

Influence of social media in the Practice of Journalism in Bangladesh

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Abstract

In the rapidly changing global arena, technological advancement and the adaptation of changing patterns of technology the growing trend in all areas, including journalism. The increasing use of social media in journalism due to technological advancement has been remarkably noticeable worldwide, including in Bangladesh in recent years. With the delicate touch of social media, sourcing and disseminating information have been easier. Social media has been considered one of the blessings of journalism to disseminate and share news events and get immediate feedback from the audience. As Facebook is the most popular social media among journalists in Bangladesh, the study took Facebook as the central unit of the research. The research's main objective is to determine how journalists in Bangladesh use Facebook in their regular journalism practices. The study is a qualitative study based on quantitative data.

In the regular journalism practice, the study inquiries different uses of Facebook by Journalists in Bangladesh based on survey data. It has been found that to disseminate reports published or broadcasted in different newspapers and TV channels; journalists mainly use the Facebook platform. The study revealed that the reports not published or broadcasted in mainstream media are getting space in social media. The study also discovered that to get immediate feedback from the audience, the journalists in Bangladesh considered Facebook one of the most powerful tools. Moreover, to develop sources and get clues for news, Facebook occasionally assists journalists significantly. Furthermore, a significant finding is that ethical practice is in danger when practicing journalism on Facebook. Based on the above findings, the study concluded that for journalists in Bangladesh, social media would be an effective alternative to sharing news and getting immediate feedback from the audience.

Introduction

Technological changes have taken place worldwide to keep pace with necessity, demand, and development. In every sphere of life, human beings are inspired by technological development and adaptation to changing patterns of technology. With the delicate touch of technology, various professional areas, including journalism, are rapidly developing.

To exercise professional efficiency and effectiveness, various ICT is being used by journalists. Contemporary journalism in Bangladesh inevitably exercises significant changes in producing and developing media content in line with global practice in utilizing technology. A survey conducted worldwide by Statista-The Statistics Portal, in April 2018, on primary social networking sites revealed that people worldwide use Facebook as a preferable networking site. Journalists are using Facebook in several perspectives of journalism practice. According to Bunz 2010, social media is a popular source for journalists and has become an essential part of online news distribution and consumption. According to Kümpel, Karnowski & Keeling, 2015, using social media news sharing has been simplified and facilitated the easy-to-use tools for posting content.

According to Fahad 2014, the nature of journalism has been changed significantly by the development of social media during the last two decades (Fahad, 2014). In Bangladesh, contemporary journalism practitioner experiences significant changes in their working practices. As places for sharing news, various social sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Viber, Imo, etc., have earned a reputation (Rahman, 2016).

The users routinely post details of their daily work and experience. Journalists use Facebook and similar sites to get help finding sources, spreading news stories, and receiving audience feedback. Using these sites, journalists get a tremendous opportunity to promote themselves with their work on the web (Rogers, 2017). From the western perspective, social media is also getting very popular in developing countries like Bangladesh. Journalists of Bangladesh are using social media, especially Facebook, in their daily journalism practices, like sharing news and getting feedback, etc. (Rahman, 2016). However, remarkable research could hardly be found in Bangladesh's perspective about the various uses of social media in journalism by journalists. The present study attempts to learn about journalists' professional exercise in using social media, especially Facebook, in Bangladesh. Facebook helps journalists get news clues from known and unknown sources. Sometimes just because of their journalistic identity on their Facebook profile, people get a tremendous opportunity to promote themselves with their work on the web (Rogers, 2017)

However, the research could hardly be found in Bangladesh regarding the various uses of social media in journalism. The study aims to learn about the professional exercise of journalists in using social media, especially Facebook, in Bangladesh.

Objectives of Research

The study is to reveal the nature and purposes of social media use by the journalists of Bangladesh in journalism. With the primary objective, the study has some specific objectives, which are:

1. To identify the use of social media by journalists of Bangladesh in their journalism practice.
2. To observe how journalists use social media in sharing news and getting feedback.
3. To discover how journalists are using social media in developing and maintaining sources.
4. To find out how far journalists could maintain ethical guidelines on Facebook while using this site for journalism.

