When Rivalry Goes Away: Mainstream News Channels' Usage Patterns of Face book in Pakistan

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Abstract

Once considered as the strongest form of influence, electronic media got its tough competitor as social media. Contrarily, the need for the promotion of content and attracting an audience stimulated electronic media managers to use social media for their marketing also. The study examines how television news channels in Pakistan use social media, particularly, Facebook to advertise and promote their content and to target specific audiences. For the purpose, a content analysis of Facebook pages of four mainstream television channels: ARY News, Express News, Samaa News, Dunya News is conducted for a six-month period.. A strong association is observed between number of non-hashtags posts and number of comments on Facebook pages of TV channels. Similarly Publication of Photos is also found positively associated with highest reaction response in Facebook pages of selected TV Channels. Videos and hash tag posts were found positively associated with sharing of the content whereas the number of Links posts is also associated with the usage of hash tags. Thus all the hypotheses were statistically approved at a significance level of <.05.

Keywords: *Social Media Marketing, News Media, Facebook Pages, Audience Response*

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INTRODUCTION

With the growing availability of the internet everywhere, the use of social media sites in people's daily routines for newsgathering, entertainment and other purposes is also increasing (Maqsood et al., 2022). Consequently, it has made necessary for media organizations to integrate non-traditional communication channels along with traditional channels in their content marketing strategies. Social media gives a variety of choice of channels (Social Media) to organizations in order to make communication with the customers (Barnard et al., 2017, p. 65). Social media has not only taken the space of traditional media as the preferred source of news but has also become primary source of news for many. The first choice of online media for getting information is often social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter (X). Gottfried and Shearer (2016) state that 64% of news users get news on one most commonly used site i.e., Facebook, 26% get news on two sites and 10% get news on three or more sites. It raises concern to find out how social networking sites are being used by news media organizations for distributing and sharing their content with the audience.

The media houses want more ratings for their television channels so they cover mostly the news and events that are trending rather than newsworthy issues. So popularity seems to overrule newsworthiness and on social media, issues those are not given proper coverage on traditional media grab audience`s attention (Shahid, 2016). Social media particularly Facebook and Twitter (X) have become popular news sources in the digital world. People prefer to read news on these social media sites rather than on traditional media sources (radio, newspaper, television). A study has found Twitter (X) as being the most preferred source for breaking news. The percentage of users who get the latest news from Twitter (X) is 59% while 31% use Facebook for this purpose (Shearer et al., 2015). As the internet becomes an indispensable aspect of daily life, television stations are swiftly recognizing the importance of publishing stories online. They are under increasing pressure to consolidate audiences across various media platforms. (lazaroiu,G. 2010). The advent of digital media has not only marked a transition from the era of broadcast mass media to digital mass media but has also positioned itself as a formidable rival to traditional broadcast media. One of the major threats posed to legacy media is audience migration. To combat this threat, legacy media has opted certain strategies including the use of its new rival as a tool .

However,the content and strategies suitable for traditional news sources may or may not be suitable for Facebook pages. The dynamics of social media are very different from traditional news sources. This exerts extreme pressure on the management of news organizations to create separate content and marketing strategies for social media as well as traditional media sources. To address this issue, the research study has been conducted to analyze the content strategies of the Facebook pages of four Pakistani TV news channels from October 2016 to March 2017.

In traditional media, the popularity of any TV channels and program is determined by the ratings of channels/programs. The ratings determine which channel is performing best amongst the audience and which type of content people mostly

liked. This is helpful for decision makers and strategists for making changes in their strategies according to the new market trends. However, in social media, the criteria for measuring success are somehow different. The engagement on social media content is the tool that marketers used to analyze their marketing efforts and change strategies according to the findings and facts. In a study Mawhinney (2017) claims that organic Facebook engagement is highest on social media posts with Videos (13.9%) and Photos (13.7%). The timing of publication of page posts also effects on engagement. As a whole, the best time to post on Facebook is 1-4 p.m.

