

THE INFLUENCE OF NEW MEDIA ON THE WATCHDOG ROLE OF JOURNALISM IN PAKISTAN: MISINFORMATION, CREDIBILITY, AND TWITTER

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Abstract

The impact of Twitter on journalism in Pakistan has been unparalleled and has changed the scope of the journalism in the country. The current research attempts to analyze the impact of Twitter on the news reporting and professional interaction of Pakistani journalists. The research examined the professional reporting of journalists using the Twitter platform to post real-time updates and to engage with the audience through collaborative reporting and active reporting of news. Nevertheless, the increasing instances of harassment of journalists and the dissemination of false news constrains the depth of contextual analysis and, in the end, damages public trust and the credibility of the journalists. Unfortunately, the platform Twitter provides journalists who use the site is often misunderstood, which results in the loss of public trust. On the other hand, the study discusses some practices journalists use to evade the challenges in reporting news and provide credibility to their stories. Furthermore, the study provides practices that can be employed to capture the advantages Twitter provides journalists in Pakistan, which enhances the ability to disseminate news in a timely manner, and they include the enhancement of digital literacies that will support fact-checking, collaboration on reporting, and a protective framework that can be utilized to safeguard journalists while using the platform in an interactive manner. Thus, the research highlights the Twitter platform and its ability that can be employed to provide a framework or set of skills that can be utilized to provide the needed accountability in a professional manner in the journalists' ecosystem in Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

In Digital Journalism, the stream is shaped by the constant upgrades, whether in the flow or the consumption or the reception of the digital news. Digital Journalism is

shaped predominantly by technological and socio-political factors. Lee et al, describe social media especially Twitter, to be preferred for public communication as it

facilitates the instantaneous flow of communication. Likewise, Digital Journalism in Pakistan is feature and influenced primarily by technology and social media due to their monopolistic role in the flow of news, instant and continuous, and the socio-political turbulence of the country. In democracies such as Pakistan, Digital Journalism need to be professionally and rigorously integrated to counter the multitude of socio-political challenges such as political disenfranchisement and public distrust in established political and administrative institutions.

Traditionally, journalism has been viewed as the 'fourth estate' and given the responsibility of monitoring power, uncovering corruption, and maintaining accountability in democracies (Nai, 2017). This responsibility requires a certain level of public trust as well as high confidence in the journalistic institutions. New digital platforms, however, have disturbed the professional gatekeeping processes that journalism used to practice in order to separate itself from, unsubstantiated, opinion and propaganda. On platforms such as Twitter, information spreads instantaneously and unverified, misleading, and incorrect information can (and often does) spread to thousands of users prior to journalists even having the opportunity to verify the information. Such an acceleration of the news cycle prioritizes speed over accuracy from journalists, thereby undermining their credibility as professional information providers (McGregor & Molyneux, 2020).

Considering the transformations occurring within the phenomena at hand, the media landscape of Pakistan over the past decade has witnessed an increase in smartphone usage along with the availability of the internet, in which people have studied the transition from traditional print and broadcast communication to digital communication platforms. Twitter has come to be considered one of the most important platforms for breaking news, participating in political discourse, and for agenda setting, and has become popular among journalists, politicians, activists and

the general public (Shah et al., 2022). Major political events, crises, and protests have come to be analyzed and reported through the lens of the Twitter platform, and thus, the platform has become an important agent of public opinion. However, the openness of Twitter has allowed for the growth of false and misleading content, as well as the spreading of disinformation for political gain, which has raised serious concerns around the ability of people to discern quality and credible news from false and misleading content.

Online misinformation is connected to social media sites' underlying mechanisms rather than being a concern connected to only misinformation that exists in isolation. The prioritization of virality, engagement, and emotionality in Twitter's algorithms often result in non-verified 'journalism' trumping actual, well-researched journalism. The site's character limit, which is intended to allow quick posting of updates, throws contextual information out the window, leading to an even higher degree of oversimplification and misrepresentation of the social and political complexities than would be the case in longer posts. For journalists, the credibility that has been painstakingly built can be destroyed by the constant need to rapidly post updates from the field to their audience. Under the pressure of live-reporting, this extreme credibility debt can be triggered by a lack of verification, unethical actions, and professional irresponsibility.

