

JOURNALIST'S TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESSION IN THE MODERN ERA

پہ عصري وخت کي د ژورناليسټانو تخنيکي پرمختگ

¹Muhammad Faheem² Ms Ramal Ijaz**Abstract**

Technological progression has changes the dimension of every field and this progression has effects on the field of journalism. Study explores positive contributions of the technology and these online plate forms as an alternative source of income. Study gave directions to the upcoming journalists and shows them the way that how they can succeed in the field of journalism. Husserl's phonological approach has been used to ask about the real-time experiences of media practitioners and answers were recorded with their consent. A semi-structured questionnaire has been used for in-depth interviews of the twenty journalists through face-to-face communication. Journalist representations were from different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from both genders. Interviews were verbatim transcribed, form themes and clusters to identify the extract meaning through discourse analysis technique. Study shows that journalists are doing multi-tasking and their learning process is nonstop, their seniors helped to generate the diversified content which increased their utility for organization.

Keywords: Technology, Mobile Journalism, Social Media, Economy, Digital Journalism

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Introduction

Journalism is one the most lucrative profession in the world but as time progresses the field is also evolving rapidly. During the last few years the field of journalism has been hit by technological bombardment and during this, the dimensions of the field have been changed dramatically. Before the launch of 3G and 4G in Pakistan, it was known as the field of teamwork but now the technology has brought that field to one man show. A single person has to operate as a cameraperson, editor, technician, reporter and also transmitter. This evolution has made this field tough for the senior fellows but it also opens up new ways for learning. Currently if one has to survive in the field and increase his or her importance, then they have to be technically well equipped. Their gadgets should be their tool for journalism and they should be alert round the clock.

The government of Pakistan auctioned 3g and 4g spectrum on 23 April 2014 (Dawn, 2014). This was the beginning of a new era in Pakistan with respect to technology. All the cellular companies started their 3g and 4g services which bring a technological revolution in Pakistan. As technology was introduced in so many fields, the field of journalism was also not far away from it. With the passage of time, different news outlets started testing the technology in their organization and making things easy and cheap. The technological area begins in 2016 for media outlets and in 2018 it was fully enforced across the country. Many journalists lost their jobs because they were not welcoming the technological change and they are not up to the mark for their specific organizations.

Change in any aspect is always in progress but nowadays in the field of journalism, change is happening rapidly, and technology is playing its positive part too, technology and journalism have now a mutual relationship which refers to "materiality of work" (Boczkowski, 2009). This technological change brings new dimensions for journalists where they started their YouTube channel, Facebook pages, Twitter accounts and also LinkedIn profiles. Media outlets also prefer such employees which learned to use the camera, editing software and also transmission single-handed. Nowadays conventional media is also taking a lot of help from the online media and this online medium has become such a powerful tool in the hands of every citizen but at the same time the journalists, who understand the worth of the news can utilize this medium to viral their news item and can get a more rapid real-time response of their news item. Similarly, this online medium not only made these journalists real influencers but also gave them an alternative path of earning a handsome amount.



Literature Review

The field of journalism is not the same anymore, with the passage of time it is evolving and as things progress the technical input enhancing as well. Technology brings so much new to the field of journalism and in order to stay alive, journalism has to go through the learning phase and learn new techniques of using gadgets. The work in the field of journalism is changing quickly (Fenton, 2009). There are so many challenges for journalists but economic and technological are prominent, these two also have a positive impact on the field of journalism as it flourished (Warren, 2008). These technological changes not only changed the dimension of reporting but also have raised the importance of the newsroom, it might not have been affecting the role of the editor but the practices of journalism are directly affected by the technology.

Technology made the news cycle short, while the shortened information process and news production cycle for online media content require relatively standardized skill performance. Shorter the cycle means shorter the time to make a decision, so the decision-taking pressure and time pressure behind the allocation of resources result in increasing pressure on the performance of the journalist's skills in online journalism (Himma-Kadakas & Palmiste, 2019).

Mobile journalism (MoJo) is an important terminology used for a one-person team in journalism. In MoJo, the journalist on his own record, edit and upload the video component to the online social media platform. For many journalists, MoJo is now of the most important methods of news gathering around the world. This new style of

journalism was established because of technological development around the world. This technical development has empowered journalists to reduce their reliance on others, like camera persons, non-linear editors, technical team and others. The journalist now can single-handed cover the events professionally and can share them on several social media platforms. MOJO usually depends on journalists, who are willing to cover the event and publish it using mobile phones, and social media platforms. It allows journalists as social media influencers to obtain news from different points of view and create its impact rapidly. It gives the first-hand chance to the journalists for covering any sudden event as an eyewitness and shares it with the public.