The study was intended to examine strategies of channels followed by a comparative analysis among the strategies adopted by the rival media organizations. This is done to find out which channel` social media performed better than others in the media industry. The emergence of social media as a threat to legacy media, quickly gained the attention of scholarly community .The phenomenon has been studied in diversified angles . The focus has been on the effects of new media on traditional media and journalistic practices .Identification of the popular content on face book newsfeed , classifying criteria of measuring success in both types of media ,Consumption patterns of users regarding videos posted on social media specially face book and the factors affecting the user's engagement with face book are some other significant areas of concern for the researchers. However, no study has been conducted to seek that which strategies legacy media has adopted to convert/ shift rivalry into cooperation .This study is unique in the sense that it attempts to fill this gap. It aims at documenting the tactics of television channels to make a potential use of emerging technologies rather than considering it a threat to their survival.

Objectives

The study aims at,
Studying the trends on mainstream media houses` Facebook pages regarding post publication in Pakistan

Analyzing the strategies adopted by mainstream news media channels regarding content on their Facebook pages.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the strategies of traditional media television channels to engage more audience through social media?

a) What types of posts are published on Facebook pages of Pakistani TV news channels?

b) Which are the top posts on each Pakistani TV news channels` Facebook page in the taken timeframe?

c) What is the best average number of post per day and per week?

RQ2: How does audience interact through mediated communication on social media?

a) Is there any relationship between the number and genres of page posts with audience response?

b) Does any relation exist between quantity of page posts and interaction rate on particular Facebook page irrespective of the fans amount?

Hypotheses

1) There is a strong relationship between number of non-hashtags posts and number of comments on Facebook pages of TV channels.

2) Publication of Photos is associated with highest reaction response in Facebook pages.

3) Publication of Videos and hashtags posts is associated with sharing of the content on Facebook pages.

4) The number of Links posts is associated with the usage of hashtags.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word 'Social' has different forms such as information, communication, communities, and collaboration (Fuchs, 2021). It is important to explain the context of word 'social' when the term Social Media is used. The word 'Media' means any source of communication either its traditional or digital like television, radio, newspaper, social media (Facebook, Twitter (X) etc). The term social media has been defined by Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein as "a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). According to Fuchs (2021) social media is a complex term and has multiple meanings in different contexts.

As Anderson & Caumont (2014) asserted that the growing allure of social media as a news source can be attributable to its ability to offer users numerous ways to interact with information. This includes the ability to consume news, discover new stories, share or repost updates, contribute personal photos, videos, or reports (engaging in citizen or participatory journalism), and comment on news. A trend that has emerged involves actively engaging with the audience through interactive means, primarily utilizing various online channels, notably social media, rather than just presenting an online rendition of a news story (Stassen, 2010).In response to this new competition, broadcast media has strategically embraced acceptance and mutual coexistence as a means to navigate this evolving landscape.

According to Lazer and Kelly's the definition of Social media marketing (as cited in Neti, 2011, p.3) is "concerned with the application of marketing knowledge,

concepts, and techniques to enhance social as well as economic ends. It is also concerned with the analysis of the social consequences of marketing policies, decisions and activities."

In today digital world almost every business either small or large and any kind of industry (fashion, cloth, beauty, government, education, medicine) is using social media particularly Facebook for marketing their products and services. Sandberg (2015) states that more than 50 million small businesses using Facebook for communicating with their customers. In another study it was reported that 55% of marketers chose Facebook, followed by LinkedIn at 18%. Marketers believe that they are planning to increase the use of social media platforms in their marketing strategies in the following order as Facebook (67%), YouTube (63%), Twitter (X) (61%) and LinkedIn (61%) (Stelzner, 2016).

