

News Dissemination through Facebook: A Study on Content, Context, and Digital Readers' Engagement

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Abstract: Technological advances have transformed news production, distribution, and consumption, with a vital role in information dissemination through social media. This study examines how three types of Bangladeshi news media use Facebook to disseminate news and engage digital readers. Analyzing 2,534 posts, the study identifies seven forms of news distribution, with hyperlink (46.72%), photo-texts, and recorded videos comprising 86% of usage. While hyperlink posts were most frequent, live videos, recorded videos, short videos (reels) and photo-texts generated the highest user engagement measured by interaction metrics on Facebook. Electronic media led the way in sharing effective visual forms, whereas print media lagged behind. Among 25 news themes, politics dominated (19.18%), followed by sports, entertainment, and education. The findings highlight the growing perseverance of visual content in social media journalism in Bangladesh..

Keywords: News, Dissemination, Facebook, Readers, Engagement

1. Introduction

With the development of internet technology, people's lives and entertainment methods are undergoing major changes. Within a couple of hours, people have access to incidents happening in any corner of the world only because of the internet which is now turning out to be an effective medium for disseminating information. Technological advancements, especially the internet change the mode of news production, dissemination and consumption. News organizations face challenges in their offline cable network delivery and readership since today's news outlets often share their news via social networks in line with marketing and readership patterns. Therefore, media outlets including traditional news disseminators have to make corresponding plans and changes. As a social networking site, Facebook, has become the most popular medium in the globe and Bangladesh too and its growing influence in information dissemination has brought about a change in the dissemination and consumption of news across media (Statistia, 2023 & Prothom Alo, 2020). Today, social media is not

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only a “source to journalists but also an important part of news distribution and consumption” through online platforms. (Bunz, 2010, as cited in Rahman et al., 2018, p. 36). The graph of news consumption through social media is increasing over time worldwide as the percentage of people using social media to get news has increased from twenty-two to thirty percent in recent years. Meanwhile, the number of people who use direct news websites or apps is decreasing remarkably (Newman, 2023). So, social media is becoming significantly important for consuming and distributing news.

Some years ago, media scholars predicted that during the last decade, “searching for news was a significant development, and in the next decade, sharing news may prove to be equally significant.” (Olmstead et. al. 2011, p. 10). In today’s world, social media have become an integral part of news dissemination and ingestion, so media outlets cannot ignore these platforms. Furthermore, the ease and convenience of Facebook tools for posting news content facilitate both media houses and individuals to share news, resulting larger response from audiences (Mitchell & Page, 2014). It is a general phenomenon to share published news content from printed newspapers, broadcasts and online portals instantly via Facebook. To cope with the new dimension of news dissemination and consumption, media outlets utilize Facebook to distribute news and reach digital readers, thereby spreading news content more broadly. This study aims to identify the strategies employed by news outlets to share published news content on Facebook, the themes that dominate the news items shared, the types of news stories disseminated most frequently, and how digital audiences interact with various types of news items shared through social media. And, last but not the least, a comparative study is needed on media outlets’ strategies to share news and attract readers.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Distributing published news content via social networking platforms has drawn increasing attention from global scholars and regulators (Meese & Hurcombe, 2021a). In response to social media’s algorithm changes, media outlets have recently started to diversify their distribution strategies and business models (Meese & Hurcombe, 2021b). Also, the growing perseverance and popularity of Facebook drive news media companies to share their news stories via the platform to reach out to more readers, viewers and consumers, etc. and understand customers’ feedback through their reactions to news posts. In Bangladesh, among various social media, such as Facebook, X, and YouTube, Facebook is the most popular medium, and also “among the top three nations contributing to Facebook’s active user growth is Bangladesh.” (The Daily Star, 2023). Besides, the official Facebook page of a print media outlet *Prothom Alo* secured first the position among the top ten newspaper pages in the world (Prothom Alo, 2020). The page has

reached out to a large number of followers within a short time since its inception, which helps the media organization stay connected with this large audience easily. According to a study, about 31 percent of Facebook users utilize the platform to get their news which is higher than any other social networking sites like YouTube (25%) and Twitter (14%), Instagram (13%)” (Pew Research – social media and news fact sheet, 2022).

