

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF JOURNALISM: FROM PRINT MEDIA TO ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE RISE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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### Abstract

Journalism is one of the three legs of democratic society. Over the last century, Journalism has gone through a remarkable evolution from an over reliance on print media to an explosion of medium, mostly as a consequence of technological advancements and audience engagement. It started with primarily print media where newspapers and magazines served as the key / primary component of the information economy. They set the standards for a professional practice of reporting, engaging in editorial accountability, and investigative reach. Subsequently, when radio and television came on the scene, these electronic media offered immediacy and visual storytelling that newspaper reporting could not compete with, annihilating local newspapers and magazines in terms of influence, and circulation. However, it did usher in a decline in print media which initiated a slow and sustained erosion of the threat to the predominance of print media. More broadly, when the internet is built out, it ushered in an era of Journalism characterized by speed, breadth of involvement, interactivity, and global reach. Social media Facebook, Twitter (X), YouTube, and Instagram is also used to connect people like previous traditional networks had done; namely communicating information to the masses, but they began to leverage immediacy, citizen journalism, and participatory communication as an interaction between user engagement and business practices designed to recommunicate information. This reconfiguration of user relationship(s) became as much the limiting media company engagement factor as the tempo of what, when, and how they communicate. What used to be a predefined mass of individuals, is now enabling the analytics of producing trends over time or space that can potentially inform real time linkages for one off engagements; and some subsequent universality under disintermediation (holding consumer interest's hostage) to demonstrate usefulness to / by accountability. Of course, with a better information economy, comes other pressures namely clutter / overconsumption, decimation of

*appropriate journalism practices, misinformation / news factories and the rise of fake news, the tangle of information overload and the crisis in confidence / trustworthiness and accountability. This paper examines the evolution of journalism across three distinct stage namely the era of print, the era of electronic media and the growing supremacy of social media. More specifically it examines the issues related to the transition between one stage to another, indicating how technology, audience preferences and economic pressures have reshaped the media landscape. This paper also examines the dimensions of journalism that have changed as a result of this transformation in the dissemination process encompassing news gathering, editorial procedures, audience engagement, and business practices. The overall finding depicts how journalism in the digital age encounters challenges unlike ever before with increased competition for people's attention, loss of trust with the media and how journalism as a profession faces never before encountered challenges but has new opportunities for inclusivity, immediacy and storytelling opportunities. The transformation of journalism demonstrates not only the resilience of the profession but demonstrates journalism's capability to advance with a society in an increasingly interconnected world.*

## INTRODUCTION

Journalism has long been perceived as one of the most formidable institutions in terms of shaping public opinion, accountability, and sustaining values of democracy. Print media, newspapers and magazines in particular, have held the clear advantage on the flow of information by being more comprehensive, engaged in and around stories, establishing legitimacy around journalism as a profession for decades. Speculation around the impact of technology began long ago, but print has been our reliable, everyday go to channels, for political, social, cultural, and economic developments. However, the industry underwent massive change into the era of technology, and continue to define how journalism does or does not function in society. (Arnas, 2022)

The electronic era of journalism accomplishes real time, effective means of engaging the public, while facilitating mass information. The media and the effect of visual communication provides immediacy, resulting in conducive environments for the audience to shift away from traditional newspapers and magazines. Thus, the electronic, actual practice established new journalism cultures that accelerated the fast pace of communication and highlighted succinct, broad reaching stories from a narrow perspective, with substantial decline to the importance of print journalism. (Eldridge, 2019)

The digital shift in the late 20th century and early 21st century accelerated and amplified this occurrence with the advent of the digital revolution and social media networks. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and YouTube have redefined how news is created, distributed, and consumed, and have muddying the lines of professional journalism and user generated content. Audiences expect immediacy, interactivity or engagement, and personalisation, in a world where journalists must challenge the need for these aspects while dealing with ass concerns and issues such as misinformation, standards of accuracy, and ethics. (Goldhaber, 1993)

This paper investigates journalism's evolution from a print medium to electronic mediums, and the next chapter with the rise of social media. This establish an analysis of journalism's evolution, as this paper examines the current opportunities and challenges for journalism, its function in public discourse and its relationship to nothing less than the audiences a changing relationship.

## Background

The history of journalism can be understood through the lens of technology and the needs of society. For hundreds of years, print remained the dominant form of information transmission and it drove political consciousness, developed public

discourse and built culture. Newspapers and magazines stood as institutional voices which featured in depth analysis, investigative journalism and editorial selection of content. This format and structure provided credibility and gained user trust ultimately operationalizing print journalism as a key part of democratic functions in societies globally. In Pakistan, as with other countries, newspapers were instrumental in constitution making, political inertia and informationalism during significant moments. (Kriyantono, 2012)

The advent of electronic media in the 20th century, marked the beginning of substantive fragmentation in the traditional media landscape. Radio provided the first opportunity for real-time information delivery that is available to both rural and urban areas irrespective of spatial constraints. In subsequent decades, television combined sound and visuals, allowing for even greater accessibility and immediacy by engaging the broader mass audience. The instantaneity generated by the visual capacity of television redefined news content over the newspaper by making it possible to provide live coverage of events such as presidential political debates and political and global humanitarian crises in ways that are new and compelling. By doing so, this evolution and technological shift eroded print circulation and transformed the print practice to a high speed urgency where immediate reportage trumped depth and detail. (McQuail, 2000)

The digital revolution of the late 20th century transformed journalism again. With the development of the internet, news organizations went online, allowing people all over the planet access to information 24/7. The developments made a change in geographic boundaries, and an even larger change in audience behaviour reader behaviour changed dramatically for newspapers as more readers began using all has limited space to pack in possibility interesting sites over the newspapers. The growth of social media platforms at the beginning of the 21st century changed the game in even more fundamental ways, shifting how a news story is produced, published, and consumed. It is hard to imagine a world without Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), or even Tiktok, but these platforms created an explicit role for the audience as

co-constructors, contributors, and disseminators in the news process. (Najoan, 2011)

In some ways, this background illustrates that the stories of journalism have been incremental, based on changes in invention, access, and audience expectations. Like the transitions in journalism through print, electronic, or social media, the technology almost always has more advantages than disadvantages, even if the problems of credibility, ethics, and sustainability still loom large as issues in the profession affective most journalism.

