The Impact of Social Media on Newsroom Operations in the UAE

"تأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على عمليات غرفة الأخبار في الإمارات "

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Abstract

Social media can be defined as a class of online interchange channels dedicated to group-based information, content-sharing, connection, and association (Asur and Huberman, 2010). Several prominent social networking venues include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

Media practitioners, in particularly news editors, have taken these platforms to gather, report and share stories to their audience. The goal of this paper" The impact of social media on newsroom operation in the UAE" is to determine the influence of social and computerized media on the way newsrooms air their news and to investigate the new tasks that have been operated by news editors in the newsroom. The researcher reasons that underlie editors' decisions to turn to social media platforms and the consequences that these applications have had on the news making practices inside several newsrooms in the UAE.

The literature reviews reveal that as a result of social media elements in the news industry, news operation goes through a transformation, causing audiences to demand quality as over quantity. Also, collecting data and qualitative interviews were conducted to study and gain insight into news-editors routines and their everyday usage of social media platforms.

The conclusions of this article suggest that strategies adopted by the UAE newsroom operations are aim to help the delivery of services and increase their custom base.

These observations carry important professional and ethical implications for news editors navigating today's news making industry, and show how technological and semiprofessional aspects are tightly linked.

Keywords: social media accounts, UAE newsroom, news editors, news, technology.

الملخص:

إن الهدف من هذه الورقة " تأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي على عمليات غرفة الأخبار في الإمارات هو تحديد تأثير الوسائط الاجتماعية الإلكترونية على طريقة بث غرف الأخبار للمحتوى، والتحقيق في المهام الجديدة التي تم تشغيلها بواسطة محرري الأخبار، كما توضح الباحثة فيها الأسباب من وراء قرارات المحررين بالانتقال إلى منصات التواصل الاجتماعي كمصادر للمعلومات، إضافة إلى النتائج المترتبة على ممارسات صناعة الأخبار الحديثة داخل العديد من غرف الأخبار في الإمارات.

وتكشف مراجعات الأدب السابقة أنه ونتيجة لتأثير وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي في صناعة الأخبار، تمر هذه العملية بتحول كبير ساهم في زيادة مطالبة الجماهير بجودة الطرح الإخباري أكثر من الكم .

ولبحث النتائج السابقة قامت الباحثة أيضا بجمع للبيانات الكمية وإجراء للمقابلات النوعية لتحقيق نظرة ثاقبة على العمليات الروتينية الأخبار التي يعتمد فيها محررو الأخبار على منصات وسائل الإعلام الاجتماعية.

تشير استنتاجات هذه المقالة إلى أن الاستراتيجيات التي تتبناها عمليات غرفة الأخبار بدولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة تهدف إلى المساعدة في تقديم الخدمات وزيادة قاعدتها المخصصة. تحمل هذه الملاحظات تداعيات مهنية وأخلاقية مهمة على محرري الأخبار العاملين في صناعة الأخبار اليوم، كما أنها تظهر كيفية ارتباط ترتبط الجوانب التكنولوجية والمهنية ارتباطًا وثيقًا.

كلمات مفتاحية: تطبيقات التواصل الاجتماعي، غرف الأخبار، محررو الأخبار، أخبار، تكنولوجيا

Introduction:
Social media can be defined as a class of online interchange channels dedicated to group-based information, content-sharing, connection, and association (Asur and Huberman, 2010). Several prominent social networking venues include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Wikipedia, Pinterest, and Reddit. Technological innovations are increasing the limits of these community circles; different media

are additionally changing how individuals communicate and associate with each other. For example, individuals do not just utilize Facebook to remain connected to family and friends, but also, to "like" specific group pages, famous people's profiles, and TV shows. Remarkably TV is no longer, a restricted medium but an intelligent one. Individuals are urged to tweet content, or to vote for candidates for everything from singing contests to matchmaking tries—overcoming any issues amongst individual lives and entertainment.

In social media today, breaking news is everywhere. Editors monitor social media and bring breaking stories to their readers by using multiple social media sources. The gathering and reporting of news has changed in that typewriters have been replaced by computers, telephone-based tips have been replaced by Tweets and Facebook posts, data validation & fact checking are streamlined to the Internet, and reporters can be their own cameraman with smartphones in their hands. (Schaap, 2017)

Study the Problem:

This study aimed to determine the influence of social and computerized media on the way newsrooms air their news, and how the public receives this news concerning social stages, online networking newsrooms, and versatile innovation. The ordinary tasks of a newsroom will be investigated, from substance and fragments to staffing and crowd sharing.