Dissemination of news content through social media is defined as “Disseminating news content with a defined group of people through a social network, such as disseminating or recommending it” (Kalsnes & Larsson, 2017, cited in Kumpel et al., 2015; p.2). News media outlets use Facebook to share their news content in various formats, such as image, audio, video, link, etc., facilitated by the meta-authority. Different media outlets take different strategies to share their content to get more responses from users. The outcome of some studies on content sharing via social networking sites emphasizes speeding up the under-researched project (Rawi, 2017a) worldwide to get significant insights. But, the contribution of Facebook to news content sharing has not come to light due to the lack of sufficient academic attention in Bangladesh so far. So, a rigorous study needs to investigate the usage of Facebook in distribution of news stories specifically to analyze the strategies followed to share news on Facebook, sort out prevalence themes, do comparative analysis of shared news items on Facebook, and understand the audience’s feedback by studying their reactions, comments and shares to news content. Hope this primary study will shade some light on this knowledge gap.

1.2 Aims and objectives of the study

This research aims to understand the role of Facebook in disseminating news and how digital readers interact with news disseminated. The specific objectives are to

- a. examine the format of news content shared on Facebook by news media outlets;
- b. identify the dominant themes of news content shared on Facebook;
- c. analyze the engagement behaviors of digital readers with forms of news posts through interactive metrics;
- d. do comparative analysis of news sharing patterns on Facebook by media outlets.

2. Literature Review

To exercise professional efficiency and effectiveness, various industries including journalism change their working patterns to keep updated with new dimensions of technological advancement. Different types of usage of social media in journalism impact news selection, formation, presentation, and news dissemination (Paulussen, 2016, as cited in Hossain et al., 2022 a). A

study titled “Influence of Social Media in the Practice of Journalism in Bangladesh” (Hossain et al., 2022b) found various purposes of social media usage. The study shows that the majority of respondents (98%) use Facebook in journalism to share news. The study also reveals that 85% of the respondents agree that they get maximum feedback from Facebook. Media houses especially journalists share their published news on Facebook to interact, promote particular media activities, and accelerate audience awareness in accordance with the study findings. Kumpel (2015) also found the same result that most journalists use Facebook for sharing news.

Ahmed Al-Rawi (2017b) conducted a study titled “News values on social media: News organizations’ Facebook use.” The study found that in most cases administrators of the Facebook pages of the respective news outlets post the news headlines, hyperlinks, video links or photos accompanying the news article to promote its news organization. Sushobhan Patankar (2016) also conducted a primary study on “Facebook as Platform for News Dissemination, Possibilities of Research on Facebook in Indian Context” and found that *Aaj Tak* posted 294 posts on an average in a year whereas *Times Now* posted 23 Posts and *ABP Majha* 117 Posts. This result indicates that Facebook is an emerging platform for news-sharing. The study on “News Content Sharing on Social Media; Distribution or Demonstration? A Comparative Study of Nepali and Norwegian Newspapers” conducted by Bimala Thapaliya (2022) found that nowadays traditional media actively employ cross-media platforms for news dissemination. Sharing news stories from offline-print newspapers all-time available Social Networking Sites (SNS) blurs the boundaries of time and location. The Nepali and Norwegian newspapers utilize Facebook for sharing news to maintain their digital dominance. From the review of the literature, it can be claimed that news sharing on social media is a time-befitting research topic. However, it is a fact that only a limited number of academic studies have been conducted in this related field. In the age of modern technology and convergence media, media content can be produced in various formats to draw users’ attention largely. Therefore, various forms of content have different appeals to audiences. To distribute news through Facebook what types of forms are used and how readers respond to those and identify dominant themes of news that are distributed on Facebook requires investigation. This study aims to address this gap and hopes to contribute valuable insights to both the academic and media fields.

3. Theoretical Framework

To investigate the aims and objectives, this study employs three consistent theoretical concepts of mass media research. These three concepts will help to analyze qualitative data. Data analysis and discussion based on the theoretical framework add significant insights to the research findings.

3.1 Media convergence

As technological developments influence media outlets to bring changes in their working system, so “convergence” term in the media industry is strongly relevant. In the media converging system media outlets speed up the production and dissemination of information by merging with multimedia platforms. Jenkins (2006) describes the convergence of media as the way to integrate traditional and new media for convenient information dissemination. The concept of media convergence can be defined as a process of amalgamation media outlets like print and broadcast media with interactive internet and digital technologies such as Facebook. The process of multimedia news production and dissemination generally involves generating and combining news across various formats, including text, image, video, audio-visual, infographic, and hyperlinks etc. (Deuze, 2007). The theory seems relevant to the study as the present news media organizations in Bangladesh have produced news content in different forms to share on Facebook which ultimately supports the claim that media outlets are increasingly turning to social media platforms for news distribution.