Westlund (2013) discussed the MOJO and said that mobile devices equipped with camera functionality, internet access and messaging services became necessary for the reporting through mobile phones. Technological landmarks in recent times have significantly improved such possibilities. Several journalists were employed in 2008-09 to work exclusively as mobile editors at larger newspapers such as *Aftonbladet*, *Expressen* and *Göteborgs-Posten*. The goal of sharing what journalists witness in MOJO can be the same as the goal of traditional journalism which is covering the news but in a different style.

Broersma, & Eldridge (2019) discuss that to some degree the ways journalism and social media have intertwined things have become more complex as actors at all levels, from the subjects of coverage to journalists to those consuming news, everyone within these spaces is changed. As we see social media as a normalized and alternative feature of news but this normalization has not been seamless. The dominant normalization framework and the prevalent focus in digital journalism studies on how the digital platform

forms have been integrated into journalism might obscure our understanding of how journalistic norms, practices, and forms are changing more fundamentally.

Social media platform forms are now necessary for every news outlet. As every media house now has one more medium to cover, so the journalists have to work more within the same salary range. These journalists are now working more time and also with more dynamics. Journalists have to produce a news item for the text story, television and also social media, these three platform forms demand different approaches for making new items and journalists have to adapt to each format simultaneously.

This has resulted in power redistribution from the news media to platform companies. This redistribution is in part a result of “dependencies”, as news media are now heavily relying on social media platforms for publishing their work and reaching audiences. Dislocation, however, also refers to a loss of power in terms of the ways the principles and contexts of news are presented and not only a reallocation of content and revenue towards a new media space or company. (Ekström & Westlund, 2019)

Motivation

Journalism field is evolving and currently this field has been affected by the technology. New media or Social media has so many advantages in comparison of the traditional media. New media bring so many opportunities and challenges at the same time but in order to take advantage from the opportunity one must have to be ready for it. This study focuses on those journalists who refined their skills in order to be ready for the new media. Similarly the evolution of media industry needs the evolution of the

journalists and in this study the successful journalists shared their experiences and challenges which can be helpful for the upcoming young journalists.

Problem Statement

Technology is evolving every day and each day it brings so many opportunities and equal number of challenges. In the field of journalism it is important now to work smart and quick with the help of technology. In modern world journalists are now one man team who not only work as a journalist but also as Non Linear Editor, Camera person and Technician.

Theoretical Framework

In the study, it has been learned that those journalists who accepted the change and started learning new techniques unintentionally formed a new group. The Actor-Network Theory (ANT) is used as the theoretical framework for this study. This theory analysis and augmented, conceptualizes journalism as a network attributing agency that connects all the actors to form a network. The theory focuses on attributes used to illustrate how the news production network initiates the way which has been developed by the technologies. ANT also focuses on how traditionally powerful agents start negotiating and shape themselves for the current scenario. Actor Network Theory helps to differentiate the journalists who accepted the change from those who did not update themselves with the passage of time. This theory has been use to study the group which set the new bars for the upcoming journalists in the field.

Keeping in view the nature and requirement of this study, qualitative research was adopted to explore and examine the technological impact in the field of journalism Furthermore, to investigate,

- How did the Technology encourage journalists to develop professional skills?
- How the journalists did learn the use of gadgets in the field of journalism?

Husserl's phenomenological approach was used to investigate the respective hypothesis. Husserl's approach lived experiences of the participants are taken into account to describe any phenomenon. A semi-structured questionnaire was designed and in-depth interviews were taken from twenty journalists through face-to-face communication. The whole feedback was recorded through a voice recorder to save time. Journalist representations were from different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and that included both genders. Their interviews were then verbatim transcribed. Essential statements from participants' interviews have been taken into account as their specific experiences. These statements then joined to form themes and clusters to identify and extract meaning through discourse analysis techniques.

Research Methodology

Keeping in view the nature and requirement of this study, qualitative research was adopted to explore and examine the recession in Pakistani media as a positive contributor/ catalyst in enhancement and diversifying professional skills, ability and capacity building of journalists. Furthermore, to investigate, during the crisis how journalists are surviving?

Husserl's phonological approach was used to investigate the hypothesis. Husserl's approach lived experiences of the participants are taken into account to describe any phenomenon. According to him, meaning lies in an individual's experience and when we collect experiences of all participants, it can interpret a situation (Moustakas, 1994).

