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English Essay

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Has Social Media Killed Traditional Journalism?

Outline

I- Introduction

- a) Rise of social media
- b) Decline of traditional journalism
- c) Statement of the problem
- d) Thesis Statement

II- Definition of Traditional Journalism

- a) Newspapers, TV, and radio
- b) Based on verification, editing, and ethics
- c) **Example:** Dawn, BBC, and PTV

III- Meaning of Social Media

- a) Digital platform with user-generated content
- b) No professional training required
- c) Anyone can publish without gate keeping
- d) **Example:** Facebook and X

IV - Speed Advantage of Social Media Over Traditional Media

- a) News spreads within seconds
- b) Breaking news first on social media
- c) Traditional media often follows later
- d) **Example:** Election results, protests, disasters

V - Decline in Newspaper Readership

- a) People prefer free digital news
- b) Print circulation decreasing worldwide
- c) **Example:**
 - i. Jang Group shut 7 publications, which led to 1400 jobs.
 - ii. London's Evening Standard switched to weekly print in 2024 due to financial stability.

VI - Rise of Social Media as an Alternative

- a) offers innovation, independent news, documentaries, interviews
- b) Bypasses censorship, ~~and~~

interactive and fast

c) Citizen journalism and viral content

d) Syed Muzammil, a political scientist, talk show host, and vlogger, uses social media and YouTube for political analysis and audience engagement, showing how traditional media figures adapt

e) Pop culture example:

The Batman (2022) - Riddle spreads messages, recruits, followers, manipulates public perception

VII - Television's Stagnation

a) Present-day TV: repetitive political talk shows, same analysts, predictable content

b) Humor, documentaries, and social issue coverage mostly disappeared

c) Press conferences and government-sponsored content dominate

VIII - Social Media-Driven Protests

a) Social media mobilization

- b) Nepal: Tik Tok ban sparked protests and PM resignation.
- c) Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Indonesia: student-led protests against political nepotism (#nepokids, #nepobabies), corruption and inequality.
- d) Gaza: Social media bypasses journalist restrictions
- e) Demonstrates social media's role in shaping public opinion, mobilizing youth, and amplifying global solidarity.

IX - Fake news, Disinformation, and AI challenges

- a) unchecked posts, rumors, and viral content
- b) May 2025 India-Pakistan crisis: false attacks, arrests, doctored visuals, and TV channels amplified misinformation
- c) Challenge for traditional journalism to fact-check
- d) AI amplifies risks: bias, surveillance, copyright

infringement.

X - Investigative Journalism Decline and Press Freedom

- a) Investigative journalism declining: costly, risky, and time-consuming
- b) Viral content dominates; speed prioritized over depth
- c) World Press Freedom Day 2025: emphasizes media as "public watchdog"; condemns attacks, harassment, and censorship; stresses ethical AI use.
- d) Press freedom crucial for democracy and accountability

XI - Digital Adaptation of Traditional Media

- a) Newspapers and TV channels now run websites, apps, and YouTube channels
- b) Example: Dawn Digital, Geo Digital
- c) Shows survival, not death

XII - Conclusion



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In recent times, social media has transformed how people access and share information. Platforms such as Facebook, X, TikTok, and YouTube enable anyone to publish, news, opinions, and videos instantly, bypassing traditional media outlets like newspapers and television. People no longer have to wait for print editions or scheduled news broadcasts to learn about events. At the same time, traditional journalism has been declining. Many newspapers have seen their circulation fall drastically, and television news often relies on repetitive political talk shows, press conferences, and predictable content. This shift has raised concerns about the reliability, depth, and ethical standards of the news that people receive. Despite these challenges, traditional journalism persists, albeit facing significant challenges. Its ability to shape public opinion, provide verified information, and maintain professional reporting standards is under pressure. ~~while traditional~~ Its role has been deeply challenged by the speed and reach of social media.

