the educational level and employment status of survey participants.

Table 2. Education and employment of respondents \_ in percentage

Education	%	Employment	%
No formal education	0%	State / public organization	27%
Primary	1%	Civil society/International agency	8%
Lower secondary education	8%	Private / commercial	22%
Upper secondary education	27%	Self-employment	15%
Professional school	8%	Student	10%
Higher education	54%	Retired	8%
Post graduate	2%	Herder	6%
		Unemployed	4%

Housing conditions of survey participants

Chart 2. Respondents' type of dwelling \_ percentage



## Two. Study results

This study report consists of following chapters:

- Citizens opinion on the credibility of media and ethics of journalism
- Awareness and understanding about the Media Council of Mongolia
- Attitudes towards critical use of media

### ***The Mongolian National Public Service Broadcaster and the daily newspapers enjoy higher credibility***

In 2005, 10 years from now, there were 340 media outlets operating in Mongolia. This number has increased in 2015 to 411 (excluding online news sites)<sup>1</sup>. According to the audience research data of the Press Institute, increase of media outlets did not result in the increase of media use<sup>2</sup>. In contrary, the use of media tends to decline. This might be one of the reasons, why many people are not able to answer the question about how much do they believe the media. For example, every second person participated in the survey said they don't know what to answer with regard to weekly and bi-weekly newspapers and radio.

*Table 3. How much do you trust media?*

	Believe very much	Believe sometimes	Do not believe	Believe little	Do not know
Commercial televisions	7%	33%	23%	13%	24%
Mongolian National Public Service TV	44%	35%	6%	3%	12%
Daily newspapers	10%	30%	17%	9%	34%
Weekly and bi-monthly newspapers	2%	16%	21%	13%	48%
Mongolian National Public Radio	25%	26%	7%	4%	38%
Other radio	2%	19%	17%	10%	52%
Magazines	3%	26%	19%	14%	38%
Online news media	5%	32%	16%	10%	37%

The Mongolian national public service radio and television enjoy the highest credibility, followed by daily newspapers. Rural citizens in areas remote from the province center believe more in Public Service Television. (54% of them said they believe in MNB very much, compared to 34 percent in Ulaanbaatar) As of the age, people older than 55 tend to believe more in media. The highest credibility among older (retired) people and herders in rural areas enjoy the Mongolian National Public Service Radio.

Citizens with an average (secondary) education tend to believe more in commercial televisions. (40 of participants believe to a certain extent) There are very little differences in terms of geographical location of people.

As of daily newspapers, capital city inhabitants tend to believe more in them compared to rural citizens. The credibility of daily newspapers is higher among people of age 35 and older, with higher education. The weekly and monthly (tabloid) newspapers have the lowest credibility among people of all ages and education, even though some people living in remote areas and older than 50 stated that they trust tabloid papers.

Magazines are trusted mostly by young people under 25 living in Ulaanbaatar suburbs/ ger districts and having a lower secondary education. On the other hand, there are magazines produced for people of a certain professional branch. People reading such magazines have mostly a higher

<sup>1</sup> "Mongolia Media Today" report, Press Institute of Mongolia. Ulaanbaatar 2015

<sup>2</sup> Audience research report, January 2014. Press Institute of Mongolia

level of education and tend to trust such types of magazines more compared to other magazine users.

