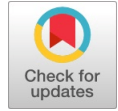


# The Development of Journalism in the Face of Social Media - A Study on Social Media's Impact on a Journalist's Role, Method, and Relationship to the Audience

Ayushi Jain, Ashok Kumar Meena



**Abstract:** This article explores how social media has changed journalism, with a particular emphasis on how it has affected reporters' roles, techniques, and interactions with audiences. Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have given journalists new opportunities as well as difficulties [1]. These platforms' introduction has sped up news cycles and moved the emphasis from in-depth reporting to quick, snappy content creation [2]. As a result of this change, journalists must learn to work in a faster-paced news environment and handle the challenges of information overload and source verification [vi]. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are used in this study. Ten journalists participated in in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data, which showed how social media has drastically changed traditional reporting practices by requiring a balance between accuracy and speed [12]. The spread of false information and the pressure to give sensationalism top priority in order to achieve high engagement metrics have been identified as major obstacles [13]. Variations in the frequency of audience interaction, the number of platforms used, and the reliance on social media for news sourcing are highlighted by quantitative analysis based on surveys of 250 journalists. According to the research, social media is heavily relied upon by journalists, with 27.2% of them utilising it for 41–60% of their news sourcing and differing degrees of audience interaction. "The ethical ramifications of social media in journalism are also examined in the study." While some journalists discover that social media improves audience engagement and speeds up the distribution of news, others worry about the detrimental effects on journalistic ethics and integrity. According to the study's findings, social media can increase interaction and immediacy, but it can also make it difficult to uphold ethical standards and accuracy.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Journalist, Relationship, Media Impact, Audience, Journalism, Etc.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Social media journalism is the contemporary method of collecting, producing, disseminating, and advancing news and information.

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Social media, as the name suggests, is crucial in this kind of journalism, which is characterised by its speed and responsiveness compared to conventional journalism [5]. However, it is prone to errors and often relies on public opinion rather than factual accuracy and truth. Social media journalism encompasses a diverse array of web-based applications, technology, and platforms utilised by journalists, agencies, as well as unemployed and non-professional bloggers, writers, and others. Its purpose is to generate content on various subjects and distribute it through social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

The era of social media is swiftly growing. Our phones provide us with quick access to news, and we often get alerts within minutes of an event happening, providing us with up-to-date information. The need for print editions of newspapers is declining as news becomes more accessible via our smartphones and other electronic devices [14].

### A. How has this Impacted Journalism?

The field of journalism has undergone significant transformations throughout history and is expected to undergo more evolution in the future. Journalists have had to adapt to the rapid advancements in technology and the prevalence of social media. However, it is important to consider the impact of these changes on traditional journalism [8]. Journalists no longer need to write lengthy pieces. Instead, they may highlight the key aspects of a story in a concise manner using a tweet, Instagram post, or Facebook post. The skill of storytelling has become obsolete; modern readers prefer concise and time-efficient reading materials to accommodate their busy schedules [13]. The practice of sitting down to read an entire newspaper has become increasingly rare. Readers now seek targeted information without the need to navigate through multiple pages. Social media platforms enable them to consume a narrative within a matter of minutes, if not seconds.

While social media has indeed had adverse effects on journalism, it has also ushered in several beneficial advancements for journalists. Journalists, with their unfettered access to research, may uncover links that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. The continual influx of information on social media creates an ideal environment for news to flourish. Twitter is an immensely effective platform for disseminating 'Breaking News' items, with a staggering rate of over 6,000 tweets being sent per second [18].



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However, it diminishes the longevity of news pieces, making these less significant until a writer has crafted a narrative from them.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Steensen (2011) [17]. asserts that social media and the internet have only facilitated the rapid dissemination of news from many sources. In the past, news was only accessible via limited articles, hourly broadcasts, and morning newspapers. However, today it can be accessed with only a single click of a mouse. The level of engagement has primarily facilitated accessibility for both producers and audiences, while also fostering a connection with the source where news is disseminated.

