



## SOCIAL MEDIA: RESEARCH ON CHANGING THE ROLES OF JOURNALISTS

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### ABSTRACT

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The impact of rise in the use of social media on the journalism and on various positions within the industry has been discussed by several researchers. However, contemporary studies do not provide any significant qualitative research related to the impression of journalist interaction with social media. The current study is focused on the opinions of the Jordanian journalist about how the social media has affected their profession and role in journalism. Several interviews are conducted that provide an insight on the journalist perception related to the interaction with the reader. Audience interaction, rise of personalized journalism and preferences of the journalists related to social media are investigated in this study. The investigation provides contrasting views. A result validates the drastic impact of social media on profession with some participants supporting that social media has helped in advancement in their profession, and others consider it as interference in their professional role.

**Contribution/Originality:** This study contributes in the existing literature to explore the perception and opinion of journalist about how social media effect their profession. Additionally, the study may also help to document the recent advancement of social media, its impact on journalists and journalism, and an insight to future of the industry.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

News may be considered as a source of information for an individual (Hughes, 1981) and every individual may encounter with this source at certain point in their lives (Barker, 2012). In the past, gestures and language were employed as a tool by our ancestors, to convey information which is known as an imagination-instructing communication system (Jablona *et al.*, 2012). These may be considered as the base to current mode of news broadcasting. Although, these modes still remain the source of information and news delivery, a significant development in the delivery pattern of news may be observed which is improving over-time. Indeed, the evolution of communication means is based on advancement in technology.

Traditionally, the perception of individual and society about the merits of journalism were reinforced by using power and status: "I share with thousands of others in journalism a sense of mission that I have seen in only two other professions. One of them is teaching and the other is the ministry" (Sigelman, 1973). Still, journalists have to tackle with some infringement on power and status, and it may have a significant change in their role.

Over the recent years, news industry has observed an irrevocable and radical change due to the expanding social media, which has altered the norms of twentieth century. The rising level of interest and effectiveness in social media is basically due to the internet, which help people across the world to remain connected. Similarly, in the news field, the distance between reader, broadcaster and journalist have reduced significantly because of the internet and have developed a sense of being more familiar to each other.

Previous literature on social media and news industry have focused on many interests and perspectives; such as the opinions of editor, media professor, newspaper manager and the audience (Deuze, 2003; Chung, 2007; Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Robinson, 2010). However, limited studies addressed about the perception and thoughts of traditional news authorities about social media. The current study is focused on the opinions of the journalist about how the social media has affected their profession and role in journalism.

This study seeks to explore the perception and opinion of journalist about how social media effect their profession. As compared to the previous decades, this study also provides an insight about how development in social media affects the reader and their perception about news? Logically, the perception of journalists about how social media influence their profession is highly relevant because they are the active contributor's and may have to adjust themselves with the new developments. Additionally, the study may also help to document the recent advancement of social media, its impact on journalists and journalism, and an insight to future of the industry. During interview processing, it must be considered that the participants must include both respondents and informants, and nature of response may be based on opinions and facts respectively.

The current study emphasized on the impact of social media on news broadcasting. It further discusses impact of social media on the change in news transmitting process and its impact on the theory behind news culture. Moreover, does rise in social media practically change the notion of news as compared to previous beliefs? Are these new contributor's comments parts of a new kind of news?

## 2. COMMUNICATION FLOW WITHIN JOURNALISM

Habermas (1989) criticized that communication pattern of media is one-way as they do not consider reader implications. The same problem is highlighted in several other studies which are related to citizen rights to express dissatisfaction and political interferences. Civic journalism movement begun in 90s and it strongly supported that readers input on certain topics of interest must be considered which may help in reconnecting with the audience (Rosen, 1992). Today, online community of participatory journalism, a translation of civic journalism, strongly promotes a two-way communication between the readers and the media (Bowman and Willis, 2003).

In the modern journalism, readers are allowed to provide personalized feedback to the industry key writers and actively participate in news production process (Safori *et al.*, 2016). The web-based journalism follows the choices of selectivity, rapidity and interactivity. Readers can choose the topics of their interests with the help of hyperlinks and newsletters. This provides an ongoing platform for readers and newspapers where they are able to communicate and provide feedback to the related stories. Thus, it is the point where personalized journalism initiates. During the last few years, traditional journalism has shifted towards modern journalism and a clear uplift is observed in the idea of collaborative news. Internet has shrunk the distance between amateur and professional journalist, as they are working together for mutual benefit by providing truest news in a quickest way.