3.2 Cross-media

Though the terms Media Convergence and Cross-Media are related but they are different in their usage. Media convergence mainly indicates different media's integration in news content production and distribution but Cross-media refers to the strategic integration of various media platforms to effectively reach a broader audience and provide consumers with a more immersive and interactive experience. So, it can be said that cross-media is a specific application of convergence media. Due to the term of media convergence, news content travels across media barriers without end. The cross-media refers to a practice of content production and dissemination where two or more media are involved in an integral way (Edral, 2008, cited in Thapaliya, 2020). The advent of social media has led to a remarkable change in world news production and consumption policies in the 21st-century networked society.

3.3 Framing theory

From production to dissemination, every media outlet follows the framing concept based on its media policies and business. Framing indicates content selection, emphasizing, and presenting in ways that shape how audiences perceive an issue, its underlying causes, and possible solutions. Pan and Koisicki (1993) describe frames as ‘cognitive windows’ through which stories are ‘seen’. In framing, the focus is to make content stand out by placing more information than others, so that the audience is more focused on that content. According to Entman (1993), “Framing is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a media image or communication text”.

In this study, the media convergence term elucidates the increasing incorporation of print, electronic, online and and social networking platforms. In convergence form, different elements of different media outlets like text, image, audio and video merge to distribute media content through social media. Further, the cross-media concept explains the current transition in newspaper dissemination through Facebook in a way that attracts the audience largely and, frames the analysis of the process of making and distributing news content in the vast reality. These three theoretical frameworks can examine the study's aims and objectives in a structured way.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Nature of the study

This research, descriptive in nature, applied a content analysis approach using both qualitative and quantitative procedures to collect and analyze data, following the stated research problems.

4.2 Sampling and data collection

The Facebook pages of all media outlets were the study population. In response to the research objectives, three official Facebook pages of print, electronic and online media outlets were chosen, using the purposive sampling technique. In terms of monthly unique visitors or Facebook engagement ranking, the three official Facebook pages namely Prothom Alo, Jagonews24.com, and Somoy TV were ahead in ranking among all media outlets' official Facebook pages. Their monthly unique visitors 33.2 million, 9 million, and 3.7 million respectively (Media Survey, 2022). So, the three media outlets were selected as the study sample. Applying the content analysis approach, primary data were collected from these three news media's Facebook pages for seven days from November 30, 2023 to December 6, 2023. Questions could be raised about whether enough representative data to get significant findings from the study analysis have been obtained. But the researcher thought that seven days for representative data collection is good enough to understand the study aims and objectives as every news outlet shares about 120 news posts every day. And by summation of seven days' data, there were a total of 2520 representative data which were enough to address the research objectives.

4.3 Data analysis and presentation

In this study, applying the content analysis approach, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined to interpret the forms, themes, and readers' engagement metrics of news items shared on Facebook pages. The Content analysis method involved summarizing news posts on Facebook pages by coding and then forming individual themes by grouping similar codes into categories. A theme-based categorical analysis of the data was processed statistically (Ahuja, 2001). Microsoft Word and Excel 2019 have

sped up the analysis, tabulation, and management of data. Simple statistical measures, such as averages and percentages, are used, and tables and figures are employed to present the analyzed data.

5. Findings and Discussion

The study, following the content analysis technique, had gathered substantial data to analyze the problem statement. Data analysis found some important findings that have been presented structurally, following the research objective (s).

5.1 Nature of news content disseminated on facebook

Media outlets use their official Facebook page to make connections with different digital readers by sharing their news content in different ways. The study findings indicate that the media outlets which was taken as the study sample had shared news content (N=2534) on Facebook pages using seven forms like Status, Image, Hyperlink, Photo-Text, Video (recorded), Reels (short recorded video) and Live (video). As shown in Figure 1, the Link form was the most used strategy to disseminate news content through social media among the seven forms which is 46.72 % of the total news content. The next toll of the nature of sharing news content was Photo-text (20.48%) followed by Video (19.22%), Status (7.93%), Reels (4.42%), and Live (video) form (0.91%) and the Image form (0.32%) was the lowest strategy to share news on Facebook. These various strategic forms of news sharing on social media are outcomes of media convergence and the evolving cross-media landscape. Elements such as links, images, photo-texts, and videos originate from different media platforms—print, electronic, and digital. When used strategically, these components represent a fusion of media convergence and cross-media communication concepts.