Safari, Amjad (2018) [16]. conducted a study that examined the perspectives of Jordanian journalists on the impact of social media on their profession and role in journalism. Multiple interviews are done to get insight into the journalist's viewpoint of their relationship with the reader. This research examines audience engagement, the increasing prevalence of personalised journalism, and the social media preferences of journalists. The inquiry presents divergent perspectives. The findings confirm the significant influence of social media on professions, with some individuals asserting that it has facilitated professional growth, while others see it as a disruption to their professional responsibilities.

Kuyucu, Mihalis. (2020) [7]. The potential for improved job opportunities in social media journalism lies in resolving the ambiguous ethical and sustainable practices and granting mainstream media and professionals increased independence to present their verified perspectives before uncertified citizen journalists. Implementing these action actions and regulatory changes will effectively remove the drawbacks and ethical quandaries in social media journalism, hence creating a plethora of new possibilities and facilitating improved information sharing for everyone.

Dr. Raghav Kumar Jha (2023) [3]. An empirical survey was carried out. The focus of the study was the metropolitan region, including the national capital and the National Capital Region (NCR). A total of 215 participants from diverse demographic backgrounds participated in the survey. In addition, interviews were held with eight prominent figures in the area of journalism. The individuals include executives from significant TV news channels, editors from notable newspapers and magazines, and esteemed media professors. The data obtained from this survey and interviews revealed some intriguing insights on individuals' perspectives of social media. The analysis of data provided a fresh perspective on this research investigation. Social media's significant impact on conventional media is attributed to its boundless space, rapid speed, and extensive reach. Whether it is in print or on television news outlets, social media has become essential for journalists. Due to the presence of interactive communication on this platform, news organisations now possess a more comprehensive understanding of their readers/viewers. Undoubtedly, social media, with its increased speed and responsiveness, plays a crucial role in modern journalism. However, it is typically inaccurate and often influenced by

public sentiment rather than verifiable information and reality. This refers to the negative aspect of journalism on social media, which involves the use of various web-based apps, technologies, and platforms by amateur bloggers, writers, and others with personal agendas to generate information on a broad range of subjects. Given this context, journalists have a challenging burden in obtaining trustworthy information. Nevertheless, journalists have a moral and professional obligation to verify the accuracy of every piece of information before incorporating it into the mainstream media. By doing so, individuals will not only synchronise with the current trends and provide valuable contributions to their print or broadcast media outlet, but also shield themselves from the inherent perils of social media. Adhering to this precaution will ensure that the social media revolution in journalism becomes a beneficial development for the mainstream media.

Matthias Degen et al. (2024) [10] provide an extensive literature analysis on journalism research that explores several dimensions of quality in social media. Using a comprehensive Scopus search, we identified 54 peer-reviewed publications written in English and published between 2015 and 2022. "These papers were then subjected to thorough textual analysis using MAXQDA. "Two significant conclusions arise from the study. According to the literature, journalists and media organisations should adjust their work routines, conventions, and values in a way that is appropriate to the specific situation while creating material for social media. Social media platforms compel journalists and media outlets to consider the expectations of their audience and devise tactics to interact with them by facilitating contact between many parties. Furthermore, the results emphasise that the social media activities of journalists vary based on their individual and organisational approaches to maintaining high journalistic standards on social media platforms. These results provide partial insights into the components of excellent journalism via social media. We want to stimulate more study in this field.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the article are stated as below:

1. To assess the ways in which social media has altered the conventional role of journalists, including modifications to their methods of reporting and interactions with audiences.
2. To determine the main obstacles, such as problems with accuracy and information overload, that journalists encounter when using social media as their main source of news.
3. To evaluate how social media affects journalistic ethics, taking into account elements like source verification, fact-checking, and the weight of social media metrics.
4. To investigate how reporters strike a balance between the requirements and expectations of social media platforms and conventional reporting techniques.



**IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the study's data collection. In-depth interviews and literature reviews are part of qualitative analysis, whereas surveys measuring journalists' use and opinions of social media are part of quantitative analysis. The sample size used for the research study is 250 respondents for the quantitative research and a group of 10 journalist respondents for the qualitative research aspect.