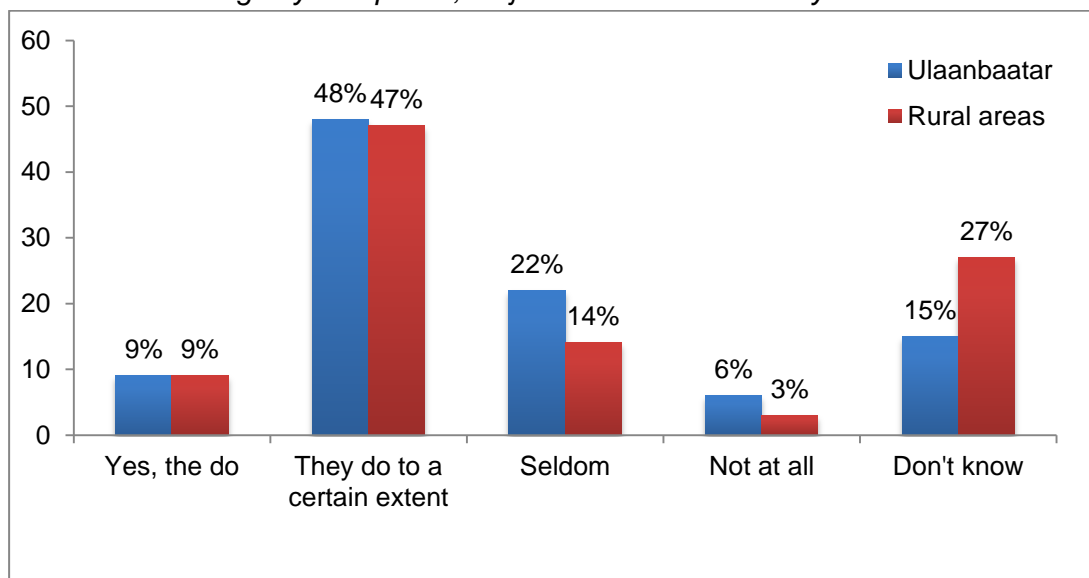
Online news media are popular especially among people between 25 – 35. Accordingly, the share of people who said that they trust online news is higher among this age group. Every second person in the age between 25 – 35 says, he/she trusts online news media. Most of online media users (60%) with less than a secondary education cannot give an assessment about the credibility of online news. People with higher education are more critical to online media.

To note is, that people's trust in media decreases with the distance to the center of Ulaanbaatar; citizens living in remote areas have the greatest trust while people living in central areas of the capital tend to distrust media.

### **According to poll results, journalists maintain a certain level of ethics and responsibility**

When asked about the ethics and responsibility of journalists a slight difference could be observed between people from urban and rural areas. Citizens from Ulaanbaatar were mostly able to give an assessment about the level of ethics and responsibility of journalists, while rural people tended to choose the answer 'don't know'.

*Chart 3. According to your opinion, do journalists work ethically?*



As mentioned before, among the 700 people involved in the survey there were 50 journalists from rural and urban areas. 80 percent of journalists who participated in the poll were of opinion, that journalists do maintain ethical standards to a certain level. The share of journalist's answers among all people who chose this answer was 12%.

Those who were sure that there were no any problems with journalistic ethics in Mongolia, were mostly people younger than 24 or older than 45.

**Information is maliciously misrepresented, sensationalized and not verified**

Survey participants stated following with regard to most common ethical mistakes made by journalists (Table 4)

*Table 4. What do you think, are the most common ethical mistakes made by journalists?*

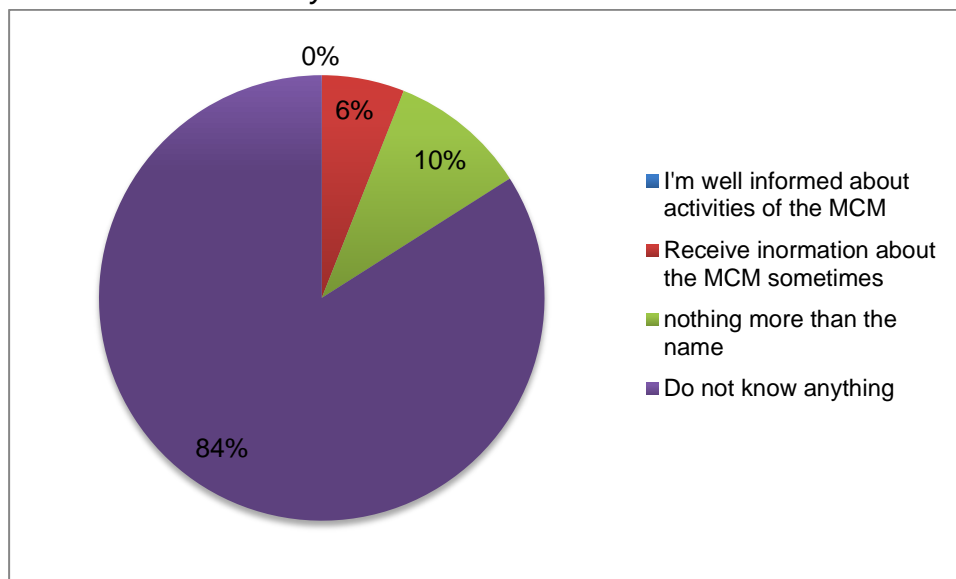
They do not verify information	24.4%
Sensationalize, show too much violence	14.9%
Maliciously misrepresent information	12.0%
Do not consider privacy issues	9.2%
Do things for money	7.8%
Libel and slander	6.0%
Discriminate people by appearance, job, physical (dis-)abilities	5.9%
Obviously paid for stories without any identification of payment	5.8%
Collect information using dishonest ways	5.2%
Do not protect their sources	4.0%
Do not respect people's sorrow and suffering	3.8%
Other	1%
	100%