## Problem Statement

The evolution from print journalism to electronic media and then social media has fundamentally changed how journalists create, share, and consume information. On the one hand, this shift has produced unique benefits such as immediacy, global reach, and audience interactivity; on the other hand, it has presented unique challenges, impeding the credibility and authenticity of journalism as an independent profession. Print journalism is once viewed as the most respected, sophisticated, and trustworthy form of journalism, but there has been a dramatic decline in readership and revenues, leaving us with concern over the future of long form, investigative journalism. Electronic media, while providing an immediate medium for news reporting, has produced its own dangerous milestones. Sensationalism emerges as news is published on websites and even radio and television. The adoption of subjective aspects as new reporting tools has replaced accuracy for even less reliable journalism. (Herlina, 2017)

Social media has created pre-conceived issues by allowing virtually anyone with access to the Internet to report stories, which is never the case and squashed the physical idea of journalism. Have we gone from the most reliable to the least reliable? Social media has arguably produced many problems that we had never dreamed of, such as misinformation, "fake news," and echo chambers for polarized ideological societies. Moreover, there is a real time constant that psychology keeps pushing on journalists to update their social media presence by reporting news quickly versus adding total value from their story. Stories with only rapid updates become simply updates and diminish valuable news

presentations across all digital platforms. (Peter, 2015)

In parts of the world like Pakistan, these challenges are particularly pronounced due to media regulatory concerns, political agendas, and low digital literacy. Audiences confront contradictory narratives, unsubstantiated content, and media prejudice which ultimately diminishes their public trust. In the context of the increasingly evolving state of journalism, it is critical to investigate the impact of the evolution on journalistic practice, audience trust, and the important role of media in democratic discourse. (Sendjaja, 2000)

Thus, the focal problem engaged within this study is the conflicting nature of technological innovations in journalism and the question of whether digital (or internet laws) really strengthen credibility, fidelity, and professional ethics.

## Research Gap

While a lot of scholarly work has investigated the developments of journalism, much of it assesses almost exclusively the impact of the decline of print media or the impact of the rise of digital/social media. More research has focused on the economic crisis facing print journalists, the expanding reach of television, and the participatory culture enabled by social media. There has been less work on the significance of these changes together as aspects of an ongoing process, recognizing the interrelations between print, the electronic media, and social media they are all engaged in journalism. And while there are definitely exceptions to this, generally, it seems to be the case that research is not examining how the condition of journalism in developing countries is being influenced in different ways due to varying trajectories of technology, culture, and polity, thus changing journalism from the Western context. (Soewajdi, 2003)

To a large part, research has examined the media in the West, reflecting on the decline of newspapers, the dominance of television networks, and the emergence of global social media platforms. There has been considerably less work in places like South Asia, especially Pakistan, where journalism has always played an important role in nation building, holding politicians accountable, and mobilizing public audiences. Although the diffusion of electronic

media and the use of social media in Pakistan has expanded dramatically, there remains an absence of much scholarly work that interrogates how this convergence has transformed journalism practice, trust from audiences, and accountability of journalists. (Romli, 2018)

A significant missing piece concerns journalism's ethical and professional dilemmas in the digital age. Though the literature has engaged with social media in relation to spreading misinformation and fake news, very few have focused on the new re-imaginings of traditional journalistic values, values such as accuracy, impartiality, accountability, and the degree to which these concepts are being redefined in relation to the evolving journalistic context. In addition, while research has established that the audience has become an important player in shaping the news agenda and changing the journalism audience relationship, the meaning and effects have not been sufficiently investigated. (Waluyo, 2018)

This study addresses the gaps in the literature by attempting a comprehensive exploration of traditional journalism's journey from print to electronic and social media, particularly the implications for the credibility, ethics, and democratic discourse in traditional journalism. In attempting to situate the investigation within Pakistan, and likewise, developing societies, the research affords consideration for a holistic understanding of how global convergences in media transformation appear and are configured differently according to various socio-political conditions.

## Research Objectives

1. To examine how journalism transitioned from print journalism to electronic journalism and the rise of social media as a news platform.
2. To consider the challenges posed by electronic journalism and social media around issues of credibility, misinformation, and ethical considerations.
3. To assess the implications of this transition for journalistic practices, audience trust, and the role of media in shaping democratic discourse in general and in Pakistan in particular.

## Research Questions

1. How has journalism transitioned from print journalism to electronic journalism and then to social media?
2. What challenges do electronic and social media pose for journalistic credibility, ethics, and professional standards?
3. How has the shift in journalism contributed to transformation of audience trust and the journalist audience relationship?

## Research Hypotheses

1. The shift from print to electronic and social media has negatively impacted the readership and influence of traditional print journalism.
2. Social media has increased the frequency with which audiences are exposed to misinformation, which has reduced the credibility of journalism.
3. The shifting media environment has transformed the journalist audience relationship such that the audience is more active in shaping news agendas.

## Significance of the Study

The transition of journalism from print to electronic and social media is not simply a technological evolution; it is a sea change in how societies access, interpret, and interact with information. Therefore, it is particularly important for academics, practitioners, policy makers, and the general public to understand this evolution.