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Traditional journalism refers to newspapers, television, and radio that adhere to established standards of verification, editing, and ethics to deliver reliable information to the public. In Pakistan, the **pre 2000s** print media was small but vibrant and highly innovative. Newspapers such as **Dawn and The News** introduced political Sunday editions, fashion spreads, book and art review sections, and covering of social events, keeping readers engaged. Print media also played a critical role during crises, such as **2005 earth quake**, by providing accurate and timely reporting. Early television followed similar principles while adding a visual and interactive dimension, with channels like **PTV and early Geo** offering ~~satire~~ satirical shows, social issue programming, and audience-focused documentaries. Internationally outlets like the **BBC** maintained rigorous verification and accountability standards. Overall, traditional journalism is characterized by its dedication to credibility, depth, and public trust, essential for informed citizenship.

Social media refers to digital platforms that allow users to create, share, and consume content without the traditional gatekeeping of professional journalists. Unlike ~~newspapers~~, traditional media, anyone can publish information online without formal training, which enables rapid dissemination, but raises concerns about accuracy and verification. In Pakistan, social media has become a dominant source of news and information. According to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (2024), the country has over 87 million social media users, with YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok leading in news consumption. These platforms provide immediacy, interactivity, and widespread reach, allowing content to go viral and reach audiences far faster than traditional media. As a result, social media has transformed how people access information, engage in public discourse, and respond to events, challenging the traditional roles of newspapers, radio, and television.

One of the strongest advantages of

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Social media over traditional journalism is its speed, as news now spreads within seconds through digital platforms and reaches millions of users instantly. Breaking news related to election results, political protests, natural disasters, and emergencies often appears first on social media before it is reported by television or newspapers. In contrast, traditional media requires time for verification and editorial approval, which creates a delay between digital and conventional news coverage. This rapid flow of information shows that social media is both a tool for truth and a weapon for misinformation, since accurate updates and false content circulate at the same pace. While this speed empowers citizens with immediate access to information, it also increases the risk of rumors and unverified reports shaping public opinion.

The decline in newspaper readership is one of the strongest indicators of the weakening position of traditional journalism. Today, most people prefer free and easily accessible online news instead of paid print editions,

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leading to a continuous fall in global print circulation. In Pakistan, this decline is evident as the Jang Group shut down 7 publications, resulting in the loss of around 1,400 jobs, reflecting the financial pressure on print media. Internationally, London's Evening Standard shifted from daily to weekly print in 2024 due to unsustainable operating costs. This crisis is further supported by data from the Pew Research Center, which reports that newspaper advertising revenue has fallen by more than 70% since 2005. These trends clearly show that traditional print journalism is facing severe economic decline in the digital age.

Social media has emerged as a dynamic alternative to traditional journalism, providing innovation, independent news coverage, documentaries, and interviews that often bypass censorship. These platforms enable interactive engagement, allowing citizens to share firsthand accounts and viral content that shape public discourse. For example, Syed

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Muhammad Zammil, a political scientist and talk show host, uses social media and YouTube to provide political analysis, engage audiences and extend his reach beyond conventional broadcast channels. Popular culture reflects this influence as well; in *The Batman* (2022), the Riddler uses online platforms to spread messages, gain followers, and manipulate public opinion. His digital presence demonstrates how social media can control narratives, mobilize audiences, and reshape public perception faster than traditional media, highlighting its growing role in shaping information flow and societal discourse. Hence digital platforms can be used both as tools of awareness and instrument of chaos.

Early television in Pakistan was innovative and experimental, featuring political satire, social issues programming on topics such as abuse and extremism, audience-based shows, documentaries, and religious debates. Shows like *Hum 196* *Ummeed se Hain* satirized politicians and political events, engaging audiences in ways that traditional media rarely had.

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Satirical personalities, such as **Begum Nawazish Ali**, challenged societal taboos and norms, inviting guests for unconventional interviews that mixed humor and critique. Politicians were openly mocked, and audience engagement was lively, reflecting a vibrant media culture. In contrast, ~~present~~ present day TV has become stagnant and predictable. Programming largely consists of repetitive political talk shows with the same analysts, ^{while} ~~with~~ humor, documentaries, and, ~~and~~ coverage of social issues have mostly disappeared. Press conferences and government-sponsored content dominate the broadcast schedule, leaving little room for innovation or independent reporting. Hence, the creativity and experimentation that once defined television have diminished, mirroring the decline previously seen in print media.