As of journalists participated in the survey, no emphasis on one or another mistake could be observed (answers of journalists were distributed among all answer options).

**Citizens do not know about the Media Council of Mongolia**

The Media Council of Mongolia has been established 10 months ago. The process of establishment and the decisions made by the Council were covered by mainstream media. However, citizens know little about this organization.

*Chart 4. How much do you know about the establishment of the Media Council of Mongolia?*



8 out of 10 people participated in the survey do not know anything about the Media Council of Mongolia. Out of the 10% who knows the name of the organization but nothing more, 40% are

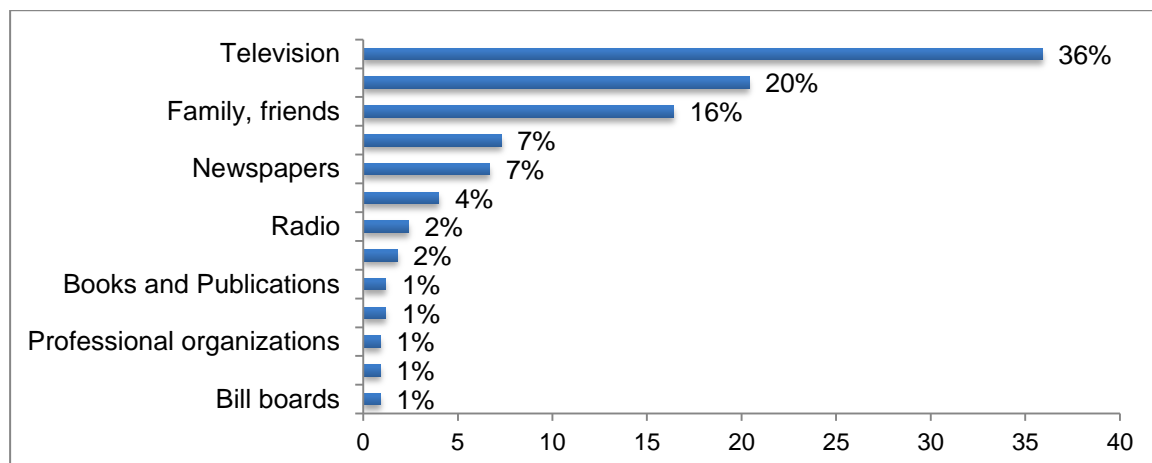
journalists. The majority are people in the age between 25 – 54. There was no one well informed about activities of the MCM. 6 percent said they hear about MCM from time to time. Half of these people are journalist, the other half are people with higher education living in Ulaanbaatar and working in a state organization or private company.

To verify answers of people who said they knew something about the MCM, we asked if they can remember some of the names of MCM members. 12 people (1.5%) answered 'yes'. However, 6 of them named people not related with the Media Council, 6 named the Chairperson of the Media Council.

### ***Information about the MCM is mostly received from the Internet and television***

The majority of people who stated that they knew something about the MCM said that they received information from TV. The second most important source of information was Internet.

*Chart 5. Sources of information about MCM*



Television was the most important source of information for both urban and rural citizens, whereas Internet was mostly used by Ulaanbaatar residents. The website of the Media council of Mongolia [www.mediacouncil.mn](http://www.mediacouncil.mn) was also predominantly used by respondents from the capital. Among rural citizens oral dissemination of information (from friend to friend, from colleague to colleague) was more common.

