

## Comparative Analysis and Implications of Mass Media Versus Digital Media for Marketing Communication

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### Abstract

*Mass media remains a significant pillar of society. However, with increased accessibility to information and communication technology, there has been a noticeable shift towards consuming digital media over mass media. This study investigates the factors and implications surrounding mass media and digital media. The in-depth comparative analysis is conducted and this research aims to comprehend the significant changes in media consumption patterns, particularly the transition from mass media to digital media. The study also investigates the characteristics and communication processes inherent in both mass media and digital media in Pakistan. The revealed findings reflect a notable increase in daily usage of digital media, coupled with a corresponding decrease in the consumption of mass media. The different factors which drive this shift are explored, shedding light on the considerations influencing marketers' decisions regarding the allocation of marketing communications budgets between mass media and digital media. This study also discusses the implications and offers recommendations for marketers. These include insights into targeted market selection, strategic planning of marketing communication budgets, understanding the distinct behavioral dynamics of both media types, recognizing the supportive role of mass media, and leveraging the strengths of both mass media and digital media in integrated marketing communication campaigns.*

**Keywords:** *Mass Media, Digital Media, Communication Processes, Strategic Planning, Behavioral Dynamics*

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### 1. Introduction

The growth of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has entirely revolutionized markets and marketing strategies. Today, the consumers can directly intermingle with marketers, sharing their different opinions, their experiences, and even creating buying online. This change has essentially changed the dynamics of marketer-consumer relationships, enabling extraordinary levels of direct engagement (Wang et al., 2023).

The marketers have the capability to create connections with their customers in ways that were once inconceivable now. The advent of ICT has not only promoted sustainability but has also had

a thoughtful influence on contemporary society (Wang et al., 2023). According to Abbas et al., (2023) in today's world, digital technology has developed an indispensable feature of daily life. For example, social media has established irreplaceable for recruiters in recognizing highly qualified job candidates. Digital knowledge and literacy have enhanced early childhood education. Furthermore, the social media hold capacity in dropping recidivism among ex-offenders by offering valuable information to enable their successful reintegration into society (Meng et al., 2023). It is observed that these individuals often encounter challenges when attempting to reintegrate into society, which can lead to further criminal behavior (Shuja & Abbas,2022)

The digital revolution has empowered different communities, stakeholders, and the public to express their opinions and experiences regarding different products and services. These external voices, independent of the company, are highly regarded for their unbiased perspectives and offer new opportunities for marketers to engage with potential customers. For instance, it has been discovered that online information can bolster tourists' confidence in restaurant brands and dining experiences (Al-Sulaiti et al. 2023)

It is quite apparent that digital media continues to flourish and the traditional mass media are witnessing a decline in popularity. Nonetheless, their former dominance still influences certain consumer demographics. Consequently, mass media can coexist alongside digital media, facilitating integrated marketing communications.

The evolution of mass media in the context of hyper-globalization is examined in this study. First, it examines the distinctions between digital and traditional mass media, examining each of their unique features in detail through a thorough comparative study. It then examines how marketing communication strategies have changed along with how consumers of traditional mass media and digital platforms have changed how they consume media. The current research aims to address several key questions:

1. Are there any discernible differences between the time spent on digital and mass media usage?
2. What factors contribute to changes in media consumption patterns?
3. What are the potential applications and implications for marketing communications in response to these trends?
4. What considerations guide marketers in efficiently allocating their marketing communications budget amid this evolving landscape?
5. What practical advice can marketers take to make the most use of digital and mass media?

The role of mass media has been changed with the emergence of digital media. Due to the swift expansion of digital media and online communication channels, the traditional media is experiencing a significant shift in its function and impact. There is a decline in the dominance of media as primary source of information distribution and audience engagement (Smith and Johnson, 2022). As an alternative, the digital media has developed as powerful substitutes, they offer large interactivity, proximity, imminence, and customization possibilities for content consumption. Such transformation has provoked researchers to examine how mass media is acclimatizing to the changes and redefining their roles in current society. Different research studies by Brown et al. (2021) have discovered the policies and strategies employed by mass media to keep pertinent and competitive in the age of digital media, it includes varying content formats, leveraging the social media, and accepting data-driven audience by using the targeting techniques. Moreover, different researchers have studied the inferences of the developing roles for several stakeholders, which include media professionals, advertisers, policymakers, and the public, shedding light on the

broader social, cultural, economic, and political consequences of the digital media revolution (Jones & Smith, 2023).