Deuze *et al.* (2007) forecast that in modern journalism with interactive relationship, news is published on multiple platforms and readers are granted with more established public sphere. Deuze *et al.* (2007) further specified that the interactive relationship between audience and journalists is the organization's initiative and describe it as a participatory journalism. Additionally, the two-way communication has scrutinized the traditionally established ideas of gatekeeping and professional identity in journalism (Chung, 2007). A report by Zvi Reich highlights that the inclusion of civic participation in traditional media is the base for new citizen-led media. Due to these changes,

journalism is passing through the moment of reformation, where traditional authorities in the media may be bypassed or diminished (Reich, 2008).

### 3. THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON JOURNALISM

According to Steensen (2011) social media and internet have only contributed by providing news from different resources in a quickest way. Previously, news which was restricted to limited stories, hourly broadcast and morning newspapers is now available on a single mouse click. Level of interactivity has only contributed by providing an ease of access to both producers and audience, and by developing a relation with source where news is published. Gunter (2003) concluded that journalist role is correlated with freedom of audience in what they choose to read and when they are willing to participate in news construction.

In online spaces, traditional communication model of top to down does not apply with the readers. The information from the source is directly provided on online platforms by skipping the role of journalists. Thus, modern professional journalism has removed the mediating role of journalists among the audience and the external world (Gunter, 2003). The modern communication may also be applied to newspapers. The readers of online newspaper can participate by providing feedback about the news, and may interact directly through blogs, chat forums, and messaging (Bowman and Willis, 2003). The change in communication is demanding a change in the journalist's perception about their role and their routine job pattern. The role of journalist which previously include; collecting information, providing responses to the feedback, and promoting their work has seen a significant shift.

The effects of social media on journalism are manifold, and have many pros and cons (Safari *et al.*, 2016). According to Steensen, technology has impacted journalism in such a way that the difference between the role of news bringers and journalists, in the eyes of journal public, is merely their professional identity. Therefore, identity of journalist is of growing importance for his/her success (Steensen, 2011).

Online journalism is further affected by the increase in the use of internet and growth in user generated content (UGC) available online. In reference to journalism practices and UGC, several studies have attempted to measure and analyze the diverse contribution of readers on the online pages and chat platforms of the newspapers. In "A clash of cultures", Hermida and Thurman (2008) revealed a significant boost in readers participation and feedback in news generation process.

According to Paul Saffo (Hermida and Thurman, 2008) "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 applied to the news, it shows that by using different social media platforms on the internet, message can be conveyed to large audience and real-time updates from both audience and the journalists can be tracked.

### 4. METHOD

Qualitative research is best placed to extract interpretive and theoretical data from a source related to their experiences and actions (Brennen, 2012). This study intends to comprehend the impact of rise in social media on journalists, its contribution towards the industry, and a better understanding of the impact that two-way communication structure bring to audience, broadcaster and the news. The research employed both theoretical and practical methods to obtain the smooth results. Although, the process can be reviewed by using several other methods, mixed method is adopted in this study as a challenge to obtain data by interviewing the maximum participants. The participants for this research include journalists from the Jordanian media industry. Due to the observed difficulty of gathering participants, interviews are conducted using face-to-face and email with regular follow ups. Moreover, researcher applied review of relevant literature as an on-going second method.

Interviews were conducted as an investigation from the organizations and individuals who were interested and were available during the study period. The respondents that appear for the interviews were of different genders,

age and journalistic backgrounds. Though, the involvement of the participants was not an easy task, data obtained from nine participants was adequate for an in-depth study.

The chosen method imparts certain limitations to the validity of the current study, including: the choice of the respondent, limited number of respondents, the choice of a qualitative approach, and the likelihood of subjective discussion on certain themes. Moreover, it is difficult to overcome these methodological issues in any research with goal of validity.

