



RESEARCH PAPER

Social Media Reliance: News Channels as Source of Information in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

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Social Media is now becoming a vast source of getting information relating to almost every aspect of social, political, religious and physiological perspectives in a democratizing country like Pakistan. This paper attempts to explore the reliance to news channels of Pakistani TV on Social Media with reference to information, ratings, policies and issues. Qualitative research design was followed to explore the phenomenon of reliance to social media. Snow ball sampling technique was used to collect data of media persons through gathered through in-depth interviews of participants. Participant's response was thematically analyzed for the evaluation of results. Different aspects of the verification process of news channels the information gained through were analyzed. Theories of uses, gratification and media dependency were related with results. It was concluded that the search engine ads, display ads, micro and macro targeting, Google demographics, audience bar, sprout etc. were the major source of information for audience and productive for the TV channels. It was also concluded that brand awareness and brand reputations sustains the attention of its viewers on TV channels so, services by software's analyst can aid in perceptions of information.

Introduction

To turn the communications into the interactive dialogues via use of web and mobile-based technology is practice as a term Social Media. The nature of communication in last 30 years is modified a lot; it has gone many substantial changes. The technologies supporting broadcasting like twitter, Facebook, YouTube convert these short surges of communication from one-on-one conversations to little bulletin (or trivia) programs: which we can tune in 'whenever we need apprise or

have something to say. Online communication keeps informed of things we want to know at a particular point of time (McClure, 2009).

The penetrating global social media trends by the news channels in developed countries have influenced the developing country like Pakistan to raise the ratings of channels. Journalism media is very resilient and liberated in Pakistan. To compete at international level Pakistan news channels are also adopting the emerging trends and techniques (Newman, 2017). Particularly the newsrooms, adopt this social media platform based strategy to upsurge with competitors, which results in increased number of audience of news channels (Graber, 2017).

The trend of consuming social media networks by the Pakistani population sway the TV channels and newsrooms to patrol and find the efficiency, effectiveness and level of appropriateness embraced by innumerable social media platforms in whole Pakistan. Presently, the leaning of consuming globally developed social media platforms is high in Pakistan. As, the figure of users who practice Facebook, What Sapp, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and many others are growing rapidly. Presently, every smartphone user in entire Pakistan is using WhatsApp to some extent. The drift of using Twitter and other social media podiums are different in Pakistan, which fundamentally depends upon demographic base variances and reasons contemporaneous among the population of Pakistan (Adornato, 2016).

Literature Review

At present the Internet has reserved a strong place in publics breathes. It is hard to visualize a young fellow who did not checked for the updates in social links in a day and did not leaf through the news outlines. The current reality entails us to be in touch and remain well informed by the up-to-date news and drifts. Social media connects persons together far or near and build relationship among people, societies can interconnect with each other, even if they are on diverse land masses, heed to music, recite books, gaze at photos and ample further (Talaueet al., 2018).

Though an operative tactic choice can be made as to which social media platforms should be adopted and what will be the level of benefits, which TV channels and newsrooms can obtain good results through this. The form and nature of content pooled in excess of the social media should also scrutinize before plumping for the anticipated social media platforms. The way to come into social media with entities must identify in a profound manner. This will bring the probabilities of gigantic and assured victory towards the TV news channels. It will also make them ample to immense the possibility of journalism activities at local, national and international level. This will escalate the receptive rate of the TV news channels and their hustle to keep the audiences or users rationalized about whatever events (either key or less essential) taking place in the civilization in which they are living (Munoz, 2016).

While online channels are steadily, using customary news foundations on the podiums available online and TV relics the chief source of bulletin remains online. Chunk of such chore might classify the utmost precise means to extent the user's feeding of news online. This is undergoing substantial revolution. As it is the focus of dialog between industry and supervisory body internationally (ACMA, 2014). Micro-blogging well defined as "a new media technology that empowers and ranges our capability to interconnect or link the sharing of correspondences with broadcast". Because of this connection, it relishes considerable admiration amongst TV reporters. In twitter the tweets sent by journalist or news channel to its followers comprises of small memos (140 characters to be precise) that may be live or they can be newscast in associations to other stories. The use of twitter is for 4 foremost motives i.e., everyday chat, discussions, shared information, communication and broadcasting news. In light of these, both somehow have relatable effects, which accompany the journalistic struggles. However, some researchers give statements that Twitter challenges the gatekeeping purpose of broadcasting; reporting or we can say journalism (Hermida, 2018).