Online networking is influencing the ways in which TV stations present news to the public and how viewers receive that news (Lasorsa et al., 2012). Before long, web-based social networking may make substantial headway in the way news stations air their stories and how different people receive that information. Hamburger and Vinitzky (2010) noted that recent changes make it unique regarding how information is collected and presented today because social media has become more depended upon by users in all parts of their normal daily existence (Hamburger & Vinitzky 2010). Notably, online networking has changed the way individuals impart information upon each other, making for an inexorably open condition in the Internet since 2008. Usually, this new wonder would influence how local information and news affects and are received by and presented to shareholders (Kumar, 2010) on every social stage.

Study Objectives:

- To assess how working in the newsroom is affected by the Social Media.
- To determine how social media editors frame the news and interact with the audience.
- To evaluate how social media are changing the news landscape concerning social networking platforms, social media newsrooms, and mobile technology.
- To assess how news stations utilize different social media platforms to transmit content.
- To determine how mobile technology has worked to a newsroom's advantage and how has it affected revenue and viewership.

Study Questions:

- How are the newsroom operations affected by Social Media?
- How do social media editors frame the news and interact with the audience?
- How is social media changing the news landscape regarding social networking platforms, social media newsrooms, and mobile technology?
- How are the news stations utilizing different social media platforms to transmit content?

- How is mobile technology working to a newsroom's advantage, and how has it affected revenue and viewership?
- What adjustments are the newsrooms making to accommodate the use of social media?

The Significance of the Study:

As the news industry grasps the different types of online networking to enable them to remain competitive in their marketing strategy and news production, some scholars have asserted that these media are substantially affecting how journalists work (Dickinson, 2011). This paper investigates the advancing practices of reporters in newsrooms and analyzes the degree and nature of impacts of online networking on their work. The significance of the study is that it adds to the body of research that has already been conducted by other scholars. Additionally, it addresses areas that previous scholars have not included, with the aim of increasing the knowledge that exists about the topic at hand. The study was conducted in the UAE.

Theoretical Framework:

The herein thesis builds on the *New Media Theory* theoretical framework, which is based on the assumption that social media has had an effect on the media landscape and demand for traditional media. Media have gone through a change over recent years because of demands of consumers who expect high quality work. The revolution in the media industry has led to the development of the Internet as a main platform for delivering news. The new media concerns the shift from conventional methods of delivering news to innovative delivery systems such as using electronic media, including social media. Additional justification for the acceptance of the new media theory in newsrooms is that consumers of information would no longer accept the previous passive ways of receiving news, as they now prefer an active participation, such as social media platforms allow. This justifies the inclusion of social media platforms as a regular and reliable method of interacting with customers. Scholars who have adopted the new media theory include Compton and Benedetti (2010) and Mierzejewska (2011), who argued that in the management of media, innovative and creative ideas of reaching the client must be adopted, so that the audience may feel that they are part of the news. The revolution in the media industry is indicative of models which allow users to demand channels through which they can communicate with newsrooms, including Twitter as a main channel (Moon & Hadley, 2014).

Subscribing to the New Media Theory as a viable theoretical framework requires understanding that it is easy to argue in the print media operations because newsrooms are constantly embracing new technology to improve service delivery. There is also increased accessibility to information by potential clients who rely on newsrooms as the only source of information from local and international markets. In the past, scholars used the new media theory as a theoretical framework and provided reliable results that contributed to the literature. For instance, Brake (2014) used the New Media Theory is his study and concluded that adoption of social media had brought changes in the newsroom.

News in the digital era has made it easy for consumers to enjoy a wide variety of options, which ensures that once information is released to the public, it reaches a wide audience and recipients are informed of activities taking place in the local and international scenes. Media houses are also in a position to interact with their consumers and to have them provide feedback, which can positively impact the operations of news firms. According to Fenton (2009) technologies exist which enable organizations to improve their performance and to increase their coverage in the clientele base. When making news, news editors consider the impacts of their stories and take caution to ensure that every piece of information released to the market is true. As such, reporters still have a role in ensuring that they collect and affirm the information that they gather from multiple sources.

Expectations of the future include that social media will soon become the only reliable channel for distributing information from various sources. It will replace traditional media methods including print media because most consumers have abandoned the purchase of hard copies of newspapers, and have incorporated the concept of relying upon and trusted social media information, even though some of the information may not originate from reliable sources.