Statement of the Problem

Journalists are using social media to exercise their professional activities worldwide. However, different studies in this context have been conducted and observed mixed outcomes. An empirical study by Kitterman (2012) discovered that social media has an overall positive role in regular journalism practices. However, from an ethical point of view, some journalists refuse to use social media in journalism. The study concluded that some journalists are still not interested in using this platform to engage their audiences in the story despite the use of social media in journalism having risen at the beginning of this decade. Another study by Olmstead and Barthel (2015) on the access and sharing of local news by American journalists found that journalists confront some challenges in collecting information through social media and sharing news. However, there is no scientific evidence in Bangladesh regarding the use of social media in Journalism. So, to ascertain its pros and cons, it is essential to figure out the scenario of using social media by the journalists of Bangladesh in journalism.

Fisher (2011) found that both in developing and developed countries, social media is used as a platform for news sources, sharing news, communicating, and getting audience feedback. In western countries, as a way of showcasing their reports, many journalists use social media, including Facebook, Twitter, etc., and achieve tremendous popularity (Fisher, 2011).

According to Ahmed 2015, social media undoubtedly has had some positive uses in journalism, but there are some concerns about their impacts on efficiency and disruption. The researcher concluded that social media had created such a dependency and circumstances that many of them could not perform their jobs without its help (Ahmed, 2015). To engage the audience with a story, some journalists in Bangladesh use social media as a platform for journalism. It is indicated by the perspective of Bangladesh that to perform the work of journalists effectively, the absence of social media can create barriers (Colhoun, 2015). The finding indicates a growing culture of using social media by journalists in journalism. So, it is essential to find out the different use of social media in journalism in Bangladesh. However, empirical studies are hardly found on it in Bangladesh. The current study will minimize some knowledge gaps.

Literature Review

For professional purposes, most journalists in the world are using social media. A study by Gulyas (2013) found that different variables of Facebook influence journalists' professional practice. The use of Facebook is various practices in journalism by the journalist, including news selection, news presentation, news distribution, etc. (Paulussen 2016). Publishing and promoting different content are the practical uses of social media. The finding of an empirical study indicates that the use of social media is much more by online journalists than that by print media journalists. Moreover, the porn of the use of social media is more in younger journalists (18-27) than in their senior journalist counterparts (46+).

Studying the working practice of local journalists in the UK's east midlands region suggests that social media may accelerate the change in journalism practices. The study examined the latitude and characteristics of social media use in local news by applying the interview method. In France and the USA, the use of social media by journalists is examined by Matthew Powers and Vera-Zambrano (2015). They found that work practices and interactions with peers influence social media usage by journalists. The typical examples of similar routine tasks in social media by journalists in both countries are gathering information, monitoring sources, and developing story ideas. Another study by Matthew Powers and Vera-Zambrano (2015) found that French Journalism motivates news organizations to use social media, while American Journalism incentivizes journalists to orient social media use toward audiences.

The scenario in Bangladesh, however, is a little different. Most journalists use Facebook as social media for regular journalism practice, while most of the people of the country use Facebook as social media (Rahman, 2016). Like Bangladesh and the world's developed countries, the practice of social media in journalism is growing in popularity in developing countries daily. In Bangladesh, people use Facebook as social media, irrespective of all segments and professions.

According to the report "We are Social and Hootsuite, as of 2021, there are around 48.8 million registered Facebook users in Bangladesh who share comments, statuses, pictures, videos, etc. Facebook users in Bangladesh accelerated to 48.8 million in 2021 from 96 thousand in 2006 (BTRC 2021). One new user joins Facebook every 7 seconds in Bangladesh, which is more than the birthrate of Bangladesh (Shams, 2020). The following table shows the.

Table 1: Different social media users in Bangladesh 2020

Name of social media	Percentage of Users (%)
Facebook	90
YouTube	43
Google+	24
Twitter	3
Other	7

Source: BTRC 2020

Regarding the popularity of social media, especially Facebook, it is a massive question whether social media threatens traditional media in Bangladesh. An empirical study by Rahman (2016) found that youth who use Facebook read printed newspapers less than non-Facebook users. It is because Facebook users get all important news in their news feed of Facebook from the mainstream newspaper. The finding indicates that the people of Bangladesh, mainly the young generation, heavily depend on Facebook to satisfy their information needs compared to traditional media.

Another study by Alejandro (2010) entitled 'Journalism in the age of Social Media' applied the method intending to find out the usage of social media in news operations among selected chief editors from different parts of the world. It has been discovered that with speed and immediacy, social media helps journalists best receive the news. Regarding the accuracy of the news, verification of sources, and less control over the information were also identified as some risks of using social media in journalism.