Mass media, which is distant and non-interactive, allows senders to reach a large audience simultaneously, but it lacks a channel for feedback between sender and receiver. Mass media comes in three main forms: print, broadcast, and support media. The term "broadcast media" describes electronic media, mainly radio and television, that send signals over the airways using wireless technology. Print media dispenses text and images; it typically takes the shape of magazines and newspapers.

On the other hand, any electronic medium that can connect to the internet and process data digitally is considered digital media. Digital media, which emerged from the convergence of phone and computer technologies, is notable for its built-in interactivity, which has captured viewers' attention since the internet's launch in the 1990s. This kind of interaction opens the door to direct communication between customers and marketers, which could lead to quick purchases. Because digital media is interactive, academics frequently refer to it as "Interactive Media" (Hongcharu, 2019; Smethers, 1998).

## **2. Literature Review**

Recent developments in communication technology and the expansion of the internet have opened up a hitherto unimaginable world of information transmission. It has become a part of people's everyday lives in ways that were previously unimaginable, especially on the internet. Since the 1980s, the internet has grown faster than any other form of communication. A new medium's introduction usually affects established media in several ways, such as audience base, credibility, and production techniques. The degree of freedom and space afforded to citizens on television, radio, and newspapers is determined by the government and/or ownership interests. On the other hand, citizens have unlimited access to the internet. 2019; Al-Garadi et al. People are now information producers and transmitters rather than merely passive recipients of one-way mass communication thanks to the news media. People can now independently produce news, voice their opinions, and discover opposing viewpoints thanks to this development. Because of this, the internet and news media are now far more relevant and well-liked in society. Conventional media outlets cover news stories based on the viewpoints of reporters who write pieces about individuals. Usually sourced from social media, these articles are also known as citizen journalism. An online news event, a different kind of media diagram, can be used as a model of experimental bias in the media in an emergency. This study describes the political news articles in India and their popularity, predicting the political bias in online media reports. This experimental report tests a list of news articles on online websites, including Wikipedia pages and URLs, as well as online news media, like Facebook pages and Twitter pages, in order to ascertain the popularity and identify biased news. There are more sources from different independent authorities in order to show the biased news articles. In online news, the general public is a major participant. When news reaches the same user repeatedly, people who trust online media don't investigate the source or the news itself; instead, they spread the word about the event (Ameli and Molaei 2020).

The false information has a significant impact on people's lives. It also has an impact on political beliefs. However, there are numerous media outlets and web portals in India that publish online news articles. Three Indian media outlets, Times Now Daily, Daily Nation, and others, are trustworthy and have published drab articles that manipulate public opinion to support traditional causes by appealing to emotions. Online news articles are often referred to as Asian news events due to their partisan editorial stance and story selection.

The media has changed significantly in the modern era because of internet and information technology. Due to the expansion of media, people are moving from offline to online social media. Citizen journalism is an online news event that results in a new media diagram. Websites, blogs, Twitter, and Facebook are examples of social media platforms that are important for online news events. Common people are also at the forefront of events in online news. Because people control online news, it tends to be more contentious than traditional media.

The public views online news articles as more trustworthy due to their online format. According to a survey, people are more likely to believe news about an event out of habit and to spread it similarly if they come across it repeatedly (Barnidge et al. 2019). People decide to spread the news rather than reading the online articles or finding out where the story originated. Because it spreads faster than the real news, this false information turned into breaking news. Generally speaking, this misleading information has been disseminated by some online sources in an attempt to either show online advertisements for profit or to highlight network traffic for hacking purposes. The word of the year for 2020, according to the Collins Dictionary, was "Fake News." A weapon against political opinions is fake news.

These days, identifying a biased fake news article on social media may be more difficult. Nonetheless, a few organisations, such as PolitiFact, Fact Check, and Snopes, keep an eye on current affairs and verify statements made about it. In India, biased media is far more common than liberal media. Media that is funded by the government usually favours the political party. Three categories of media coverage exist. Political leaders' attitudes are often described as statement bias, agenda bias in campaign strategy, and coverage bias in the government party by Indian online news sources (Bartley et al. 2016).

Traditional media presents news events from the viewpoint of the journalists covering them, whereas online media primarily depends on the public to spread news. Certain Indian online media outlets regularly disseminate factual data in favour of traditional causes in an effort to emotionally manipulate the public. The news articles are biased because of the editorial position, which constantly promotes a specific story, and the stories chosen. In India, the daily nation is mainly known as the biased Indian National Daily. This is just one of many publications that are similar. Bernhardt et al. (2020) claim that The Independent.ie, which specialises in news about India, the world, sports, business, travel, and entertainment, is the most divisive and biased online news source.