(Please note that one person could chose several answers to select all types of information sources used).

### ***“Media council is a state organization to control media”***

In order to find out the degree of understanding about the Media council we asked a question about functions of the MCM. 61 percent of survey participants were not able to answer this question.

15 percent said MCM was a “state organization to control media” 12 percent defined the MCM as a “self-regulatory body to ensure implementation of professional ethics of journalists”. Almost all people who chose this answer were journalists.

Table 5. In your opinion, what functions does the Media Council of Mongolia have?

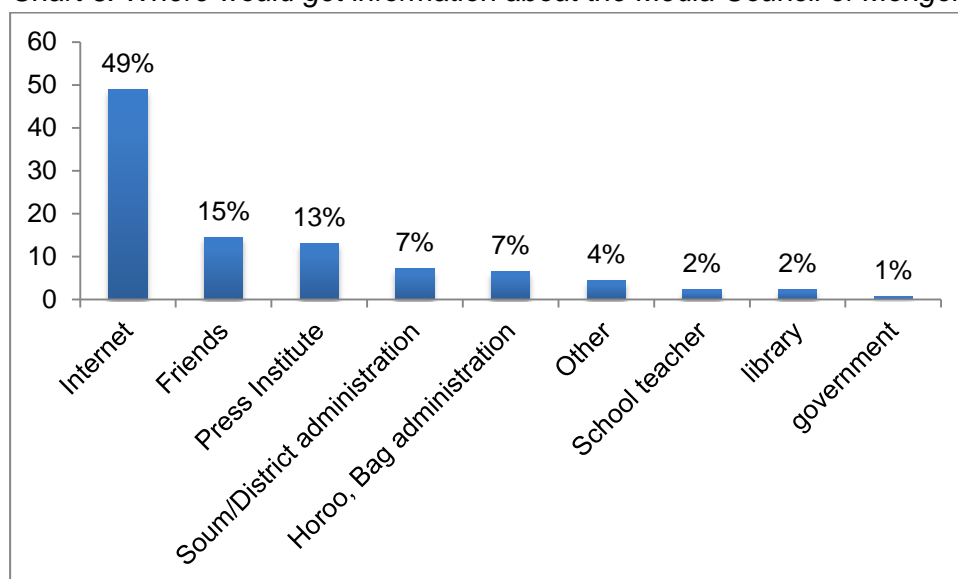
	Receive information about MCM sometimes	Know nothing more than the name	Do not know anything about MCM
State organization to control media	<b>37.9%</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>10.7%</b>
Has similar functions as the Journalists Union	10.3%	5.4%	2.7%
Self-regulatory body to ensure implementation of professional ethics of journalists	<b>24.1%</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>
Organization to protect media houses before going to court	0.0%	2.3%	2.2%
Organization to protect citizens rights	0.0%	5.4%	4.9%
Organization issue licenses for media	0.0%	1.6%	0.5%
Other	0.0%	0.8%	0.5%
Do not know	<b>27.6%</b>	<b>40.3%</b>	<b>69.9%</b>
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

As the table shows, people who “sometimes receive information about MCM” tend to have an understanding about the Council, even though every fourth “informed” citizen thinks that this is “state organization to control media”

**Internet is the most common potential source of information**

When asked where they would get information about the Media council from if needed, 9 out of 10 people said they do not know. This includes also journalists participated in the survey. Those who know how or where to get information are mostly people aged between 25-54, with a higher education, employed, male. Half of these people said they would go to Internet, followed by “friends” and “the Press Institute” as potential sources of information.

Chart 6. Where would get information about the Media Council of Mongolia if needed/wanted?





Those who would search the Internet for information about the Media council are from both urban and rural areas. However, citizens who would prefer to go to the local administration to find information about the MCM are mostly from rural areas.

