A Case for Incorporation of New Media Aspects in the Pakistan's Mass Communication Curriculum

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Abstract

There is an increased use of interactive digital communication technologies in the media organizations which have brought tremendous changes in the daily lives of millions of people across the globe. However the challenge is how far media educational institutions in Pakistan have kept with the pace in curriculum redesigning. Through documents analysis and in-depth interviews, this study shows that the new media (social media) aspects are mostly offered as an optional course. At undergraduate level, introduction to social media and online journalism are offered in fourth and fifth semesters respectively. Digital Media is offered to students of MPhil (research and professional tracks) as an elective course in second semester. The media educators and curriculum developers interviewed acknowledge the existing gaps in the curriculum and recommend practical steps towards improving it with inclusion of new relevant aspects even beyond new media. The study confirmed that the way mass communication educators are adapting to the new media technologies is in line with the Fidler's (1997) principles of mediamorphosis. The paper observes a huge academia-industry gap which must urgently be addressed through curriculum review and mutual partnerships.

Keyword: *New media, Media Industry, Mass communication Curriculum, Mediamorphosis*

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Introduction

Recent decades have witnessed swift changes in the uses of interactive information and communication technologies that are continuing to generate both indirect and significantly rearranging every sector of society, (Gutiérrez-Martín and Tyner, 2012). Substantial to these technological advances, are the increased internet access and the enhanced number of social media users which is estimated to have grown to around 2.8 billion people worldwide. The proliferation of social media which are defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as being a group of Internet-based applications that allow the widespread creation and dissemination of user generated content, has altered daily activities, communication practices, business enterprises and higher education sector. Additionally, as King et al, (2009) argued, Social networking tools have progressively gained a foothold in education and have proven value in the learning process.

In order to match with the new wave of technological changes especially multimedia convergence and the impact of social media, Ureta and Peña (2018) assert that news media organizations are engrossed in a significant process of technological, professional and business restructuring. They suggest that professionals working for these organizations therefore, must deal with, and learn to succeed in, convergent media environments which require a high level of cooperative effort and multitasking. Employers are now tightening their recruitment standards to only get those graduates comfortable with the changing technologies, innovative story forms and workflows, and comfortable with uncertainty, for careers in near-future newsrooms yet to be imagined (Clair, 2015).

Wotkyns (2014) saw journalism practitioners and academics as grappling with a varying media landscape; they are trying hard to keep up. He suggests that media educators must work out a new curriculum for journalism, one that instills new technology, but also emphasizing responsible reporting, focusing on accuracy, independence, and verification. Whereas, Kothari and Hickerson (2016) argued that various media academics seem to be acknowledging the fact that journalism schools have not kept up with this change in the industry. Little is known about how journalism and mass communication programs within Pakistan incorporate social media in their coursework.

Considering the social media popularity, how much the universities of the developed countries have integrated new media in their media curricular, and the scanty literature on how much mass communication programs especially in Pakistan address new media aspects, this paper seeks to: a) analyze the extent to which new media aspects are addressed in the mass communication revised curriculum (2013) of Pakistan; b) explore the media trainers'/curriculum developers insights and recommendations on the current mass communication revised curriculum of Pakistan. The study mainly employed document analysis and in-depth interviews as the key research methods. The findings reveal that mass communication curriculum of Pakistani higher education institutions is still deficient in addressing the new media aspects. Media educators/ curriculum experts agree to this fact and recommend frequent revision of the curriculum in order to match with the industry demands.

Literature Review

The terms new media and social media have been used interchangeably in several literary works though the latter is a clear sub-set of the former. Sometimes, new media is used to refer to new digital technologies. Neese (2016) for instance defines new media as digital technologies that take advantage of computers and the internet to offer products and services that provide information or entertainment. To him, social media, blogs, video games and online news outlets are typically referred to as "new media." He adds that such media are interactive (incorporate two-way communication) and involve some form of computing.