First, this research contributes to the academic context of journalism, as it examined journalism's shift as a whole, using a holistic study, assessing journalism's evolution from print, electronic, and social media, instead of each individually. Understanding how each phase connects to the social processes that have characterized journalism is crucial to understanding the evolution of journalism from print media to social media as we know it today.

Second, the study relevance in a practical sense is aimed at journalists and media organizations. The transition from print journalism means the erosion of credibility, ethical dilemmas, audience trust, etc., remain the same for media practitioners now than

five, ten, or twenty years ago. However, this research has implications for media practitioners in terms of changing audience expectations, while still being accountable to journalistic principles. This is particularly evident when our accreditation exhibit the truth, but problems of speed and misinformation circulate faster than the truth.

Thirdly, this research is particularly meaningful when we consider the situation in Pakistan and other countries with developing media where journalism serves as an instrument of political accountability, a mechanism for democratic participation, and a source of public information. This study focuses on local media adapting to global technological changes and helps identify the unique prospects and limitations that non-Western societies face when confronted with the transformation of media.

Lastly, the study contributes to broader societal knowledge of journalism's changing role. Citizens are becoming active agents in news production through social media and digital spaces and the traditional journalist audience relationship is changing. The study's findings could be used for developing media literacy projects, prompting critical engagement in news coverage, and contributing to understanding the democratic role of journalism as the information landscape changes quickly.

In sum, the study's importance is tied to its ability to provide links between the academic, professional, and societal understandings of journalism's transformation by identifying both the challenges and opportunities of a growing digital context.

## Literature Review

Digital media in contemporary society has become a necessity rather than a tool. Its evolution is not entirely new, and there is a gradual encroachment by digital technologies into print journalism during the 20th century. The mean erosion of print is occurring at the same time we started realizing the speed ability of transmitting information, in our case, news and knowledge. The evolution of communication technologies creates a need for both individuals and institutions to evolve, to feel like they must continue to evolve as if guided by the current rhythms of technological modernization. Data released by the Press Council of Indonesia shows that in 2017 alone there are 1,755 online new portals in Indonesia. This

is testament to the explosive proliferation of new media. (Yunus, 2010)

Dependence on communication technologies has emerged as a vital form of human development that is linked to the continued sustainability of the future of civilizations. In the past, information was mediated by newspapers, magazines, books, radio, and television, and these lengthy forms of mass media are instrumental in developing the ways in which information could be shared. However, the onset of digital technologies has dramatically altered the journalism system, forcing the transmission of information to move from platforms beyond print and broadcast to online platforms. The potential consequences have been far reaching, impacting traffic patterns, understanding ways to generate revenue, and professional approaches to work that are constantly confronted with the epistemic pressures of developing content for digital platforms like Facebook and Twitter (Ekstrom & Westlund, 2019, in Eldridge, Hess, Tandoc, & Westlund, 2019: 397).

Supporting evidence from reports about the Nielsen's Consumer & Media View Survey from the third quarter of 2017 indicates a decline in traditional (print media and newspapers), explaining only 20 percent of individuals purchased newspapers in Indonesia in 2017 compared to 28 percent in 2013 (<https://katadata.co.id>). The above trends demonstrate the decline of traditional media (print media, newspapers) while digitization is producing new content and new media. (Bentivegna, 2020)

The growth of the internet in Indonesian society has allowed for a greater reliance on digital portals for information. According to Siregar in Asep Syamsul (2018: 34-35), "online media" is an umbrella term for telecommunication and multimedia-based formats such as portal, website, online radio, online television and digital press each site, and email. These formats are often used interchangeably as "cyber media," "internet media," or "new media" each meaning content hosted on online media. Likewise, Syarifuddin Yunus (2010: 30) argues that "online media" consists of digital platforms such as websites and blogs that are produced only in cyberspace, and consumed online. Online journalism is an important aspect of the Indonesian media landscape since its

first discovery in 1994, and is an evolving aspect of the Indonesia press. (Carvalho, 2018)

The Contemporary Experience and Views of Indonesian Journalists," Kuskridho Ambardi, PhD of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISPOL), UGM, identified five core characteristics of Indonesian online journalism. These are: emphasis on speed of reporting, incomplete truth (as news is produced), sensationalism, the concentration of reporting/coverage from Jakarta, and the use of practices similar to public relations practices that sometimes distort issues. These practices all need to be addressed critically by the consumer. For example, in regard to sensationalism, this highlights the structural tension between audience demand and journalists' commitments to accuracy. As Ambardi points out, when the audience does not have substantive literacy, the media continues to produce low quality news, challenging the reader to read the media text more critically. (Fadilla, 2021)

Changes occurring in mass media indicate changes are occurring in a process of incremental, fundamental, transformation. Laseau (1980: 120) in Najoan and Johansen (2011) noted Laseau's transformation includes responses to internal and external, stimuli, which continue as changes in an environment, and which change slightly each time, in the same direction, until it was transformed. Journalism today indicates these are the major shifts that have occurred, because of digital technologies, therefore traditional genders or media organizations are challenged by asking how to reframe their model and keep up with new demand. Information today is expected to glean instantly, and this expectation positions the digital media and society's established practice of speed and access to information, solidified the shift online, regarding previous collective practices. The advent of the internet also solidified and shaped society's relations to information speed and flow.

The "new media theory" from Pierre Levy (Novi Herlina, 2017) explored how the development of media technology impacts the socialization process, researching the use of media technology as small, medium or large group uses to former interaction styles (media). Levy's two camps, theory separates as social interaction, where differences between media measure inclusion and distance to face to face

interaction, while the other, measures the differences in others' integration socially culturally, therefore media are ideas or rituals, that are used as measures connected to a common vitalization, shared experience, rather than a technology connected to tether to another individual use of information shared. The World Wide Web is not transformative, as a user refers to an important relations, knowledge orientations of positioning structures, new possibilities of community based connections. Media are not oriented as a position of self-interest, but it is thought in assignable when articulated as a dynamic and flexible place to constitute a related experience.