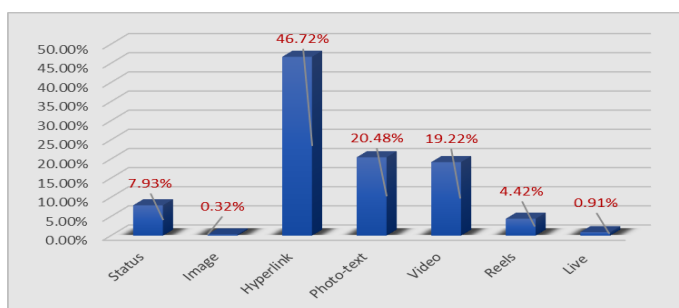


Figure 1: Forms of News Dissemination through Facebook (N=2534)
(Source: Content Analysis, 2023)

- i. **Hyperlink:** The hyperlink form of sharing news transforms Facebook pages from mere endpoints into gateways to the broader internet, enabling news media to connect users to their official websites through click-throughs. The usage of the hyperlink form in

disseminating news on Facebook is the highest (1184) in number as Table 1 indicates. This is because generating this form is easier than others. In digital systems, when a media organization publishes news content on its official website, a hyperlink is generated automatically. This link can then be easily shared on social media platforms to facilitate wider distribution of the news. To reach larger audiences media outlets do not take only link share strategy but also use #Hashtag which was first introduced by X (Twitter) in 2007 then followed by Facebook. This powerful tool for social media, which turns topics and phrases into clickable links in posts, helps the audience to find posts on Facebook. Using relevant hashtags to share news articles on Facebook can make it much easier for users to discover media outlets’ relevant content and reach a large audience. (Facebook, 2016 & Kalemi, 2023). The use of hashtags and hyperlinks simultaneously is the result of the convergence media concept applied in a different way merging with the cross-media approach.

- ii. **Photo-text:** There is a saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. If a statement is considered positively regarding the dissemination of news content through Facebook, then the form Photo-text is crucial. Photo-text means designating relations of the visual and verbal. A Facebook post with photos consistently leads to higher engagement on social media (Li & Xie, 2019). Moreover, there is a positive correlation when photos and texts blend together for sharing information. Particularly news themes such as politics, sports and entertainment having photos can be strongly linked to the news texts (Cheema et al., 2023). For this, media outlets use photo-text mostly as shown in Table 1 to share their news articles on Facebook. Sharing news on Facebook by using the photo-text form widely, the second largest usage among other forms, indicates the significance of this form to engage news-lovers mostly.

Table 1: Nature of Disseminating News on Facebook (N=2534)

Nature of disseminating news on Facebook	Number of disseminated news posts on Facebook
Hyperlink	1184
Photo-text	519
Video (recorded)	487
Status	201
Reels (recorded short videos)	112
Live (video)	23
Image	8

(Source: Content Analysis, 2023)

Inscribing text on photo media outlets creates the photo-text form where photos and texts are mainly related to news, to share information shortly about a particular event, in which photos play a significant role alongside texts to draw audience's reaction. Audiences interested in getting detailed information should read the comments section where a hyperlink is shared to go to the main website of the news outlet. As the photo text is a blend of multiple media outlets, it is called media convergence and cross-media application.

