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Abstract

This study investigates how Mardan-based journalists utilize Facebook, X, and Instagram. It focuses on how useful social media is for them in carrying out their professional duties. The study intends to investigate how often and how journalists use Facebook, which particular features and functions they find most helpful, what kinds of content are shared, and how the pros and cons of using Facebook for professional journalism are perceived. Thirty journalists in Mardan were surveyed using the study's convenient sampling method and quantitative approach. The findings show that although journalists use a variety of social media sites, Facebook stands out as a particularly helpful resource for information collecting and distribution. The results provide credence to the theory that social media, particularly Facebook, helps journalists fulfill their professional obligations.

Keywords: Social Media, Facebook, Instagram, X, Twitter, Mardan, Pakistan

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Abstract

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Keywords:

[Social Media](#), [Facebook](#),
[Instagram](#), [X](#), [Twitter](#),
[Mardan](#), [Pakistan](#)

Contents

- [Introduction](#)
- [Research Question](#)
- [Literature Review](#)
- [Theoretical Foundation for this Study](#)
- [The Theory's Relevance to this Research](#)
- [Research Methodology](#)
- [Survey](#)
- [Convenience Sampling](#)
- [Data Analysis](#)
- [Discussion and conclusion](#)
- [References](#)

Introduction

Social media has become an important platform for determining what is occurring in society. It is so mainstream that it appears to be unthinkable for many to exist off the online media today. Reports on incidents are shared within seconds and minutes after an incident occurs.

Thanks to the "Live" component of Facebook and Instagram, many journalists and citizens are using this feature and show an event while it is taking place. This research study focuses on how journalists use the social

media platforms of Facebook, X (formerly X), and Instagram as a helping tool for their jobs of reporting news.

The researcher examined the use of Facebook, X, and Instagram and attempted to find out if these platforms are helping the journalists of Mardan, a district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, in their professional jobs and which features of these websites help journalists the most. This study also attempts to explore how much social media is becoming essential day by day for journalists, whether



spreading their word on an issue or gathering story ideas during their reporting roles.

Research Question

- In what ways are journalists using Facebook for the professional obligations?
- On the basis of general observations, the following hypothesis has been framed:
- Social media are serving as a helpful tool for journalists in their professional obligations.

Significance of the Study

Nowadays social media plays a vital role in every walk of life. In this globalized world, social media usage is increasing day by day and it is used by politicians, public figures, and government and organizations alike, to spread news, information, and opinions. This study attempts to explore how journalists are using the three mentioned social media platforms in collecting and gathering news and information. For the purpose of narrowing down the study population, the researcher selected the journalists of the Mardan district as their research population.

Literature Review

A literature review is an organized search and examination of information that has been published on a subject by academics and researchers. It is arranged in accordance with the goals of the research or the problems that the researcher wants to investigate. A literature review lowers the likelihood of idea duplication while adding to one's knowledge in a certain field. Most significantly, in order to maximize the benefits of research efforts, it helps to identify the direction of the study scope (Cooper, 1998).

By informing the public and limiting the range of ideas available for discussion, the media can accelerate cognitive development by setting the public agenda and defining the parameters of public discourse. However, Safori (2018) elaborates that contemporary studies regarding social media usage in the field of journalism lack significant and qualitative research about how the journalist community interacts with

such platforms. His study concerns the opinions of newsmen from Jordan about the impacts of social platforms, the news media profession, and the role of journalists, through interviews that highlight how the journalists use social media and interact with the readers. This study looks into the relationship between the audience and the media, the emergence of personalized journalism, and the social media preferences of journalists. The study confirms the significant influence of these platforms on the workforce. While a few respondents believed social media had aided in their professional growth, others saw it as interfering with their job duties.

According to Steensen (2011), the internet and social media have aided in the rapid dissemination of news from a range of sources. A single mouse click can now access news that was previously restricted to specific stories, hourly broadcasts, and morning newspapers. The level of interactivity has only benefited producers and consumers by simplifying the creation and consumption of news and by fostering a bond with the news source.

