Credibility of Online and Traditional News; 
Perceptions of Pakistani Journalists

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Abstract
Objective- Pakistan is a developing country where private news media has mushroomed growth since 2002 and similarly the internet is also a new technology blooming in the society of Pakistan. Both of the technologies are new yet having deep penetration for communication of news media. In such scenario a debate is going on about the credibility of both mediums. The study debates about the credibility of both media by the perspective of journalists, it also sheds light on the reasons of particular medium being more credible than other and also emphasize on the reasons of assessing credibility and its standards. 
Methodology/ Technique- A survey was conducted to find out if online news source can be a threat for the existence of traditional medium in future. The respondents were Pakistani journalists of both traditional and online news media. 
Findings- The point of view of journalists about credibility of online news is either because of their association with traditional medium or may be mostly online news are the exact depiction of what is going on traditional medium. 
Novelty- The result shows that some journalists also consider online news platforms useful because of its easy access and timely information. 
Theme- Communication Studies 

Keywords: credibility, perceptions, news websites, traditional media, journalists.
Introduction

Media plays an influential role in a society and communication impacts human thought and actions. Garrison (2000), Chan (2006) and Weise (1997) explored that journalism and media news are built on the credibility. With the advent of online news websites, there is an increased competition in the news journalism around the world. In the traditional news media reaction to the new key player on media scene, there is a negative approach in aspect of credibility sources, difficulties in identifying the truth on online world and the reliable information. Similarly Bennett (1985) and McCoy (2001) mentioned that the traditional media journalists think that online journalism has shaped journalism more in the aspect of new media world environment. Hovland and Weiss (1951) mentioned that credibility of news has been an important face of journalism and mass communication since long. However the influential credibility of news that concentrates on different source credibility dimensions highlighted disparities in credibility perception to many different channels of media. Some of the most renowned media scholars like Chan (2006), Flanagin and Metzger (2000), Bucy (2003), Johnson and Kaye (1998), Jordan (2007) and Kiousis (2001) has also explored the recently online news realm with aspect of credibility of media analysis. The online journalism study by The State of the News Media (2006) concluded that more online users, the less trust on news. The most increasing reliable websites are those which are associated with traditional media. The News Media (2006) also reported that the increase to the traditional media websites is equal as per the increase and boosting skepticism in direction towards the other or alternative form of online news. It has also been found that those individuals who are interested in blogs are more suspicious of it as they find no hard information in the arguments and authenticity is always lacking, but the trust level of people are better on traditional media and then talking about online those website which are associated with traditional media channels get more credibility amongst users than other online news media.

Purpose of the study is to determine the view of journalists on online news credibility as compared to traditional media. The sample journalists are those who are working in the traditional media news organizations and also online journalists who are working within the media that offering all information only on internet. The important goal of the study is to confirm Pakistani journalist’s perception about credibility with the increase and growth of news websites, and also to address the perception of Pakistani journalists against the credibility of social media news and traditional media news.

Literature Review

Trends of Social Media Users in Pakistan

According to Zulqarnain (2017), new technologies have given opportunity to everyone to choose their own information sources particularly in Pakistan where the social media has gained momentous growth for the last some years. Similarly Aun (2013)
elaborated the social media a medium that is the widely and mostly used by people of all the age. It further explains that social media network is basically a platform where individuals communicate with one another. Sophie (2013) explained that social media is rapidly growing and changing atmosphere of mass communication; it stands on four pillars that are called communication, participation, belief and the transparency. According to world stat reports (2017), there are above 110 million blogs and 100 million videos, and more than 123 million Facebook worldwide users. The study of Butt (2017) shows that 75% of population in the countries which are developed and using internet and social media is under the 25 years age. In November 2012, Facebook announced that it has more than 1 billion worldwide users, Canadians are 18 million users. In the same way July 2012, Twitter has mentioned that it has 517 million users are around the world. In society of Pakistan, social media is becoming more popular. According to Internet world stats (2013) Pakistan has 32 million users. Abida (2013) quoted that in Pakistan people use social media to communicate; their purpose is to use it for five purposes, first is to share breaking news by mainstream media, second is to motivate individual for other campaigns. Third is to emphasize some issue and the problems related to aspect of humanitarian, fourth is to participate and look for social cause activities, and last but not least to be a medium in between the politicians and public. According to Karamat and Farooq (2016), internet in Pakistan has emerged in the year 1995 and the internet world stats (2013) suggest that Pakistan is ranked 8 out of 10 highest popular in internet usage amongst Pakistani young generation.