As a result of advances in communication technologies, information production and dissemination have changed in parallel. Traditional news organisations continue to use digital formats in their distribution mode, and the two formats (traditional and online) are beginning to complement one another (partially). Goldhaber (1993) uses the term "transformation" to refer more generally to processes that are the result of an external prompt or input that ultimately results in a different outcome. A similar point is made by Wira Respati (2014: 47) who indicates that the enhancement of information and communication technologies have affected lifestyle changes, which are also occurring in Indonesia. Social media now makes it possible for everyone to have instantaneous, immediate communication for a nearly zero cost across distance, widely capturing public interest. Laseau (1980:120) as noted by Najoan and Johansen (2011) points out that transformation involves ongoing change with direction instigated by contextual aspects. Joko Waluyo's statement in the *Diakom Journal: The Meaning of Journalism in the Digital Era: An Opportunity and Transformation* (2018:34) identifies that since Indonesia's Reformation period, traditional media has experienced more degrees of freedom, but the proliferation of the internet means that traditional outlets now "compete" with websites and online media, which can provide easier access to news and things of interest in real time. The speed at which digital platforms can publish content has forced traditional media into a second class status in a sense and as they converge on the way to transmedia

experiences, they adopted a plethora of internet practices across their outputs.

Generational change has also played a role in the evolution of the media. Peter (2015) refers to Generation X as people who are born during a time of rapid growth for technology, including the personal computer, cable television, video games, and the internet. This generation has been flexible with technological development, and it is often described as resourceful, independent, informal, and entrepreneurial in terms of work orientation and commitment to a satisfactory balance between work and home life. Their adaptability to technological changes has ultimately served as a catalyst for embedding the use of digital media in everyday practices. Historical trends of Indonesia's print publishing industry show increases in quantity by the early 2000s as well. As Sendjaja (2000) noted, the MASINDO report found 358 publishing outlets at that time, with 104 newspapers, 115 tabloids, and 139 magazines, as well as the beginnings of broader specialization of content and a segmented audience as a way of remaining competitive in increasingly congested media landscape.

In contemplating the movement from print to digital media, it is also essential to think about agenda setting theories. Bentivegna and Boccia (2020) suggest creation of the agenda in a digital ecosystem occurs through alternating cycles of production and consumption. Personal content such as photos, stories and videos are amalgamated with collective stories, represented in print and broadcast news, and fed into the context of a personal and collective discourse. The combination of private and public materials is a major reconstruction of agenda-setting practices. For example, Twitter expresses an example of digital agenda setting practices through the use of hashtags that bring to gather different threads of content into shared spaces of visibility.

While trending hashtags look similar to agenda setting they do not adhere to traditional textbook definitions of agenda setting or construction (Carvalho et al., 2018). Hashtag activism is a tangible expression of how visibility in online spaces can disrupt traditional mainstream media systems through the ability to gain mass visibility and attention. Therefore, the digital environment reshapes agenda setting and expands the area in

which agenda-setting can operate, and with that shift, new power relations take shape in regard to who has accessibility and the ability to shape the policies and objectives of political and media elites. Everyday participants are now involved in discourse through fast and effective mobilization, mass sharing and participating in on-line campaigns changing the public sphere and shaping the topics and policy agenda.

Emerging ideas about a “networked public sphere” reflect the distributed and participatory nature of digital deliberation. Firmansyah et al. (2021) argue that agendas are cohesive because of their connections to a network of 'other' media outlets, partisan associations, and non-partisan communities, even if their single and composite formats diverge. Despite multiple platforms, there is considerable convergence in the aims and objectives of agendas and the way they are interdependent across digital and traditional media. However, there is still debate about the ways that digital platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, are observable influences in agenda setting.

Lin et al. (2021) point out that some of the reasons about the diffusion of information, particularly the transfer into mainstream news agendas, has not been investigated yet. Questions persist about how algorithms, networks, and user engagement work together to shape agendas. Misinformation complicates this relationship because the increasing reliance on fabricated content can eat away at digital credibility. While most of the scholars agree with the many risks posed by misinformation, there is still contention about the extent of misinformation, and the utility of any helpful responses (Mutiarra & Priyonggo, 2019).

Solving these problems requires a focus on media literacy and fact checking initiatives. As suggested by Firmansyah et al. (2021), educating audiences is imperative for an audience to be able to interact effectively with different content forms, whether in print or digital format. Without sufficient literacy audiences are susceptible to misinformation, filter bubbles, and echo chambers. At the same time, research needs to explore what sustainable economic models look like for both print and digital content. Lin et al. (2021) note that we need to examine advertising models, subscription services, and

nonprofit models to consider whether there are ways to make diverse media viable into the future. The social impact of changing media models also bears careful close attention. Polarization, civic engagement, solidarity these are systemic problems related to larger structures that shape media change.

The intersection of algorithms and curation only exacerbates issues of agenda setting. Algorithms often restrict access and elevate some content above others, effectively editorializing access to information. This creates biases in our exposure to information. The mystery of algorithms creates questions surrounding transparency and pluralism in the digital media space. Whether in connection with social media algorithms, search engines, or information suggested to us by algorithms generally, Mutiarra, and Priyonggo (2019) argue that algorithms have an identifiable and biased impact on access to various perspectives. Now is the time to investigate how algorithmic recommendation systems are changing our public debate. Some evidence suggests there is also a shift from centralised agenda setting by media elites to decentralized, participatory practices that emerge from grassroots communities (Twenge et al., 2019). The interactive capabilities of digital platforms, such as hashtags and trending topics, contribute to the complementary decentralization of the process of agenda making. In this way, digital content blurs the participatory lines between individual and audience based creator, producing a layered, interconnected media experience.