Similarly, the new media theorist Lev Manovich refers to new media as being native to computers or depending on computers for distribution: websites, human-computer interface, virtual worlds, computer animation, multimedia, virtual reality, computer games, digital video, special effects in cinema and interactive computer installations.

New media is sometimes used to refer to cyber studies which are broadly defined as: 'domains of digital communication and information technologies', which include 'the Internet, email, chat rooms, MUDs, digital imaging systems, virtual reality, new biomedical technologies, artificial life and interactive digital entertainment systems', (Bell and Kennedy, 2000). Just like Manovich, the two researchers ably listed all the ICT digital platforms that are interactive, information and entertainment based.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) look at social media a group digital applications that permit the extensive production and

distribution of user generated content. They add that these new platforms have made the sharing of information a highly democratic process, allowing the specific users to be potential content creators and contributors to the online discussion. Their study traces the history of social media, highlight their related concepts, classifications, and uses in business and daily life.

Popularity/Prominence of New Media

The increased popularity of new media technologies globally, the proliferation of digital media programs in colleges and universities generally and departments of communications specifically, and the affirmative action on the new media in communication research, prompted Tomasello, et al., (2009) to study the new media research publication trends and outlets in communication from 1990 to 2006. Their findings show that a substantial number of communication researchers use key terms like online, web, computer, digital, and internet to refer to the new media. They conclude that research on new media or digital communication technologies is expanding and will continue doing so for the foreseeable future.

While focusing on "Media Education, Media Literacy and Digital Competence", Gutiérrez-Martín and Tyner (2012) observed that latest progress in communication technologies continue to produce both indirect and weighty restructuring in every sphere of life and as such, the prevalent access and daily reliance on multimedia devices are the new normal. The study reveals that the widespread of new media is particularly reverberating with young users who approach information in

varied and innovative ways that portray their daily uses of ICTs as an essential life skill.

Due to the fact that majority of the young people are in the education sector, digital communication tools have increasingly gained acceptability in education and have proved value in the scholarship. Numerous studies show that students in both lower and higher institutions of learning in a structured environment can be steered to join learning communities quickly and access course material with ease, (King et al. 2009).

Freberg and Kim (2018) add that new media are more frequently embraced in higher education and have affected the sector more or less like they have done with daily activities, communication and business practices throughout society. They substantiate their claim by arguing that more than half of the academic staff in colleges and universities of the United States of America, use digital communication technologies at least monthly for professional reasons, with professors in professions and applied sciences taking the lead.

Lenhardt and Madden (2005) found more than one-half of all American teenagers and 57 percent of Internet users among the teens were also media content creators. Media creator, according to these authors, is someone who creates webpage or blog or posts original artwork in form of photography, stories or videos online or remixed online content into their own new creations. The study evidence that most of the youngsters are engaged in two or more of these activities, one-third of teens share what they create online with others, 22 percent have their own websites, 19 percent are bloggers, and 19 percent remix online

content. These findings have an implication to the education sector in the USA. With such familiarity, the teenagers must be having a firm grip on the new media in terms of curriculum as well as in their day-to-day life.

New Media and Media Industry

Due to multimedia merging and the impact of digital communication technologies, media institutions are immersed in relentless process of, professional, technological and business restructuring, (Ureta and Peña, 2018). Specialists working for these institutions must therefore adapt to the convergent media environments that require multitasking and cooperative efforts. The study further reveal that online journalism, a sector that is open to constant technological change, demand a lot more requirements to thrive especially in the area of content development and dissemination. The future newsrooms therefore, require graduates who are comfortable with the changing technologies and enterprising story formatting techniques. This can substantially be achieved through up-to-date curriculum that integrates both theory and industry dynamics.

Journalists of the new media age, according to Clair (2015) must be able to produce news reports that are acceptable across all media outlets in a variety of formats including audio, text, video, and photography. Such professionals must be producers as well as publishers of content with the capacity to use mobile technology, engage with audiences in the process of content generation and dissemination, and take part in public discourse with ease. This new media technology must therefore

be a subject of study and pedagogical tools in the journalism or media schools.