- iii. **Video (recorded):** In the new media age, virtual people engage themselves virtually with audio-visual platforms to get a clear sense about news content, using their organs. According to Marshal McLuhan (1964), Television (audio-visual media) is a cool medium where people can use their multiple (two-eye and ear) organs to get a clear sense about media content. So, media outlets can use video content, like audio-visual platforms, to share news on Facebook with more visibility. Table 1 reveals that video form marked the third toll of form usage in sharing news stories on the Facebook platform by media houses. Citing visuals as the most effective form of information sharing in social media, a study found videos of any product (school) affected students' decisions as visuals help to get a better sense of any content (environment) [(Blanco et al., 2010, as cited in Moltaji, 2018a)]. Media organizations like print, electronic and online media outlets form their news story with audio-visual and even audio-video-text. Data also indicate that not only audio-visual but also audio-visual-textual (text use with #hashtags) form is used by the media outlets to find relevant news stories and reach a wider news consumer society through Facebook. The audio-visual-textual storytelling can be referred to as multimedia or cross-media and convergence media.
- iv. **Status:** Textual message on social media varies with regard to the user engagement (Blanco et al., 2010, as cited in Moltaji, 2018b). Textual information talks about the products and characteristics in words which is less engaging on Facebook (Leung & Erdem, 2017, as cited in Gkikas et al., 2022a). But, text messages are easier to process and easy to read, hence textual information can draw large users on social media (Lee & Aaker, 2004; Lee & Labroo, 2004, as cited in Gkikas et al., 2022b). Table 1 shows that only 201 shared posts on social media were in status form. In other words, the status posts about any news stories on Facebook give primary information. For details, users are asked to click on the hyperlink shared in the comments section.

- v. **Reels (recorded short video):** Reels, comparatively a new feature of social media platforms brought by Facebook in 2021, is a short-length video created with music, audio, camera angles, artificial effects, etc. There is almost a similarity between these audio-visual contents but the length of the videos is shorter than those available on Facebook, which allows videos to last up to 90 seconds. As Table 1 shows, the alley of Reels form of news sharing via Facebook is in fifth position as 112 news posts out of 2534 news content are shared by the media outlets. These short videos regarding news content are generated where celebrities, renowned politicians and top-of-the-town or country topics, etc., are involved in news content directly. Media outlets take the facilitation of the popularity of celebrities and political personalities to share their news massively by using them in short videos circulated on Facebook pages. Sharing news content with Reels videos, media, to some extent, use Hashtags and URL links to provide detailed information on that news.
- vi. **Live (video).** Unlike video, live (video) form of news sharing on Facebook is a real-time reporting. Live is a feature of the Facebook platform that allows users to telecast content directly or prerecorded. As shown in Table 1, the three official Facebook pages of media outlets shared only 23 news items out of 2534 as Facebook posts in live form which is very low in terms of other forms' usage. The study also finds that a news bulletin consists of some news stories that are pre-recorded videos shared via the Facebook Live feature and in some cases, real-time reporting shared via Facebook Live.
- vii. **Image:** Although an image is compared to a thousand words, how much is this relevant in news stories that are disseminated on Facebook? News stories do not consist only of images rather it is comprised of text, images, and videos in today's multimedia journalism practice. For this stance, Table 1 reveals that among 2534, only 8 posts of sharing news on Facebook were in image form. Images related to news stories shared on social media with captions provide information just on a part of a news story. On the other hand, an image is worth a thousand words and results in greater audience engagement on social media. (Li & Xie, 2020 b).

5.2 Themes of news items shared on Facebook

Data collected through the content analysis approach had been categorized based on news story themes and beats reporting. The study findings reveal that twenty-five (25) main themes of news items that were posted on Facebook by the three media outlets had been identified. As shown in Figure 2, news on the Political themes dominated the disseminated news through Facebook pages which was 19.18 % of the total news items that were

distributed. Sports news (12.98 %) was the second most shared news on Facebook Pages and 8.68 % of total news on Entertainment was shared on the social medium platform as the third most followed by Educational (6.91%), Business and Economic (6.83%), Crime (6.59%), Administrative (3.99%), Weather (3.95%), Law, Justice and Parliamentary (3.71%), and the other news stories shared on the Facebook Pages include chronologically War, Diplomatic, Lifestyle, Public Health and Medical, Science and Technology, Environmental, Geological, Transport, Gender, Development, Defence, Agricultural, Aviation and Tourism, Human Rights, Energy and Other news. News on various themes selected by the news media to share on their official Facebook pages was influenced by the framing theory. Framing theory generally analyzes what and how a news story is portrayed in the press media. Moreover, framing theory, a country's environment that leads to incidents also influences on production of news stories and their selection for distribution via Facebook pages by media outlets. A single themes of news dominated the disseminated news via Facebook. The study found that the political theme of news stories dominated the news distribution alley because of the upcoming national election and framing theory concepts.