**V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

**A. Qualitative Analysis**

A group of 10 journalist respondents for the qualitative aspects of answering the questions, and the responses acquired are stated below in a collectively analysed format:

**B. Qualitative Questions**

*i. How has Social Media Transformed the Traditional Role of Journalists?*

The respondents reported that social media has fundamentally changed their traditional roles by speeding up the news cycle and changing their emphasis from in-depth reporting to quicker, more succinct content creation. Social media's immediate nature necessitates that journalists keep up to date, frequently at the expense of in-depth research in favour of speed. They must interact directly with their audience on social media, which means they are not only reporters but also content producers and community managers.

*ii. What are the Key Challenges Journalists Face when using Social Media as a Primary News Source?*

When using social media as a primary news source, respondents cited the prevalence of misinformation and the difficulty of verifying sources as the two biggest obstacles [9]. Journalists are under pressure to report stories quickly, sometimes at the expense of accuracy, due to the quick dissemination of unverified material. They also highlighted the difficulty in differentiating between reliable sources and those with ulterior motives, the elevated danger of prejudice, and the ongoing need to uphold journalistic standards.

*iii. How do Journalists Perceive the Influence of Social Media on their Relationship with the Audience?*

Respondents agreed that social media has improved communication between them and their readers by enabling quick responses and involvement. Because viewers can now directly influence news content with their responses and preferences, this has democratised the flow of information. Nevertheless, this also implies that journalists are more vulnerable to public opinion, which can occasionally result in the compromise of journalistic integrity in order to satisfy the demands of the audience.

*iv. In what ways has Social Media Changed the Ethical Considerations in Journalism?*

The group came to the conclusion that social media has created new ethical problems, especially with regard to the necessity of transparency and information accuracy. Because news is expected to be released quickly, there may be a tendency to emphasise sensationalism over substance and to neglect to thoroughly fact-check stories. Today's journalists

face the moral challenge of striking a balance between upholding strict standards of accuracy and dependability and the public's demand for rapid updates.

*v. How do Journalists Balance Traditional Reporting Methods with the Demands of Social Media Platforms?*

Respondents reported that it's a constant struggle to strike a balance between the demands of social media and traditional reporting methods. Many have taken a hybrid approach, saving in-depth analysis and long-form stories for traditional media formats and using social media for brief updates and teasers. They also emphasised the significance of time management and the necessity of sharing only certain types of content on social media in order to preserve credibility.

*vi. How has the Rise of Social Media Affected the way Journalists Verify and Fact-Check Information?*

The respondents said that the emergence of social media has increased the difficulty of fact-checking and verification. Because of the sheer amount of information available and the speed at which it disseminates, journalists must devise new techniques for rapidly confirming facts. While many journalists acknowledged that they cross-check their reporting using digital tools and a network of reliable sources, they also acknowledged that the rush to publish can occasionally cause compromises in the verification process.

*vii. In what ways have Social Media Metrics (E.G., Likes, Shares, Comments) Influenced Journalistic Content and Reporting Practices?*

Journalists reported that their reporting and content creation processes have been greatly impacted by social media metrics. More attention is now paid to creating content that has the potential to go viral due to the pressure to get likes, shares, and comments—sometimes at the expense of more significant but less dramatic stories. The nature and focus of news reporting may change as a result of this trend, which has also encouraged journalists to write for algorithms rather than just for the benefit of their readers.

**Table 1: Awareness of Social Media Crosstabulation**

	Aware of Social Media?		Total
	Yes	No	
Female	130	20	150
Male	95	5	100
Total	225	25	250

With 90% of respondents (225 out of 250) reporting familiarity with social media, the crosstabulation data on social media awareness shows that a sizable majority of respondents are aware of it. The percentage of respondents who indicated awareness, by gender, was 95% for men (95 out of 100) and 86.7% for women (130 out of 150). On the other hand, 10% of the sample as a whole (25 out of 250) did not know about social media; girls were more likely than men (5%) to fall into this category. According to this, there are minor differences in awareness between the sexes, with men exhibiting slightly higher awareness than women, even though awareness is generally high.