New media and media curriculum: Are the journalism schools coping?

For many years, journalism academia have attempted to integrate media tools and texts into pedagogical practices though the speed at which they are adapting to the new communication technologies appears to be slow especially in the developing nations like Pakistan. The new media (social media) have become part of life and the number of users keeps increasing almost daily.

News media as seen above, have tightened their grip on multi skilled personnel for recruitment. Similarly, mass communication graduates are increasingly becoming entrepreneurs due to the relevant skills acquired from their media schools. Literature on the new media and media curriculum in Pakistan is still scarce. Despite the existence of studies that explored how news reporters use social media, less is known about how journalism and mass communication programs incorporate social media in their coursework, (Kothari and Hickerson, 2016).

George and Dellasega (2011) observe that social media usage in the academia has taken root especially for undergraduate students as compared to the graduate populations where little application has been discovered more particularly in the medical field. Although their study was specific on medical students, their conclusion that social media is gaining attention especially in education is paramount to the current analysis.

Wotkyns (2014) suggests that journalism/media educators ought to restructure their taught curriculum to incorporate new media technologies, responsible writing and reporting, freedom of expression, and acceptable code of professional ethics. He adds that through social media platforms such as Youtube, Twitter and Facebook, citizen journalists are in position to tell varied stories that would otherwise be suppressed in the conventional news reporting protocols.

Poynter Institute Study Report (2013) found that a full 39 percent of journalism educators surveyed acknowledged that their programs are not keeping up with the changing industry and 48 percent of the staffers and their editors said journalism schools and colleges are not keeping up with the changes in the field. The same study findings included multiple written responses calling for major changes in media taught academic programmes, a relaxed academic protocols that delay students in theoretical classes at universities and emphasis on practical skills and sessions such as video-audio reporting and editing, and introducing social media courses in the first classes of journalism training.

Apart from the integration of new media in the mass communication curriculum, several studies have also looked at the usage of digital media by both faculty and students, and others have addressed both curriculum and usage. This combination gives a wider appreciation of new media adaptability in journalism schools. Kothari & Hickerson (2016) compared social media use among journalism/media faculty and students in both personal and academic life. Findings evidence

that the sampled faculty and students used Facebook more frequently for personal matters and Twitter for classroom assignments. The study further revealed that students' and faculty's field experience influenced the way they evaluated the utility of digital media in coursework and classes. Apart from highlighting the curriculum gap with specific regard to new aspects, our study is also recommending the adaptability of new media at both faculty and students levels.

Arnedillo-Sánchez and Isaías (2012) while investigating the impact of social media platforms on mass media education in the pedagogical and effects of use perspectives found a positive impact of incorporating new media tools in teaching and learning environments. Similarly, Ureta and Peña (2018) acknowledge the new media technologies and the need to incorporate such technologies into the media study curriculum but with caution of not overlooking the ethical considerations that are associated with interactive and instantaneous digital media.

Although George and Dellasega (2011) evaluated the incorporation of new media tools into the medical curriculum at Penn State College of Medicine, their findings offer a broader picture about what new media could offer to students regardless of their discipline. Students for instance stated that the use and integration of social media into coursework hours improved learning, cooperation and boosted inventiveness.

Ullah (2012) brought the picture of new media and media curriculum closer when he shared his experiences of the subject in the South Asian countries. He argues that mass communication educators repeatedly endeavor to catch up with the fast moving

media industry technological trends amidst numerous restrictions. He acknowledges that any change in the industry consequently necessitate a change in the journalism curriculum content. He recommends, as we do, that journalism syllabi or curricula must take into considerations of the new societal requirements and demands that arise from time to time.