Social media has become a powerful tool for mobilizing youth and challenging authority. In **Nepal**, government restrictions on **TikTok** triggered a massive uprising of protests, eventually leading to the Prime Minister's resignation, with traditional media reporting only

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after online pressure. In Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Indonesia, student led movements gained momentum through trending hashtags such as #nepobabies and #nepokids, reflecting public anger against political nepotism, corruption, and inequality, and compelling governments to respond. In Gaza, citizens relied on social media as a critical news source when journalists were restricted.

According to RSF, over 220 journalists have been killed by the Israeli army in Gaza, including multiple targeted attacks on media personnel, highlighting the stakes for press freedom. Such censorship has forced the public to depend on digital platforms for uncensored news, demonstrating how social media enables real-time reporting, shapes narratives, and influences public perception when traditional media cannot operate freely.

The rapid spread of unverified content on social media poses a significant threat to traditional journalism, as seen during the May 2025 India-Pakistan crisis, where false information and manipulated visuals circulated widely. Mainstream media,

struggling to verify claims quickly, inadvertently amplified these inaccuracies.

The rise of artificial intelligence exacerbates these challenges, introducing biases, raising surveillance issues, and potentially violating copyrights. Journalists face ethical dilemmas and must balance maintaining credibility with the fast-paced nature of online platforms, emphasizing the urgency of fact-checking and verification. As Mark Twain famously said "A lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth puts on its shoes." highlighting how quickly misinformation can spread while the truth takes longer to be recognized. Hence, fake news and AI-driven disinformation threaten the reliability of conventional ~~the~~ journalism and underscore the crucial role of vigilant journalism.

As social media and digital platforms rise, traditional journalism faces growing challenges in maintaining depth, integrity, and press freedom. Investigative journalism faces significant threats, particularly highlighted by the Israeli army's targeted strikes, which led to the deaths of journalists including Al-jazeera

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Correspondent Anas Al-Sharif. World Press Freedom Day 2025 underscored the media's role as a "public watchdog" ~~and the ethical~~, condemning attacks and harassment of journalists and stressing ethical use of artificial intelligence in reporting. The day's theme, "Reporting in The Brave New World: The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Press Freedom and Media", points out that while AI can improve efficiency, it also poses risks like disinformation and bias. Hence, protecting investigative journalism and press freedom remains crucial for democracy, transparency, and accountability.

As audiences increasingly turn to online platforms, traditional media has had to evolve to stay relevant. Newspapers have moved much of their content online, offering websites and digital editions to reach wider audiences. Television channels have expanded their presence through YouTube channels and dedicated websites, providing news, interviews, and documentaries accessible anytime. Examples include Dawn and Geo Digital, which combine conventional journalism standards with the speed and interactivity of digital platforms. According to the Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2024,

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69% of people get news from social media, while only 28% rely primarily on newspapers. To maintain journalistic credibility in the era of social media, traditional media's digital adaptation reflects changing audience behaviour and ~~demotist~~ demonstrates that it is evolving rather than disappearing.

In conclusion, the emergence of social media has profoundly transformed the journalism landscape. The speed, interactivity, and reach of digital platforms have challenged conventional media including television, and newspapers, which remain essential for ethics, verification, and in-depth reporting. As observed in Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Gaza, social media facilitates the spread of news, inspires youth movement, and offers alternatives in places where press freedom is restricted. At the same time, it brings challenges such as fake news, disinformation, and ethical dilemmas amplified by artificial intelligence. Traditional journalism has adapted by creating online platforms to maintain credibility and relevance. As Marshall McLuhan famously said, "The medium is the message."

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emphasizing that the platforms themselves shape how audiences perceive and engage with information. Hence, social media has reshaped but not eliminated traditional journalism, creating a hybrid ecosystem where both coexist, complement, and compete.



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