In 2020, a survey conducted by reporters ranked India 13th out of 180 countries based on media freedom. Michael Martin, the prime minister of India, is the leader of the Fianna Fail, which controlled a sizable chunk of the newspaper market. There are sometimes harshly worded stories published in the Indian media that are critical of the government. Every internet news source usually covers the campaign programme in India. The opinions and treatment of the ruling party and the candidates of the opposition parties are the main subjects of the news media. The campaign story covers categorise media bias into three categories. Statement bias, agenda bias, and coverage bias are the three categories of biases. In India, opposition parties and the ruling party are regularly compared in online media. In biased coverage, the government party's progress graph is frequently used to influence public opinion. The agenda-biased media, which also considers the party's size, political position, campaign strategies, and current standing, democratises the party's agenda. Statement bias includes the mindset and actions of political leaders who try to manipulate the public's emotions through emotion.

Among online news brands, The Journal.ie is the most read news website in India. Boddy (2016) claims that the news outlet provides daily digital news about entertainment, sports, and other

nations. Information technology is responsible for the quick distribution of news articles on the internet. In India, there are two types of traditional news articles: national newspapers published daily and weekly regional newspapers. The Indian news market is crowded with competition from numerous UK publications. India remains one of the European countries with the highest demand for print newspapers. According to a national newspaper survey, 91% of adults in India regularly read newspapers (Borger et al. 2019). Broadsheet and tabloid newspapers are the most popular formats for most widely read newspapers. Public service broadcaster RTE is ranked second in India for online news brands. Additionally, radio is a major component of online news articles. Radio transmission is still widely used in India. 83% of Indian adults listened to the news on the radio every day, according to a survey (Bowers 2020).

The Journal and Indian Central are just two of the numerous online news sources available in India, in addition to the media outlets and portals previously mentioned. In India these days, reading online news that combines thorough knowledge of current events with a high degree of trust in people has also become popular. Even so, there are still grounds for suspicion that some of those extensively read internet news articles are fraudulent. A journal claims that among Indian internet news brands, The Journal.ie is the most read news source. Daily digital news about sports, entertainment, and international news is available from the news brand. Many online news brands grew in popularity day by day. Yahoo News, Breaking News.ie, MSN News, Indian Independent Online, Guardian Online, and Yahoo News are these. The graph showed the brand of online news sources in India. Occasionally, the news brand presents a biased or fake news story. The news brand's main focal points will be the selected story, the attitude towards citizens, and the government (Breen et al. 2019).

### 3. Materials and Methods

The current study aims to provide a better understanding of the characteristics of digital and traditional mass media for marketing communication strategies by comparing and contrasting them. Finding the differences in the roles and functions that underpin media consumption trends and the resulting consequences is the aim of this research. It also examines how marketing communication applications for both types of media have evolved over time. In order to understand the current shifts in media consumption habits, this study focuses on the retrospective analysis of past events in both media. The current study compares and contrasts the amount of time spent on mass and digital media in Pakistan over the previous five years, demonstrating changes in the country's media consumption and usage habits. The study is qualitative in nature. A thematic analysis is conducted for the study. The following themes are noted:

1. Secrecy and Privacy.
2. Control of the Processing Speed of Information
3. Provision of Information Products and Services Directly
4. Information Processing Formats
5. Electronic Data Quality
6. Information Storage and Database Connections
7. Context Availability
8. Notifications
9. Synchronicity

#### 4. Comparison of the channel attributes between the traditional mass media and digital media

A comparative investigation of the channel features of the traditional mass media and digital media is held in detail. The current analysis involves the comparison of their respective channel attributes

to advance insights into the functions and advantages of each media. Such understandings are irreplaceable for marketers in developing effective marketing communication strategies.

### **1. Secrecy and Privacy.**

According to Eklund et al. (2021) secrecy refers to the extent to which a channel can conceal the identities of both the sender and the recipient. Various researchers are concerned about the issue of privacy, which they define as people's right to control the disclosure of their personal information (Westin, 1968). The proliferation of digital media, particularly in the Internet era, has led to a significant increase in social concerns regarding the gathering of people's digital information, which can include subtle and sensitive data like financial or health information (Ziegeldorf et al., 2013). There is a claim that the prevalence of digital media channels like SMS, social media, and mobile phones may be due to the absence of laws safeguarding consumers' privacy (Ahmed et al. 2019)

However, mass media does not permit the sender to conceal their identity from the recipient, in contrast to digital media. However, the mass media is also unable to pinpoint particular beneficiaries.