Digital media have disrupted the long standing hierarchies of agenda setting. Even when both are present, engagement with traditional and digital outlets is complementary; they give and take from one another. Twenge et al. (2019) proposed this phenomenon as indicators of layered media ecology because audiences engage across multiple media forms and are generating interdependent flows of information. This importantly tells us that digital media is not the only factor in the construction of discourse; digital media can only affect discourse in conjunction with other media. Venkatraman et al. (2021) stated that hashtags and collectives streams of visibility are ways grassroots participation takes over mainstream coverage. Ultimately, our media landscape now includes collaboration, convergence, complexity, and combines print and digital.

The problem of misinformation heightens the importance of media literacy programs and collaborative regulatory solutions. Policymakers, educators, and media workers must come together to design interventions that can address the credibility problems, all while protecting press freedom (Firmansyah et al., 2021). Meanwhile, media must continue to adjust business models for profitability. Carvalho et al. (2018) emphasize how traditional print outlets have attempted paywalls and subscriptions as advertising windfall profits increasingly evaporate. The developing digital economy relies on effective websites, apps, and social media engagement to solidify audiences' loyalty. Media faces the paradox of financial survival and the expectation of social responsibility, which requires constant testing of innovation, flexibility and values. This article shows that the transformation of journalism from print based to digital is a localized version of the expansive transformation occurring globally. Digital media fosters participation, redefines agenda setting, and speeds up the flow of information. While this undoubtedly help our society, it also raises urgent challenges like fake news, erosion of trust, economic sustainability, and algorithmic bias. As such, scholars, decision makers, and practitioners must work together to navigate challenges to ensure media systems are relevant for sustaining democratic societies while also adapting to technological change. The trajectory of journalism provides a layered, interactive, and convergent media ecology in which both traditional and digital platforms are often fighting but at times intersecting to affect the flow of information and what it means for public opinion.

## Theoretical Framework

Understanding the change of journalism from print to electronic and social media can best be situated within the context of communication and media theories about the relationship between media, society, and audiences. This study use three interconnected theories that provide a framework for the analysis:

### 1. Agenda Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972)

According to this theory, the media does not tell people what to think, rather it then determines what people think about; that is, it provides a framework of publicly discussable discourse focused on the issues of the day. Traditionally, print media had an agenda setting power due to its broad reach, third party credibility, and other associated influences. When moving to electronic and social media, this power of agenda setting has become entirely multiplex, with competing messages vying for members of the audience's attention. In using an agenda setting lens, this study looks at how the various phases of journalism create known and unknown issues that receive attention.

### 1. Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974)

This theory emphasizes the active role of audiences in choosing media based on anticipated attitudes that met fulfilling needs, such as information gathering, entertainment, social interaction, and personal identity. Print journalism historically proved itself to give depth to journalism and credibility, while electronic media satisfied immediacy and visual need, and social media satisfies the audience's name for participation and interactivity. This framework assists in understanding the changing patterns of audience behaviours in print, electronic, and social media.

### 2. Public Sphere Theory (Habermas 1989)

Habermas's work on public sphere theory expanded the notion of the importance of media as the assistant to the democratic based debate on solutions and collective decision making entrees space. Print journalism structurally served as a platform for civic and rational postulate of credibility and reliability for public discourse. Electronic media served an even wider mobilization to a public sphere as it had readily available news sources with less direct timeliness but broad availability, while social media platforms allowed citizens to participate directly in what would become conversation or dialogue and participation in the use as a form of media as conversation as a democratic expression. It is also important understand social media expands the

public discourse which can create possible harms to the public sphere as new media can contribute polarizations and fragmentation and distort foundation information, when platforming public media as dialogue for public opinion, and disastrous outcomes to the democratic space, therefore we must keep each in check. This theory remains essential for assessing the democratic roles of journalism and its changes in digital transformations.

The integration of three theoretical perspectives in this study offers a broad spectrum to investigate the changing journalism landscape, audience interactions, and potential implications for society and democracy. This framework allows for an examination of journalism's credibility, audience trust, and the newly configured journalist audience relationship in the contemporary landscape.

## Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative research design in order to analyze the shift from print journalism to electronic media and the rise of social media. Qualitative research design is appropriate in this instance since the study focuses on understanding processes, trends, and implications among mass media, rather than seeking a statistical analysis. The aim of the study is to capture and describe the historical developments, practices among journalists, audience behaviours, and their respective impact on the community as a whole, which provides comprehensive understanding of journalism and its implications.

## Research Design

The study employs a descriptive and analytic design. It is descriptive in so far as it describes the progression of journalism across three stages of convergence: print median, electronic media, and social media. The analysis considers and critiques the causes, challenges and consequences of each stage to ultimately examining societal patterns and implications concerning themes of democracy and community engagement around journalism across the stages of development in the media convergence. The study's design also facilitated strong connections between stages of media development and allowed for consideration of similarities and differences across the various stages of journalistic development.

## Data Collection Methods

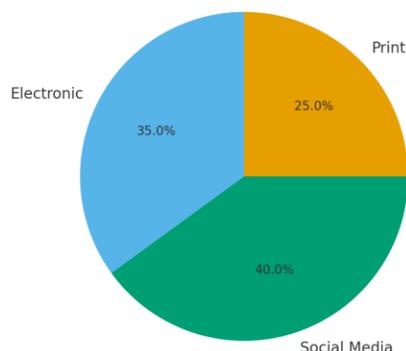
- **Secondary Data:** The stressed study utilizes significant amounts of secondary data, including important, credible academic journal articles, books, news articles, databases, and government publications. Each of these representative data communicates historical context, theoretical frameworks, and case studies that are related to journalism's transformation.
- **Document Analysis:** Historical newspapers, audio-visual materials archival services, and social media sources were analyzed to show changes in journalistic practices and the role of audience participation
- **Case Studies:** The selected case studies from Pakistan and international cases are analyzed to represent how transitions in the media reflect credibility, ethics, and democratic deliberation.