Facebook, at certain level, eases the sense of an individual liaison with reporters. Media establishments generate business profiles and reporters or correspondents generated discrete summons to which the viewers are able to tie up and take steady informs. It is also near to the part of the billion operators. Among media users, it is consider as the portion of the largest emergent networks. Facebook used by individuals is to link by "friends," after which it creates sagacity that news patrons would sense a particular link with journalists they track on Facebook (Stassen, 2010). According to SNCR Survey of Media 90percent of reporters plotted that the novel mass media and public sites via apparatuses and skills result in an increased social media to account bulletin, discover story concepts and bases, monitor views and debates, exploring personages and establishments. They also retain up-to-date on concerns and matters of notice and contribute in discussions (McClure, 2009).

Uses and Gratification Theory

Katz, Bulmer & Guerevitch (1974) developed the Uses and Gratification Theory. Applying UGT, Raacke (2008) also establish the websites based on social networking and sub-domains, digital media, over-all inspire and empower to establish the strengthening of relationships.

Media Dependency Theory

The main conceptualization of this theory rotates around the sociology and large social systems. Media dependency theory necessarily needs a two way system which incorporates the social system and a media system and the essential idea behind its application in dependency of bulletin networks are mutual (Rokeach & Relfleur, 1976). Now, the theory can be expanded to encompass social media. As the social media is allowing its users to accomplish the necessities or wants somehow. When we apply the studies according to the media dependency theory it suggests

that the more reliant a person is on social broad casting, the more amount of views they will practice about facilities and concepts that perform on their feed more often. Whenever a bigger event happens on political or social level people catches the internet feed to voice the support of inner confusion or frustration. The aptitude of asking questions and getting answers by community is what makes the relevancy of social media specifically.

Material and Methods

Research Design, Sample, and Sampling Strategy

Descriptive research paradigm was followed under qualitative research to explore the outcome of the reliance of Pakistani TV news channels on Social Media. Purposive sampling technique was used for data collection through in-depth semi structured interviews for getting detailed insight of the impact of Social Media. Sample was consisted of (N=10) TV news channel professionals working in news rooms, programming and social media departments including controller news, directors, content producers, and copy writers from *92 News*, *Express News*, *Neo News*, Lahore and was homogeneous in nature.

Construction of Interview Guide

Self-Constructed Interview Guide was used to collect data consisted on questions based on the assessment of the reliance of Pakistani TV news channels on Social Media i.e. the different aspects of the reliance of Pakistani TV news channels on social media, the commercial benefits of the use of social media, the dependence of news channels on social media for gaining information, the verification process of the news channels about the information gained from the social media. The total number of questions in interview guide was 15. The interview guide questions were asked in Urdu language as it was more convenient to answer.

Procedure

Participant's demographic information was conducted using personal information sheet. All interviews were recorded by a voice recorder with the permission of the participants. A brief purpose and objectives of the study were explained to the participants before the interviews. Participant's responses were analyzed carefully to form themes and sub themes.

Results and Discussion

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Major themes and subthemes were generated using participants responses for the questions of interview. Three major themes were found (Social Media as Source of Information, Reliance of TV Channels on Social Media, Issues, and Challenges) with regards to the reliance of Pakistani TV news channels on these aspects of Social Media. The researchers gave

importance to ethical considerations while conducting interviews. The official staff of the TV news channels played the role of gatekeepers because they were well familiar with the respondents and research sites.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Table 1
Demographic Properties of Participants Characteristics

Participants	Positions	Interview	No. of Participants
Directors	Managerial position holders	Discussion based	02
Controller News	Managerial position holders	Open ended	01
SME	Executives	Open ended	01
Social Media Officer	Executives	Discussion based	01
SMC	Executives	Open ended	01
Copy Writer	Duty Officers	Open ended	01
Content Head	Duty Officers	Discussion based	01
Content Producer	Duty Officers	Discussion based	02

Table 2
Demographic information of the Sample (N=10)

Participants	Gender	Age	Education	Designations	News Channels
Interviewee1	M	40	M. Phil	Director	92 NEWS
Inteviewee2	M	35	Ph. D	Director	NEO NEWS
Interviewee3	M	37	M. Phil	Controller	EXPRESS NEWS
Interviewee4	M	29	BS. Hons.	SME	EXPRESS NEWS
Interviewee 5	M	25	BS. Hons.	Senior SMO	92 NEWS
Interviewee6	M	30	M. Phil	SMC	NEO NEWS
Interviewee7	M	32	BS. Hons.	Copy Writer	92 NEWS
Interviewee8	M	28	BS. Hons.	Content Head	NEO NEWS
Interviewee9	M	30	BS. Hons.	Content Producer	92 NEWS
Interviewee10	M	34	BS. Hons.	Content Producer	92 NEWS

Table 1 and 2 showed participants demographic characteristics along with information of news channels from where they belong. On the basis of their responses further thematic analysis was followed to evaluate themes and sub themes.

Participant 1**Farooq Majeed (Director News, 92 News)**

Social Media is an easy approach, its help to provide news swiftly to the public; however we have to ensure its reliability. We have a team for monitoring and evaluation especially for the interlinked mediums who design the digital campaigns and boosting to bring audience on channel. About 76% of TV audience depends on social buzz. Audience response tracking is the key to produce different content and the attribution is tested through watch- re-watch to have a productive output.