Digital media facilitates two-way, impersonal communication while allowing sender and recipient anonymity. Digital media platforms that are computer-based can protect users' privacy and anonymity. Nevertheless, since buyers and sellers might not be aware of one another's identities, electronic commerce presents difficulties for digital media in terms of anonymity. As a result, before any business transaction can take place, it becomes crucial to verify the identities of both parties.

However, consumers frequently give up their privacy and anonymity when it comes to mobile phone marketing. Based on their interactions and shared information on messaging apps, hackers and fraudsters can readily identify particular individuals (AFP, 2022). As a result, recipients give up their privacy and anonymity because callers can find them through a variety of databases. In addition, phones allow callers to converse with recipients face-to-face and instantly identify themselves by name, invading their privacy. Recipients can also tell who sent the message because the phone shows the caller's number.

### **2. Control of the Processing Speed of Information**

Media can be categorized into non-receiver-controlled and receiver-controlled media, as recipients can control the pace of information absorption (Belch & Belch, 2021). The receiver-controlled media denotes to platforms that afford users the ability to adjust the speed at which information is consumed. Print media exemplifies this category, where readers have the autonomy to determine how swiftly they peruse a newspaper or magazine. Here, the recipient exercises control over the rate of information processing.

Conversely, the non-receiver-controlled media differ from the receiver-controlled media in that recipients lack control over the tempo at which they receive information. They are unable to regulate the speed at which information is disseminated. Examples include radio and television, prominent forms of electronic mass media, where listeners have no influence over the pace of broadcasters' speech. However, most electronic media platforms offer online repositories, such as social media channels or YouTube, allowing audiences to revisit messages they may have missed due to the ephemeral nature of content.

This distinction between the receiver-controlled and the non-receiver-controlled media impacts how audiences interpret messages, as the capability to regulate processing speed affects the ease or difficulty of message comprehension and adaptation to individual comfort levels.

Recipients of digital media, irrespective of the mode of delivery, have the ability to adjust the speed at which they process information, making them receiver-controlled media. Digital media consumers are able to adjust the rate at which they take in information by replaying, speeding up, or slowing it down to their desired level. This property of receiver control applies to all digital information dispensation formats, with text, numeric data, audio, still photos, and video.

### **3. Provision of Information Products and Services Directly**

Insubstantial products and services that are free to deliver and store are referred to as information products and services (Hossen, 2021). These products, which are generally delivered via digital media, include text, e-books, and software. They can be quickly obtained through electronic commerce, enabling purchasers to download straight from vendors. Because it was so convenient, electronic commerce took off during the COVID-19 pandemic, when physical ordering was replaced by reliance on digital media. Customers have the option to either utilize delivery services for home delivery or download information products.

### **4. Formats for Information Processing**

Individual mass media platforms are limited to specific data formats rather than being able to process different types of data. For example, magazines and newspapers primarily handle text and static images, while radio broadcasts exclusively transmit voice. Television, however, can accommodate a broad array of data formats, including video and audio. These formats may exist in either analog or digital form. Nevertheless, digital media transcends these constraints by being capable of handling virtually any data format. This flexibility empowers users to utilize the formats that best suit their particular audience (Li & Liu, 2023).

### **5. Electronic Data Quality**

Before the digital era, electronic data underwent analog processing, which could result in signal quality degradation. Traditional analog broadcast media, such as radio and television, suffer from reduced signal quality as the audience distance from the broadcast station increases (Fischer, 2008). This issue has been mitigated with the advent of digital media, as digital processing consistently produces high-quality electronic broadcast signals. In the digital realm, recipients utilize a binary 0 and 1 digital processing system, enabling them to either receive a flawless signal or no signal at all.

### **6. Information Storage and Database Connections**

The mass media is not equipped to store information or combine databases from various sources. The ability to find, collect, and evaluate consumer data is essential in a time when marketers mainly rely on its accessibility. Conversely, digital media's capacity to link databases and store information enables users to access information more readily. Any digital data can be processed, stored, and retrieved by any digital media platform, facilitating its online delivery, transfer, and sale (Keller & Lima, 2021). Additionally, the widespread availability of information allows for the use of barcodes and QR codes for data storage and retrieval purposes.