## 5. RESULTS

Current section presents the data unveiled. The next section provides an in-depth assessment of the results. Out of the nine interviews conducted during the study period, four interviews are conducted face-to-face and five interviews are done through email. The interviewees vary in nature, as few of them belong to larger organizations, and they can be broken down into writing to be published in local and national level publishers. The data was gathered, transcribed and coded into the following sections, while quotes have been placed in text to support the findings.

### 5.1. Communication Flow in Journalism

Most participants hold a firm belief that journalism holds a two-way communication and there is a certain level of interaction between the reader and the journalist. One aspirant described that during early days of internet, before social media, the level of readers participation was surprising as “people were ringing, sending letters, coming to the office. They should be listened to” (P2). With others stating, “it’s two-way communication because it has to be dependent on what the readers are interested in” (P3), “journalism is by definition, destined to inform the masses. When communicating to the masses, the reactions and responses are as important as the message’s delivery itself” (P8). However, few participants disagree with the above views. They stated that nature of communication in journalism has changed as social media role has evolved. “The reaction of the audience is of such an importance, as it generates new content, that has to be associated to the article itself” (P7). The ease of connecting with journalist by using new platform has contributed towards two-way communication, “journalism was a one-way communication in the past, but with the new technology and by shifting towards the online environment it has become a two-way communication, because people can easily tell their opinion regarding anything in the media” (P6, P9), “it probably has changed. It’s much easier to contact journalists now; they’re sitting on their emails or twitters. If you don’t agree with something they say you can go straight to them” (P1).

Only one participant supports the one-way communication and stated that journalists set the public agendas, so “the public’s response is not really an important part of journalistic type of communication” (P5).

### 5.2. Social Media use within Journalism

In the upcoming questions researcher investigate how social media is used by the participants at their workplace and looking at the way they are related. This is related to both the adjusted role of the journalist, and how journalists practically use social media at the workplace.

Upon questioning the participants about their use of social media, the response produced as a result of the interview are overwhelmingly positive and are categorized as follows. Firstly, as covered earlier, social media is a prominent source for writing material. It may negatively effect as one participant express the untrustworthiness of Twitter, “people are like sheep. They all just retweet what they see or read” (P1).

Social media can be used as an effective tool to interact with peers which is apparently much easier on some platforms than others. Nevertheless, Twitter has also provided a way to build professional relationship, “there are a few friends I’ve made just through Twitter” (P1). Several advantages are attached with the use of social media in helping people to connect with other communities are discussed below.

According to the interviewees, one of the primary purpose of social media is knowledge sharing. Although it may be implemented with peers, but it also provides a platform to understand and promote the material of an individual's interest, "I see it more as sharing links and stories, not that personal stuff" (P1), "I use them to look up trending things or check additional information about a happening" (P4).

Additionally, social media is also used as a marketing tool by the journalist for either promoting their own material, "I'm glad when my work is shared, because it means that what I wrote there is a high-quality writing and it interested more people" (P9), periodicals, "I use social media in order to promote my publication's fan page" (P7), or attracting the audience towards their external sites, "it's also an important channel to draw traffic to the site" (P3).

There is an uncertainty on the balance between distinct identity, emanating through personal or private interaction, and the professional identity on social media due to which the identity of a journalist is often conflicted. However, some participants perceive that their identities remain intact and their activities on social media does not impact their professional role: "On my personal social media accounts, I do not feel restricted. I am aware of the fact that I, as well, stand for my publication, but I do not completely confound with it" (P7). Whereas, others are aware of their professional identity, and their ability to project their writing by using social media: "I always remember that I'm a public person writing under my own name. No matter if I write for the printed or online version of the newspaper. Since I write my name under the articles I never let the quality to be low" (P4).

However, majority of the participants are of the view that online platforms have synthesize both identities. The concern is majorly on the way by which information is transmitted, "I'm careful online, and offline, and any way" (P2), "you have to make very clear if you post on an online profile where you are perceived as a public person or as a normal individual with own opinion" (P8). It may also lead to promotion of topics or inhibiting the discussion which is usually done in private, "retweeting certain things that may seem fun may have a professional backlash" (P9). One participant also said that such behavior of journalists is monitored by their supervisors: "My boss can check what I'm saying and I'd get in trouble. On Twitter I have my handle there saying where I work so it's fair enough – in a sense I'm representing the brand when I'm on Twitter, so I have to be careful" (P1).

