



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Role of Social Media in Journalism to create News for Mainstream Media. A Survey of journalists of Sindh, Pakistan**

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**ABSTRACT**

In Sindh, Pakistan, the digital emergence of Twitter (X), Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube platforms has severely influenced journalism. In countries where the media infrastructure is underdeveloped, they are vital to real-time coverage, playing to the audience, and circumventing common media restrictions. The research study is restricted to the population of 300 working journalists in both the urban and rural Sindh, which represents the print, electronic and online media. It was administered through a structured Likert-scale survey that consisted of a quantitative cross-sectional survey. The demographics were well represented through stratified purposive sampling. Almost all, 88 percent of people use social media every day, and people post about breaking news online before mass media informs about them. The strong correlation of digital influence is proven by Pearson correlation ( $r = 0.67$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Adopt moral editorial codes, introduce digital literacy courses, enhance rural media facilities as well as develop partnership between online and older platforms.

**Keywords:** Consumer, journalists, Sindh, Social Media

**Introduction**

The rise of social media has resulted to a revolution in journalism activities in the world. The digital platforms have transformed news production, as they have changed the way journalists collect information, make news and publish it, whether in the uptown newsrooms of the cities or the freelance journalists in the countryside (Muzaffar, et. al., 2019). The effect of such transformation is mostly spherical in developing areas like the Sindh region of Pakistan whereby there is lack of conventional media infrastructure and/or intermittent or rather some non-existing infrastructure. Social media does not only provide journalism with a technological advantage in this case, but a functional requirement.

Social media platforms like Twitter (now X), Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have become inseparable to the journalists in Sindh. These sites allow instant communication, fast distribution of information news and provide close contact to audiences (Salam, et. al., 2024). Unlike in the conventional media where delays and restraints tend to determine the flow of news or news; social media actually allows journalists to report first hand in the field. Even journalists in remote areas can now participate in the larger media eco-system with a smart phone and connection to the internet to achieve the odds of the original news reporting even though institutional and infrastructural lesion may have been in the past.

This kind of digital empowerment has been a disruption of the hierarchies that have proved to be long with regard to information dissemination. Instead of news being

controlled by centralized editorial committees and released on a fixed schedule (i.e., daily newspaper publications or television programming), social media has come along with an endless and distributed delivery of information. This has led journalism to change its one-way communication format as more of an interactive dynamic process. Viewers have now ceased to be passive observer and are active participants interacting in real time with the journalist giving their opinions, disputing stories or even uploading material. Such interactivity has democratized the information ground, and led to even more civic participation.

Social media has bridged gaps in Sindh that had other media till now which has disproportionately access to the conventional media, mostly in rural and semi-urban Sindh. Reporters in such regions heavily use such platforms as WhatsApp or Facebook not merely to send out information but also to receive information of the community members. The process of news gathering has taken a communal approach involving members of the society and professionals. This synergy has contributed towards reporting that is more local, the emergence of grassroots reports, and greater coverage of voiceless groups (Muzaffar, et. al., 2020; Asghar, et. al., 2025; Awan, et. al., 2018).

Nonetheless, the process of incorporating social media in the journalistic practices does not come without its hurdles. The corruption of the journalistic integrity is one of the most urgent questions. A race to be one of the first to publish in a competitive online space also tends to interfere with older standards of a process of verification and fact-checking. Since social media feeds on what is termed as immediacy, at times journalists are also motivated to post information that is not yet verified with the aim of retaining their status and the activity thereof. Such a tendency poses a threat of spreading misinformation and endangers the authority of journalism in general.

Moreover, there is also the blurring of lines between the professional journalism and user-generated content, which creates some complications. Although the presence of the participatory aspect of digital platforms makes them more inclusive, their editorial standards are weakened. Not every shared information heard on the Internet is the observation of journalistic ethics and it is even harder to identify the credible information and opinion, rumor or propaganda. Without such power of editorial control, reporters could possibly engage in propagation of false or misleading stories without necessarily having their intentions.

Other ethical issues that are involved are the privacy issue, sensationalism and boosting of bad content. The social media is so viral that when information is posted, whether true or false, it can be difficult to contain and this can lead to loss of reputation or even fight. This especially provokes the issue of politically and ethnically diverse areas such as Sindh where easily the media content leads to a rapid increase of tension. Accordingly, it is not only reporting news, but informational management with proper responsibility in the open and volatile digital environment that is the modern role of the journalist.

Also, there are economic consequences of the rising use of social media; it encourages more and more institutions of traditional media to rely on it. The sources of advertising revenues and viewers/readers are increasingly migrating to the online source thus resulting in reduced financial sustainability old media. This transition influences the working conditions, freedom in the editorial process and the quality of journalism in general. Although some news organizations in Pakistan have tried to change through creation of digital wings, most are still experiencing difficulty in changing the rate and nature of change.