Qureshi (2016) claims that Facebook has widespread usage in Pakistan and a rapid increase at this popular social networking site can be seen in the last five years. Qureshi quoted Facebook Audience Insights as saying that about 15 to 20 million men in Pakistan are Facebook users, and almost 5 to 6 million are female users. Beside all this the report of Broadcasting Board of Governors (2014) shows that more use of social media also reflects the country’s tough restrictions on media freedom, include the extensive self-censorship at the domestic outlets, particularly coverage of government security or intelligence agencies or powerful non-state militias. The report further elaborated that the coverage of Pakistani incidents by reporters are limited because these incidents are restricted by the security department and any reports need to be reviewed.

According to the domestic news and international perspectives of the Pakistani incident mentioned by the Broadcasting Council (2014), 84.1% people are interested in news. The report shows that about a third (32.1%) are generally interested in international news, although this figure rose to half (49.1%) in the middle or higher population. Relatively few Pakistanis are interested in news of the United States (14.9%), the United Kingdom (12.2%) or Europe (11.4%). The proportion of computer and home Internet access among Pakistani households was 15.8% and 8.7%, respectively. In Pakistan, only 8.4% said they had already accessed the Internet in the past few years. The use of the Internet in men, the Pakistani Youth and Urban Residents Broadcasting
Council (2014), and Pakistani people above secondary education are particularly likely to become weekly Internet users (37.1%). Most of the weekly Internet users in Pakistan stated that they use the Internet at home (72.3%) instead of work (15.5%), Internet cafes (4.4%) or schools (3.9%) to access the Internet. According to the Broadcasting Council (2014), weekly Internet users in Pakistan are more likely to say that they have accessed the Internet via mobile phones.

Trends of Traditional Media in Pakistan

We live in the age of technological advancement mentioned by Ashgabat (2012), and our media environment is changing faster than we imagined 10 years ago. In this diversified world, Ashgabat (2012) found that online media did not replace traditional media but created very fierce competition for them. Ashgabat (2012) further explained that with the development of social media, more and more people can practice the work of journalists. Even if they are not professionals, they are more and more actively involved in the information sharing process. The freedom of the media as a human right is not retained by the media company or the editorial department, Ashgabat (2012). This right cannot be explained only in the context of traditional media, but is applicable to any form of public publication.

According to Ashgabat's research (2012), most traditional mass media are also building a blogging platform; the web version also tries to actively infiltrate social networks, arguing that this is necessary for the new era explained by Ashgabat (2012) Conditions, many experts believe that traditional media have the obligation to respond to social networking and other phenomena and consider the existence of social networks is absolutely necessary. In the context of Pakistani media, Zulqarnain's (2017) study shows that the proportion of traditional media users is 50.7%, television users' main source is 33.8% of newspapers, and only 9.5% of radio stations.

The study also found that the use of traditional media is significant for 42.0% of the severe news. Similarly, Cheong’s (2010) research focuses on traditional media preferences and consumption, broadcasting, newspapers, television, and magazines. Warraich's (2011) study mentioned that there are many private traditional media in Pakistan, many of which are controversial and even antagonistic to the government's Open Source Center (2010). In fact, even though the then Pakistani President Musharraf imposed a broadcast ban on them (some media completely ignored the ban), in fact they are often praised for helping trigger the 2007 democracy movement. Warraich (2011) further explained that many Pakistani joined protests based on information obtained through verbal communication or mainstream media reports, rather than via social media, thus undermining the description of new media as mass mobilization. Warraich (2011) mentioned that in this way, Pakistan's traditional media has chosen new media as a transformative power. Similarly, Kugelman (2012) explained that traditional media can use social media for personal gain. The major television channels in Pakistan have
multiple Facebook and Twitter accounts liked by hundreds of thousands of followers, so traditional media is getting benefitted with the excess usage of social media. So, one can argue that the sparks of communication provided by social media, especially the ability to expand the space for debate and information exchange can help provide an enabling environment for the mobilization efforts of traditional media. In addition, Kugelman (2012) explained that website traffic monitoring websites and polls have found that blogs have much fewer clicks than traditional media sites. In view of the lagging efforts of the traditional Pakistani media to develop codes of conduct and other regulatory tools, similar attempts by social media may also face significant challenges. Another risk that can be mitigated is the rapid proliferation of inappropriate and indecent content explained by Treydte, Schleser, Helle, Frank Winiger Haug and Esper (2006), and many efforts by the traditional media have failed, including a short TV Dawning News Channel is dedicated for selecting unethical media behaviors, but there are also some success stories.