### **7. Context Availability**

The context in which messages can be integrated is referred to as context availability. Marketers depend on media platforms when they can access the right context. Mass media present a multitude of contexts. For example, electronic media offer diverse programs tailored to various target audiences, allowing marketers to select suitable slots for airing their advertising messages. Similarly, print media provide diverse columns suitable for placing advertising messages. Even support media like out-of-home or transit media enable marketers to select contexts and environments conducive to the nearby audience. Context significantly influences the placement of advertisements. Research suggests that viewers exposed to ads after programs evoking negative

moods handle the ads less effectively compared to those after positive mood programs (Aylesworth & MacKenzie, 1998).

However, context is less readily available in digital media, encompassing websites, mobile phones, smartphones, emails, SMS, social media, and messaging apps. Messages may have less impact when squeezed into the same digital space. Nonetheless, marketers can still target specific demographics on websites and other digital platforms by selecting settings or contexts relevant to their target audience. The limited screen size of smartphones and other mobile phones poses a significant challenge. Nevertheless, marketers utilize mobile apps, which organize content into distinct icons, in an attempt to acclimate to the mobile environment.

### 8. Notifications/ Alerts

Users can receive notifications or alerts from digital media about new emails, posts on social media, messages, and content from mobile apps (Pielot et al., 2014). Digital media, as opposed to mass media, can alert users to messages from senders and draw their attention to them. This feature enables marketers to periodically inform their customers about various news and updates related to their brand.

### 9. Synchronicity

According to Liu and Shrum (2005), synchronisation is the capacity of the sender and the recipient to communicate in real time. As the sender and the recipient can both respond to the message at the same time, it symbolises the perfect form of human communication. Synchronicity is facilitated by two-way personal communication but not by one-way non-personal communication, such as that found in the media.

Initially, digital media delivered through computers experienced slight delays in interaction between both parties. Emails or SMS messages might not receive an immediate response if the sender does not check them promptly. However, with the advent of the smartphone era, this issue has been resolved. Receivers can now be promptly notified of any messages or calls, as digital media platforms have successfully integrated this feature from traditional telephone communication.

Channel Features	Traditional Mass Media	Digital Media
<b>Secrecy and Privacy</b>	Sender identity not concealed	Sender and recipient anonymity
	Recipients cannot be pinpointed	
<b>Control of Processing Speed of Info</b>	Non-receiver-controlled	Receiver-controlled
	Recipients lack control over pace	Recipients can adjust processing speed
<b>Provision of Info Products &amp; Services</b>	Limited delivery options	Digital delivery, download, or delivery
	Physical ordering necessary	
<b>Formats for Info Processing</b>	Limited to specific formats	Capable of handling various formats
	Text, static images, voice	Text, numeric data, audio, video
<b>Electronic Data Quality</b>	Signal quality degradation	Consistently high-quality signals



<b>Electronic Data Quality</b>	Signal quality degradation	Consistently high-quality signals
	Analog processing	Digital processing system
<b>Info Storage &amp; Database Connections</b>	Not equipped to store information	Can store, link databases
	Inability to combine databases	Retrieve and process data efficiently
<b>Context Availability</b>	Diverse contexts for placement	Limited context availability
	Ads placed based on target audience	Targeting specific demographics
<b>Notifications/Alerts</b>	Limited notification capabilities	Notifications for new content
	No alerts for messages	Periodic updates and news
<b>Synchronicity</b>	Limited real-time communication	Real-time communication

### 5. Developments in the use of Digital and Mass Media for marketing communication

Since their inception, mass media has served as a prominent platform for advertisements, with many relying solely on revenue from these commercials to sustain their operations. Newspapers and magazines sell advertising space, while radio and television stations offer advertisers airtime during their programs. Mass media are attractive because they can disseminate information, persuade, remind, and educate large audiences simultaneously, leveraging their ability to reach numerous individuals at once. From a marketing standpoint, mass media prove cost-effective due to their broad audience reach relative to expenses. However, one of their primary limitations is their one-way communication style, which restricts customer interaction with marketers and among themselves.

The emergence of the Internet ushered in the era of digital marketing communication. The advent of the World Wide Web enabled businesses to establish websites and engage in interactive communication with a global audience. It didn't take long for marketers to recognize the potential for interactive customer engagement. Studies have shown that email marketing, mobile devices, search engine optimization, and business websites all contribute positively to the long-term success of brands. According to Ahmed et al. (2019), the cost-effectiveness and lack of control over customer data have driven the popularity of these digital tools.

Initially, website marketing resembled conventional mass media advertising, with online advertisements such as banners, content sponsorships, and interstitials mirroring print media advertisements that consumers were accustomed to seeing. Marketers failed to fully capitalize on the interactive capabilities of the Internet.