## Sampling

In the literature and document analysis portion purposive sampling is employed to select the appropriate materials that corresponded with the researcher's research objectives. In the case studies, the researcher selected examples that are relevant and significant in showing discernible patterns such as; declining print readership; effects of television on population's perceptions of information; and the circulation of credible news among population via social media.

## Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is employed to interpret qualitative data. Sources are categorized under themes for example "credibility and ethics," "audience engagement," "misinformation and fake news," and "journalist audience relationship." This method ensures that recurring patterns and differences across print, electronic, and social media are identified and critically discussed.



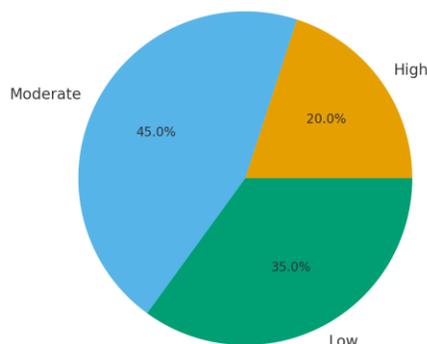
### 1. Audience Preference for News Sources

Category	Percentage
Print	25
Electronic	35
Social Media	40

#### Discussion:

The results of the audience preference suggest that social media has emerged as the most dominant form of news access, eclipsing print and electronic media. This audience preference serves as evidence of a generational shift in the use of digital platforms for breaking news, particularly among younger audiences, who continue to rely heavily on digital platforms for fast breaking events and interactive experiences. Print media, at one time the foundation of journalism, now stands at less than 2% in the

preference categories, most notably demonstrating that its influence on public debate is indeed waning. While current audience preference suggests that electronic media remains significant due to its accessibility across demographic groups, it is notable that television and radio still garner trust and usage, especially as audiences and the public continues to seek information. Overall, the results map how the landscape of media is changing due to digitalization and audience habits.



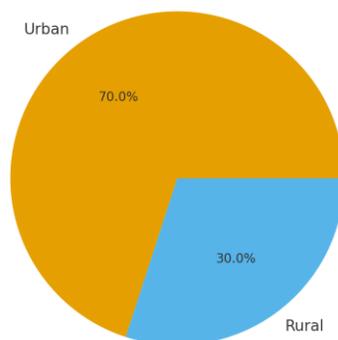
## 2. Trust Level in Different Media

Category	Percentage
High	20
Moderate	45
Low	35

### Discussion:

The results demonstrate a troubling trend in trust levels in the individual platforms of media. Only a very small percentage of the audience regard media as 'very' trustworthy, with more people allocating their trust levels to the 'moderate' category. This implies that audiences are skeptical and therefore probably question the trustworthiness of news they receive no matter the platform. Low trust ratings are especially apparent in social media, considering its prevalent association with disinformation and unverified content. However, traditional outlets like print and electronic media still hold a faint semblance of trust due to an established method of content management of editorial processes. Nonetheless, the greater decline of trust represents

the potential structural decline of professional news media institutions as a source of credible news demonstrating the pressing need for the institutions, and the greater professional media, to regain trust and credibility through transparency, fact checking, and ethical standards.



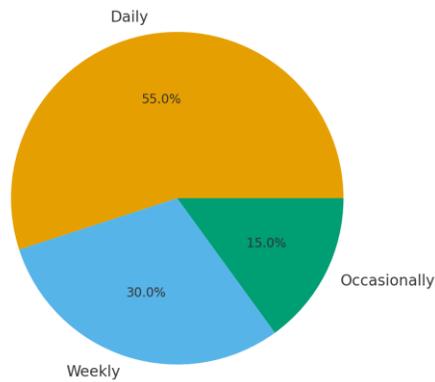
### 3. Accessibility of Media Platforms

Category	Percentage
Urban	70
Rural	30

**Discussion:**

The data shows a stark urban rural divide in media access. Urban audiences, primarily because of infrastructure development, connectivity, a wider reach of digital devices, and higher internet penetration access a far greater range of electronic and social media platforms than the rural community. While rural areas can access online news services, they are still struggling under a lack of connectivity, inadequate resources, and low levels of

digital literacy. While print media is falling in relevance across the board, in rural areas print media remains more relevant, mostly because print media remains a format these rural communities can actually access. It is clear from the report findings that while journalism is changing at a rapid pace, this pace of development is not shared equally across geographic and socio-economic lines in terms of accessibility to benefits of new media.



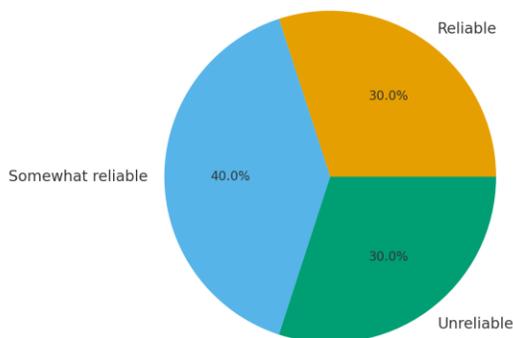
#### 4. Frequency of Media Consumption

Category	Percentage
Daily	55
Weekly	30
Occasionally	15

#### Discussion:

The frequency analysis indicates that most of these audiences access news on a daily basis, primarily through electronic and social media. The centrality of media to people's daily lives is demonstrated, in that it is a constant source for information and for interaction. Users who access news less frequently tend to be weekly or occasional and are likely to be

consumers of print journalism or follow some selected online news sites where they can engage in deeper analysis, rather than breaking news. This division indicates that our consumption of media is becoming more personalized: over time individuals engage with media in more customized ways to suit their lifestyle and their own consumption of information.