Theoretical explanations for these events are based on agenda setting theory and Habermas's theory of the public sphere. According to agenda-setting theory, the media shape the public's perception of the importance of particular issues and influence what the public considers important (Drew, 2023). On Twitter, agenda-setting has become more influenced by trending hashtags, retweet coalitions, and algorithmic visibility, which can favor disinformation rather than the art of journalism. In the same vein, Habermas's public sphere theory posits that rational-critical discourse is one of the main pillars of democracy (Habermas, 1991, 2022).

Although Twitter is able to operate as a digital public sphere as it provides fora for participation and discourse, its aversion to information that is true, polarization, and manipulation thwart the possibility of rational discourse and diminish journalism's role in democracy (Seeliger & Sevnani, 2022).

However, if Twitter (X) is utilized strategically, some of the challenges can be turned into advantage. For example, Twitter X (now X) can reinforce the support function of journalism. Also, the advocacy of journalism can be enhanced through the use of multiplexed audience engagement and real-time verification during protest events. Furthermore, Twitter (X) can be used to practice what has been termed citizen journalism and can be a complement to journalism, especially in situations where professional reporting is under abundant. The real-time situations that can be provided by citizen journalists can be invaluable during politically charged situations where the reporting gaps can be extensive. These methodologies can be effective and efficient, and credible, but are still subject to contextualization and verification. (Agbo & Chukwuma, 2017). Also, the nature of journalism in Pakistan adds to the credibility crisis of social studies. Moreover, this discontent is exacerbated by

the working conditions under which most journalists operate. There is a dominant culture of surveillance, cyber harassment, and intimidation of journalists by state and non-state actors and this is mostly in the political domain. One of the chronic problems as regards these actors is self-censorship which leads to the shrinking of spaces for investigative reporting. Consequently, the disengagement of the watchdog role also contributes to a crisis in credibility. At this point, as most historians would argue, it goes beyond being a profession. It is a form of defiance against abuse, suppression, and disinformation.

Given this, it is vital to understand how Pakistani journalists manage misinformation and issues of credibility on Twitter. These problems digitally and globally inspire confidence and, in this case, accountability shifts to the loss of the journalism's watchdog role in Pakistan Twitter. This absence of research, thus far, recognized the influence of social media in the Western context. This research addresses this lack of scholarship by contributing to the conversations around the impact of social media. The reliance of developing democracies on the credibility of reporters makes the journalists, in the name of democracy, expeditiously respond to the absence of democratic accountability.

Literature Review

The last few decades have produced an enormous amount of scholarly work motivated by the proliferation of digital media and its consequences on journalism, misinformation, credibility, and media's 'watchdog' role—especially in the context of social media. The use of social media in news production has transformed the processes of news production, and it has also disrupted traditional gatekeeping, and diversified the actors in the information flow. These changes, on the one hand, make information more accessible, and on the other hand, they make challenges more pronounced in terms of verifying information, practicing ethical journalism, and overall public trust (Lee et al., 2017; Rashid et al., 2020). The aim of this

literature review to focus the attention of the academic community on research in the digital media, Twitter, misinformation, and journalism credibility, particularly in the case of Pakistan.

The recognition of social media platforms as an essential resource for journalism has permeated a significant volume of literature. Traditionally, journalists, according to Lee et al., (2017) have been expressing and utilizing Twitter for writing and engagement, but recently, it's been news used more as a tool for breaking news and audience engagement. Likewise, Shah et al., (2022) observed that Twitter as a resource enhancing Pakistan's journalist professional performance by facilitating real-time audience reporting and engagement. The

rapid availability of information and ease of access to social media might increase the amount of unverified information that journalists encounter, which problematic in terms of professional accuracy and credibility.