Gunter posits (2003) that a journalist's job includes allowing the public to choose the content they read and the time when to get involved in the newsmaking process.

Online surroundings do not lend themselves to the traditional top-down style of audience communication. By abandoning the journalist's function, digital platforms give information straight from the source. As a result, digital media has replaced the media's role as a go-between for the public and the outside world (Gunter, 2003: 171).

Newspapers can gain from modern communication methods as well. The audience of electronic newspapers interacts by making comments on the content and communicating with one another directly via message services, blogs, and chat rooms (Bowman and Willis, 2003).

As communication has changed, journalists' perceptions of their responsibilities and normal work hours must also change. There has been a major change in the function of journalists, which used to involve gathering information, responding to

criticism, and promoting their work. The proliferation of user-generated content (UGC) available online and the rise in internet usage both have an impact on online journalism. Numerous studies have sought to quantify and examine the varied contributions made by audiences on the websites and chat platforms of newspapers with regard to journalism methods and user-generated content. Hermida and Thurman (2008) found that reader engagement and comments in the news-generating process had significantly increased in "A clash of cultures."

Hermida & Thurman further state that, "the Internet in this new media culture allows that the public is no longer a passive consumer of media, but an active participant in the creation of the media landscape."

When it comes to news, it demonstrates that the use of various social media platforms on the internet allows messages to reach a wide audience and allows journalists to track real-time updates from both the audience and the journalists themselves. For example, social media platforms shared information about the London bombings with the BBC, which on the day of the attacks got 22,000 emails and texts, 300 pictures, and many video clips (Hermida & Thurman 2008). This is a good illustration of how readers utilize Internet resources and contribute to the global transmission of news and information.

Douglas (2006) claims that it was the first instance of its kind in which content from the internet platform was valued higher than expert commentary. It was eventually discovered that news websites might employ reader-submitted content during regular news periods or during certain events.

The research study in hand is being conducted to find out if the journalists are using the social media platforms to improve their professional working and if they are taking help from social media in their professional jobs with various media organizations. Thus, this study is the first of its kind in the Mardan region so far.

Theoretical Foundation for this Study

The theoretical framework is an important part of

research and provides a theoretical base for a research study. This study is based on the Two-Step Flow Theory of mass communication. The theory presented by Paul Lazarsfeld together with Elihu Katz in the book *Personal Influence* (1955) states that after the Following World War II, scholars noticed that audiences' responses to mass media varied widely. Contrary to popular belief, the media had less influence and power (Klapper). According to Katz and Lazarsfeld, the Two-Step Flow theory posits that In mass communication, messages do not always go directly from the sender to the receiver. Instead, a small group of people referred to as gatekeepers control, edit and filter the messages that the media sends out to the public. Opinion leaders first "consume media content on topics of particular interest to them," after which they analyze it in the context of their own beliefs and values (Baran, p.1955).

In the second step, opinion leaders sift and interpret the messages, prior to being sent to opinion followers, or people who hold similar opinions but do not consume as much media. This theory is demonstrated throughout political campaigns. Studies reveal that the information the media chooses to present about a candidate during an election affects your choice of how you vote (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet). There is still use for this information in the present political campaigns. Pope Francis is one of the social media influencers who receives the most retweets, with over 18 million followers on X. He engages and persuades his followers about global events through social media.

Moreover, it was believed that former US President Obama's usage of social media had a significant role in his election. Liberals contended that the media was owned and controlled by affluent conservatives, while conservatives claimed that the "liberal media" was to blame for their marginalization. Either way, research indicates that the public becomes increasingly dependent on the media, especially during political elections (Jeffries & Walker, 2012).

Journalists are also included as the gatekeepers; they first collect information and news and then share it on the media which then reaches a lot of people.

Social media is also used by public figures to share their ideas and activities.