**Social Media and Journalists**

Galtung, (1973); Lynch (2005); Hanitzsch (2004); Kempff (2007); Allan (2007) and Keeble (2010) believe that power, politics, and profit have always been the media's traditional conflict. In recent decades, the debate on "Peace News" as a method of conflict has gained momentum and attracted the attention of some scholars. However, Aslam (2011) mentioned that there are many problems in the effectiveness of peace news, and its application to other forms of media has still not been answered. However, Memon (2014) believes that radio is the most widely-used medium in Sindh province. Finally, from the geographical point of view, Memon (2014) mentioned that the proportion of rural reporters choosing newspapers (61.6%) was higher than that of selective broadcasting (48.8%) or television (50.0%) and in urban journalists, choosing television. The proportion of people using television (50.0%) and radio stations (51.2%) is almost equal to and greater than the proportion of people choosing newspapers.

Memon (2014) concluded in the opinion of rural journalists that newspapers are the most widely consumed media; while for urban reporters, television and radio are the most widely consumed news media in Pakistan. From a news standpoint, Alejandro (2010) mentioned that new media technologies have a serious impact on the journalism industry. Alejandro (2010) further explained that the way most public and commercial media are changing is more important than the emergence of citizen news or an independent blogosphere. However, Mezzera and Sial (2010) believe that Pakistani journalists also face four dictatorships. The last is that the longest of all journalists was severely scrutinized in the hands of dictators. They implemented censorship and many journalists were killed in the target killings. Butt (2014) mentioned that the prominent growth of the media gave voice to the general public and helped people understand difficult governance methods through political discussions and news reports. Blumer and
Katz (1973) quoted that there are not reflexive users but there are active and they are able to select and choose mediums by their own ways and as per their requirement. In addition the system of media dependency theory by Sandra and Defleur (1976), they presented theory in a sociological and conventional literature, which vary on assumptions that biggest social media systems cannot be assumed as their audience researches and in media.

A study of Alejandro (2010) found that 150 journalists across Pakistan agreed that social media has a negative impact on Pakistani journalism and anyone can share any nonsense on social media. The research findings further indicate that most journalists think they are dissatisfied with the content, because in most cases, the information shared on social media is unreliable, there is no credibility. Many times opinions are presented as news items. Butt (2017) concluded that journalism should not ignore the role of gatekeeper/editor, especially in a country like Pakistan, where the country is faced with endless problems explained. He further explained that social media has made reporters lazy because many reporters do not engage in activities in this area but use information shared on social media. Because of its unreliable and unconfirmed news people are misled, there was no editor concept, and the future of the press seemed dark.

**Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The aim of this study is to find out the credibility of social and traditional media among the journalists therefore following research question are made

*RQ1: Which is the most credible news media considered by the respondents?*

The literature about the credibility of the medium shows that journalists who work in traditional media considered online media less credible than the online websites that are governed by the registered traditional media platforms therefore based on the review of this literature following hypothesis is formulated:

*H1: Journalists consider traditional media operated online news websites more credible than online websites that are operated privately*

Bucy (2003) defines credibility is perceived by the respondents as being accurate, fair, informative, and believable and in detail, or if they have shaped the new criteria, than the study create another research question:

2. *What are the factors that help journalist to rate medium credibility?*

**Research Methodology**

Survey method was applied and a questionnaire was formulated on the scale of Bucy (2003). The population was Pakistani journalists associated with traditional and online news media. 200 questionnaires were distributed randomly and out of which 183 responses were usable. In order to determine the reasons for assessing the credibility of the media, unstructured questions were also asked to the interviewees: Why did they evaluate the credibility of certain media and how they defined credibility. The purpose
of these questions is to ask the respondents to obtain their own credibility standards as an alternative of providing them with the standards known in the literature.