As digital media evolved into Internet 2.0, community integration became central to interactions, fostering a diverse array of thoughts, opinions, assessments, and experiences. Today, marketing communication extends beyond interactions between businesses and customers to include stakeholders, the public, and other communication participants. This era also witnessed the emergence of "social media," encompassing platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, alongside the increased usage of messaging apps among smartphone users.

Marketers foresaw that mobile phones would revolutionize marketing communications, despite the initial challenge posed by screen size. This obstacle was overcome with the growth of mobile applications, enabling different companies to maintain a continuous presence on smartphone screens and ensuring ongoing contact with customers.

Digital media play an integral role in the evolution of all elements of the communication mix; they function as integrators alongside event marketing and word-of-mouth marketing. They facilitate bidirectional communication across all major components of the communication mix.

While mass media still hold sway over audiences, digital media are steadily gaining popularity. The current study of 1500 Pakistanis, found that television commercials remain the most attention-grabbing. Following this, online advertisements (30%), the social media advertisements (12%), radio advertisements (5%), outdoor advertisements (7%), newspapers (5%), magazines (3%), and other channels (20%) ranked in descending order of attention. Given that this data reflects shifting behaviors among users of both digital and mass media, it appears likely that digital media will soon surpass mass media as the preferred channel for marketers. Nonetheless, a variety of mass media channels continue to offer advertisers a reliable means of connecting with consumers.

### **6. Shifts in the usage of Media**

The amount of time that Pakistani spend watching television has changed over time. Since its launch, the amount of time spent watching television peaked in 2009–2010, averaging 8 hours and 55 minutes per day. By 2023, however, this percentage had dropped, with 50% of Pakistani spending one to four hours a day on television and 35% spending four hours or more. Notably, a significant portion of television viewers now access content through digital devices like laptops (20%), tablets (17%), desktop computers (13%), smartphones (25%), and others. Despite this shift, television continues to influence viewers' attitudes and behaviors, with individuals spending up to 290 minutes daily consuming print, broadcast, and support media combined.

The rise of the Internet has led to expectations that digital media consumption would eventually surpass that of traditional mass media. This anticipation materialized in 2018 when Pakistanis began spending more time on digital media than on traditional mass media for the first time. Presently, Pakistanis spend over seven hours daily on digital media, up from six hours and fifty minutes in 2020, alongside 331 minutes on traditional media overall (Guttman, 2023; Oberlo, 2023). This trend is expected to extend globally.

In addition to shifts in media consumption, it is predicted that a 6.84% increase in Internet users in the Pakistan between 2024 and 2028, reaching 340 million users by 2028. It is forecasted that an even more rapid rise in social media users, projecting a 7.4% increase over the same period, peaking at 331.09 million users by 2028. While the number of social media users may not match that of Internet users, their rapid expansion underscores society's demand for networking, communication, engagement, information sharing, and commerce.

The dominance of digital media over mass media is evident from the increased time spent on them, surpassing traditional media consumption in Pakistan. This trend is expected to persist globally, with Dixon (2023) forecasting 5.85 billion social media users worldwide by 2027, up from 2.73 billion in 2017.

A comparison between digital and mass media proves more insightful than merely examining user numbers and average time spent on media. It reveals shifting patterns in media consumption habits, with more time allocated to one medium and less to the other. The substantial usage of social media and the Internet by a significant portion of the population provides compelling evidence of this evolving trend.

### **7. Discussion**

A thorough assessment has been conducted on the time spent each day on digital and mass media, as well as the rising number of social media users worldwide, demonstrate the growing appeal of digital media. These insights provide compelling empirical evidence supporting long-held assumptions by marketers. This study stands out for being among the first to empirically validate the shifting trend it identifies.

Given these remarkable findings, our aim is to delve into the underlying causes driving the shift in media consumption patterns between digital and mass media.

### **7.1. Causes of the Change in Time Spent on Digital and Mass Media**

The observed changes in media consumption patterns between digital and mass media can be attributed to several key factors:

The convergence of telephone and computer technologies has played a pivotal role in the widespread adoption of digital media. The ubiquity of smartphones has empowered individuals to carry powerful computing devices in their pockets, facilitating easy access to digital content. With 6.899 billion smartphone network subscriptions worldwide in 2023, a number expected to reach 7.8 billion by 2028 according to Taylor (2023), the influence of digital media continues to grow.

The exponential increase in the use of digital media can be attributed to its user-friendly nature, particularly with smartphones and mobile devices. Factors such as acceptance, usability, and perceived benefits, as highlighted by Abbas et al. (2019), influence the widespread use of social media platforms and other digital mediums.