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**Table 2: Understanding about Social Media**

	What is Social Media?				Total
	Traditional Media	Media based on SNS	A part of Total Media	New Media	
Female	37	72	30	11	150
Male	29	53	14	4	100
Total	66	125	44	15	250

Respondents' perceptions of social media comprehension vary according to the data. 50% (125 out of 250) of respondents consider social media to be 'media based on social networking services (SNS),' suggesting a strong preference for sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In terms of gender, 53% of men (53 out of 100) and 48% of women (72 out of 150) agree with this statement. A slightly higher percentage of females (24.7%) than males (29%); however, consider social media to be 'Traditional Media,' accounting for 26.4% (66 out of 250) of the sample. Furthermore, 17.6% of respondents believe it to be 'A part of Total Media,' with females holding this opinion more frequently than males (14%). And last, 6% (15 out of 250) of the sample classify social media as 'New Media,' with a slightly higher proportion of women (7.3%) than men (4%). These results demonstrate different perspectives on social media; a sizable majority associate it with SNS platforms,

while others classify it under more general media headings [19].

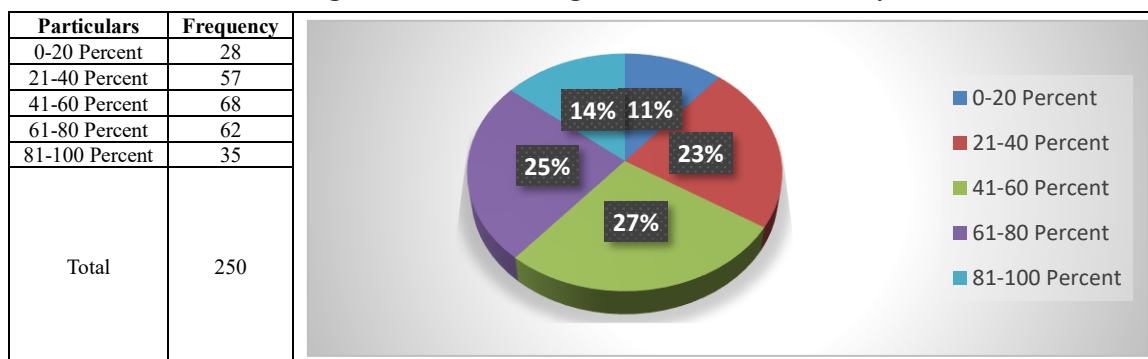
**Table 3: Social Media a Part of Journalism**

	Is Social Media Part of Journalism?		Total
	Yes	No	
Female	105	45	150
Male	68	32	100
Total	173	77	250

According to data regarding the inclusion of social media in journalism, the majority of respondents—69.2%, or 173 out of 250—agree that social media is an integral part of the field. Of these, 68 out of 100 males and 105 out of 150 females, or 70% and 68%, respectively, hold this opinion. On the other hand, 30% of female respondents (45 out of 150) and 32% of male respondents (32 out of 100) disagree that social media is a part of journalism, making up 30.8% (77 out of 250) of the sample. This shows that there are differences in opinions about how to incorporate social media into journalistic practices, even though a sizable majority of people in both genders acknowledge the importance of social media in journalism.