Methodology and Design:

The methodology section outlines methods that the researcher used to collect information from the different sources. It also specifies the research design with the aim of highlighting the methods that the author used to source information that was analyzed in the following chapter. A detailed outline of the methodology ensures that the researcher remains within the required objectives, by ensuring that sources which provide quality and relevant information related to the study were used. It also ensures that all information used in the data collection step is relevant and at the end of the study provides rich content. The methodology chapter defines the research design, methods of collecting data including the secondary research methods, and description of the population and sample.

qualitative interviews were conducted to emphasize the active participation of the interviewer, and the importance of giving voice to participants. Furthermore, the interview questions were semi-structured. All media practitioners who participated in interviews were asked the same questions, and all interviews were recorded for later analysis. This method was done to provide valid and reliable data.

Population and Sample:

The population for the study was the news center in the UAE. The aim of the study was to assess any impact of social media on the newsrooms, indicating that the entire population of interest was the media industry. However, it would be impossible to interview the entire population as a point of focus, which justified the need to select a sample of participants from the population, which are then implied as interests of the entire industry population.

Results , Discussions and Conclusions:

The findings of the study indicate that the majority of journalists have embraced the use of social media in gathering and transmitting news, and use social media to reach news sources. It is notable that even the few who responded having not used social media to reach out or get information from news sources, did have social media accounts. Moreover, most of the respondents reported having posted news stories on social media platforms.

According to Talal Al Hindasi from Abu Dhabi Media, main sources of social media information come from the agency's account, and also from government agencies, decision-makers, and field correspondents (personal communication 2018). The data here includes responses from 23 participants, of whom 74% were male. Approximately 74% of participants were between 26-45 years old, most had BSc/BA degree (74%), and 22% had postgraduate education. About half (52.2%) of the participants specialized in Media/Journalism while 17.4% specialized in Political Science, 17.4% specialized in Arabic/English languages, and 13% specialized in Management. About one-third (35%) of participants had 10-15 years of experience and approximately 61% of participants had 10-20 years of experience.

According to results, many participants performed more than one job role. For example, editing news substance may be done by an editor in chief, an editor, an editor/announcer and/or an editor-reporter. All participants had social media accounts, and about 61% used smartphones to access the Internet. The majority of the participants had Twitter accounts (87%), followed by Instagram (78%) and Facebook (70%). However, the latest survey in Dubai 2017 indicates that Facebook was positioned at the top of social media sources (Admin, 2018). Each participant had at least one account on a social

media platform. These percentages indicate that some participants may have several social media accounts.

For reading and gathering news, Twitter was used most frequently followed by Instagram, while YouTube scored only 2.78, indicating a 55% importance as ranked by participants. This is despite that many news channels live stream through YouTube.

In-depth interviews with a group of media practitioners from the UAE key media were conducted to identify the role of social media among media professionals and journalists. The interviews aimed to gain insights into the impact of social media on the activities of media professionals and journalists, and how the online platforms may influence the news content and dissemination.

The Social Media Impact survey was presented to a group of journalists and professionals to facilitate dialogue about social media, a topic that is gaining importance. Journalists widely use social media posts for their jobs, despite having doubts about the reliability of information on the online platforms. At the same time, media professionals believe that news is becoming less reliable as journalists do less fact-checking.

Responses to the questionnaire also revealed that a majority of journalists felt less bound by journalistic rules on social media. Social media are increasingly being used as a means of engaging in dialogue. All journalists responded that social media posts are not a reliable source of information, although many journalists indicated that Twitter is their main source of information. Further, news editors believe that journalism can no longer operate without social media.

The results of the study were largely consistent with the Review of Literature. The literature reviewed revealed that social media has affected the ways in which organizations deliver their services to consumers. Newsrooms also experiences this phenomenon, and many have strongly relied on social media platforms to deliver quality and timely services. As a result, audiences receive news immediately after it occurs. Continuous changes in the telecommunication industry have caused newsrooms to adopt new ideas to improve quality while reducing costs and ensuring that audience can access the services on time. One of the requirements of the newsrooms to ensure that they keep up with market demands is to train employees so that they may keep up with the market trends. Today, audience can access news from their mobile phones due to the development of social media platforms. Journalists are no longer to always move from one place to another as they accumulate their news. Rather, they are required to have the knowledge and skills of utilizing the electronic devices create and transmit their reports to newsrooms.