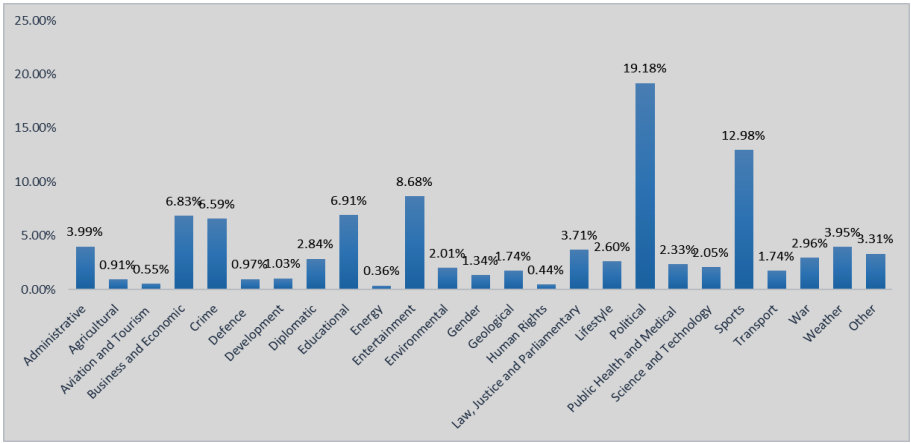


Figure 2: Theme of Disseminated News Stories on Facebook
(Source: Content Analysis, 2023)

- i. **Political theme:** Political theme refers specifically to coverage of the civil government and political powers (NIMCJ, India). The study categorized news stories as political themes directly related to politicians, political parties, their agenda and ideologies, election commissions and its activities, etc. During the data collection period, the upcoming national election was in progress. There had been numerous activities marking this election, such as political speeches, party activities, and party development activities; these are all considered as a political theme. Additionally, many celebrities, such as athletes, actors, and actresses, were participating in political

activities ahead of the next national election to express their political views. Considering their activities as political all things were considered as a political theme.

- ii. **Sports theme:** The Sports theme of news covers a large arena in journalism. It covers all kinds of information related to various sports like cricket, football, badminton, hockey, volleyball as well as other sports held all around the globe. In this study, all kinds of activities involved with sports, athletes, sports organizations, etc. were considered as a sports theme of news. Figure 2 indicates that this characteristic also dominated the shared news on Facebook as sports activities occur more across the entire world including Bangladesh and people have a great interest in it. People's interest might influence on framing of this theme and sharing via Facebook to reach to mass audience.
- iii. **Entertainment theme:** Entertainment theme covers information related to cultures, arts and performing. In this beat, reporters try to dig out the juicy gossip of the glamorous people and write about film, music, theatre, arts and culture in the world (NIMCJ, India). The study categorized these things as defining characteristics of entertainment news. This theme was also prominent in the dissemination of news items on Facebook, ranking third in terms of the number of entertainment-related posts shared, as shown in Figure 2.
- iv. **Educational theme:** Information related to the educational systems, institutes, personalities, public exams, exam results as well as any incident happening on the academic campuses was categorized as the educational theme. In terms of the number of education-related news posts shared on Facebook Figure 2 shows the fourth rank.
- v. **Business-Economic theme:** The business-economic beat refers to a bunch of information connected with banking and financial activities. In this study news reports covering national economic policy, National Board of Revenue, remittance, market, share market, profit and loss, trading, industry, manufacturing business, etc. were considered as Business-Economic theme.

Except these news themes discussed above, many more themes of news are shown in Figure 2 including administrative theme related to governance, governmental activities, policy announcements, and cabinet meetings; weather theme connecting weather updates, climate and impact of change; law, justice and parliamentary news involved with the activities of law enforcers, court, justice and parliament; health theme related to human medical issues and diplomatic, lifestyle, public health and medical, science

and technology, environmental, geological, transport, gender, development, defence, agricultural, aviation and tourism, human rights, and, energy news themes cover their respected field. These themes were discussed above chronologically in terms of prominence in the dissemination of news items on Facebook, as shown in Figure 2.