### C. Quantitative Analysis

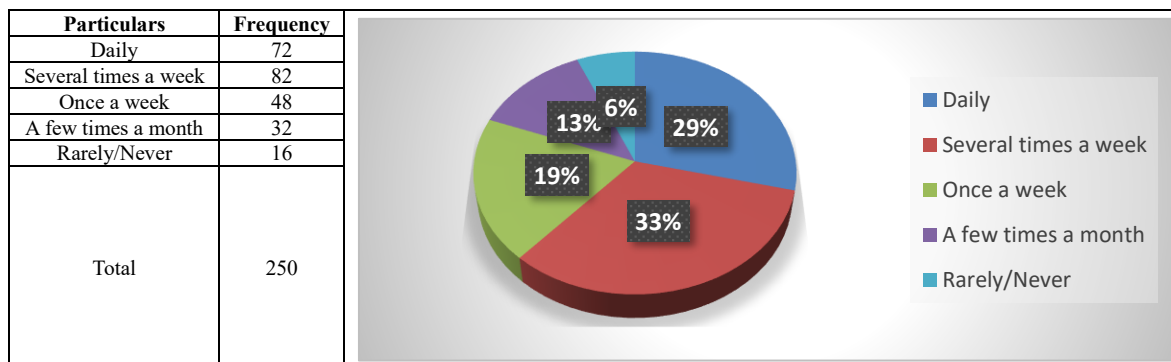
**Table 4: Percentage of Journalists using Social Media as a Primary News Source**



There are differences in the amount of reliance that journalists have on social media as their main news source, according to data on this topic. Significantly, 27.2% (68 out of 250) of the sample use social media for news sourcing, falling within the 41-60% usage range. Not far behind, 24.8% (62 out of 250) of journalists say they get their news mostly from social media between 61 and 80 percent of the time, indicating a greater reliance. In the meantime, 14% (35 out of

250) heavily relies on social media, with an 81–100% usage rate, and 22.8% (57 out of 250) use it 21–40% of the time. The remaining subset, 11.2% (28 out of 250), uses social media infrequently—between 0 and 20 percent of the time. This distribution shows that although many journalists use social media extensively for news gathering, there are significant differences in the amount of reliance amongst journalists.

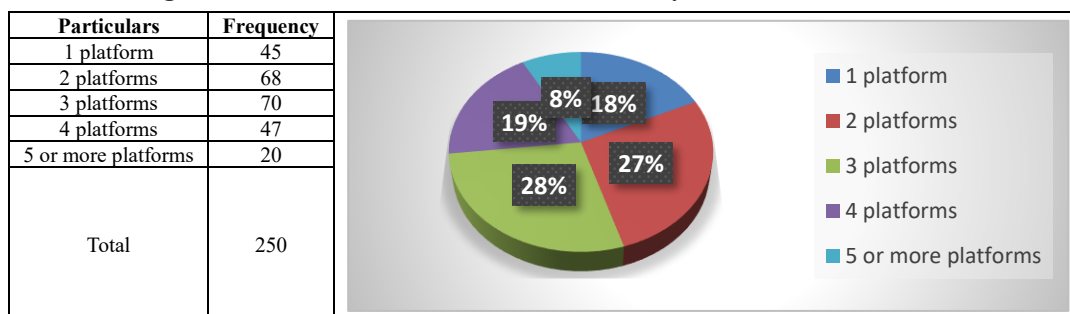
**Table 5: Frequency of using Social Media for Audience Interaction**



Data on the frequency with which journalists use social media to engage with their audiences reveals that this is a widespread practice, albeit one with differing levels of engagement [15]. 32.8% (82 out of 250) of the audience interacts with them multiple times a week, which suggests a regular but not daily level of engagement. Closely behind, 28.8% (72 out of 250) of journalists use social media to interact with their audience on a daily basis. Furthermore,

12.8% (32 out of 250) interact a few times per month, compared to 19.2% (48 out of 250) who do so once a week. 6.4% (16 out of 250) of the sample is smaller and uses social media infrequently or never at all for audience interaction. These data imply that although a sizable percentage of journalists regularly interact with their readers on social media, the frequency varies, with a sizable portion maintaining regular, if irregular, interaction.