A semi-structured questionnaire was designed and in-depth interviews were taken from twenty journalists through face-to-face communication. The whole feedback was recorded through a voice recorder to save time. Journalist representations were from different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and both genders. Participants were interviewed by assuring their privacy. Their interviews were then verbatim transcribed. Essential statements from participants' interviews have been taken into account as their specific experiences. These statements then joined to form themes and clusters to identify and extract meaning through discourse analysis technique.

Gill (2000) stated that discourse analysis (DA) is the name given to the variety of approaches to understand and learn more about the texts, interactions and language. It's an umbrella term that is encompassing variations in languages and the technique to study them (Harper, 2006). Discourse consists of all form of formal, informal, spoken and written interactions that happens in socializing (Whetherel, 1988). It is argued that language actually constructs the real world as it has the power to transform the meanings and generate new ideas and thoughts through expression (Potter and Edwards, 1996). Techniques of Discourse analysis are widely used in qualitative studies where this formal method helps in generating new ideas and information from the data collected under analysis that is beyond the range of other techniques designed to analyze the obtained material (Harris, 1981). In mid-1990's, the techniques of discourse analysis were found

spreading across and adapting rapidly, to sum up, the findings of the studies as it has been witnessed to encompass variety in terms of topics, conceptual approaches, boundaries, themes and methods (Leipold, Feindt, Winkel, and Keller 2019).

In the study, the discourse analysis has been used to analyze the responses gathered from the journalists who survived the recession 2018-19. The interviews were transcribed and represented in the shape of a cluster which was analyzed through discourse analysis techniques to fetch the findings.

Findings and Analysis

Journalists knew the importance of the technology but they were not fully equipped. They had computer skills for filing stories and limited use of camera, editing system and mobile phone for journalistic purposes but when the recession was around the corner, they started working on their technical skills and learned a huge amount of camera and editing during the tough period. Technical skills were the major reason which helped them to save their job, few shared that they didn't need to learn to survive but yes to be equipped for unexpected difficult situations they learned to some extent. Similarly, technology is not yet completed and it is still evolving with each second and all of the respondents raise the importance of continuous learning they agree to learn new techniques and new soft wares to stay competitive. Respondents are still trying to learn new techniques and news gadgets in order to be competitive in the field of journalism. Most of them are still trying to use these skills at a professional level while few of them are still reluctant to learn technical skills as they feel their prime job is more administrative so they need to focus on that. To stay competitive, they also started to

learn these technical skills and they didn't want to be isolated just because they don't have specific technical skills. Journalists accept the importance of the alternate source of income and for that purpose, they start finding alternate ways. Freelancing and using social media platforms was the best path they used for an alternative source, they have an alternate source of income similarly if they get fired so they should have skills to operate their own social media platform and to learn from them. Learning new techniques and tricks was never easy and at the time when everyone was trying to survive, the news media outlets did not help their staff to learn, similarly, Journalists Unions and Press Clubs also did not play their due role. To some extent few media organizations and Journalists Unions had pieces of training and sessions for journalists but it was not enough to compete in the current scenario, already well equipped and technically equipped journalists were the real helping hands for other journalists. Respondents shared their experience of learning from the juniors and also their colleagues, who helped them without any kind of expectations.

Discussion

It was never been easy for journalists to learn these techniques and fully equip themselves but they tried and search for help around them. Journalists having two bodies across the country to help and support them, one is the press club while the second is the union but during these tough situations, these organizations could not perform their due role. Similarly, the organizations where these journalists work were also silent when it comes to equipping the journalists to complete the task. Journalists keep searching for their friends and colleagues in order to help them and also the non-governmental organizations help these journalists to enhance themselves and do the task. When the

situation was not similar any more than the competition begins and everyone agrees that it was survival of the fittest. Journalists irrespective of their age, organization and responsibilities started to enhance their capacity including learning new techniques that can help them to ensure their utility for the organizations. Almost every organization was in order to shrink their staffs at different stations which creates healthy competition within the organization and also within the field. Journalists start over-viewing their past performances and capabilities and start learning new techniques to improve their skills. Reporters started taking interest in camera and editing while the video journalists started taking interest in reporting. Once the competition begins it also strengthens the bond among the journalists because of the help they get and share with each other. During the hard times of recession 2018-19, journalists learned video recording and editing, similarly transmitting the reports through mobile phone. Journalists now can use their mobile phones for almost every journalistic purpose. Mobile Journalism (MoJo) helped them to be fully equipped at the spot they can now report from the event place, they can record and make a report on the spot similarly they can transmit the reports without any help of DSNG or OB Van. The recession not only encouraged the journalists to learn new skills but also make them revisit their current skills and that is what helps them to start freelancing and pitching a story idea in such a manner that it cannot be rejected. Technology is evolving and with each new day, it brings something new. Technology made our life easy and also it helps us to perform the task efficiently and quickly. Similarly, technology has totally taken over the field of journalism, learning to operate technical equipment and work efficiently; journalists are learning new skills and these skills helped them to stay on the job. Primarily everyone fights for his/her place, to stay