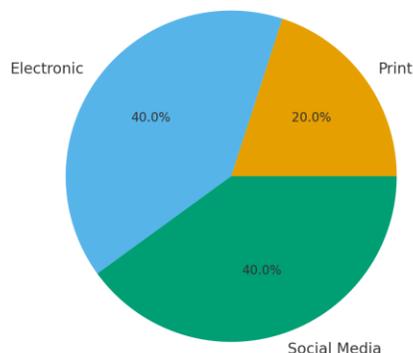
### 5. Perceived Credibility of Media

Category	Percentage
Reliable	30
Somewhat reliable	40
Unreliable	30

#### Discussion:

Credibility continues to be a significant challenge for modern journalism today. From the data, one group of potential audiences does indeed still have a view of media content as credible and a large number have a view of journalism as 'somewhat credible' and is likely their perception is influenced by the use of sensationalism, the bias contained in media content, as well as misinformation. Of all of the categories of media, social media remains the least credible source of media, while print media has maintained a fair amount of credibility and positive effects despite a decline in readership. The overall results indicate

that good reporting can be done consistently and ethically, and it is clear that we can regain credibility in journalism as well.

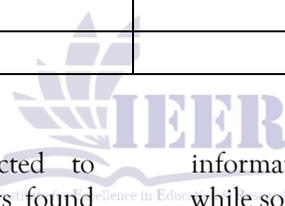


### 6. Impact on Political Awareness

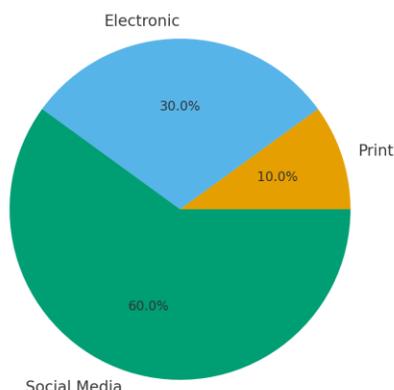
Category	Percentage
Print	20
Electronic	40
Social Media	40

**Discussion:**

Political consciousness is highly connected to patterns of media consumption. The results found that informs of electronic media and social media are the primary ways how media is generally providing political knowledge, in part due to immediacy and interaction. Broadcast television, including broadcast debates and talk shows, continues to be an



informative mechanism for sizable populations, while social media offers platforms for citizen-led discussion and fast updating. Print journalism, while less prolific, certainly offers far more nuanced analysis to assist politically engaged citizens in their decision making. All of these media contribute to our political understanding of society, sometimes in complex ways, and sometimes at the expense of context, depth, and data quality.



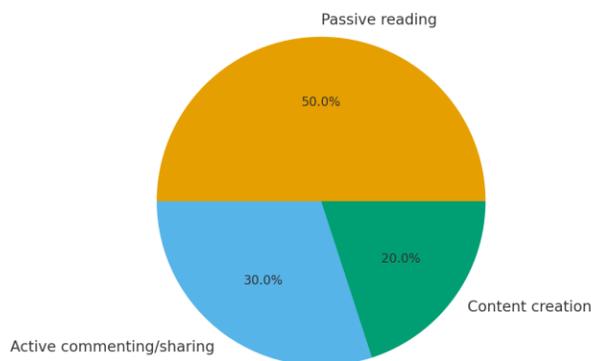
### 7. Role in Spreading Misinformation

Category	Percentage
Print	10
Electronic	30
Social Media	60

#### Discussion:

Misinformation has been deemed one of the great challenges of digitally driven era, and everything from the findings we made indicates that social media is the dominant source of misinformation. Misinformation spreads easily because it is so easy to publish, it isn't regulated, and the potential to go 'viral' turns platforms like Facebook and Twitter into misinformation machines. Electronic media is also a source of misinformation, albeit from a different

perspective. Journalists working with electronic stories, with its doors to immediacy, can be guilty of 'breaking' news when what falls out of the coverage was not properly verified. Print media can be a relatively small source of misinformation because of the verification filters that exist within the editorial process. In general, social media's growth coupled with misinformation is a significant barrier to the credibility journalism altogether.



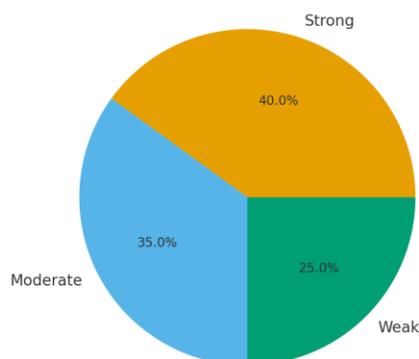
### 8. Engagement Level

Category	Percentage
Passive reading	50
Active commenting/sharing	30
Content creation	20

#### Discussion:

When we innately consider engagement patterns, in the case of news, most audiences serve the purpose of passive consumption by either reading or viewing news articles or video content. However, there seems to be an active trend toward participation with commenting, sharing and actively creating content. We must also consider how social media platforms have democratized the journalist/audience division to allow ordinary users to influence the news agenda. Though participation facilitates opportunities for inclusivity, it also raises valid issues related to the accuracy and standards of accuracy in the production of other non-journalist content. The results of the

study highlight how journalism is moving away from a linear dissemination paradigm to an increasingly participatory use of journalism, where audiences will want a role in the discussions about the narrative.