***Every second person lacks any understanding about the Code of ethics of journalists.***

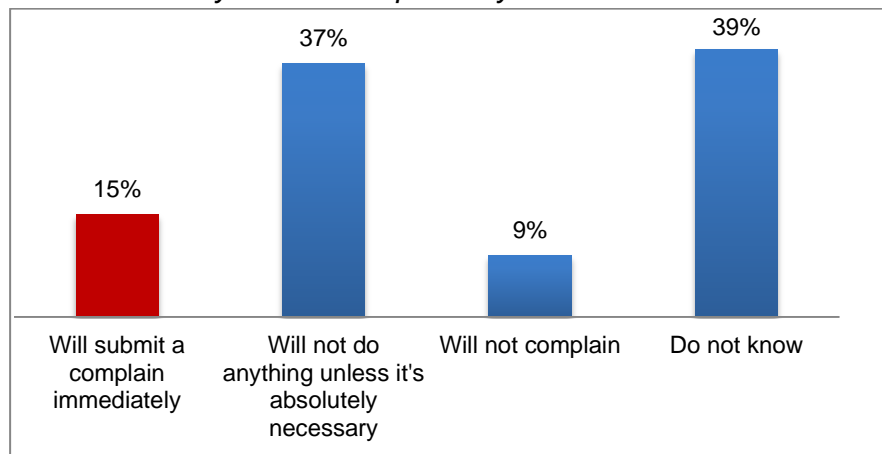
As part of the survey, we tried to assess the level knowledge and understanding about the Code of Ethics of Journalists approved by the Media council of Mongolia. 46 percent of survey participants said that they do not know anything about such a code. This answer is spread out equally among all age, education, employment and gender groups.

53 percent said they did not know that there was a new code approved. Only 1 percent (7 people) said they know that there is a Code of Ethics of Journalists approved by the Media council. 6 out of these 7 persons were journalists from Ulaanbaatar.

***Few citizens willing to file a complain about ethical mistakes of journalists***

When survey participants were asked “would you file a complaint if a journalist would make an ethical mistake”, only 15 percent said they would submit a complaint immediately. Most of these people are Ulaanbaatar residents elder than 55. None of the 50 journalists participated in the survey said they would file a complaint against other journalists/media.

*Chart 7. Would you file a complaint if you find an ethical mistake in the media?*



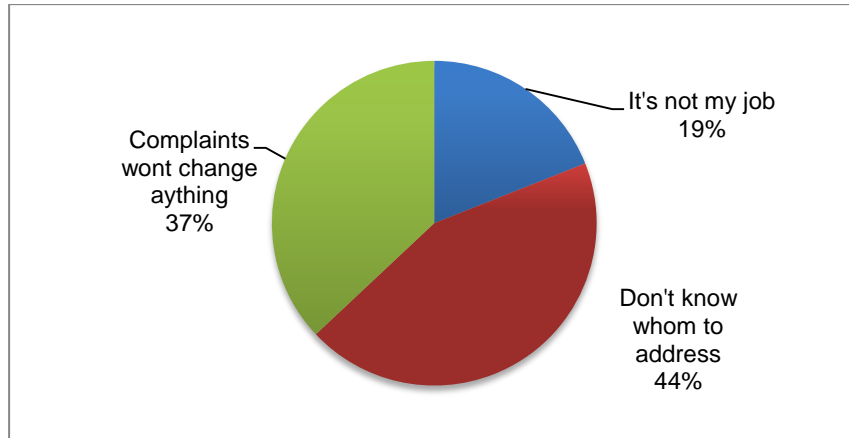
Those who would submit a complain would do following:

- Send a complaint to the respective media house – 17 people
- Go to police or court – 4 persons
- Submit a complaint to the Media Council of Mongolia – 4 persons
- Send a letter to the Mongolian Journalist’s Union
- Send a letter to other media
- Send a complaint to the government’s hotline service 1111 – 2 persons
- Don’t know - 74 people

From the above list of answers it can be concluded that citizens lack information and understanding about functions of the Media council and other organizations.

Those who do not want to do anything, explain their position by following:

Chart 7. Would you file a complaint if you find an ethical mistake in the media?



People who think that submitting complaints is not their job are mostly citizens living Ulaanbaatar suburbs or remote areas from urban centers, with average (secondary) education, male.

Respondents who represent the opinion that “complaints will not change anything” tend to live in urban centers (38 percent), are of age 25-44 years (40 percent) and have upper secondary or higher education, (40 percent).

Those who do not know where to submit a complaint are mostly people elder than 55, (60 percent) female (48 percent), with lower secondary education (80 percent) or students and unemployed.