Results and Discussion
Results of data show education, gender and the age, which does not have a significant statistics effect. It means that the credibility of news media evaluation of journalists does not significantly differ on age, education and gender based. Those participants who particularly evaluate media as credible more and they are not homogenous about the education, age structure and gender. But the credibility evaluation is in correlation with regards to use of internet daily that is showing in Table 2. And also working with a group of particular medium “traditional on internet, traditional, internet” showing in Table 3. And also correlations in between these all variables which are significant statistically in both of the charts verified.

Table 1. Journalists’ Evaluations of Media Credibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagreed</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Sum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility level higher in Traditional News Media</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News websites of the Traditional News Media have High Level of Credibility</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News websites operated privately have High Level of Credibility</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 is showing rating of journalist’s credibility of a specific media groups. 102 respondents are in majority who agreed that the news of traditional media have more credibility degree. About 80 respondents are recognized who show News websites of the Traditional News Media have High Level of Credibility. Half of them could not decide if these websites are credible. 40 respondents are in favor the news websites of online companies. Disagreed respondents are 103.

Table 2. Journalists’ Evaluations of News Media Credibility (Daily Use of the Internet)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional media are credible</th>
<th>Traditional media on the internet are credible</th>
<th>internet media are credible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1hr a Day</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5hr a Day</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10hr a Day</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10hr a Day</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results showing in Table 2, the internet media are more credible evaluated for those study respondents who are more often internet users in a day course and with those who are online news media worker. The respondents however who less experiences of daily use with internet and who are working for traditional media news evaluated more credible traditional news media. In this way the hypothesis of the study are confirmed that journalists who are working for traditional media news rate mostly
the online news sites of established media traditional media organizations as credible more than online news company’s news sites.

Table 3. Journalists’ Evaluations of News Media Credibility (Working within a Medium of a Particular Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional media are credible</th>
<th>Traditional media on the internet are credible</th>
<th>Internet media are credible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working in Traditional Media</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in Traditional Media on Internet</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in Internet Media</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 results shows that those respondents who are with traditional media are in traditional media credibility favor as 95. Similarly those respondents who are working in media internet are in favor of credibility of internet media as 90. However those who are working for traditional media on internet are showing as 70 respondents. This means the majority of respondents are in favor of more credible traditional news on internet then other.

It has been observed that the Respondent’s opinions fluctuate as their association with the certain medium changes. Alejandro (2010) also found that in the profession of journalism the credibility opinion may change as with association with the medium. Likewise journalists working with internet medium consider online news medium more credible as compared to traditional medium. Current study found that those Pakistani journalists who spend less time on internet use have opinion that online news media are
less credible than news traditional media. Similarly those journalists who are using internet more than ten hours a days have opposite opinion. McQuarrie (1999) also found that the opposite and negative perception or the judgment of online news websites may be due to their wrong evaluation or due to their own work discontent, and is also evident in current study. Particularly the study analysis reveals that those journalists who are working for the news websites of traditional media perceive negatively their work, it also name as “copy paste” practices of production. Respondents explain this copy paste practices as a sensational news translation from the other countries media and it also shape public relation messages in news item forms. These kinds of conversations or arguments are not to guide that Pakistani journalist who does not locate valuable websites companies online.

**Conclusion**

The paper presents analysis on how journalists assess the news websites credibility and how this evaluation can be contextualized in comparison with traditional media. The journalists are individual who are directly associated with media and their opinion and beliefs can be valuable for the journalism research in world of online media. The key finding of the study shows that majority of Pakistani journalist community who are working in traditional medium still believe that the news traditional medium is more credible than online medium; interestingly most of the journalists also have given their opinion that online mediums which are associated with traditional medium have higher credibility than other online mediums.

Respondents realized the internet value to open a huge journalism space. Particularly respondents focused and valued online news as medium of timely information that is useful to make decisions in competitive world. Respondents sometimes point out the credible medium, as it assured by equal authenticity by online news media users community. Expectations might be if journalism influence value resources on internet increase, than the wide range of community sense will be developed, in order to further prevail over most of negative professionalism sense in the field of journalism. The study also hypothesized that the modern community model would be better which serve for interest of public news accepts to follow up for important and exclusive standards. Some of the missing data or information circulated may be moderated by online and then be of good services to the national audience. So Media ownership, government management of Pakistan should keep opinion of journalists in mind and should focus on the factors that can help in improving journalism as profession and ultimately to develop credibility on our media nationwide.

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