in the field is what is most important and these technical skills keep a journalist's job intact. The study shows that working journalists nowadays have full command of the technology which is using the field of journalism. The working journalists accept that technical skills were the major reason which helped them to save their job, similarly few other reasons also play their part including pro-organization approach, less salary package and to some extent being lucky. In Peshawar, 161 journalists lost their job during the recession, in these 161 most of them were misfit to the new technology and they did not have the tendency to learn such new techniques but few were technically equipped as well. Those who do have technical skills still could not survive were heavily paid and that is the reason why few of the correspondents added the role of their luck, which keeps them on the job even during the tough situation of recession 2018-19. Journalists serving in the field now focus on the upcoming technical skills specifically mobile journalism which is the new world order. Journalists are now trying to enhance mobile technical skills, resolving the technical issues they are facing on a continuous basis and more specifically they are focusing on their own social media platform where not only they can share their opinion without any fear but also they can earn handsomely as alternate source with the mainstream media.

Journalists still lack proper training and short courses including social media trending is the current lesson for the journalists. New soft wares and new gadgets also need proper training to use while journalists are still trying to use these skills at a professional level. Press Clubs and Journalists Union has an important role to play but unfortunately, during the transition period, these journalists' bodies did not perform according to the expectations. Unions and Press Club had few workshops and pieces of

training but they were not at the same level as it was needed. Journalists agreed to the fact that their self-belief and the youngsters made such an environment where they had no choice but to learn and survive. The respondents wanted to stay alive in the field and to stay up to date but it was not possible without the updated and new skills. The search for better and unique content with the help of technology was also the thrust which pushed them to engage and learn these skills; on one side the fear of being fired was putting pressure in the back of their mind so on the other side fear of being isolated was also making them learn new gadgets and techniques. Friends and especially their colleagues were the real force of encouragement which helps them to learn, at the same time those respondents which are in the field for more than a decade agreed to the fact that they were lacking technically. Respondents also needed to be equally equipped with the youngsters who push them towards new learning; youth joining the field of journalism and using social media, mobile phones and other gadgets professionally also encouraged the journalists.

Recommendations

- Journalists have to adopt the new technology and increase their utility for the organization.
- Mobile Journalism is the future, the journalists have to learn how to use their mobile phones for reporting on the spot.
- Digital Media platforms should be utilized as an alternate source of income.
- Journalists should have multi-tasking abilities.

- The future is technological based, one has to get prepared for that.

Conclusion

Technology brings evolutions in the field of journalism and those who accepted those evolutions are now successful journalist. Those journalists who were not ready to accept the change are now out of the field. Journalism progression in the modern era is an opportunity and challenge at the same time. This study focuses on those journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who adopted the technological progression. Twenty journalists who are the members of Khyber Union of Journalists and Peshawar Press club were interviewed and their experiences show that they adopted the change which was necessary to remain in the field. Journalists had a tough time during the recession, most of the journalists had no help from their organization, press club and union but they learned using the technology with the help of their seniors and colleagues, they started covering more beats to produce the diversified content while non-governmental organizations helped them to enhance their capacity. This study shows that now journalists are doing multi-tasking and performing one-man shows while in past they were having a team that covers the whole event. The study also identified that the learning process for the current and upcoming journalist is now continuing and journalists have to learn every day, as there is no endpoint to technology similarly, there is no endpoint to learning. The rise of digital media is an opportunity but at the same time it also increased journalist's burden. Journalists are now using this technological progression as an opportunity for their own growth and also for their media organization. Regular seminars, pieces of training and workshops need to be arranged for the journalists at their office, press clubs and if needed then at the head office too. Upcoming

journalists will have their work cut out as they have to adapt multi-task at the same time, news organizations will also prefer to have such a workforce that can give them utility and perform multi-tasking in the limited available time. In order to stay competitive, journalists will have to manage their social media platforms as well which not only gives them an alternate platform to share news items but at the same time these platforms can be utilized for a healthy income.



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