Facebook introduced hashtags in back 2013. Buffer's blogger Kevan Lee states that "Facebook posts without a hashtags better than those with a hashtags" (as cited in Hutchinson, 2016). The similar kind of report stated over 1 billion posts were analyzed from 30 million brands pages on Facebook and it was found that posts without hashtags got more interactions than posts with hashtags (Rayson, 2016). The study challenged use of too many hashtags on social media posts. On the other hand, (The Ultimate Guide to hashtags, 2017) analyzed over 200,000 brand posts on Facebook in February 2014 and found that too many hashtags lead to fewer interactions. Posts with 2 to 3 hashtags got average 593 interactions, posts with 3 to 5 got average 416 interactions, posts with 6 to 8 got average 307 interactions and posts with more than 10 hashtags got 188 interactions. According to the marketing experts, the best strategy is to use 1-2 hashtags on social media posts (Parkinson, 2021).

Regarding popular genres on social media, Fashion had been the top Pakistan industry on Facebook that reported 18414158 fans in 2017, followed by Telecom (12071399 fans), Ecommerce (10502953fans), Food (4982909 fans) and Retail Food (4949768 fans). Jazz remained the top Facebook brand with 3719347 fans. Pakistan TV is the top Facebook brand in terms of number of interactions with 1435420total interactions. Soya Sauce was observed as the fastest growing Facebook page with 130080+ fans. Hamdard Pakistan got the place of top brand on Facebook in terms of highest average post interactions per one thousand Fans with average post interactions as 1476. Telenor Pakistan remained the top socially devoted brand on Facebook with 26 min response time and 100% response rate (January 2017 Social Marketing Report Pakistan, 2017). On talking about Youtube, OPPO Pakistan had been the fastest growing YouTube channel in Pakistan with 20042+ subscribers in 2017. Surf Excel Pakistan got the place of top brand on YouTube in terms of the highest average interactions per one thousand fans and it had average interactions as 20 per on thousand fans (January 2017, Social Marketing Report Pakistan, 2017). Khan's in his book Seven Layers of Social Media (as cited in Hexagon, n.d.) has defined Social Media Analytics as "the art and science of extracting valuable hidden insights from vast amounts of semi structured and unstructured social media data to enable informed and insightful decision making". Social Media Analytics is often confused with the two terms of Social Media that are 'Social Media Monitoring

(SMM) and 'Social Media Intelligence (SMI)'.

Kmieckowiak (2016) analyzed the social media profiles (Facebook and Twitter (X)) of Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton during the US elections campaign period May 1-Oct 31 2016. He found that Donald Tumph had more Facebook fans (11,678,079) and Twitter (X) followers (12,591,796), published less content i.e. 1,456 posts on Facebook and 2003 Tweets on Twitter (X), got more interactions i.e 141,873,055 interactions on Facebook and 69,602,734 on Twitter (X) and used comparatively less sponsored content.

Social Media has totally changed the news consumption trends among people. People relied before only on the traditional media sources (newspapers, magazines, radio and television) for getting the updates of daily happenings. However, for the past some years this new technology has totally changed the dynamics of media business. This new media has exerted many challenges for traditional media outlets. In order to survive in this new communication environment every traditional media outlets need to incorporate social media usage in their marketing strategies. The content and strategies that used on traditional media may or may not work on social media. Social media has its own dynamics that is very much different from the traditional media. The marketers need to know the differences between them and plan their strategies accordingly.

Facebook and Twitter (X) are increasingly becoming sources of news for people. According to the survey conducted by Pew research center in 2010, the Internet has become dominant and surpassed newspapers in terms of popularity and ranks just behind television (cited in Hong, 2012). As of 2012, the distribution of newspaper content through social networking sites has become a common practice (Ju et al., 2013). The New York Times describes its social media marketing as "one of the several essential strategies for disseminating news online".