However, researchers also discovered that initial information from the mass media reaches the general public immediately and is not filtered through opinion leaders. Subsequently, several researchers stated that the two-step model falls short in describing how learning occurs. In the 1940 election study, Lazarsfeld and colleagues were unable to pinpoint the precise flow of influence. However, the majority of research on advertising nowadays is predicated on this hypothesis, particularly with regard to the social role of opinion leaders.

The Theory's Relevance to this Research

The Two-Step Flow theory tells us that information reaches the audience through gatekeepers and opinion leaders; hence, nowadays opinion leaders use social media to spread information and news and that's why social media is now being used by a large number of people to get information. For journalists, social media is essential for collecting and spreading information and this study has attempted to explain how journalists benefit from information on Facebook, X, and Instagram) is helps journalists in collecting and spreading news and information.

Research Methodology

The specific procedures or approaches utilized to find, arrange, process, and assess subject-related data are referred to as research methodology. The researcher used a survey and collected data through a questionnaire from the journalists of the Mardan district. The researcher used convenient sampling and visited the Mardan Press Club where around 30

journalists were available and they filled in the survey forms for this study.

Survey

A survey in research is defined as "the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions" (Check & Schutt, 2012, p.160).

One of the advantages of the survey is that it can collect more information in a short time. For instance, survey forms can be distributed among a large number of respondents at a time, thus collecting more information in a short time. This is why surveys are frequently used in social science research.

Convenience Sampling

As a nonprobability sampling method, convenience sampling selects participants only on the basis of their suitability as "convenient" sources of information for researchers.

A non-probability sample of research participants or subjects was selected due to their accessibility. An example is university researchers using their students. For this study, the researcher visited the Mardan Press Club and they were able to collect data through surveys from 30 journalists, who are members of the club and currently working for various media organizations in the district.

Data Analysis

The survey has been done based on the information provided by the journalists through a questionnaire and all of them are affiliated with the Mardan Press Club. For the analysis of the data, the researcher used SPSS. Following are the details of the findings and its analysis:

Table 1

Do u have a social media account?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	27	90.0	90.0	93.3
no	3	10.00	10.00	6.6
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey

This table shows that 90 percent of journalists use social media and they have active social media accounts while 10 percent don't have a social media

account; this shows that the majority of journalists use social media.

This also shows the use and importance of social media.

Table 2

What feature of social media helps you the most

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Live Sharing	10	33.33	33.33	33.33
Posting	10	33.33	33.33	66.66
News production	10	33.33	33.33	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey

This table shows us which social media platforms provide many features but which features help journalists the most. 33.3 percent answered live sharing helps them the most and 33.3 answered

posting features helped them the most while 33.3 chose other features this shows that social media is helping journalists to get story ideas and produce news.

Table 3

Does social media help in gathering news?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Favorable	19	63.3	63.3	63.3
Unfavorable	11	36.6	36.6	36.6
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Regarding how much social media helps journalists in gathering news; 63.3 percent of journalists answered that social media helps in gathering news and 36.6 percent answered that it does not help with gathering

news. The majority of journalists think that social media helps in collecting news or at least ideas that can lead to the production of content for mainstream media.

Table 4

Does social media help in spreading the news?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	19	63.3	63.3	63.3
No	11	36.6	36.6	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey

Here, 60 percent of respondents answered that social media helps in spreading news and 40 percent answered that it does not help in spreading news.

Table 5

Is social media good for the overall betterment of society?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	22	73.3	66.7	66.7
No	08	26.6	33.3	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

About how much journalists of Mardan think social networks are positively contributing to society; 73.3 percent of people answered that these platforms are positively contributing to society and only 26.6 answered that it is not advancing societal progress.

This shows that the majority of journalists think that social media is being used to improve awareness levels among people about various issues, thus enabling them to make informed decisions.