The portability of mobile phones has significantly contributed to the surge in digital media consumption. Marketers anticipated that mobile technology would revolutionize media consumption habits, as users can access the internet anytime and anywhere. Unlike less mobile mass media platforms like television and print media, the mobility of smartphones enables direct communication between marketers and consumers.

The adoption of digital media was further accelerated by the reliance on online platforms for information sharing and communication during lockdowns and social distancing measures. As more people turned to social media for online connections, industries increasingly relied on digital media to maintain engagement. While the pandemic briefly revived some traditional mass media platforms, such as radio and television, this resurgence proved temporary. Print media suffered as people stayed home, and concerns about physical distribution safety led to a decline in outdoor advertising.

As digital media evolved into Internet 2.0, the community was integrated into interactions, contributing a range of thoughts, viewpoints, assessments, and experiences. These days, marketing communication involves stakeholders, the public, and other communication parties in addition to interactions between a business and its customers. This phase also saw the rise of "social media," which included Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, in addition to the increasing usage of messaging apps among smartphone users.

Despite the screen size being a barrier, marketers expected mobile phones to revolutionise marketing communications. The creation of mobile apps offered a solution to this issue by enabling businesses to remain consistently visible on smartphone screens and guaranteeing that marketers were in constant communication with their clientele.

Digital media are integral to the growth of all components of the communication mix; they work as integrators alongside event and word-of-mouth marketing. They make it possible for all of the main elements of the communication mix to communicate in both directions.

Digital media are becoming more and more popular, but mass media still has a strong hold on viewers. According to the current conducted among 1500 Pakistanis, television commercials

continue to be the most captivating content. The next categories of advertisements are: online advertisements (30%), the social media advertisements (12%), radio advertisements (5%), outdoor advertisements (7%), newspapers (5%), magazines (3%), and other channels (20%) ranked in descending order of attention.

Given that the data reflects changing behaviours among users of both digital and mass media, it appears likely that digital media will soon surpass mass media as the preferred channel for marketers.

### **7.2. Factors that shape the changing roles of mass media in response to the rise of digital media.**

Marketers need to adapt their IMC strategies to suit the changing media consumption habits of consumers in order to effectively engage their target audience. Despite the fact that people are spending less time watching mass media commercials across a range of channels, data indicate that people are still paying attention to them (Commisso, 2022). By utilising insights from media usage patterns, it is evident that digital and mass media can collaborate to increase the effectiveness of communication campaigns (Shivya, 2020).

Mass media still plays a significant role in influencing social norms, values, and culture. It also has a significant impact on attitudes, perceptions, and behavior of individuals in society (Ghanta, 2021). Since mass media have been a part of people's lives for so long, they are hard for newer media platforms to replace and still hold a big social influence.

Therefore, this paper identifies factors influencing marketers' decisions regarding the allocation of their marketing communications budget between mass and digital media. These factors necessitate proactive adjustments to marketing plans based on evolving market dynamics encountered during communication campaigns.

The appropriateness of different media platforms contrasts based on the characteristics and preferences of miscellaneous consumer sections. It is required for the marketers to remain attentive of growing consumer behaviors, principally the rising prevalence of digital media consumption over traditional mass media. This is imperious for marketers to evaluate whether target audience's media usage aligns with the shifting tendencies. It has been seen in many cases, the pervasiveness of digital media consumption among targeted demographics stimulates different marketers to prioritize the digital media as principal communication tools to diminish dependence on mass media. So, it's key to know that mass media still serve as principal channels for positive customer sections, predominantly those with limited access to digital platforms.

It is important that the marketers face the challenge of choosing the most efficient media within budget limitations while planning the marketing communication budgets. Digital media classically propose less operational costs and can often be managed in-house, reducing reliance on external advertising agencies. On the contrary, the total costs related to mass media, joined with their ability to grasp broad audiences concurrently, can condense them monetarily exorbitant for many companies or products targeting niche audience sections. Consequently, for products aimed at smaller target clusters where effective budget allocation is perilous, mass media cannot be the most feasible choice. Nevertheless, for products targeting larger market sections, mass media can offer more effective reach as compare to digital media.

### **7.3. Functions of Media:**

Mass media fulfills crucial roles in informing, persuading, reminding, and educating society, often regarded as significant drivers of sociological change (Malamuth et al., 2000; Rubin et al., 2001; Sprafkin et al., 1975). Conversely, digital media, particularly the Internet, primarily serve as information repositories and search platforms (Rodgers & Thorson, 2000).