In another study, Hille & Bakker (2013) studied the usage of Facebook by Dutch media and audience participation. He found that media do not follow any strategy of using Facebook. Users do actions on 'like' and 'share' options so it means audience distributes content more rather than participates. Moreover, By customizing content to individual preferences and integrating interactive feedback, consumers are receiving an experience that goes beyond what television alone can offer. There is concern among some that emerging technologies like the internet and other new media could possibly eventually supplant traditional forms of media (Price & Brown, 2010).

Instead of getting news from social networking sites the users also contributed to the content these sites by shared news stories, images or Videos. According to the Pew Research 2014, social media users shared or reposted 50% news stories, images or Videos, discussed 46% news issue or event posted 14% of own Photograph of news event and posted 15% own Videos of news event (Anderson & Caumont, 2014). Kmieckowiak (2016) analyzed which type of content rules the Facebook news feed. The study found that Photo was the leading content (54%) and contributed more than half of the content share followed by Link 30%, Status 11%, Video 3%,

Cover Photo 1% and other 1% share. While interaction wise video was the most engaging post with the highest average interactions per video i.e. 2183 followed by a Photo with 3158, status with 648, offer with 632, cover Photo with 630, question with 281, note with 204, Link with 188, SWF with 102, music with 57 and event with least average interactions i.e. 0.08.

Gottke (2016) explained how people use the reactions option on Facebook content. The study found that on average, Facebook reactions have low significance and Videos receive 40% more reactions than images. The users tend to react with a "Wow" option significantly more as compared to images. The same applies to the "Angry" option that users are likely to interact with after watching a video. This shows that video watching generates emotional responses in users. The "Like" option has greater interactions on images than Videos.

Herrmann (2017) analyzed 6.2 million Videos posts of 167k Facebook profiles from July to December 2016. He found that 90% of Facebook native Videos are used by the profiles, 30% used YouTube Videos, only 2% included Video on their pages and 7% used other video formats.

The interaction rate for Facebook native Videos was on average 109.67% higher than YouTube. Facebook native Videos are shared nearly 4.5 times more than YouTube Videos.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative content analysis is used to provide in-depth analysis of the study. Before conducting the final study, the researcher has done pilot study on one-week data of the Facebook pages of ARY News and Express News from 6 to 12 February 2017. The page posts have been categorized on two grounds: first is the type of posts and second is the nature. Since, "type of posts" has been categorized into Photo, video, Link, status and event and the "nature of posts" has been categorized into two categories such as hashtags posts and non-hashtags posts. The interaction means reactions, shares and comments. Reactions option has been further categorized into six categories as Like, Love, Haha, Wow, Sad and Angry.

Sampling

The top four television news channels` Facebook pages have been selected for the research study considering their number of fans. The channels that have been chosen for the study are ARY News, Express News, Samaa News, and Dunya News. The 6 months page posts from October 2016 to March 2017 have been analyzed in the study. The total 81,799 page posts were published in the selected period and all these page posts have been included as a sample. The researcher has used Purposive-sampling technique for the formation of sample.

RESULTS

Table 1

Top Facebook pages in TV channels page category								
TV Channels	Top Facebook pages in each category with thefans number of each page							Total
Sports	P T V Sports	Geo Super						
	16141010	7136622						23277632
News	A R Y News	Express News	Samaa TV	Waqt News	Dunya News	Geo News Urdu	Aaj News	
	14393400	13350440	9914132	8224178	8172906	7349597	6589365	67994018
Entertainment	HUM TV							
	7193633							7193633

The above table shows that out of top 10 TV channels` Facebook pages 2 Facebook pages fall in sports category, 7 in news category and 1 in entertainment category. It also shows that in TV channels category people mostly liked News channels Facebook pages and have the greatest fans (67994018) followed by Sports (23277632) and Entertainment (7193633).

Table 2

Number of fans in each category of TV channels Facebook pages		
TV Channels	No. of fans	Percentage (%)
Sports	23277632	23.64%
News	67994018	69.05%
Entertainment	7193633	7.305%
Total	98465283	100%

In the TV channels category people mostly liked News channels` Facebook pages have the greatest fans percentage (69.05%) followed by Sports (23.64%) and Entertainment (7.305%). Thus it is imperative to study and find out what content strategies they are using on Facebook which keep them on top in Pakistan Facebook market and either they need to improve their current strategies or not.