Table 6

Is social media easily accessible?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	24	80	80	80
No	6	20	20	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey

This table shows us and tells us about the accessibility of social media to journalists. Almost 80 percent of people answered that social media is easily accessible by all and 20% of people answered it is not accessible

due to the internet and other issues in various areas of the district, which shows that social media is easily available and accessible to the majority.

Table 7

Is social media working as a helping tool for journalists?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
yes	25	83.3	83.3	83.3
No	5	18.6	16.6	100.0
May be	0	0	0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Here, 83.3 percent of journalists answered that social media is working as a helping tool for journalists in Mardan and only 18.6 percent answered with “No”.

This shows us that social media has become an essential tool for journalists and it helps journalists in

many ways and how it is making their journalistic reporting easy.

Table 8

When did you start using social media?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
5 years ago	15	66.7	50.0	50.0
10 years ago	12	40.0	40.0	90.0
Others	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

This table shows us when the participants of the survey started using social media

50 percent answered about 5 years ago, 40 percent answered about 10 years ago and 10 percent answered

"other". This shows that the use of social media is increasing day by day as most of them have joined social media platforms.

Table 9

What social platforms do you use the most?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
Instagram	8	26.66	26.66	66.66
X	7	23.33	23.33	90.0
Other	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

To this question, 40 percent of people said they use Facebook 26.66 percent use Instagram, and 23.33

percent use X while other 10 percent people use other social media platforms.

Table 10

What was your age when you started using social media?

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
15	18	60.0	60.0	60.0
18	6	20.0	20.0	80.0
Other	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey

This table shows us at what age people started using social media the participants answered that 60 percent of them started using social media at the age of 15, 20

percent at the age of 18, and 20 percent at other ages, which shows that people started using social media at a very young age.

Table 11

How much time do you give to social media daily?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2 hours	9	30.0	30.0	60.0
4 hours	6	20.0	20.0	50.0
More than 3 hours	15	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

While answering this question, 30 respondents answered they use it for two hours daily; 20% answered they use social media for four hours daily and 50% answered they use it for more than 3 hours,

which shows us that people spend a lot of time on social media and they are always connected to people and are exposed to new and information for a long time.

Table 12

What is the biggest disadvantage of social media?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Time waste	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
unethical comments	12	40.0	40.0	90.0
Fake news	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Source: field survey

This table shows us that the biggest disadvantage of social media 50 percent of people answered time is wasted, 40 percent answered unethical comments and

only 10 percent answered fake news is the biggest disadvantage of social media. This table shows that social media's overuse can waste time.

Table 13

What is the biggest advantage for journalists from social media?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Connecting with official pages	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
Connecting with people	15	50.0	50.0	90.0
Connecting with officials	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Regarding the advantages of social media to journalists, 40 percent answered that connecting to official pages is the major advantage 50 percent answered that connecting to people is it and 10

percent answered connecting with officials is the best advantage. This shows that social media connects people and the main advantage of social media is connecting to a large number of people.

Table 14*Which age group uses social media the most?*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-25	10	33.33	33.33	33.33
30-40	12	40.0	40.0	73.33
40-50	5	16.66	16.66	90.0
above 50	3	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The survey shows that 33.3 percent of participants answered 18-25 aged people 40 percent answered 30-40 and 16 percent answered 40-50 and the rest 10 percent answered above 50. So by the table, we get to know that people aged 30-40 use social media the most this shows that young people use social media the most.

Discussion and conclusion

After conducting the study and analyzing the data, the researcher proved the research question and also the hypothesis. The study answered the question: "In what ways are journalists using Facebook for professional obligations?" It proved that social media

is helpful to journalists in a number of ways. They gather information and disseminate information and news through social media. Also, the study proved that of all the three platforms of X, Facebook, and Instagram, Facebook was the most popular in terms of use by journalists in Mardan.

Also, the study proved the hypothesis that "social media is helping journalists in their professional jobs at various media organizations". The majority of journalists said that they often took story ideas and collected and disseminated other information through social media, which ultimately helped them in their professional obligations as news media persons.

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