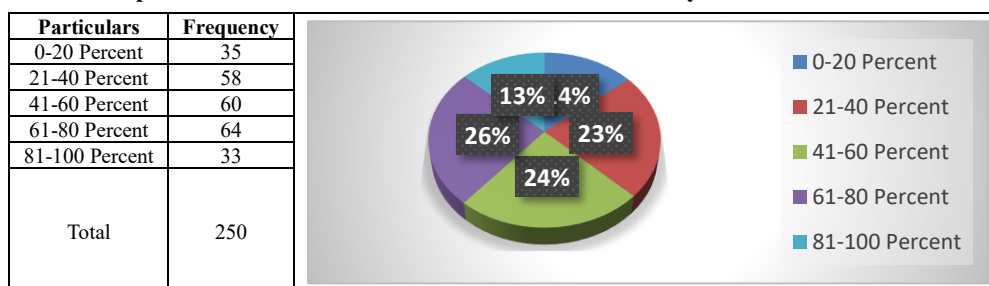
**Table 6: Average Number of Social Media Platforms used by Journalists for News Dissemination**



A wide variety of platforms are used, according to data on the average number of social media platforms that journalists use to disseminate news. The majority of the group, 28% (70 out of 250), uses three platforms, indicating that many journalists would rather spread their news through a variety of social media platforms. 18% (47 out of 250) and 27.2% (68 out of 250) use two and four platforms, respectively, in close succession, suggesting a significant reliance on multiple platforms for audience outreach. In contrast, 18% of

respondents (45 out of 250) only use one platform, which suggests a more targeted approach to social media interaction. A smaller percentage (20 out of 250) utilises five or more platforms, indicating a broad and varied use of social media for the distribution of news. According to this data, the majority of journalists use a variety of platforms, but the exact number varies, with many choosing to strike a balance between manageability and diversity.

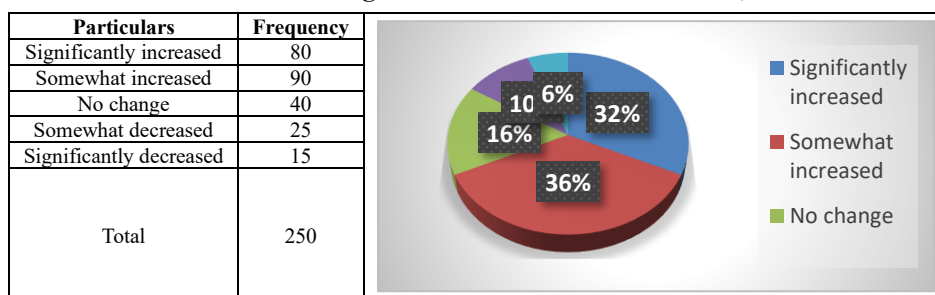
**Table 7: Proportion of News Stories Influenced or Initiated by Content from Social Media**



The percentage of news stories that are inspired or influenced by social media content reveals a range of effects in the journalism industry. The most common range is 61-80%, and according to 25.6% of journalists (64 out of 250), social media content influences a sizable portion of their stories. The range of 41-60% is closely behind this, with 24 percent of journalists (60 out of 250) indicating a moderate level of influence. Furthermore, 14% (35 out of 250) report having little influence, falling between 0 and 20%, while

23.2% (58 out of 250) report having an influence between 21 and 40%. Thirty-three out of 250, or 13.2%, show a very high level of influence; 81-100% of their stories were inspired by or influenced by social media content. This distribution implies that while social media plays a major role in the news production process for many journalists, the degree to which it does so varies greatly, with some journalists depending more heavily than others on social media [20].