DISCUSSION

The results show that Dunya News Facebook page published most Photos (32.40%) and ARY News Facebook page published least Photos (15.84%). Express News Facebook page published most Videos (39.42%) and Dunya News Facebook page published least Videos (13.46%). ARY`s Facebook page published most Links (51.85%) and Express News Facebook page published least Links (0.13%). Dunya News Facebook page published most non-hashtags posts (28.78%) and Express News Facebook page published least non-hashtags posts (16.70%). ARY News

Facebook page has the highest fans (31.085) and Dunya News Facebook page has the least fans (18.33%).

It also shows that Links were the most published page post type (48.05%) followed by Photos (43.20%) and Videos (8.75%) in media industry Facebook pages but get least interactions on comments (19.96%) and shares (11.72%).

The results also show that 70% non-hashtags posts and 25% hashtags posts published in television news channels` Facebook pages and non-hashtags posts got most interactions (88.05%) than hashtags posts (11.94%). The similar kind of study conducted by Miller (2014) in which it stated that too many hashtags lead to fewer interactions.

The result also shows that "Link" was the most published page post type in media industry Facebook pages (48.01%) followed by Photo (43.19%), video (8.74%), status (0.0366%) and event (0.0085%). It is also observed that Links were the most published content on ARY News` Facebook page (72.38%) followed by Photo (19.89%), video (7.709%), status (0.0106%) and event (0.0071%). Photos were the most published content on Express News Facebook page (71.24%) followed by Videos (28.16%), Links (0.529%), status (0.039%) and event (0.019%). Photos were the most published content on Samaa News Facebook page (47.81%) followed by Links (46.95%), video (5.15%), status (0.068%) and event (0%). Moreover, Photos were the most published content on Dunya News Facebook page (56.30%) followed by Links (38.19%), video (4.73%), status (0.034%) and event (0.014%). It also shows that Links and Photos were the most published content on ARY News, Samaa News and Dunya News Facebook pages. Express News has different content strategy, Photos and Videos are the most published content. Status and event are the least published content on all selected news channel Facebook pages.

The result shows that television news channels` Facebook pages in Pakistan published most non-hashtags posts (73%) and least hashtags posts (27%). ARY News`s Facebook page published most non-hashtags posts (60%) and least hashtags posts (40%). Express News`s Facebook page published completely non-hashtags posts (100%) on its page timeline.  Samaa News`s Facebook page published non-hashtags posts (68%) more than hashtags posts (32%). Dunya News`s Facebook page published more non-hashtags posts (85%) than hashtags posts (15%).

The result also shows that ARY`s  Facebook page published most hashtags posts (40.39%) as compared to other news channels` Facebook pages (Samaa News i.e. 32.09%, Dunya News i.e. 15.34% and Express News i.e. 0.24%). While Express News Facebook page published most non-hashtags posts (99.76%) as compared to other news channels Facebook pages (Dunya News i.e. 84.65%, Samaa News i.e. 67.90% and ARY News i.e. 59.60%).

It also shows that highest interactions reported on Express News`s Facebook page i.e., 40.68% followed by ARY News (22%), Dunya News (20.18%) and the least interactions reported on Samaa News Facebook page i.e., 16.31%.
Hypotheses Testing

H1: There is a strong relationship between number of non-hashtags posts and number of comments on Facebook media pages of Pakistan.