One of the consequences of the rise of social media has been the democratization of digital journalism; however, the Misinformation is the greatest of the consequences of the rise of digital journalism. More specifically, the ease of spreading false or misleading content on platforms such as Twitter further diminishes journalistic credibility, and consequently, credibility of news institutions. McGregor & Molyneux (2020), for instance, found that, due to the platform's algorithmic structure prioritizing engagement and virality, content that is often unverified wins out over content that has been fact-checked and is, therefore, legitimate journalism - we live in an era of infotainment. Journalists are under pressure to publish on fast-цикл. In politically polarized societies, Canada and other Western democracies as well as Pakistan, the risks are higher, as misinformation has the potential to be weaponized for social control, further destabilizing the media environment.

A significant aspect of journalism's credibility is its societal watchdog role. Nai (2017) argues that the effectiveness of journalism as the fourth estate is directly proportional to the degree of confidence the public bestows on the media in exercising independence, accuracy, and ethical behavior. The unchecked spread of misinformation diminishes journalism. In digital settings, public discourse is shaped by various factors, including the dissemination of misinformation, as illustrated by the principles of the agenda-setting theory. McCombs & Shaw's work (1972) posits the media's ability to shape the public's views and perceptions by addressing only certain issues. As for Twitter, the agenda-setting power is no longer the sole possession of legacy media, as it is augmented by the presence of hashtags, trending topics, and retweeting constituencies. This misinformation, as

Drew (2023) points out, is likely to receive authority and attention that is pertinent to journalism, as it is uncontrolled by the author's (editor's) hand and is amplified by the algorithms. Research esp. from Pakistan suggests the ability of Twitter to influence, as well as be influenced by, the agenda of mainstream media, esp. concerning the case at hand and the prevailing political situation. This suggests the sophistication of the relationship between legacy and contemporary media.

Digital misinformation specifically within the area of journalism can be explained using the theory of the public sphere. Habermas (1991) defined the public sphere as an area of \"rational-critical debate\" as a requirement for democratic rule. Although social media can serve the function of a public sphere because of the ability to freely participate and debate, studies present the argument that misinformation, polarization, and commercialization, diminish that potential (Seeliger & Seignani, 2022). In Pakistan, where politics discourse is quite inflammatory, the spread of false narratives on social media can be even more detrimental to the role of public debate and journalism as the debate and discourse mediator between the state and society.

Social media journalism is a field that has been documented with ethical dilemmas. The ability for users to share and disseminate messages within the Twittersphere raises issues surrounding verification as well as source credibility, and responsibility as a professional. The ethical responsibility of journalists to verify such content has been increasingly difficult as they are on the field with little to no resources and working under tight deadlines. Such issues are a cause of the public's declining trust, and publicly accepted skepticism on the news media of the society. In such an environment, preserving the public's trust is of utmost importance, and that can only be established using a self-regulatory framework of an institution focused on ethical journalism that upholds fact checking and accountability.

Within the context of Pakistan, the activities of harassment, surveillance, and political pressure are even more complicated. Jamil (2021) portrays the plight of the journalists able to partake in physical and digital surveillances and the way it affects their autonomy in the profession and their personal life spheres. Threats and campaigns aimed to intimidate and silence journalists further complicate these journalists' work and have a chilling effect on critiques and on investigative work. It is these things that fuel the crisis of credibility more, and which constrains journalists from freely and adequately carrying out their watchdog function. Although such conditions are in place, the adaptive mechanisms that journalists take to counteract disinformation and loss of credibility are documented in literature. There are collaborations in fact checking, use of various stories, and integration of transparency that are characterized as other forms of modern practices in enhancement of verification to gain audience trust. There are direct engagements of audiences to combat falsehoods and clarify the process undertaken in reporting. This action, to some degree, enhances the credibility of the acts done in digital forums. Verified citizen journalism can also act as a complement to the work of professional reporting by offering timely and different accounts, especially in crisis situations (Agbo & Chukwuma, 2017; Popović, 2024).

The literature shows that digital media, especially Twitter, has changed journalism's watchdog function by altering flows of information, gatekeeping, and changes in credibility. Despite the possible benefits of Twitter as the social media platform, including potential greater transparency, participation, and accountability, the platform also has the potential for greater abuse and for suggesting, with greater pressure on reporters, issues of verification and ethics. There is political polarization, surveillance, and lack of safety for reporters in Pakistan, which casts even greater light on the issues. The literature points to the need for studies on the strategies which journalists employ in the context of

misinformation and credibility. This study attempts to address that gap by examining how misinformation and the credibility of digital media impact Twitter's role in Pakistan.