Digital and mass media serve similar purposes in terms of disseminating information. On the other hand, consumers of digital media actively participate by looking for and interacting with content, whereas consumers of mass media merely consume information passively. This proactive nature of digital media contributes to its widespread popularity.

While both mediums are capable of persuasion, digital media hold an edge due to their interactivity and mobility, enabling marketers to maintain closer proximity to their audience.

Additionally, both mass and digital media play crucial roles in brand recall, particularly for established brands. Consistent communication through media channels is essential for brand retention and relevance in consumers' minds.

Mass media primarily engage users cognitively and emotionally, whereas digital media facilitate interactive transactions, including purchases, due to their interactive nature. Some digital platforms also support electronic commerce.

Although marketing budgets are increasingly shifting towards digital media, mass media may still serve as additional channels to strengthen brand messaging and uphold consistency across different platforms. Historically, digital media reinforced mass media during their inception, guiding users to organizations' websites and providing extra content. Today, mass media may reciprocate this support by supplementing digital efforts to increase brand awareness, consciousness, knowledge, and preferences.

Mass media platforms like television, radio, newspapers, and magazines offer unique advantages for brand communication, from visual representation to comprehensive documented information, catering to various audience preferences. Moreover, marketers can leverage various support media, including outdoor, transit, mobile, and advertising products, to reach consumers in different settings and enhance brand exposure. The influential support of media provides marketers with opportunities for unexpected encounters with potential consumers, expanding market reach and increasing campaign effectiveness beyond digital media.

#### **7.4. Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)**

For IMC campaigns to be successful across the various components of the communication mix—public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, and publicity—both mass media and digital media are crucial.

Mass media traditionally served as the primary source for advertising due to their ability to reach broad audiences simultaneously, thereby reducing total costs for advertisers. However, with the emergence of digital media, marketers have shifted part of their advertising budgets to digital media to support IMC campaigns. By enabling interactive consumer engagement, digital media fill the void left by mass media's one-way communication, increasing consumer participation and brand interaction.

Historically, sales promotion heavily relied on print media for coupon publication. However, contemporary trends show a significant shift towards mobile marketing and social media, targeting specific customer segments or existing brand followers more effectively. Direct marketing strategies have evolved to leverage digital media platforms, such as the Internet and mobile marketing, for expedited customer engagement and order processing. Minority groups without internet or mobile phone access are now largely excluded from traditional mass media outlets for direct marketing, such as television and catalogues.

Mass media have traditionally served as core channels for public relations (PR), facilitating interactions between companies and the press. In the digital era, marketers increasingly connect with both press and customers directly through digital media channels such as websites and mobile apps. While some businesses still rely on traditional media for PR and publicity, others build their

credibility through influencer marketing and social media. Mass media support personal selling efforts by providing crucial awareness and knowledge, laying the foundation for customer education, persuasion, and brand recall. However, the interactive features of digital media improve personal selling by enabling salespeople to communicate directly with consumers through messaging apps and social media platforms.

### **7.5. Position throughout the COVID-19 outbreak**

Mass media was a useful first line of communication for public health officials to start large-scale health campaigns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital media—social media in particular—was essential in promoting accurate information and enabling one-on-one, two-way communication. Furthermore, digital technology empowered medical personnel to access information remotely, improving synchronicity in searching medical information and supporting telemedicine initiatives. In the business sector, internet and digital marketing campaigns are essential components of new approaches to revitalize industries, such as tourism, post-pandemic.

### **8. Conclusion**

Digital media has surpassed mass media in terms of popularity and audience engagement, according to data reflecting daily media usage trends and the growing number of Internet and social media users in Pakistan and around the world. Marketers can improve their marketing communication strategies by leveraging the unique advantages of mass media, given the evolving landscape of media consumption. Marketers must carefully evaluate all of the relevant factors before integrating mass media into their campaigns. The target market, the spending allotted to it, the characteristics of the media channels, and the possible behaviour are the most crucial factors. After the analysis of these variables, marketers can adapt their plans for the effective, operational and successful use of digital and mass media. Besides, it was used to enhance marketing communication activities, the markets must explore the diverse supplementary functions that the mass media can commence. Marketers can strategically combine communication elements to maximise the impact of their marketing communication budget, and create a strong connection with their target audience by combining digital and traditional media both. It is concluded that if digital and mass media are appropriately integrated, marketers may be able to interact and communicate with their targeted audience more effectively and efficiently. Marketers can also primacies their marketing communication strategies and acknowledge the evolving nature of media consumption habits by capitalising on the advantages of digital and mass media.

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