Theoretical Framework

Just like Tomasello, et al., (2009), the current research is based on the mediamorphosis, a term that is coined by Roger Fidler to refer to the alteration of communication media, usually brought about by the complex interplay of perceived needs, political and social pressures, and technological innovations, (Fidler, 1997). Fidler's theoretical framework seeks to explain the manners of change and the impact of these changes on media technologies and the people who use them. In the context of this study, we examine how mass communication or journalism educators familiarize with the new media technologies and their changes and see how much of the new trends are captured in the taught curriculum from time to time with the appreciation of the coexistence of both traditional and new media technologies.

Mediamorphosis theory revolves around six principles one of which is the relationship between the new and the already existing media formats (coevolution and coexistence) and how the newer and old formats change as a result of existing side-by-side. New media technologies do not emerge out of blue, rather, they are a product of progression of the older media formats (metamorphosis) — the second aspect of the theory. The third principle, propagation, implies that new communication formats

extend the dominant and valued traits of prevailing forms. Fourthly, the already existing media set-ups must identify niche areas of fit in order to survive and remain relevant. The fifth aspect is opportunity and need; technology is not enough, but there must be social, political and/or economic reasons for new media to be developed. In other words, the innovation itself cannot guarantee successful adoption; rather, people must appreciate its relevance in their lives as per the prevailing social, political and economic settings. The sixth aspect is delayed adoption. Commercial success of new media always takes longer than expected. Sometimes it is usually one human generation (20-30) years to reach widespread adoption.

The current study looks at the concept of mediamorphosis in the context of new media technologies and the ways in which they have been integrated in the mass communication curriculum. The new media which is so quick in its evolution but the adaptability and understanding of the phenomenon is still unclear and slow. Mass communication curriculum in Pakistan at BS, M.Phil and Ph.D. levels.

This is a qualitative research study conducted within Pakistan and endeavored to select respondents from the regions of Punjab, KPK, Balochistan, and Sindh. It addressed two principal research questions:

RQ1. To what extent does the Curriculum of Mass Communication BS/MS/MPHIL (Revised 2013) in Pakistan address the new media aspects?

RQ2. What are the views/recommendations of media trainers/curriculum developers in respect to the Curriculum of Mass Communication?

Our sampling frame were the 66 institutions/universities and colleges that are approved by the HEC to offer Mass Communication degree programs within the entire country as compiled by the Association of Media and Communication Academic Professionals (AMCAP). The undated AMCAP document indicate that 41 (62 percent) institutions that are teaching Mass Communication degree programs are concentrated in Punjab, 12 (18 percent) are in Sindh, 10 (15 percent) are located in KPK, and three (5 percent) are situated in Baluchistan.

Because an entire team of the HEC National Curriculum Revision Committee in the discipline of Mass Communication and the In-Charge/HoDs Mass Communication throughout the country were difficult to interview due to time and resource constraints, purposive sampling was used to select eight respondents due to their expertise in media education, exposure and experience in mass communication aspects. In addition to expertize and exposure, the selection of respondents was also based on the regions for purposes of eliciting varied views from across the country. Thus, the selection was as follows; Lahore (n=3), Gujrta (n=1), Islamabad (n=1), Peshawar (n=1), Balochistan (n=1), and Karachi (n=1). Out of the eight electronic questionnaires sent, only five responses were registered as follow; Lahore (n=3), Peshawar (n=1), and Karachi (n=1).

Similarly, a PDF document of the Curriculum of Mass Communication, BS/MS/MPHIL (Revised 2013) HEC, Islamabad

was purposively selected for analysis because of its presumed relevance to the study. Although the selected sampling technique has many chances of bias, as Wimmer and Dominick (2011) argue, the identified respondents and materials met certain requirements needed in answering the study's research questions. Additionally, the technique is cheap and not time-consuming.

Our study mainly employed explorative structured interviews which are easy to tabulate and analyze, though they do not achieve the depth or expanse of unstructured interviews as Wimmer and Dominick (ibid) suggests. Interview questions were emailed to the respondents and for effectiveness; they were alerted on phone about the same.