Chi-Square Test for Association

Serial No	Non-hashtagss posts	Comments	All
1	16768	1375265	1392033
	16062	1375971	
2	9993	1872724	1882717
	21723	1860994	
3	15831	907696	923527
	10656	912871	
4	17212	967604	984816
	11363	973453	
All	59804	5123289	5183093

Cell Contents: Count
Expected Count
Pearson Chi-Square = 12027.976, df = 3, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 12890.523, df = 3, P-Value = 0.000

Interpretation:The Chi-Square Test for Association has been applied to test the hypothesis and through the test value of Pearson Chi-Square is 12027.976 and P-Value is 0.000. The statistical result indicates that the hypothesis has been significantly approved, $p<0.05$

H2: Publication of Photos is associated with highest reaction response in Facebook pages.

Chi-Square Test for Association

Serial No	Photos	Reactions	All
1	5596	41481530	41487126
	7839	41479287	
	7137	76884564	76891701
2	14529	76877172	
	11148	30718969	30730117
3	5807	30724310	

	11448	37849734	37861182
4	7154	37854028	
All	35329	186934797	186970126

Cell Contents: Count
Expected Count
Pearson Chi-Square = 11895.758, df = 3, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 11389.749, df = 3, P-Value = 0.000

Interpretation: The Chi-Square Test for Association has been applied to test the hypothesis and through this test the value of Pearson Chi-Square is 11895.758 and P-Value is 0.000. The statistical results indicate that the hypothesis has been significantly approved, $p<0.05$.
H3: Publication of Videos and hashtags posts is associated with sharing of the content on Facebook pages.

Chi-Square Test for Association

Serial No	Videos	Hashtags	Shares	All
1	2169	11344	4272011	4285524
	2379	7304	4275841	
2	2821	24	4614978	4617823
	2563	7870	4607390	
3	1203	7484	1429887	1438574
	798	2452	1435324	
4	963	3121	2546592	2550676
	1416	4347	2544913	
All	7156	21973	12863468	12892597

Cell Contents: Count
Expected Count
Pearson Chi-Square = 21163.235, df = 6, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 24768.549, df = 6, P-Value = 0.000

Interpretation: The Chi-Square Test for Association has been applied to test the hypothesis and through this test the value of Pearson Chi-Square is 21163.235 and P-Value is 0.000. The statistical results indicate that the hypothesis has been significantly approved, $p<0.05$.

H4: The number of Links posts is related with the usage of hashtags.

Chi-Square Test for Association

Serial No	Links	Non-hashtags	All
1	20364	11344	31708
	20333.0	11375.0	
	53	24	77
2	49.4	27.6	
	10948	7484	18432
3	11819.7	6612.3	
	7912	3121	11033
4	7075.0	3958.0	
All	39277	21973	61250

Cell Contents: Count
Expected Count
Pearson Chi-Square = 456.084, df = 3, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 463.303, df = 3, P-Value = 0.000

Interpretation: The Chi-Square Test for Association has been applied to test the hypothesis and through this test the value of Pearson Chi-Square is 456.084 and P-Value is 0.000. The statistical results indicate that the hypothesis has been significantly approved, $p < 0.05$.

CONCLUSION

The content and strategies suitable for traditional news sources may or may not be suitable for Facebook pages. The dynamics of social media is very different from traditional news sources. This exerts extreme pressure to the management of news organizations to create separate content and marketing strategies for social media as well as traditional media sources.

To address this issue, the research study has been conducted to analyze the content strategies of Facebook pages of four Pakistani TV news channels from October 2016 to March 2017. The results of this research study indicate that there is a strong relationship between number of non-hashtags posts and number of comments with the P-Value is 0.000. Publication of Photos is associated with the highest reaction response with the P-Value is 0.000. There is a relationship observed between publication of Videos and a hashtags post with sharing of the content on Facebook pages with the P-Value is 0.000. The findings of this research study also indicate that early morning hours (10am, 9am, 7am, 8am) have been the best time in media industry when page posts get most interactions while the prime hours (6pm, 7pm,

10pm, 8pm, 11pm) get the least interactions. The best weekday when people do most interactions is observed Tuesday and Sunday while Wednesday and Saturday are the least favorable day reported least interactions.

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