**Lack of information concerning complaint procedure**

No one from the survey participants has ever submitted a complaint to the Media Council of Mongolia.

When asked if they know how to proceed in case if they would submit a complaint to the MCM, 19 percent said. 40 percent of these people would make a phone call, 33% would write a complaint and submit personally:

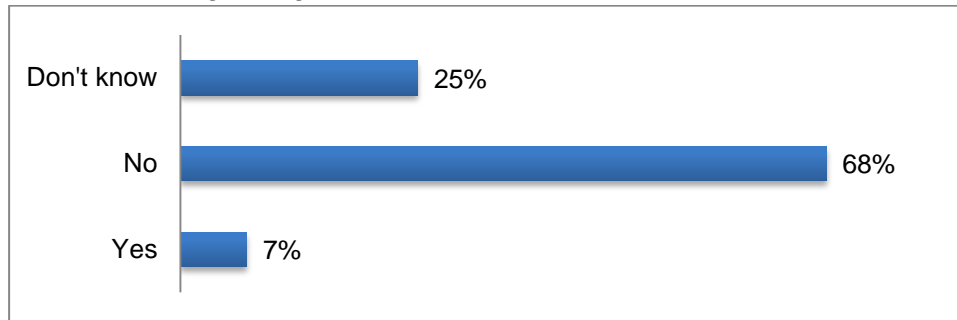
Table 6. How would you proceed to submit a complaint?

	Percent
Make a phone call	40%
Submit a complaint personally	33%
Post complaint on Facebook or Twitter	13%
Find out through the website	11%
Other	3%

**No complaints right now**

When the survey participants were asked “Do you have an issue about which you would like to submit a complaint to the Media Council of Mongolia right now?”, the dominating majority (68 percent) said “No.

Chart 8. Do you have an issue about which you would like to submit a complaint to the Media Council of Mongolia right now?



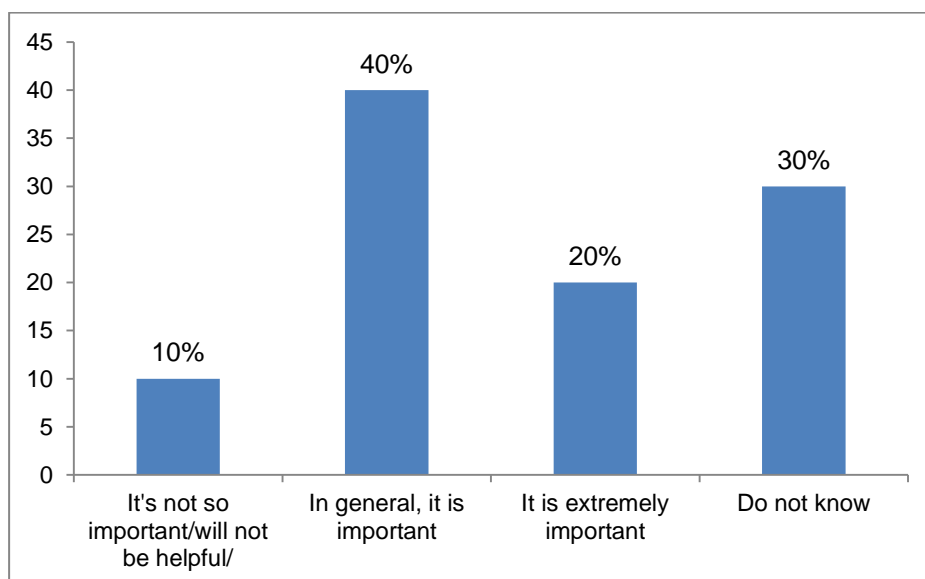
Those 7 percent who have complaints to file, described their dissatisfaction by following:

- Journalists do not provide objective information
- Journalists do not verify information
- There is too much Korean dramas and advertisement
- Journalist’s education need to be improved
- The media need to disseminate more important and useful information
- Information provided by journalists is not balanced. It’s mostly biased.
- Cable TV fees are too high.
- I don’t want to pay any license fees to the Public Service Broadcaster

**Positive attitudes towards establishments of the Media council**

About 60 percent of survey participants think in general, ethical mistakes of journalists should be addressed.