The participants also endorsed that industry put pressure on them to use social media. This pressure can be enforced directly by one's publication "our bosses expect us to follow what happens on social media platforms" (P4), or to cope up with peers and competitor, "If you want people to know who you are you have to be on Twitter" (P1), "there is a kind of peer pressure, as the other publications use it for promoting their own content and if one does not use it, he gets a certain degree of handicap in the matter of reaching out to one's public (P9)". The participants also claimed that if they don't use social media it effects their work, "I'd feel very cut off if we didn't have it" (P3), "it is essential we use social media within journalism, otherwise it would be completely out of date – which would be absolutely incongruent with its fundamental purpose" (P7).

### 5.3. Journalist's Work Preferences

In this section, questions related to the journalists and the impact of social media on their preferences of various methods and factors, and the way they had to reevaluate it in their workplace are discussed.

#### 5.3.1. Sources

During the investigation, as mentioned in the interview, four methods were yielded for obtaining sources. The most valuable source for obtaining information is witness/informant and face-to-face communication with them is the ideal approach, "informers are always the best. You have to get out of your office room, leave the computer, walk the streets, get out to the city" (P4).

Some interviewees mentioned that a risky practice of using other articles without mentioning source or reference, for inspiring one's investigation is also common. "a lot of journalists will quote other things they've read

in other publications and take them as gospel, which is a little risky” (P1). Official information is also used to confirm information, often through state publications.

Lastly, some participants indicate that social media has now become a source and is sometimes used as a tool to obtain source for valuable information or stories by “using trending hashtags, seeing what politicians, company leaders and individuals are writing about and discussing” (P3). For some, “articles have been born of twitter conversations” (P1).

### 5.3.2. Comments

The next question was asked about interviewees attitude towards the comments being made on their publications, and general articles. The participants responses are divided into three categories:

Participants who agreed to receive the readers comment on their work further specified that social media has made it easier to interact with readers, “It’s an interaction with your readers, it’s good to know what they think. It’s interesting how comments can become part of the news, it could almost be a dinner discussion of informed individuals” (P3), “probably more interaction now because you can just tweet someone and say, ‘how dare you, I agree, I disagree, I have information on your story’” (P1), “It’s very important to know what our readers expect from us, whether they would agree or wouldn’t agree” (P2). One participant indicated that readers comment is often helpful to validate the news for those people who avoid commenting on their posts, “even if they wouldn’t comment but they read the comments they would make sense that it’s a reliable source, that people are discussing and making sense of the situation” (P2).

Other interviewees specified that they desire to get positive comments from the reader with some of them having an experience that “most comments by the public are just insults to the journalist or to the way he wrote the story, false facts or illegitimate accusations” (P5), “feedback is always welcome, but productive comments. I don’t mind a negative comment, but I want it to have a sustaining argument behind. If not, I do not appreciate it” (P6). Regarding comments, the biggest fear is that there are high chances of trolling and negativity, “we have lots of problems with it on the website (trolling). We used to have to pay moderators thousands of pounds a year to stop it” (P9), “it’s a big problem with trolling and provocations. It’s a phenomenon” (P2).

“People have the right to say their mind but of course it can’t be illegal. I don’t want to let people to take over a commenting field and use it as a platform for propaganda. All major news sites have struggled with that. It loses its purpose if its not a real discussion, which is why they’re there” (P3).

“I am perfectly comfortable with negative comments, even though I strongly disagree with them. My natural reaction – if they are completely irrelevant – is to ignore them because they are nothing but a form of adolescent offensive, which should by no means taken too seriously. Therefore, it is self-evident that trolling is never a valid response. If those comments are completely insignificant in position, I simply ignore them. Not only is trolling entirely unsophisticated, but it is also qualifying its author as a minor speaker, with no means of persuasion” (P7).

### 5.4. Social Media’s Effect on Journalism

In the current era of technology, internet is one of the best tool to provide the latest news to masses. It became a hot topic through presenting the most important and interesting news in the form of printing as well as visuals. According to the contributors, there are several rationales that case to rise of social media, particularly in the field of journalism. These lead to create basic necessary skills of journalist, to the growth and augmentation of audience and finally to create news organizations.