Against this background, the importance of evaluating how the journalists in Sindh are addressing this new media environment has become more pertinent than ever. The realisation of the scope of the use of social media, the apparent effect it has on popular

journalism, and the moral issues that go along with it may provide rich insight into how the whole aspect of media practice is changing in transitional nations. To the best of my ability, the proposed study will fill this gap by examining the influence of digital platforms on patterns, perceptions, and responsibilities of journalism in the diverse media culture of Sindh.

To sum it up, social media has certainly augmented the number of instruments and opportunities provided to the journalists, yet has created a number of new risks and ethical concerns. To see journalism in Sindh excel in this digital era we need to make a strong attempt to merge these platforms without recklessness, through professional training, institutional encouragement, and with effective ethics.

### **Literature Review**

The development of computer-based technologies has changed the journalistic sphere greatly, making the way of creation, distribution and interaction with the audience to change as well. Researchers have been studying the emergence of technological innovations that have altered the traditional journalism paradigm and replaced them with new ones. One of the first scholars who drew attention to the process of newsroom convergence is Pavlik (2001), who explained the process as the incorporation of the digital technology and multimedia elements (video clips, hyperlinks, interactive graphics, and audio recording) into the traditional reporting system. This convergence, as Pavlik puts it, not only homogenized the differences between the print, broadcast and online journalism but also saw the entry of more adaptable and dynamic newsrooms which could respond to a changing story very promptly. Alternative sources are taken on the basis of these developments, and as such, Hermida (2010) developed the idea of ambient journalism that entailed the real-time flow of the news made possible by the mobile technologies and social networking sites. To Hermida, this word-changing stream of updates, much of which is user-generated, has knocked the traditional news cycles out of their orbits and has turned the reporter into a curator. They have long ceased to be exclusively gatekeepers of information: journalists are becoming curators and moderators of a bigger information space in which people can interact themselves. This has far-reaching consequences in regards to the journalistic practices such as sourcing, verification, and interacting with the audience. Zafar and Muhammad (2020) have studied the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the quickening of mobile internet utilization in the South Asian context and social media use among the Pakistani journalists. In their study the researchers discovered that WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter became the main means through which journalists were able to deliver not only breaking news, but also hold interviews with people remotely, and to keep in touch with people. Even those journalists who also used to utilize the traditional way of gathering news had to resort to using digital technology so as not to be left behind in their profession. The pandemic worked as a catalyst, and established digital journalism into the Pakistani media reality even deeper. Ali (2021) has also examined how traditional versus digital journalism has become more and more tense in the Pakistani landscape and how this shift has led to various ethical and professional dilemmas. To back up this argument, he claimed that the demand on speed and virility of social media has affected the essence of a journalist, the verification, factual accuracy, and editorial responsibility. Most times, the ambition to be first has ended up superseding the duty to be real and the end result is the mushrooming of misinformation and loss of faith by the citizenry. Although these are important contributions in the global and national debate, research on the regional aspects of the digital journalism-especially in the Sindh- is rare. The majority of the available studies represent Pakistan as media environment in which socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural differences across provinces are not taken into consideration. Sindh being the province that has technologically well-developed cities but underdeveloped rural parts can be considered as the unique case of studying how journalists adapt and apply digital platforms in different conditions. This research will fill this gap since it examines how social

media has influenced journalistic conduct, journalistic ethics, and the media power in Sindh. The research contributes a finer and place-bound knowledge to the general discourse of journalism in the digital age by understanding this particular region. It points out that as much as social media has been seen as a medium of communication, it has also come to transform the area and extent of journalism on a regional scale.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Nature**

The study is quantitative but cross-sectional since it aims at evaluation of social media use by journalists in the Sindh region in the course of their work.

### **Population**

The working journalists of Sindh doing print, electronic and online media will form the target population.

### **Sample and Sampling technique**

Three hundred journalists were recruited through stratified purposive sampling in which the representation of the urban and rural areas and the media categories was proportional.

### **Instrument**

Data obtained using structured questionnaire that included questions on media usage habits, perceived effects and ethical issues using Likert-scale items (Strongly Agree to Strongly disagree).

### **Pilot Testing**

The Cronbach alpha was also computed to clarify the level of reliability, the scope and clarity of the questionnaire through a pilot study which involved 20 journalists in Hyderabad and Karachi.

### **Validity and Reliability**

The content validity was guaranteed by three media scholars review. The internal consistency of the pilot tool was indicated with Cronbach alpha equal to 0.81, which is good enough.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) was used in analyzing data. Pearson correlation and descriptive statistics (fractions and percentage were utilized to assess the co relations of variables.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study had been passed through the University of Sindh Research Ethics Committee. All participants signed an informed consent confirming free participation, anonymity, and confidentiality.