Participant 2**Muhammad Usman (Director News, Neo News)**

Use of gadgets is demand of the present era as it is one of the informal ways to interact and an easy approach to have information as dependency factors on social media is more now. The channel's aim is to provide reliable news based on facts abiding by the rules of journalism with commitment. Google and Facebook are used to monitor the response and engagement as forecasting. Effective Television Rating Point (TRP) links are being inserted along with the application of emerging trends as ads, sliders etc. to make the audience or viewers aware internationally. News is checked if it's fake or real in both cases the aim is to let people know everything. Second edge marketing is a wise enough medium to communicate with the audience. If you want to be in competition, create a varied content and design parallel campaigns. Use algorithm based analytical tools, track visitors to be known for your valuable matter because TRP will automatically rise if you follow public demand.

Participant 3**Awais Hameed (Controller News, Express News)**

The coming generation is swift and wants information speedily. Their aim is to provide complete coverage with authentic information as validating the news is obligatory factor of mass media. Quality managers and software are there to check quality and engagements. Online parameters are being applied. Hash tags and linked media are used to reach that is more organic and confirms that audiences are absorbing individuals via social media. It is like demand and supply. According to my experience TRP is much raised if proper boosting is done digitally as output from digital mediums is very productive. Provide quality work and it will spread the word out. Also lookup for audiences age wise interests.

Participant 4

Naqash Ali (Social Media Executive, *Express News*)

The present generation is fast and acknowledges everything that is at ease. Our aim is to provide them with comprehensive and complete information. With credible news people follow the channels more. Through the projection of audience's views we assess that which thing is in demand. Embedded links, hash tags and back links endorse the viewer's attention in posted content. Look into campaign maps and touch points of digital media, email responses and search engine adds, display ads, this micro and macro targeting is productive for the channel audience.

Participant 5

Muhammad Mudassar (Sr. Social Media Officer, *92 News*)

Social hub is an effortless way to interact and have information and to give real news and more coverage. Genuine news wins the trust of audiences and they will watch, re-watch the content if it is reliable. In this regard, one need to assess the behavior of audiences and get to know which thing triggers the most. Online brand reputations management is essential so, we associate multiple media, with embedded links, hash tags and back links to endorse the viewer's interest. Use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to focus on building traffic on TV channel to promote the content. Digital media is a mix-marketing tool, which ensures the fruitful results. It definitely gives output. Hoaxes are the most difficult things to handle. A team is built to deal with this. Being part of news channel it our duty to refrain from such de-marketing tools.

Participant 6

Oman Ali (Social Media Coordinator, *Neo News*)

You do not have to go especially in TV lounge you can satisfy your info desire sitting anywhere. Social media landscape is wide as availability of people is almost accessible 24hours, across borders, among societies across the globe. Serve public with right information in an honest and balanced approach. Cross check the news, after ensuring its authenticity then transmit it. Interlinked mediums are backbone of today's digital marketing. Digital team is mandate of mass media nowadays. The tricky part here is to know that how and when audiences interact on these mediums. Brand awareness, brand reputation management is important to sustain the viewers. Output from digital media engages audiences. Try to involve audience's issues and demands, research well before pursuing any news. Content planning is evident to involve audiences. If the content loop is well planned the channel's word will spread. Target demographic of audiences wisely. Platform swinging is a jugglery part of audience so; maintain the validation, dignity of your channel, if you serve right you will be publicized automatically. Reach, referral

traffic, hash tags, and some software like keyhole, sprout social, digmind etc. can let you measure the count and provide the maximum engaging content.

Participant 7

Usman Mukhtar (Copy Writer, 92 News)

Social media is approachable. The primary aim should be to provide right info with credibility at right time. Use interlinked mediums to market channel with emerging trends, as at the end it is the number of views a channel needs. Social media land is widespread in this prospect. The challenge TV channel faced is to have the credit of publishing news first. A special team is built to look into problematic matters, campaigns and boosting to penetrate deeper into audiences. Picture the target market demographics to have proficient results at the end. We focus on how users navigate between these mediums and what exactly makes them stay on one medium. Software's like outpost, Hoot suite, agora pulse and above all Google analytics help to evaluate the engagement and look into the forthcoming areas to pursue.

Participant 8

Murtaza Khan (Content Head, Neo News)

Social media is one click away. It makes people aware of what is happening around them. A credible new steam is essential to crosscheck the factual data. Use interlinked mediums to make sure we are anchored in social media galaxy as the whole world is at this global platform and be in the race of digital marketing. Major part of TRP belongs to internet audiences. Social media spots are the cradle points of Word-O-Mouth (WOM); challenge is to have the credit of publishing it first. Build a separate team to meet all such challenges. Manage your content calendar, use wise hash tags, measure the engagement to design or redesign the market tools. Measure the engagement of content as the reach, impressions, engagements, shares, likes, referrals, responses etc. all gave you a combine view of 360° of your multiple media.