Document analysis, was the second data collection method used in this study. Curriculum of Mass Communication, BS/MS/MPHIL (Revised 2013) was the principal document because it is approved by HEC, a statutory body mandated to govern and guide higher education in Pakistan. Although individual institutions have freedom to add several aspects in HEC approved curricula, what the organ provides remains outstanding for implementation throughout the country.

For analysis, we perused through the curriculum document semester by semester to look for sources that carried one of the nine broad categories that were drawn from new media literature and these were: New Media, Digital Media, Online Journalism, Multimedia, Social Media, Digital Communication, Interactive Media, Information and Communication Technologies, and Internet and Web Technologies. Data from document analysis informed the interviews.

In the process of collection, data was categorized in themes of research questions, informants were also classified in line with their responses, and similar patterns and themes were identified and aligned together to ensure reliability. This was done repeatedly to check for any missed out categories. The study also took into consideration all the basic research ethical concerns.

Discussion

As established earlier, this paper sought to measure the extent to which the Curriculum of Mass Communication BS/MS/MPHIL (Revised 2013) in Pakistan address the new media aspects and to find the views/recommendations of media trainers/curriculum developers in respect to this curriculum. Document analysis was used as data collection method to find out how much are the new media aspects covered.

RQ1. The extent to which new media aspects are covered in the Curriculum of Mass Communication

Table 1: *Distribution of New Media related courses in the Bachelor of Science, Mass Communication (Honors Degree) curriculum*

Semester	Courses related to New Media
Semester 1	Nil
Semester 2	Nil
Semester 3	Nil
Semester 4	1 Optional
	4.3 Introduction to Social Media
Semester 5	1
	5.2 Online Journalism
Semester 6	Nil
Semester 7	Nil
Semester 8	Nil

Source: Curriculum of Mass Communication, HEC

From Table 1, it is evident that new media aspects are broadly covered in two courses: Introduction to Social Media and

Online Journalism offered in semesters; four and five respectively. However, it is important to note that even Introduction to Social Media, a course offered in semester four is optional (elective). This implies that students with no interest can do away with it despite its relevance. Online Journalism remains as the sole core course presumed to offer new media aspects to the students of BS. (Hons) in their four-year degree program. Unless individual institutions and faculty handle new media aspects in some other papers offered, the overall picture observed gives a clear curriculum gap that urgently needs to be fixed. A benefit of doubt is given to individual institutions and faculty who might be incorporating new media aspects in their offered courses. For instance, an instructor of introduction to mass communication is presumed to tackle some contemporary media aspects social media inclusive. But this calls for self-discipline and commitment to the teaching profession on the side of the faculty. It is also vital to note that, most of the journalism skills and knowledge required in the media industry are presumed to be imparted at this initial level because graduate studies world-wide mainly broaden research skills and subject mastery.

Table 2: *Distribution of New Media related courses in the Master of Philosophy, Mass Communication curriculum (MPhil, Research Track)*

Semester	Courses related to New Media
Semester 1	Nil
Semester 2	1 Optional course
	7. Digital Media
Thesis	Based on the area selected

Source: Curriculum of Mass Communication, HEC

In the MPhil, Mass Communication (Research Track) new media is just an optional course in the second semester. If an MPhil student did not opt for introduction to social media in the semester four of BS (Hons), he/she can complete the 18 years of journalism education with flimsy or no new media knowledge at all.

Table 3. *Distribution of New Media related courses in the Master of Philosophy, Mass Communication curriculum (MPhil, Professional Track)*

Semester	Courses related to New Media
Semester 1	Nil
Semester 2	1 Optional course
	7. Digital Media
Thesis	Based on the area selected

Source: Curriculum of Mass Communication, HEC

Just like in MPhil, Mass Communication (Research Track), new media is just an optional course in the second semester of the Professional Track covered as new media. The chances of students opting for social media in their theses (researches) are also minimal because, if they did not get adequate teaching about them, it is inconvincible for them to opt for it at the level of research. The same case applies to Doctoral of Philosophy in communication studies or mass communication. Students at graduate levels, as earlier argued, do not master new basic things. They are normally guided in sharpening theory application and research approaches. So, social media aspects ought to be intensively handled at undergraduate level.