Theoretical Framework

This study considers UGT Theory, Uses and Gratification, as a key measure and focal point of this research. UGT purports that active media users make conscious selections of specific media and content to satisfy a need, in contrast to being passive media consumers (Katz et al., 1973). UGT proposes that certain extreme motivations such as a need for information, entertainment, socialization, ease, and self-presentation drive individuals to choose one media form over another (Goljović, 2024). This appears to be especially salient for social media platforms such as Twitter, where users are able to share content.

When applied to journalism, why Twitter is used for collecting news, verifying, engaging with and sustaining audience trust as a credibility-preserving tool is explained by this theory. Twitter channels for monitoring public discourse, verifying information and updating responses to messages containing misinformation. This adhesion to Twitter is meant to reinforce the journalists' watchdog role. Also, Lasswell's media functions, that is surveillance, social correlation, cultural transmission and entertainment, epitomizes the role journalism must play in society with surveillance being the main control of watching specific events and informing the public.

A remarkable shift and transformation of the different technologies available in the field of communication and the media has occurred in Pakistan. Tweeting has become integral for journalists as they report, update, and interact with their audience and participants in the discourse. It has also facilitated the democratization of journalism and advocacy and the expression of silenced voices. Some of the potential negative consequences of the profession include unintentional dissemination of rumors, abuse of the customizable parameters of the profession, and online harassment of

journalists and others in the profession. Despite such drawbacks, the potential journalistic improvement in the area of public accountability, and surveillance is enormous.

This study utilizing the UGT and media functionalism foundational theories with the journalistic practices, seeks to understand the role of digital media in the

field of journalism in Pakistan, and how journalists and other participants in the profession use Twitter to in fact control unintentional rumors and maintain their integrity and credibility to help preserve the value of digital media in a professional context for accountability and trust to be preserved in the system.

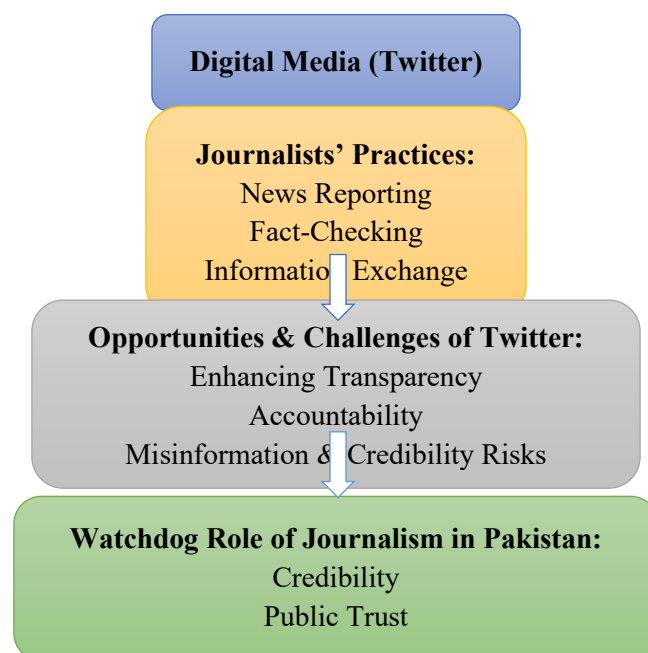
Conceptual Framework

This research looks into the impact of digital media, particularly Twitter, on the journalist function of watchdog in the context of misinformation and credibility in Pakistan. This research is grounded in Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) in which, in contrast to journalists, media users are the ones who bestow purpose to the media, which in this case is the journalists and the information. When doing media functionalities, Lasswell primarily focuses on journalism's instrumental roles in the society of surveillance and control and social accountability.

In this sense,

- UGT explains that Twitter, as professional tool, allows journalists to report, authenticate and disseminate information in real time.
- Credibility and misinformation are challenges that pose threats of the digital platform, professional discernment and verification are needed to mitigate such.
- Influenced by the challenges of Twitter and the dangers associated with it, the journalist's control frameworks aimed at transparency and accountability as well as public confidence in the societal roles espoused by Lasswell.