Participant 9

Noman Iftkhar (Content Producer, Express News)

Social media is a casual medium as people can use it on their devices effortlessly. Our policy is to give reliable news and withdraw a projected engagement. Let people distinguish or identify that its online fake news, mobile applications or alerts that create the reliance of TV channels on digital media. Interlinked mediums especially Facebook, Instagram, Interest twitter, LinkedIn are imperative to bring desired audience by software and filters help. Digital media is a secondary verge of publicizing. Therefore, issues crop up which are handled by an experienced team. The best thing is to withdraw speedy statistics via audience

response tracking, preplanned the campaign in parallel to shows which build an audience that engages and gives views. Algorithm tools help us know the facts for upgrading.

Participant 10

Mian Mohsin (Content Producer, 92 News)

Social media is handy and present generation seeks comfort. Publicize the authenticated news and be real with the content. Digital tools somehow attract the consciousness and interest of audiences. Social hub let people socialize, interact so people find it interactive and spend more time on it which triggers the necessity factors of TV channels to market on digital media. Output will be good if response tracking is done and boosting is planned demographically. Quality is what wins the WOM before experimenting, so plan the trials and backups. Insert content in all platforms to have the maximum connectivity with audiences at varied platforms.

Discussion

Audience response tracking is the key to produce different content and the attribution is tested through watch- re-watch to have a productive output. It is analyzed from the above interview that gadgets are utilized for monitoring the dependency factors of TV on social media and effective TRP links are being embedded along with the application of emerging trends as ads, sliders etc. to make the audience or viewers aware internationally. There is about 2 billion business in the world that is getting maximum output from Social Media platforms. Social Media is kind of another broadcasting channel. Make sure the copyrights for the news stories are strictly followed so that people should rely on the social media based news coverage. Follow Google demographics, as we are now getting dependent on online podiums to get ratings. Referrals are the strongest feedbacks. WOM builds a community for the broadcasted content. Google analytics (demographic tools) are best partners if you are planning the social media phases or touch points. For spread of word, keep that thing on broadcast that is in demand and trustworthy and understand the people's psychology to raise TRP. Use online mediums as content conversion points are the main lead. Audience's interest may vary demographically so sketch the strategies you are going to plan though it is not an easy job to deal a diverse audience, but measuring the engagement is what let us know how, when and where we have to focus first.

Subthemes

- Reliable information
- Emerging new trends
- Effective TRP links
- Attribution of different content
- Authentic and valid information
- Audience interest

- Content planning
- Referral traffic of information
- inquiries before pursuing new information
- Use of software analytic approach by Social Media

Major Themes

On the basis of participants responses it was concluded that news channel show reliance to social media for the following characteristics.

- Quality information
- Audience interest
- Reliable and authentic
- Content validity

Conclusion

The in-depth interviews findings shows that there must be a planned campaign and boosting for channels, which should be properly monitored via software or Digimind tools to engage maximum audiences. Touch points of digital media, email responses, search engine adds, display ads, micro and macro targeting is productive for the TV channel audiences. Use Google demographics to raise the target audience bar. The use of SEO and multiple media brings traffic towards channel so plan to target according to the demographics of audiences. Brand awareness and brand reputations sustains the viewers on TV channels, thus try to engage the audience in which content planning is vital. Measurement software's can aid in it like: keyhole, sprout social, Digimind etc.

Interlinked marketing is a channel need and focus on how users navigate between these mediums and what exactly makes them stay on one medium. To evaluate the engagements the software's like outpost, Hoot suite, agora pulse and above all Google analytics are suggested. The major part of the TRP belongs to internet audiences for which it is better to manage content calendar, wise hash tags, measure the engagement. The audience response tracking and planned campaigns along with algorithm tools are beneficiary touch points to raise the TRP. The audience is raised if response tracking is done and boosting is planned demographically, hence inserts the content in all platforms to have the maximum connectivity with audiences for TV channels.

Limitations

- Selected sample may have some lack of maturity to identify the dependency of TV channels on Social Media and related issues which may contribute to major limitation of this study.

- Few participants of the study may limit the generalization of the obtained results of reliance of Pakistani TV news channels on Social Media.

Suggestions

- Correlation research should be followed between TV channels and Social Media aspects (search engine ads, display ads, micro and macro targeting, Google demographics, audience bar, sprout etc.) through quantitative research to explore correlation effects between these phenomenon.
- Present research title should be study in future as case study engaging professional (producers, writers and director) of TV channels to know their professional policies and approach about the Social Media usage and its expected effects on the society.

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