It is a matter of fact that only a few studies have been conducted in Bangladesh about using social media in journalism. Therefore, estimating a concrete and absolute result overlooking many angles is challenging. The present study is an attempt to explore this gap.

Rationale of the Study

To conduct the current study, several factors have been prompted. 1st the literature review revealed that most of the research covering the issue of social media and journalism practice had been conducted in developed countries, and developing and listed developed countries have a vast lacking in the area. Secondly, research on the growing phenomenon of 3rd world countries like Bangladesh using social media such as Facebook to share news, gather information, and engage with others is challenging. Thirdly, policymakers and stakeholders should take the necessary initiatives to confront the challenges of journalism practice in social media, like sharing and uploading fake news. However, there needs to be more evidence to guide policymakers in making evidence-based policies. Finally, the study will cover the new issues of social sciences in the context of Bangladesh. This pioneering work can help future research for further exploration.

Research Methodology

In the study, a case-oriented qualitative research strategy has been applied to fulfill the objectives. The case-oriented study consists of 3 criteria: questionnaires, contemporary issue phenomena, and little control over respondents. The nature of the study is indicative. The inductive approach starts with the observations, and at the end of the research, theories or generalizations are formulated as a result of observations. The study is conducted with a case-oriented inductive approach.

The research is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. 20 structural and the same number of semi-structural questionnaires were given to 80 journalists of several ages, sex, and media outlets practicing journalism in Bangladesh. Moreover, face-to-face interviews were also conducted among the respondents. Secondary data was collected through books, published articles, research materials, and internet sources.

Different statistical analyses have been used for quantities analysis and raw data counts to establish frequency and percentage to complement quantities data. Structural and semi-structural questionnaires with open-ended and closed-ended questions helped the research fulfill research objectives.

Finding and Discussion

Journalists' Use of social media

The study attempts to determine the scenario of social media use in journalism in Bangladesh. 97.5% of the respondents are found to be active on social media, while 97.43% use Facebook as a source of social media. Of the journalists using social media, 93.42% ensure that they use Facebook as a social network (Table 1). The study's finding indicates that a significant portion of journalists is active on Facebook for journalism in Bangladesh perspective. The same finding was observed in the study conducted by Bunz (2010) on the western perspective. In the study, Bunz discovers that Twitter and Facebook are significant sources of Social media journalists use in journalism.

Table 2: Uses of social media by the Journalists in Bangladesh

Uses of social media		No.	%
	Yes	78	97.5
	No	2	2.5
	Total	80	100
Uses of social media	Facebook	76	97.43
	Twitter	2	2.56
	Linkedine	0	0
	Other	0	0
	Total	80	100
Uses Facebook as Social Network	Yes	76	95
	No	2	5
	Total	78	100
Use Facebook for Journalism	Yes	76	95
	No	2	5
	Total	78	100

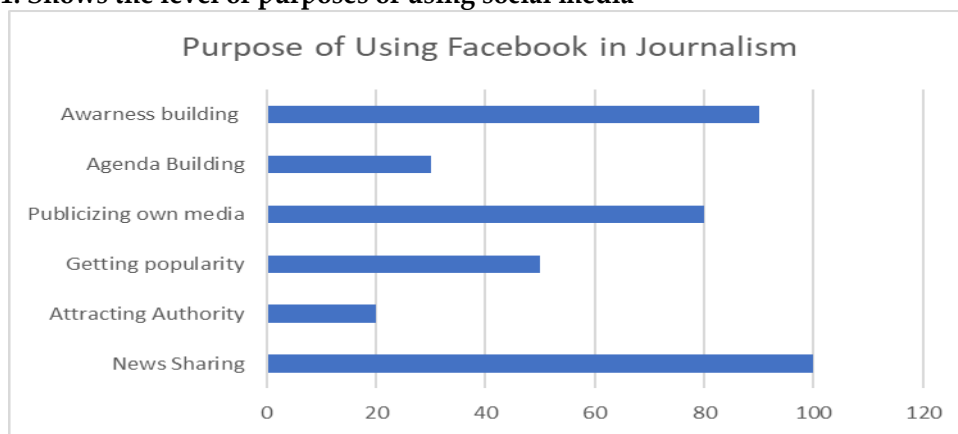
Source: Calculated by the Author 2021

The current study is in the context of Bangladesh's Facebook Uses (95%) through the journalist in the practice of journalism. A similar finding was revealed in the study was also found by a study Apuke (2010) in the context of Facebook Used by Journalists in Jalingo Metropolis.