The framework has overall classified Twitter as a dualistic phenomenon which can both increase the amplification of journalism's watch-dog role by enabling the flow of information and engaging the public as well as increase the threats related to information, misinformation, credibility, and professional fatigue. This research aims to examine the journalists' experiences and perceptions in order to gauge the effects of the digital of journalism on the media landscape in Pakistan on the watch-dog role of journalism.



Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine how Pakistani journalists' use of Twitter influences their perceived effectiveness in performing the watchdog role, especially regarding misinformation and credibility.
2. To assess how Pakistani journalists' use of Twitter influences their news reporting, fact-checking, and professional information exchange practices.
3. To explore journalists' perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of using Twitter to promote transparency and accountability in Pakistan.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between journalists' use of digital media (Twitter) and their perceived effectiveness in performing the watchdog role.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between journalists' use of Twitter and their practices of news reporting, fact-checking, and professional information exchange.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between journalists' use of Twitter and their perceptions of opportunities and challenges in promoting transparency and accountability.

Research Questions

1. How do Pakistani journalists perceive the influence of digital media on their watchdog role, particularly in addressing misinformation and maintaining credibility?
2. How do journalists use Twitter for news reporting, fact-checking, and professional information exchange in their practice?
3. What are journalists' perspectives on the opportunities and challenges of using Twitter to enhance transparency and accountability in Pakistan?

Methodology

The study adopted a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design to understand the impact of Twitter on the watchdog role of journalism in Pakistan, which included quantitative surveys, a social media analytics component, and qualitative interviews.

Data Collection

The first step to implement this research was measuring the journalists' activity on Twitter and the opportunities and challenges they came across while venting their methods of exchanging information and checking facts, as well as reporting news. Surveys were sent and journalists' Twitter activity was measured. Additionally, to observe the reporting of news and exchanging information to use in fact-checking, public Twitter data was analyzed along with the use of sentiment analysis, the networks of retweets, and hashtags.

Interviews were the main form of data collection, using a qualitative, semi-structured approach with a smaller cohort of journalists, who had varying degrees of experience. Their use of Twitter and digital

media in journalism, and how digital media in journalism, as well as Twitter, could enhance its accountability and transparency were the questions posed.

From the emergence of New Media in Pakistan to journalists' activity on Twitter, the current research had its dependent variable as the Watchdog Role of Journalism, while its independent ones were. For the collection of the data, online questionnaires, social media analytical tools, and a flexible interview framework were the primary instruments to ensure harmonization.

Data Analysis

Both the quantitative survey and the social media data were analyzed through statistical software, and interview data was transcribed

and coded into themes that emerged. Combining the different types of data provided more specific answers to the research questions as well as identifying the patterns, opportunities, and challenges of using Twitter for journalism.

Ethical Considerations

This research included some ethical considerations, such as obtaining informed consent, ensuring anonymity, and receiving approval from the institution.

Results and Findings

This research aimed to analyze the influence of Twitter in the field of journalism and its watchdog function in Pakistan by merging qualitative interviews with quantitative data in the form of a social media/journalists survey. The main contribution of this research was to identify the key opportunities, challenges, and trends that Twitter presents.

Quantitative Findings

By sampling survey data and social media data, we examined Twitter usage by journalists regarding performance of their watchdog function. This social media platform, and its features of instantaneous

dissemination and engagement, real-time reporting and interfacing with other journalists, and specialists, justified our partial acceptance of H_{01} and H_{02} .

The merging of social media and news media monitoring showed that journalists:

- i. Most journalists reported using Twitter to capture, verify, and report news stories that they interact with.
- ii. Increased interaction with Twitter correlated with enhanced perceived effectiveness in carrying out watchdog activities, thus partially invalidating H_{01} .
- iii. Engagement through certain actions, such as following reliable accounts and retweeting verified content, positively correlated with professional actions like fact-checking and reporting. Thus, H_{02} is partially rejected.
- iv. Survey responses describe perceived opportunities such as enriched audience engagement and increased reach, while also explaining challenges such as misinformation and online harassment, thus describing partially $H_{3..}$.