However, this section of the study is focused on all research questions. Through detailed interviews, the first idea that came into the confidence is that social media enforce the news channels to endorse it, pertinent with their younger users and to grasp online branding opportunities. “The social media is used now mainly as a mean of promoting online content on the publication website and attracting page views” (P5).

The social media brought sensitive competition that has also open such branding opportunities; “there’s more pressure on getting out first. That changes how you work. If there is a story that might get read, we need to write two lines to get it out quick” (P3), “be the first one that brings the hot news on a plate, or it gets cold and nobody will be interested anymore” (P6).

According to respondents, the technological literate is the most important aspect of social media that is influencing the journalist. Now the journalist is more focused on both sides; how to reach the news first and how to achieve audience through using advance technology; “the speed with which information can get to the public and as well, to the journalist, is greater. Everything is accelerated now” (P8). So, it’s very important for a journalist to create such skills and to make himself more relevant to the industry. Moreover, one participant quantified that it is anticipated that you’re “expected to be literate in social media [...] you have to be able to market yourself like a product to a certain extent” (P1). The social media culture in the particular office led to create strong grip regarding this specific area; “Interns are so savvy with social media because they’ve grown up with it and are much better than I will ever be. It’s easy for them to think “let’s make a little video about this or put something out on Facebook” because they’ve grown up with it. They think in multiple forms, they don’t just think linear” (P1).

In line with the third research question, every interviewee was contributing more about the intensification of the citizen journalist, most of them were concentrating on its virtues as an arrangement of journalism, “if you’re at the Boston finishing line and you film it [the Boston bombings] and put it up on YouTube you’ve reported that” (P1), “everything can be eyewitness news, that’s what you want if you write about a story. Reports from people that are there” (P9), “I believe that with this evolution of social media, any person can bring some news material online and create an almost decent news material” (P6), “everyone has potential to be a journalist nowadays, with the condition to be in the right place at the right time. Journalists can’t be omnipresent” (P8). While others were more focused on its perceived drawbacks: “self-emerging news, everything for free and unverified news? If you get something for free you can’t complain about its quality” (P4), “news can be conveyed without them – for example as a chain of shares on Facebook, initiated by an ordinary user – but it cannot escape the nuance of gossip, not to mention that denaturation of facts is almost unavoidable in this case” (P7).

The authority of the audience is significantly influenced by the rise of social media, as classifier of news and reporters of the news. They have more autonomy about what they read, “people should be able to choose what they read about [even though] there may be things that they overlook” (P1), offer positive criticism, equal opportunity to access and right to challenge the news using trending hashtags. This has materialized to such degree that “readers can become producers [especially] when the traditional media isn’t doing its job like in the Arabic spring or in Turkey” (P3). The Twitter and Facebook are platforms that have given such an absolute power to the audience “conveyed by simple users travels much faster than news from a publication to its public” (P5).

For interviewee, it had been established that there is no change in the role of inherent journalist. But it is fact that social media is little more than another tool for the dumping of trained professional journalist.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The useful information collected from the data collection has promoted several thought-provoking horizons for debate. This debate will provide significant factors to explore the research questions, developing a thought process to address the rise of social media and its significant effects on journalism through the eyes of the journalist. For the implications of this and to understand it as a component of communication, it will be analyzed under the relationship of theory and communication models. Especially, pay focused attention to the communication flow which belongs to it. Additionally, it should be addressed during analysis that journalists have its own perceived intentions, models and preferences regarding the ideas. Moreover, it is addressed separately under the light of traditional and social media influenced positions.

## 6.1. Communication Flow in Journalism

Considering that communication act of journalism is very natural. In simple words, we can describe it as a communicational interaction between the sender as a journalist and receiver as an audience. However, this modest expression of one-way communication does not satisfy the reader's requirements to get control over the message of journalist. Moreover, reader is able to rebuild the transmission of the message as per their own perception. Through this process, the communication process will modify from the audience and sending information or feedback to the sender.

Most of the participants believed, that journalism is a two-way communication act with the reader. We can measure or interpret the involvement of the public through their reaction towards news. It would be capitalized through direct comments or other means of personal interactions offered by online platforms, letters, telephone, mobile messages or face to face meetings. Moreover, some interviewees highlighted an evolution in the communication patterns. They pointed out that old fashioned journalism was based on one-way communication. However, from last two-decades, new type of citizen journalism holds two-way communication flow (Deuze *et al.*, 2007).