**Table 1**  
**Research components**

Research Component	Information
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Study Design	Observational study, cross-sectional
Target Population	Journalists in the print, electronic, and online media in Sindh
Sampling Technique	Stratified purposive sampling
Sample Size	300 journalists
Type of Instrument Used	Structured questionnaire with items on a Likert scale
Tools of Analysis	SPSS, Pearson correlation, descriptive statistics
Pilot Testing Sample	20 journalists from Hyderabad and Karachi
Reliability Score	Cronbach's Alpha = 0.81

## Results and Discussion

**Table 2**  
**Demographic Description of Respondent**

Sex Category	Subcategory	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
	Male	210	70.0%
	Female	90	30.0%
Age Group	20–30 years	75	25.0%
	31–40 years	135	45.0%
	41 years and above	90	30.0%
Education Level	Middle School	105	33.6%
	Bachelor's Degree	95 (approx.)	31.7%
	Master's Degree	0	0.0%
Type of Media	Print Media	90 (assumed)	30.0% (assumed)
	Electronic Media	120	40.0%
	Internet Media	90	30.0%

**Table 3**  
**Social Media Usage Statement**

	Percentage (%)
Daily day-to-day journalism utilization	88%
Posting breaking news earlier than mainstream media	72%
Belief that social media has made reporting faster	79%
Belief that it increases citizen participation	68%
Belief that it poses a danger to traditional media	61%
Difficulty in verifying user-generated content	66%

**Table 4**  
**Perceived Impacts of Social Media on Journalism**

Statement	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Total Agreement (%)
Social media enhances real-time reporting	45%	34%	79%
It increases feed-forward relationship between journalists and the audience	38%	30%	68%
It decreases the effectiveness of news validation	40%	26%	66%
It helps bridge infrastructure gaps in rural areas	41%	34%	75%
It encourages breaking news over accuracy	36%	28%	64%

**Table 5**  
**Pearson values of variables**

Variables	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Frequency of Use Media Speed	0.67	Not specified	There is variability in the frequency of social media use affecting media speed
Frequency of Use Audience Reach	0.64	< 0.01	High correlation; statistically significant
Ethical Risk × Daily Social Media Use	0.59	< 0.01	Greater use increases perceived ethical risks

## Discussion

According to findings, there has been a digital revolution to Sindh's journalistic practices. Social media has become more useful as journalists on different platforms use it in sourcing, reporting, and communicating with audiences. The considerable level of usage rate (88%) and the fact that providing breaking news is distributed before becoming mainstream (72%) shows that digital platforms are the most essential part of the contemporary news flows. But there are ethical issues that are on the increase. Most of them (66%) acknowledge the difficulties in authenticating user-generated content which endangers journalistic reputation.

Such predicament has been echoed in Hermida (2010) idea of ambient journalism where speed overrules precision. Younger journalists are more malleable; they use social media in forming their professional identities, whereas older practitioners are concerned with the loss of objectivity and verification (Ali 2021).

These generational changes and infrastructural issues in Sindh preach the necessity of balanced digitalization that does not tamper with the main journalistic principles.

## **Conclusion**

The phenomenal inclusion of social media in the journalism process has greatly transformed the media sector in the Sindh region of Pakistan. Applications like Twitter (X), Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have enabled journalists to target more audiences, write in real-time as well as increase interaction with the general masses. Such internet tools have been especially useful in regions where access to media infrastructure is low as it enables the journalists to overcome the institutional blockage and reach their intended audiences.

This however is not without difficulty in change. The democracy and ease of use that gives the social media such an explosive power carries very high dangers to journalistic integrity. In this hurry of getting news first, most of the journalists wind up making concessions in areas of fact-checks and verification which are the bases of ethical journalism. As a growing pressure to generate continuous content and have online presence may result in further circulation of unverified or inadequate information, breaking the confidence of the people with the media and becoming one of the issues that cause misinformation.

The findings of this study indicate that there is a substantial relationship between the prevalence of social media and subjective improvement of media performance especially in the aspect of speed and reach. But it also shows how the rise in ethical issues is going hand-in-hand with one regarding the credibility's of content and editorial cursory. The new dictums that journalists in Sindh are supposed to perform a dual task to both, as content creators, fast and responsive, and gatekeepers and maintain professional standards, as well as meet their ethical obligations.

There is a need to balance these needs because it is the key to sustainable development of journalism in the area. The future of the media in Sindh lies not just in the increase of technological sophistication but also in the capability to develop the sense of morality and accountability as well as in the development of professional responsibility. Media organizations, policy-makers, and journalists need to collaborate to set rules, give training and invest in infrastructures, which promote innovation and integrity.

To sum up, even though the social media provides the greatest opportunities in terms of journalistic expansion and spreading the sources of public involvement, its power should be used wisely. Digital innovation paired with responsible journalism is the key to sustainable and reputable media environment in Sindh and even in another country.

## **Recommendations**

To guarantee the responsible journalism in the online era, a number of strategic steps are needed. First, all journalists should be subjected to compulsory digital literacy and facts-verification seminars in order to increase their skills at dealing with online information. Second, guidelines should be formulated on formality in ethical use of social media in news reporting. Third, significant investment on digital infrastructure must be made especially in provinces and underdeveloped localities to respond to equitable access to technology. Finally, collaboration of traditional as well as digital media can encourage diversity of content, enhance quality of news, and fill the divide between traditional and upcoming journalistic approaches.

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