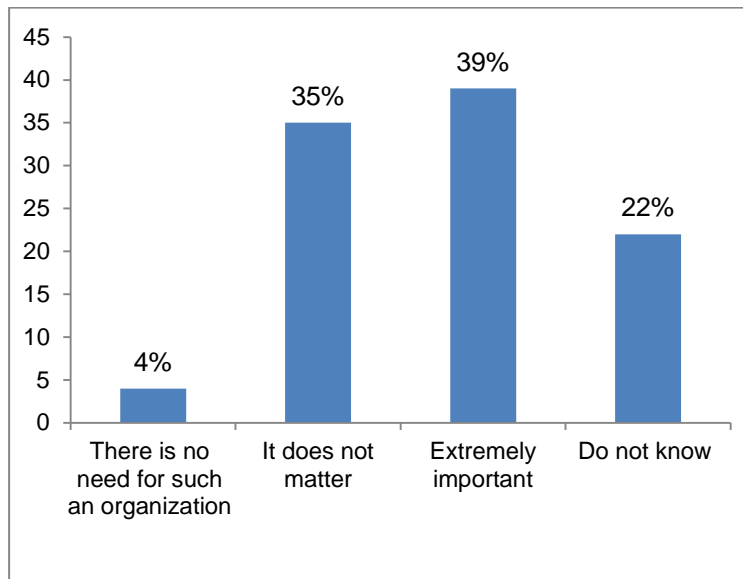
Chart 9. In your opinion, how important is it to address ethical problems of journalists/media?



Among people who do not know if journalism ethics should be addressed or not are citizens dominant who are older than 45, with a secondary education, unemployed or retired.

When asked to assess the usefulness of establishing a media self-regulatory body, about 40 percent of respondents said that this was extremely important.

Chart 10. In your opinion, how important/useful was it to establish a media self-regulatory body, the Media Council of Mongolia?



## Summary/Conclusions

- In general, citizens trust in media remains low. The Mongolian National Public Service Television and Radio enjoy the highest credibility, followed by daily newspapers. Young people in the age of 35 and younger tend to believe more in the Internet.
- According to citizens' opinion, even though journalists do maintain a certain level of ethics and responsibility, they do not verify information, tend to sensationalize, show too much violence and maliciously misrepresent information.
- Citizens are not informed about the establishment of the Media Council of Mongolia and its functions. Also people who think they know about the Media Council tend to misunderstand its functions or have wrong information. So for example, 61 percent of survey participants did not know what the Media Council does and 15 percent said it was a 'state organization to control media'.
- People who heard about the Media Council received information mostly from television and Internet. There were a few people who visited the website [www.mediacouncil.mn](http://www.mediacouncil.mn) or received information from professional organizations.
- If needed, citizens would first search the Internet to find information about the Media council of Mongolia. Rural citizens from remote areas tend to think that the local government

administrations would be the best place to find information about the media self-regulatory body.

- 
- Citizens lack information about the Code of ethics of journalists and they also doubt that they can or should complain if journalists work unethically. Citizens who are better educated and employed understand that journalists need abide by ethical standards but tend to have pessimistic and passive attitudes by arguing that “complaining will not change anything”.
- Citizens also lack information about how to proceed in case if they want to file a complaint. Some of them think that the Journalist’s Union, Police or court would be the right place to go if one would want to file a complaint.
- Rural citizens and people with lower education tend to think that they have nothing to do with media ethics and it’s not their job to complain about mistakes of journalists.
- Citizens lack knowledge and understanding about types of mistakes that can be related to ethical failures, They also do not know how to proceed in case they want to file a complaint.
- Nevertheless, About 60 percent of survey participants think in general, ethical mistakes of journalists should be addressed and about 40 percent of respondents stated that setting up the Media council has been extremely important.

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Chart 7. *Would you file a complaint if you find an ethical mistake in the media?*

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Chart 9. *In your opinion, how important is it to address ethical problems of journalists/media?*

Chart 10. *In your opinion, how important/useful was it to establish a media self-regulatory body, the Media Council of Mongolia?*

**Pictures from survey field work**