RQ2. The views/recommendations of media trainers/curriculum developers in respect to the mass communication curriculum.

In order to elicit adequate information from the media educators/curriculum developers about the current mass communication, four questions were posed.

1. What is your take on the current mass communication curriculum of Pakistan in addressing: a) Industry demands, b) New media aspects

According to Associate Professor, Institute of Communication Studies at the University of the Punjab and also the President, Association of Media and Communication Academic Professionals (AMCAP), Dr. Bushra H. Rahman (Personal Communication, February 18, 2019), with limited resources public universities are endeavoring to match with the current trends in the industry and several aspects of new media are addressed in the curriculum offered. She is however, skeptical about other universities' commitment about new media apart from PU where she teaches. She adds that both private and public universities are still failing on what she terms as 'real journalism'.

To Faizullah Jan, an Associate Professor and Head of Journalism and Mass Communication Department at the University of Peshawar, (Personal Communication, February 14, 2019) universities have not fully catered for the industrial demands. He however, observes that universities are supposed to lead, not to conform to such demands. He acknowledges that the current mass communication ignored much of the new media aspects.

We always keep considering the market needs in our minds. We are aware of the technological changes. In the era of print journalism, the focus was on the courses like reporting,

editing, feature writing and history. Later, new advances in media technology led to the syllabi shift from journalism as a discipline to mass communication. In today's digital age in which the mode of journalism is transformed into civic journalism, street journalism and social journalism, we have no choice but to adjust. The Director, Institute of Communication Studies, The University of the Punjab, Dr. Noshina Saleem said, (Personal Communication, February 18, 2019).

She observes that due to technological changes in the media specifically, news organizations are hiring multi-skilled resources who can keep up with the trends. She calls upon communication departments to update their curricula to fit in the market requirements. From her submission, Punjab University has moved a step further to introduce some need of the hour courses that capture new media aspects at B.S, Masters, MPhil and even PhD levels.

According to her, digital media is now a specialization in the various degrees offered and faculty are updating their course contents with contemporary dimensions.

Dr. Tauseef Ahmed Khan, a Teaching Associate at the Department of Mass Communication, University of Karachi and Dr. Muhammad Khalid, the former Head of School of Creative Arts at the University of Lahore concur with their colleagues that the current curriculum requires urgent updates in order to make the trainees relevant to the field demands.

2. What should be done about the current mass communication curriculum in order to address: a) Industry demands b) New media aspects

Bushra H. (Personal Communication, February 18, 2019) recommends regular dialogues between the academia and the industry, use of successful alumni to inspire the continuing students about the industry requirements, emphasizing internships and involvement of practitioners in the curriculum review exercises. Similarly, Faizullah (Personal Communication, February 14, 2019) calls for universities-industry collaborations and more focus on practical courses than theory.

In order to catch up with the world trends, Noshina (Personal Communication, February 18, 2019) recommends that universities across Pakistan must use the freedom granted by HEC to academic institutions to incorporate several aspects of the new media in their curricular from time to time. Equally Ahmed (Personal Communication, February 16, 2019) and Khalid Personal Communication, February 16, 2019) suggest that the curriculum must be made as practical as possible and the training facilities/learning environment in universities should also be tailored towards the new media technologies.

3. How much (in terms courses taught) should the new media be covered in BS/MS/MPHIL curriculum?

As of now, emphasis must be put on ensuring that mass communication students get the necessary skills to operate or work and live with the new media, (Bushra H, Personal Communication, 2019).