This new way of cooperative work between the journalist and the reader is developing a two-way natural communication by removing the communication gap between sender and receiver. It has developed a new complex process of transmitting the news (Deuze *et al.*, 2007). Now the focus of the journalism has been shifted from the person that transport the information to the reader because now through modern technology receiver can actively participate in the transaction of messages. Moreover, the direct contribution of the audience is more relevant even they can give their feedback in real time. This dynamic change in communication reveals the cross functionality of online publications and developed an interactive relationship between journalist and its audience (Deuze *et al.*, 2007).

## 6.2. Social Media Use within Journalism

### 6.2.1. Using Social Media

Social media proved a new dynamic and widest network tool for the journalist to gather news. Interviewees describe that social media is not only a tool of communication to develop relationship with the stakeholders but works as a comprehensive system of sharing knowledge and developing niche societies by broadcasting information. Social media can act as a marketing tool, most of the respondent stressed this as an important aspect of social media. They specifically highlighted the new media networks like Twitter or Facebook as both have enough potential for personal branding. This emerging trend of social media is to develop an identity through sharing significant information on personal blogs or on Facebook / Twitter account and brand themselves as freelancer journalist in the field of journalism.

The consistent use of social media is clearly emphasizing the importance of social media in our life. As most of the interviewees are the active users of social media and through this platform they can create a direct communicational link with their target audience. Moreover, different stories and huge amount of news are available on social media and all the information is easily accessible by one click. Thus, holding these characteristics make this a certain form of broadcasting (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012).

However, the social media totally changed the dynamics of traditional journalist by allowing everyone to share his information or opinion through using a global sharing system. In the view of some scholars it is the decline of journalism (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012).

### 6.2.2. Social Media Identity

The journalist's identity on social media is a blend of personal identity plus professional. Social media has an extreme level of sharing and it is a fact that it's really impossible to preserve personal identity especially for those



who worked on media platforms on daily basis. The interviewed journalists described their professional identity as a combination of personal plus professional. They stated that their personal attitudes, behaviors and values are mixed with professional life. This synthesis phenomenon can be explained as a result of concentrated use of social media on daily basis; through sharing personal opinion, stories, knowledge and build a specific social community with the help of your family and friends.

However, it doesn't mean that professional identity become insignificant or irrelevant. In fact, whenever they post or comment on social media, they actually promote and create awareness regarding ethics and professionalism. Journalist that grow up through this exercise must adopt professional values in order to survive in the industry as a news representative.

Furthermore, it's very difficult for a journalist to maintain balance between professional identity and personal identity from the respondent's point of view. Social media is a platform where personal and professional identity are become closer and closer together. However, social media is providing a perfect canvas to draw or promote any virtual character.

### **6.2.3. Social Media Pressure**

In the background of the comparison between traditional ways of transmission news with new advanced technological broadcasting, some interviewees stressed that the writing style, language of content, size of article and construction of article are adapted features of journalism and are altered according to the communication platforms. They also highlighted that due to rapid change in our social behavior, the use of social media has become a social pressure to everyone. So, journalists have sense of insecurity that people might be refusing to adapt the new media content.

## **6.3. Journalist's Preferences**

### **6.3.1. Sources**

All interviewees have their own preferences for a multiple source that can be translated as new media for the professional space of journalism. They pointed out their ideal sources as being: Twitter, Facebook, other articles, online reports, information provided by certified institutions websites, information from personal facilitator or from witnesses.

Current dynamic of communication drastically changed the traditional journalism. Now old chain of information no longer operates, and journalist no longer serve as gate keeper between the audience and themselves. Internet plays a significant role between public and news sources. Through current technology they can communicate directly, and the mediating role of the journalist is eliminated (Chung, 2007). However, some professional journalists still believe in the sources that indicate a convinced degree of authority and based on established public or political institutions. These type of elite source journalists developed their research process totally depending upon official information. They reject basic procedures of checking and searching for the information.

Furthermore, the citizen-based journalism introduced a citizens-based news source as compared to traditional ones. Literature stressed that the source of information should be vary in accordance to the type of news a journalist is transmitting. For political and economic news, he will use traditional sources, however for the entertainment news his sources have a wide range of online and offline individuals.