5.3 Engagement behaviors of digital readers with forms of news posts on Facebook

The media research, including Larsson and Welbers & Opgenhaffen (2018 & 2019 as cited in Thapaliya, 2020), indicated that Media outlets use their official Facebook pages to disseminate news as a strategy to maintain digital readership and reach a broad audience. By using the Facebook platform’s interaction metrics, such as likes, comments, and shares, users are able to visualize their engagement activities by liking, commenting, and sharing the distributed news posts. In terms of readers’ likes, comments and shares, audiences’ engagement can be determined (Chugh et al., 2019a). Considering this, the study aimed to understand the digital readers’ engagement with forms of shared news posts on Facebook. The study found seven forms of news posts that particularly drew users’ attention differently. The study counted audiences’ reactions, such as likes, comments, and shares, and every form of disseminated news posts on Facebook. In terms of likes, comments, and shares, users engaged mostly with posts by clicking the ‘like’ button. As shown in Table 2, the 2,534 news posts shared on Facebook received a total of 1 lac 67 thousand and ten likes—the highest among all forms of user reactions. In comparison, total shares amounted to 1 lac thirty-seven thousand and three hundred and thirty-four, while total comments reached 1 lac thirty thousand and three hundred and seventy-two. However, comments and shares are considered more reliable indicators of user engagement than likes (Chugh et al., 2019b).

Table 2: Digital readers’ engagement with forms of shared posts on Facebook

Nature of shared posts	Likes	Comments	Shares
Status	80590	5874	818
Image	3287	124	42
Hyperlink	309654	43914	4565
Photo-text	465777	37627	111268
Video (recorded)	762714	29592	17015
Reels (recorded short video)	94584	3027	2286
Live (video)	50404	10214	1340
	Equal 1767010	Equal 130372	Equal 137334

(Source: Content Analysis, 2023)

The researcher calculated average reactions by summing all readers' responses—likes, comments, and shares—for each form of Facebook post and then dividing that total by the number of posts of that specific news dissemination form. Figure 3 reveals that the Live (video) form demonstrated more engagement with posts on Facebook as the users' average reactions to the Live (video) form were 2303 which indicated the highest users' engagement. In terms of average reactions of users, the next most effective form of sharing news was also video form but it was the recorded form; and unlike the video form, Reels, a short video form of news distribution through Facebook also received good reactions, as shown in figure 3. These reactions of readers to video forms (live, video and reels) indicate that these forms are more effective than other forms such as status, image, and hyperlink according to Figure 3. Among the seven forms, the photo-text (visual) form of distributed news through Facebook is remarkably important as this form achieved more users' attention. As shown in Figure 3, the audio-visual and visual forms received outstanding audiences' reactions which indicate that these types of forms are effective in disseminating news through Facebook.

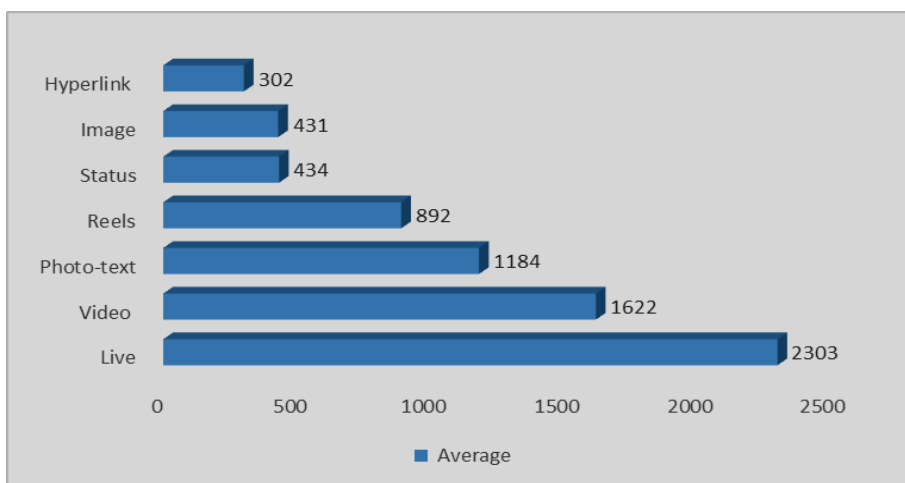


Figure 3: Digital readers' reactions to forms of shared posts

(Source: Content Analysis, 2023)

5.4 Comparative analysis of news sharing patterns on Facebook by media outlets

The study took various media outlets like print, online and electronic media as samples to investigate the forms of news dissemination through their respective official Facebook pages. The study found various forms of news sharing on social media. In the convergence media age, all types of media organisations distribute their news stories in multimedia, cross-media and convergence systems to reach audiences on a large scale. Table 3 reveals that the three media outlets shared news stories on their Facebook pages in seven

forms. But those are not equal in numbers. As shown in Table 3, *Prothom Alo* shared 563 news stories on Facebook in the hyperlink form which is almost 71% of the total news items of that medium. Whereas 333 and 288 were of *Jagonews24.com* and *Somoy TV* media respectively. As per Figure 1, about 47 % of the total news sharing posts were in hyperlink form. But in terms of likes, comments, and shares, users’ engagement is the lowest in this form as shown in Figure 3.