**Table 8: Audience's Trust in Journalism Changed with the Rise of Social Media, Measured over the Past Decade.**

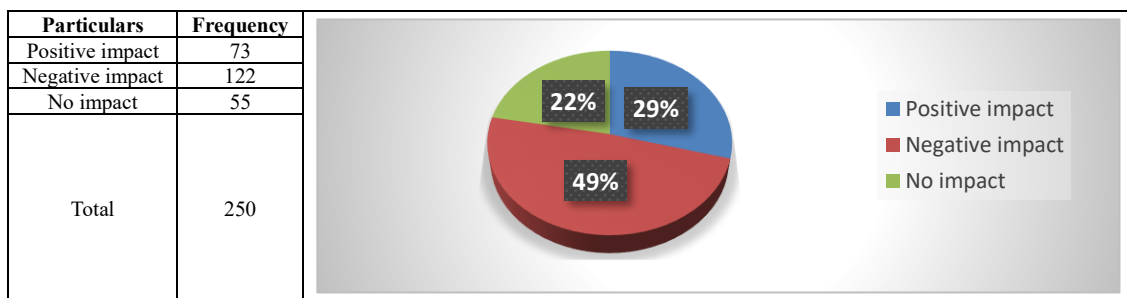


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The data on how the audience's trust in journalism has changed with the rise of social media over the past decade reveals a mixed but generally positive trend [21]. A significant portion, 36% (90 out of 250), reports that audience trust has somewhat increased, indicating that social media has had a generally favourable impact on how journalism is perceived [22]. Additionally, 32% (80 out of 250) believe that trust has significantly increased, suggesting that many in the audience view the integration of social media into journalism positively [23].

However, 16% (40 out of 250) of respondents feel that there has been no change in trust levels, indicating that for some, social media has neither enhanced nor diminished their trust in journalism. On the other hand, 10% (25 out of 250) report that trust has somewhat decreased, and 6% (15 out of 250) believe it has significantly decreased, highlighting concerns among a smaller segment of the population about the potential negative effects of social media on journalistic integrity. Overall, the data suggests that while social media has generally boosted trust in journalism for many, there are also notable concerns that need to be addressed.

**Table 9: Impact of Social Media on Journalistic Ethics (E.G., Fact-Checking, Source Verification)**



Data on how social media affects journalistic ethics, especially when it comes to things like source verification and fact-checking, indicates that journalists generally have a negative opinion of it [24]. Concerns about the difficulties social media presents in upholding traditional ethical standards are evident from the nearly half of respondents (48.8%, or 122 out of 250) who feel that social media has had a negative impact on journalistic ethics [11].

However, 29.2% (73 out of 250) believe that social media has a positive impact on ethics, indicating that some journalists value the tools and resources that social media offers for source verification and fact-checking. However, 22% (55 out of 250) say there has been no impact, meaning that social media hasn't improved or worsened journalists' ethical standards. All things considered, the data shows a great deal of worry regarding the moral dilemmas that social media presents, even as it also recognises the possible advantages and neutral consequences that some in the industry believe to exist [25].

### VI. CONCLUSION

The emergence of social media has drastically changed journalism, altering journalistic roles, reporting techniques, and audience interactions [1]. There are benefits and drawbacks to this change towards a news environment that is more immediate and interactive. Social media raises questions about the veracity of information and the moral standards of journalism, even as it facilitates the quicker distribution of news and increased audience interaction [4]. The need to create content quickly and the possibility of false information spreading have grown to be serious problems that threaten the ethics and standards of traditional journalism.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, social media presents journalists with excellent chances to engage their readers in fresh and significant ways. Direct reader interaction and real-time feedback collection can improve the impact and relevance of news coverage. But as this environment changes,

journalists need to be very conscious of the ethical ramifications and make sure that engagement and speed don't compromise on veracity and accuracy. Maintaining the fundamental values of journalism while taking full advantage of social media's advantages is necessary in order to adjust to these developments [7].

### A. Future Direction

Future studies should examine how journalists in the social media era can successfully strike a balance between accuracy and speed. Examining methods for enhancing information verification and thwarting disinformation could yield insightful information for upholding journalistic standards. It will also be critical to look at how social media affects media literacy and public trust in journalism over the long run. Ongoing research is necessary to handle new opportunities and challenges in the journalism industry as social media keeps changing.

### DECLARATION STATEMENT

After aggregating input from all authors, I must verify the accuracy of the following information as the article's author.

- **Conflicts of Interest/ Competing Interests:** Based on my understanding, this article has no conflicts of interest.
- **Funding Support:** This article has not been sponsored or funded by any organization or agency. The independence of this research is a crucial factor in affirming its impartiality, as it has been conducted without any external sway.
- **Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate:** The data provided in this article is exempt from the requirement for ethical approval or participant consent.
- **Data Access Statement and Material Availability:** The adequate resources of this article are publicly accessible.
- **Authors Contributions:** The authorship of this article is contributed equally to all participating individuals.



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