Social media is more accessible for journalists to gather information and witnesses. Journalists can easily view the information and find its possible story. The key issue on social media is that the possible story sources are uncertain. However, social media has certain prospect to reach out more than one sources in same time. Several interviewees claimed that social media is a useful method to interact with multiple expert for example religious experts, politicians, artist and football commentators.

### 6.3.2. Comments

It has been witnessed that there is variation among the journalist to take interest in readers' comments. Some are interested in regular conversations, while others take only specific constructive comments only. However most of the respondent valuing constructive comments and fruitful debates. While unconstructive comments are also considered as beneficial of news interaction on online platforms. Therefore, some of the respondent appreciated it. Generally, readers' comments are the indicators of newsworthiness and set standards regarding readership. Most of the journalists demanding the freedom to an open interaction with their readers. However, on the other side due to the interventions from the audience it can be seen as disruption of the established identity of a journalist. Furthermore, this kind of disruption leads to a conflict for the traditional journalists those still wants to remain with the hierarchical order (Robinson, 2010).

Moreover, the concept of readers interactivity is concerned with the reader's produced content in relation with the transmission of news. To understand this issue, we take interactivity as ability or capacity to modify or convert the content of a message by replacing or removing any parts of it or adding some content as a member of audience (Robinson, 2010). These real-time conversations among readers and journalists has endanger the traditional perception of journalism

### 6.4. Social Media's Effect on Journalism

To analyze the effect of social media on journalism, most of the interviewees highlighted pre-social media period and current social media age. One of the respondent offered an amazing model to understand the difference between these two eras, with variables of access to sources and news, and class of message. The availability of the social media provides a greater approachability to sources and news for both audience as well as journalist. But it offers a low level of message quality. Moreover, this cheap quality of message belongs to many things; low level of personal interaction while gaining information, adopting new style of writing due to competitive urgency to report and cheap identity of work. However, this definite conclusion as we proposed in this study is a matter of opportunity and a recommended topic of debate for future study.

On the other hand, social media has played its role as a game changer in this industry. Social media dramatically changed the norms of traditional journalism. It is developing a new society of youth and give ability to readers to go beyond the traditional limits.

In relationship with the changes brought by social media in the industry of journalism, it is believed to create a transitional change inside the professional identity of a journalist. Social media brings down the unique prestige which was possessed by a traditional news broadcaster. This unique media adequately empowers the audience that they can take participate actively and play a significant role as information sender and publishing news or reports on various stages.

The society left the traditional journalism because of social media. It creates pool of knowledge and give ability to readers that they can also go beyond their traditionally defined limits and publish their own content. Social media has ability to challenge well established, traditional industry like journalism by producing unrestricted access for users to the information stream. However, traditional journalism still focused on the value or quality of journalistic message. Moreover, a damage in quality is one of the consequences of social media transaction.

This particular research is based on the answers given by the interviewees. The participants believe that voices of the audience are the real power of social media that comes with the development of cooperative platforms. These platforms are allowed a real-time feedback and have developed the citizen journalism.

The Steensen developed a critical point when he sketches interactivity as the new characteristics of online journalism, the internet plays a significant role not only to bring people under one umbrella but also boosting their capability to remain connected to information (Steensen, 2011). A big debate was developed through the

contribution of the general public in the process of news formation or collecting serious news materials, which mainstream journalists publish in online platforms.

Due to this traffic inflow on social media, it generates an opportunity to start commercial operations such as advertising of new products or targeting possible customers (Bruns, 2007). The popularity of social media also harvest development in the communicational stream of journalism. The top down model is used in traditional media, but now it has been converted into a decentralized system of sending and receiving information. The communication process is now more under the control of audience, and also plays an active role in the news feeding experience (Chung, 2008).

Social media contributes as a centralized tool for gathering information, but on the other hand, it would be a big communicational blander when professionals are not able to use it properly. One of the most important factor of online media is providing networking option, through which we can build communities and share knowledge. Moreover, social media destroyed all geographical, religious and ethnic distances and creates a virtual world, where we have equal opportunity to get chance of interaction.