The Main Purposes of using Facebook in Journalism

One of the study's primary objectives is to discover how journalists use Facebook in their regular practices. The finding discovers that Facebook is used mainly for six purposes in the practice of journalism, including-a) news sharing, b) attracting Authority, C) gaining popularity, d) publicizing own media, e) agenda building, and f) awareness building

Figure 1: Shows the level of purposes of using social media



Source: Computed by the author 2021

The study reveals that an overwhelming majority of 98% of the respondents use Facebook in journalism to share their news, while almost 90% use the platform to build awareness. Examining 461 peer-review articles, Kumpel (2015) found that most Journalists use Facebook for news-sharing purposes.

Feedback Over Using Facebook

One of the principal objectives of the study is to determine whether the journalists of Bangladesh consider Facebook a powerful component for getting immediate feedback from audiences. It has been found that 95% of the respondents agreed that they are getting vital feedback both from mainstream and social media, while 85% of respondents denote that they are getting maximum feedback from Facebook.

Table 3: Getting Feedback through Facebook

Getting Feedback from the Audience		No.	%
Getting Feedback from the Audience	Yes	76	95
	No	4	5
	Total	80	100
Maximum Feedback	Mainstream media	68	85
	Social media	12	15
	Total	80	100

Source: Calculated by the Author 2021

Building and Maintaining Sources through Facebook

The study discovers that to develop sources and get clues for news; occasionally, Facebook assists journalists greatly. A collective study conducted jointly by Cision and George Washington University (2017) found that most journalists use social media as a source of their news. The current study reflects a similar result with the finding that 93% of respondents use Facebook as their news source.

Ethical Guideline over Using Facebook

One of the study's primary objectives is to discover whether journalists practice ethical guidelines while using Facebook for journalism. It has been discovered that almost 97.5% of the respondents agreed

that they maintain and practice ethical guidelines while using Facebook for journalism. On the contrary, only 2.5% of respondents said they could be more careful about ethical issues while using Facebook for journalism.

Table 4: Practicing ethical guideline in Facebook

Practicing ethical guideline in Facebook	Form/Format	No.	%
	Yes	78	97.5
	No	2	2.5
	Total	80	100
Concern of violating Ethical Guideline in Feedback	Yes	65	81.25
	No	15	18.75
	Total	80	100

Source: Calculated by the Author 2021

More than 80% of the respondents mentioned that while using Facebook for journalism, violating ethical guidelines is a common scenario (Table 5). The use of social media in journalism is a significant concern throughout the world. The same result was found in the study by Dickinson (2011) that journalists are excited to use social media but anxious about ethical concerns.

Overall Finding of the Study

The study reveals that sharing news, videos, and photos on Facebook is preferable for journalists in Bangladesh the journalism practice. Sharing news to accelerate the audience's awareness and promote particular media using Facebook is their essential motive. Journalists share news on Facebook published in a news portal, in turn, to promote themselves, get feedback, and sometimes interact. Journalists capitalize on different statuses, comments, reactions, inbox messages, and individual and group chats. The audience responds by sharing their thoughts and perception regarding the news.

To develop and maintain sources, Facebook is a crucial and supportive platform, as indicated by the finding. It also facilitates getting clues for news. Most journalists know the ethical dimension of using Facebook while practicing journalism. However, at the same time, they believe that this platform could be dangerous due to the ethical and irresponsible practice of journalism. The study also revealed that social media assists journalists in overcoming the time and space limitations of traditional journalism.

Conclusion

Social media is an effective platform for practicing journalism in the ever-changing technological arena. Based on the literature review and analysis result, technological advancement assists journalists in promoting journalism in various ways. Facebook, as the popular social media site in Bangladesh, is being used by journalists, turning it to be part and parcel of life. As one of the world's developed countries, Facebook has brought significant changes in the practice of journalism in Bangladesh. However, a lack of ethical practice in using Facebook could be detrimental to the profession and harm society despite opening up a new horizon for journalism. For developing and maintaining sources, collecting information, sensing clues, sharing news having feedback, etc., social media has already become an alternative and practical component for journalists. Moreover, it is a matter of fact that the platform is gradually becoming a forum for interaction and engagement with media, its professionals, and its audience. However, to use Facebook for journalism, practitioners should be more conscious and responsible.

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