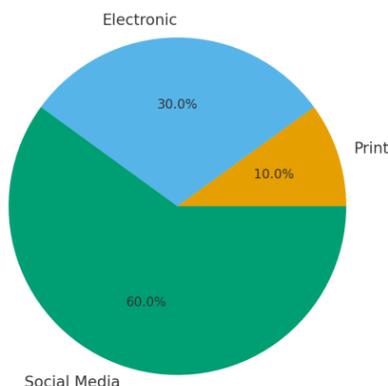
### 9. Influence on Public Opinion

Category	Percentage
Strong	40
Moderate	35
Weak	25

#### Discussion:

The findings indicate that media continues to shape public opinion, in a dynamic manner, with significant differences according to different media types. Social media is the most influential by far because it is interactive and allows for contagion; electronic media is still influential because of musing reported news and television coverage; print media is still quite weak in this triad but at least provides

readers a reference book (perspective, background). The raw data illustrate how collective perceptions of the reality and how media gets combined helps shape these perceptions, and reinforce how journalism propels social and political dialogue.



### 10. Future Preference Prediction

Category	Percentage
Print	10
Electronic	30
Social Media	60

**Discussion:**

The future of journalism is increasingly tilted toward being digital, especially social media. Three quarters of audiences believe these platforms will dominate news consumption over the next 5 - 10 years due to their immediacy, interactivity, and personalization. The electronic media will survive, particularly among older audiences who've grown up with television. Print media, however, continue to decline, persisting as a niche product designed to appeal to specialized readers. All these are a reflection of the digital phase of electronic media and business model solidifying itself in a way never before imagined. It must be noted that change itself is constant, and the uptake of digital first media would require journalists to embrace it as part of their practice.

**Findings**

1. **Consumer Preferences:** Social media is revealed to be the existing and highest form of delivery of news to audiences instead of print and electronic media, particularly for younger audiences.

- 2. **Trust Level:** The audience has a moderate level of trust; especially because print is more trusted than social media, which has a massive quantity and dominance of bald faced misinformation.
- 3. **Accessibility:** Audiences in urban areas have a greater quantity of access to multiple formats of news than rural audiences, who may only have access to a few, generally print or radio.
- 4. **Frequency:** A typical person is exposed to news fairly regularly; on a daily basis; evident by the amount of access and amount of lived media, many people are regularly exposed to news media.
- 5. **Credibility Perceptions:** Social media is predicted to act as the most incredible medium; traditional print has residual credibility in comparison to social media,

mostly because of the idea of past editorial control.

- 7. **Political awareness:** It is dominated by electronic and social media and print only engages the audience in deeper analysis levels.
- 8. **Spread of misinformation:** It is attributed greatest to social media and electronic media is also a contributor and print the least.
- 9. **Engagement levels:** Audiences are becoming what they are previously only willing to be

participants, with news agendas largely being created by audiences' comments and shares on electronic and social media.

- 10. **Public Opinion Influence:** Social media is the most influential in public opinion followed by television and radio sorted for secondary, and print for tertiary
- 11. **Future Outlook:** The researchers see the future of social media advance further into print and further move into electronic media as a secondary influence.



**Conclusion**

The crusade from print to a digital first platform, most notably through social media, is an acceptable evolutionary stage in journalism's transformation. The accessibility, immediacy, and interactivity of the age offers exciting possibilities and disturbing issues and challenges regarding misinformation, trustworthiness, authenticity, credibility, and skepticism in the audience. While we now consider print journalism as having lesser importance as a main source of news, newspapers in print still do provide in depth, trustful credible news analysis. Electronic media may be relevant but increasingly

faces competition from interactivity and participation in digital media. In some levels of journalism, audiences become increasingly participatory and shift from a consumer in the traditional sense to a co-creator in the collaborative

sense transforming the journalism paradigm into one audience participates with the journalist and author in the creation of the news. Finally, these findings confirm the future of journalism depends on demonstrating adaptability, restoring credibility, and development in ethical journalism as these

interactively evolve in politics, technology, and social change.

## Recommendations

1. **Establishing Trustworthiness:** Media organizations looking to combat misinformation and recover lost audience trust have to demonstrate that Fact Checking, Transparency and Independence are important.
2. **Digital Storytelling:** Journalist have to use their digital storytelling toolkit to tell stories interactively with audiences and have to work on various social communication platforms to interact with audiences in the audience marketplace.
3. **Digital Inclusion:** As part of an agreed upon policy steer, investing in affordable internet connectivity and digital literacy are strategies that allows remote audiences to use open systems to access media.
4. **Media Literacy:** Governments, non-profits and education can support media literacy strategies that allow audiences to read and interrogate media based on patterns and knowledge of media's nature.
5. **Timelines vs Accuracy:** As a broad rule of thumb journalist must ensure all forms of media, especially electronic and social media, are typified by vetting for audiences, unless trying to do so for audiences proves unnecessarily problematic.
6. **Support Print Journalism:** Print journalism has largely decreased, however, print has the capacity to exist as niche business which focuses on investigative journalism, long form reporting, and specialized readership.
7. **Regulate as Inspectors, not Suppressors:** Governments have the opportunity to work with regulation, to decrease misinformation and broaden freedoms of the press.
8. **Support Ethical Journalism:** Training, and access to a code of conduct continue to play an important role in ensuring ethical journalism for traditional and digital journalism.
9. **Engage Public Responsibly:** Media Platforms should continue to create spaces for appropriate public engagement, as long as moderation exists to deal with misinformation as well as harmful content.
10. **Be Prepared to Change with Audiences:** Journalists and the organizations that fund them need to be prepared to move towards a digital first landscape of journalism while being sustainable, and shift with audiences and the expectations of audiences.



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