Similarly, the journalists enjoy the facility of social media and they take advantage from this virtual world, where each community member is available on one click, in order to collect valuable information and can categorize reliable news sources. The most ingesting aspect of this online reality is the opportunity to join and contribute in discussions and debates with all of this happening in real time. In fact, the social media is all about interaction with people, making relationships and searching other individuals those are interested in sharing same value and attitudes related to the subject (Grensing-Pophal, 2010; Safori *et al.*, 2017). The social media opens equal opportunity for fetching news in real time sharing with the entire world is in front of you and you are free to share what happened in your corner of the world.

It has been evident on the basis of data fetched from the interviews that all the research questions are significantly answered. During interview, respondents undoubtedly recognized numerous ways in which social media has changed their roles. Through social media, the accessibility of required sources has significantly increased, every information which needed is available on one click of internet and for institutional reporting several reports are available.

For a journalist, it is not only important to remain in contact with its source, but it also allows the journalist's audience to maintain contact with the author of the article or report, by providing their negative, positive or critical feedback using comments and personal messages.

In the news circuit, if the citizen journalist has continued influence, it will rise a different opinion as to their acceptability as a journalist in the traditional sense. Most of the respondent suggested that although, they can observe this as holding a convinced amount of merit, still their personal professional trainings and experience make them apart from the citizen journalist. Moreover, it is very interesting that news sites offer addition tools for interaction with the author and this is an ongoing process.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The data which is collected from the journalist is analyzed and the factors are indicating and supporting this fact that social media has a continuous strong influence on the journalism. It has been highlighted that continuous interaction with the readers and potential sources has caused a journalist to get away from the traditional news reporter role. It is the fact that this era belong to social media and this new mean of communication has entirely changed the concept of traditional journalism. Now it must play an entirely different role in the age of social media. The duties and responsibilities have entirely changed. Now they have to develop strong networking, pursue the stories more quickly, appreciate the sharing trend of articles, maintain interaction with their readers, and they have to do all this in real-time because of the dynamic nature of social media.

It has been observed that citizen journalists have gained more influence and authority in online social media. The social media is an outlet for news and no one know what will happen in the future with the journalist and its publications. Social media empowered the audience so much as it is not only the issue of feedback given by the audience but now they will transmit news as a broadcaster. This online journalism phenomena have already affected the local news market, most of the local publishers are not able to continue printing. Similarly, big publications houses are under threat and it is quite possible that they will diminish or can only be available exclusively online. Under the current scenario it is very predictable that in near future the role of traditional journalism will be converted towards social media writing.

The number of interviews that were compiled in this specific study are enough to validate the study. Moreover, it would be better to fetch data from different demographics of journalists, or numerous highly recognized journalists. Nevertheless, it is also true and a fact that unfortunately, the job of journalists is very hectic and under current circumstances it is difficult for them to spare little time for such requests. Henceforth, without a strong content it might be difficult to conduct such type of enquiry.

It has been observed that industry is continuously moving away from the traditional ways of journalism. As the new generation of the journalist get engaged into the industry, it will be more fruitful for them to grasp more opportunities from social media and open new horizons as well as new markets. As those who remained stick with traditional aspects will get nothing from the industry and soon they will be abolished from industry as it is impossible to stop this new revolution of social media.

## 8. PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study opens new horizons for the future studies. The data showed that young journalist who were more familiar with technology and spend more time of their working as well as their personal life on social media, has more accepting attitude towards the social media journalism. Although, this was not the area of this particular study, but it has been observed that this factor of spending time on social media is more relevant and have significant influence on journalism. This factor may be enhanced by an in-depth social media studies.

Another gap that should be addressed is to engage the audience with journalist to investigate this issue. In fact, this study has a particular question regarding reactions of audience while they are reading news on social media. In future it could be added regarding audience, that what they feel about this interaction with the author of the news. The both side view about this new dynamic journalism would be a contribution in the literature.

The interviewees also contributing for future recommendation and arise different new topics those should be addressed. For instance, the role of moderation and its implications is an enticing subject. Most of the interviewees suggested the role of moderator between journalist and reader to reduce the conspiracy and misuse of this facility. Furthermore, there are many topics those should be addressed through the lens of journalist, the audience, the auditor, business men and social media users. Moreover, trolling itself an interesting topic regarding social media it should be addressed with some psychology variables.

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