Table 3: Number of forms of news sharing posts on Facebook by media outlets

Nature of shared	Prothom Alo	Jagonews24.com	Somoy TV
Status	3	192	6
Image	3	5	0
Hyperlink	563	333	288
Photo-text	115	187	217
Video	76	108	303
Reels	34	11	67
Live	2	8	13
	Equal 796	Equal 844	Equal 894

(Source: Content Analysis, 2023)

The second most used form to share news stories on Facebook was photo-text which is 20.48 % (Figure 1) of the total number of posts. Electronic media—*Somoy TV* secured the first position in sharing news (217) on Facebook using photo-text form followed by *Jagonews24.com* (187) and *Prothom Alo* (115). The video form of disseminating news through social media especially Facebook is also valuable for users’ engagement. According to Figure 1 and Table 3, About 19.22 % of total shared news posts were in video form whereas *Somoy TV* showed its best performance as it shared 303 posts in the video format. In terms of audiences’ likes, comments and shares, video is the second most effective nature of sharing news on social media after the Live (video) form shown in Figure 3. The other two media *Jagonews24.com* and *Prothom Alo* were comparatively in the backstep in this sector as they shared 108 and 76 posts respectively. *Somoy TV* also is in the first position in the alley of sharing news on Facebook in Live (video) form which is the most effective form of users’ engagement to posts, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 3. But in this form, the media outlets shared news stories a few numbers which is only 23 out of 2534 as shown in table 1. The other forms of news sharing on Facebook were Status, Reels, and Image which were also low in number whereas *Somoy TV* in Reels, and *Jagonews24.com* in Status and Image dominated.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Social media is an effective and popular platform for practicing journalism in Bangladesh in the ever-changing technology arena. The study found that media outlets employed a range of strategic and effective formats on Facebook to reach broader audiences and promote their brands, which is noteworthy. Among the seven formats used, hyperlinks, photo-texts, and videos were the most common, amounting to 86% of total usage. In terms of user engagement, live videos, recorded videos, and photo-texts proved to be the most effective, while posts with only images or hyperlinks were less engaging. Notably, although hyperlinks were the most frequently used format, they were relatively less effective, whereas video formats generated higher engagement.

As shown in Figure 3, live (videos), videos (recorded), reels (short recorded videos), and photo-texts generated the highest audience engagement. Since engagement reflects the effectiveness of a format, electronic media emerged as the most effective and strategic user of news distribution forms on Facebook, utilizing 67% effective formats among the three media outlets. While online and print media platforms have shown themselves to be less effective in disseminating news via Facebook, with only 30% and 29% respectively utilizing the effective forms. On the other hand, in identifying the prominent themes of shared news items on Facebook, the study found twenty-five (25) themes in total. Political theme led the list with 19.18%, followed by sports (12.98%), entertainment (8.68%), education (6.91%), business and economy (6.83%), and crime (6.59%). This distribution also reflects the prevailing conditions and environment of a country. The nature of media houses can influence the production of formats in varying quantities. It is important to note that this study measures total likes, comments, and shares based on the formats of posts, rather than the types of news stories. As a result, the method of measuring user engagement may vary to some extent; however, the overall scenario is likely to remain largely the same. This is acknowledged as a limitation of the research. Further research will be conducted from an analytical perspective—why media houses share news items on such themes, using forms and investigate the engagement behaviors from the audience's perspective. It is recommended to:

- focus on distribution news items through Facebook, using the highest engagement formats — live videos, recorded videos, reels, and photo-texts.
- utilize the compelling visuals or short videos instead of hyperlink — only posts to increase engagement and click-through rates.
- prioritize the use of video and multimedia to compete with electronic media and engage audiences.

- utilize social media analytics to track performance by form and theme, allowing rapid adaptation to audience preferences and emerging trends.
- report and share news on themes such as politics, sports, entertainment and education to capture and engage a wide audience.

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