The most commonly used methods in research include case studies which highlight experiences of different service providers in the media room. The methodology used in the present study secondary research methods, which relied on other recorded information from other researchers. The sources of information were derived from reputable publications that addressed the impact of social media on the newsroom in the UAE. Many scholars and other stakeholders have studied the topic of social media to understand the influence it has on the wellbeing and performance of different organizations, with a bias on the newsroom. The information contained in the present study is rich in content and contains information from peer-reviewed articles that met high academic standards, meaning that they are reliable and contain up-to-date information about the social media effects in the industry.

The study on the social media elements and their use in the newsroom indicates that countries worldwide have opened up their virtual borders and are sharing information with each other. It also acknowledges that social media has made work easier for many newscasters as the spread of information, both negative and positive, occurs quickly after dispatching from the source. Technology

changes in the media industry have also helped to draw attention to social issues affecting people in different geographical areas, with the aim of generating help and solutions to social issues. However, the issue of personal security has not completely been addressed, leading some users to fail to secure their privacy. Social media platforms have provisions for users where they can provide personal and intimate information which spreads across the platforms once released. Online communication and news platforms can store information about a person, and others can easily access that information, even after the individual who posted the private data deletes it.

The literature reveals that as a result of social media elements in the news industry, print media has lost much of the allure that once commanded. Many individuals have access to the Internet and can easily receive news on their personal phones or laptops, which reduces the need to purchase hard copies of newspapers to read the same information. In addition, because social media outlets present information in real-time as opposed to papers, which report information that took place on a previous day, has justified the preference of customers regarding the platform as a source of information. However, to compensate the differences between print and digital media, newsrooms often maintain an official online page which allows their customers to access real-time information. This aids competition from other media houses, and helps to promote and maintain the relevance a company has in the industry despite the number of entrants in the industry.

Changes in the ICT sector has led digital broadcasting to go through a transformation, causing audiences to demand quality as over quantity. Most media houses use online venues which allow their audience to log in and interact with each other. This takes place in the form of commenting and presenting ideas on ways in which the media houses can improve the content they provide. Correspondence in this manner is made easy by digital platforms because reporters working in the different media houses may report from any part of the world and provide real-time information. For instance, when reporters of a local media house travel, they must provide information they have gathered to their employers, and can do so despite the time and geographical differences in the country of origin and the host nation.

Factors to consider include the reliability of social media in properly influencing the operations of the newsrooms, while still highlighting technological developments that have been adopted by the industry. Most newsrooms in the UAE have engaged in social media operations to improve their ability to deliver services as well as to improve customer ratings and satisfaction in the long-term. This means that strategies adopted by the UAE newsroom operations are aim to help the delivery of services and increase their clientele base. Each social media platform is unique and provides different ideas that the social media marketer should use to maintain the leadership in the industry.

Radio news coverage has seen substantial changes as a result of recent innovations, particularly with the advancement of workflow generation, conveyance of modern communication instruments, and radio dynamics transformation. Starkey and Crissell (2009) stated that radio news coverage is a critical movement of media well associated with daily paper and TV broadcasting improvement amid the 20th century.

Recommendations

To conclude, this study offered recommendations for media owners, managers and journalists. Most importantly is that social media is a permanent fixture in society those who can harness it effectively will be able to stay ahead of competition. To that end, several recommendations follow, based on the present study.

1. The media should invest more time and care into enhancing editorial checks for their social media account managers by continually training them on changes in the field. With technological innovations pushing social media forward quickly, and often changing how it works in new social media, there is a need to train staff to handle social media.

2.	There is also a need for journalists to understand what the social media or digital divisions are doing in order to work together, especially in an era in which media convergence abounds in newsrooms. The present study showed that journalists in different divisions have little understanding of the processes in their online/digital departments. This increased understanding may be achieved by holding regular social media training for journalists and making by ensuring that they are conversant with social media policies that guide the handling of official and personal social media accounts.

3.	Media managers should innovate ways of increasing revenue by way of social media platforms. It is clear from the findings that media managers and owners face a challenge of harnessing the power of social media to grow consumer bases and eventually to increase profits from social media. As results from the present study show, social media departments in mainstream newsrooms presently play a complementary, and subordinate, role to other platforms. There is need, therefore, to develop social media capabilities which enable such digital departments, especially social media, to a place where they can hold their own and to be compete with traditional platforms both in terms of quality and financially. Social media outlets lead print and broadcast journalists to work more diligently to provide their audiences with fresh content to keep pace with social media which is faster at breaking news and updates.

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