Qualitative Findings

RQ1 to RQ3 is explored through semi-structured interviews, which provide rich detail about specific aspects of the journalists' experience:

Opportunities:

- **Improved Transparency and Accountability:** Real-time updating of news promotes responsible reporting and communication.
- **Gauging Public Sentiment:** Journalists interact with audience,

respond, and enlighten them on issues, thus building social credibility.

- **Enriched Participation in Journalism:** Neglected perspectives obtain news values and augment the watchdog function.
- **Knowledgeable Reporting:** Reporting reflects the ideas that flow from collaboration of journalists.

Challenges:

- **Verification of Information:** Fast accumulation of data raises the tangled issue of nugget versus noise for fraudulent data.
- **Oversimplification:** Complexity of issues leads to loss of essential detail in the short format of a tweet.
- **Abuse:** Threats of harassment often lead to self-censorship and limit the amount of reporting journalists feel they can undertake.

Emerging Trends:

- **Rise of Multimedia Sharing:** Usage of photos, videos, and live streaming to enhance audience engagement and storytelling.
- **Fact-Checking Initiatives:** Collaborations with independent fact-checkers combat misinformation.
- **Evolving Language and Slang:** Adaptation of language helps reach younger audiences and improve accessibility.

Table 1

Summary of Opportunities, Challenges, and Emerging Trends of Twitter for Pakistani Journalism

Category	Description	Significance
Opportunities	Enhanced Information Dissemination: Real-time news sharing to a wider audience	Encourages transparency, accountability, and awareness by the public.
	Direct Audience Engagement: Interaction with audiences through Q&A, clarifications, and discussions	Builds trust and assesses sentiment by the public and increases the quality of reporting.
	Amplified Citizen Journalism: Platform for marginalized voices and grassroots reporting	Increases the volume of news published and strengthens the supervisor job.
Challenges	Networking and Collaboration: Connections with journalists, experts, and sources	Encourages reporting to be more enriched and be able to exchange knowledge.
	Misinformation and Disinformation: Rapid spread of false or unverified content	Impairs trust and credibility, and also impacts the standards of journalism.
	Limited Context and Complexity: Brevity of tweets can oversimplify issues	Impairs the quality of reporting to be incomplete and interpret it wrongly.
Emerging Trends	Online Harassment and Threats: Abuse and intimidation of journalists	Impairs the freedom to speak and also the problems with investigations.
	Rise of Multimedia Sharing: Use of photos, videos, and live streams	Increases the level of involvement and experience of news.
	Fact-Checking Initiatives: Collaboration with independent fact-checkers	Encourages verification of current information and maintains information to be more accurate.
	Evolving Language and Slang: Adapting communication for younger audiences	News content becomes more relevant and accessible.

In total, a small number of journalists in the Pakistan data consider Twitter to be functioning in more than a few significant ways. Distribution of tweets per user is extensive, and also Twitter journalists do reporting in a way that is professional, ethical, and transparent. Data indicates that journalism in Pakistan has a peculiar and sometimes strange relationship with technology.

Discussion

This research sheds light on the complexities and contradictions of Twitter use in journalistic watch-dogging in the Pakistan context, and offers journalists both the opportunities Twitter provides, as well as the restrictions of one social media tool in a fully networked digital media environment. As the Uses and Gratification theory suggests,

Twitter is a social media tool, among many, that journalists use when they feel the need to engage in professional tasks, such as verifying, capturing, and disseminating news, as well as engaging with an audience. The quantitative findings of this study reveal that Twitter users report being more effective in performing the watchdog role, which suggests that social media is a tool

that journalists can use to adapt and achieve professional social objectives (thereby, partially rejecting H₀₁ and H₀₂) (Lee et al., 2017; Shah et al., 2022).

The qualitative findings build on the quantitative results and demonstrate that Twitter fosters a greater level of transparency, greater collaboration in journalism, and more active citizen participation, thereby amplifying the traditional watchdog role of journalism, which suggests that journalists can operate outside formal journalism institutions. The use of Twitter, which illustrates the active agency that is central to UGT, allowed journalists to moderate, in the plural sense, real-time social events, engage with the audience, and raise the voices of the marginalized (Agbo & Chukwuma, 2017; Jamil, 2021).

Although the use of Twitter for professional journalism has many potential benefits, the challenges, including misinformation, disinformation, insufficient context, and online abuse, demonstrate the potential dangers of using Twitter. These difficulties also correspond with the existing literature stating that social media has the potential to both advance and limit journalism (Nai, 2017; McGregor & Molyneux, 2020). To protect their credibility and professional journalism, social media journalists must engage in strategic authentication, nuanced analyses, and reporting, and collaborate with professional fact-checkers (Shah et al., 2022).

Increased surveillance and digital accountability via Lasswell's functions of journalism are supplemented by the internet, but the increased volume of bogus information makes exercising these functions of the internet frustrating (Habermas, 1991; Seeliger & Seignani,

Conclusion

The influence of social media, specifically Twitter, on journalism in Pakistan, and on the use of digital communication technology by journalists in the transformation of their watchdog role is what this research is about. Journalism now provides the unprecedented capacity to

2022; Drew, 2023). Journalists have to make the choice at the crossroads of the paradox. The trends noted as fact-checking; as well as, the recent innovations in language, and multimedia storytelling point out how journalists adapt to remain pertinent, reach a greater audience, and counter the spread of misinformation (Lee et al., 2017; Rashid et al., 2020). The Twitter phenomenon in Pakistan and the paradox it presents is a case of advocacy for transparency in journalism, and for the promotion of civic trust and accountability.

The influence of social media, and in this case Twitter specifically, in the journalistic profession is well established. This shows how Twitter allows journalists to showcase rapid reporting while communicating to the public and audience. Also, they ensure accountability, and transparency, and gain the audience's trust. This has been improved to gain the public's trust and ensure data is relayed faster. The Twitter platform also has challenges of misinformation and harassment which impact the public's trust. Journalists have stopped to engage in the fact reporting process to ensure they counter the problems to ensure quality journalism. This has been described in the use of Active Media.

In general, Twitter is both beneficial and damaging at the same time: journalists and their work are positively advanced and expanded, but Twitter also poses possible threats that, if unheeded, can undermine the terrible traits of professionalism and democracy. This study looks at the consequences of the usage of social media journalism in Pakistan and assesses its consequences both positively and negatively. Social media's impact, both in the positive and negative aspects, is acknowledged.

reporters to capture and relay their narratives in real time, and to engage, collaborate, and provide advocacy for the disempowered, while other accountability mechanisms are in place.

However, the negative aspects of Twitter utilization such as disinformation, lack of depth, online abuse, and other

consequences, which affect the journalistic work, in particular its credibility, are considerable. The journalists overcome these barriers by incorporating fact checking, multimedia storytelling, and other flexible communicating such activities to the field, which shows the active use of social media, as promoted in the Uses and Gratifications Theory.

Overall, Twitter is a unique tool because, on one hand, it helps journalists and

strengthens the watchdog role, but on the other, it needs to be meticulously handled to ensure professional and democratic accountability. The research findings demonstrate the significance of ethical, policy, and collective measures to optimize the advantages of the platform and reduce its negative outcomes on the practice of journalism in the country.

Recommendations

Strengthening journalism in Pakistan on Twitter in light of the findings of the research should include the following.

1. **Enhanced and Systematic Fact-Checking:** Journalists and media houses should stop the practice of losing credibility because of failing to fact-check too quickly, as well as losing too much credibility when false information is fact-checked, when too much false information is losing credibility.
2. **Systematic and Enhanced Digital Literacy:** Media professionals should gain skills in at least one social media platform in a systemized way to be able to understand the content, and the digital platform to be able to critique the content.

3. Strengthened and Enhanced Collaborative Reporting:

The discipline of journalism should allow collaborative projects on the same topic across different organizations and with citizen journalists.

4. Guidelines for social media reporting:

Media houses must have policies and documentations to ensure journalists have safe reporting on Twitter, and support structures for reporting online harassment, and ethical challenges in reporting.

5. They may use multimedia content + interactive comm tools to accomplish this engagement, provide context and simplify complex news.

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