To Faizullah (Personal Communication, 2019) new media are competing with mainstream/traditional media and it is not a question of more or less, it is to focus on exploring the symbiotic relationship between the two.

"Let all communication departments do away with the obsolete concepts in their curricular and replaced them by the new media. This however, does not mean to discard the old media completely but to strike a desired balance in the media landscape. The old newspaper archives are now being replaced by E-newspapers. For now, the inclusion of new media in to the mass communication curriculum is still under considerations. But lack of new media experts appears to be an outstanding challenge. We currently have technicians but the scholars required in the institutions of higher learning", says Noshina, (Personal Communication, 2019).

Noshina is raising another debate of technicians versus scholars which has been in the media education for some reasonable time. It is not only about the new media particularly but also about the television and radio skills. Much of the practical production aspects in both television and radio are well-known to technicians not the scholars. This therefore, calls for the trainings of trainers in order to fix this dilemma.

4. In your opinion, how often should the mass communication curriculum be revised in order for it to be up-to-date?

All the media educators interviewed suggest that the mass communication curriculum must be reviewed from time to time in order to make them relevant. They all suggest that new mass communication courses need to be introduced especially those that address societal challenges. Noshina for instance suggests that courses like peace journalism, conflict journalism

and spiritual communication should be thought about while revising the curriculum.

Applicability of the six principles of mediamorphosis to this study

The findings of this study are consistent with the six principles of mediamorphosis that are helpful in explaining how the new media evolving, as well as influences, other existing traditional media sectors. The principles of coexistence and coevolution, metamorphosis, propagation, survival, opportunity and need and delayed adoption are principally applicable and helpful in portraying how technological alteration is a multifaceted process simultaneously linking political, social and economic factors. As all communication media co-evolves as an adaptive system thereby influencing all other forms of media, the same adaptability and influence is also seen in the media curriculum. Through metamorphosis, the mass communication curriculum will also continue to evolve rather than shrinking. The new media are emerging with dominant traits that are related to the traditional media, thus; the curriculum also does the same. The new media aspects are not totally alien but have links with the exiting traits.

As both media and media enterprises adapt in the changing environment, media training institutions ought to follow suit. In order to exploit the opportunity and need, the adoption of the new media curriculum must envisaged within the social, economic and political circumstances of the country. By taking the sixths aspect of the theory into account, the successful adaptation to the new media in totality will take long than

expected. Delayed adoption is always a characteristic of innovations.

Limitations and Scope

The major drawback of this research is its small sample, namely the media educators/curriculum developers who should have provided diverse information on subject under study. Because of the small sample size, the research should be seen as precursor to further research and not from representational point of view. We are however confident that the responses got are good enough to guide the curriculum review process.

Another limitation of the research is that we were unable to access course contents of universities to broadly assess whether new media aspects are covered. This probably might have been useful especially if a reasonable sample size of universities' curricula was reviewed. We therefore recommend a bigger study in the same frame to survey how much do mainstream communication departments in Pakistan address new media trends in their curricula on top of what HEC offers.

Conclusion & Recommendations

It certainly seems clear as Deuze (2006) argues that journalism schools and programs the world over are changing swiftly to bridge the gap between the industry and academia. Changes are made to accommodate increasing numbers of students, while at the same time trying to develop some kind of consistency in the curriculum. This is not a small task as the Pakistan media educators have acknowledged. There several limitations towards keeping up the pace with the technological

advances. These are mainly: financial resources, competent human resources and willingness to change.

The study has clearly found that new media aspects at all levels of mass communication education in Pakistan are covered as options i.e. students can take them or ignore them. This does not necessarily mean that there are no institutions endeavoring to address new media aspects in their curricular. On a positive note, media educators are realizing the curriculum gaps and their suggestions shed some light on future improvement.

Although this study is pragmatic in calling for new media incorporation in the mass communication curriculum, it appreciates the value of the existing mass communication curriculum while stating that it must be improved to produce multi-skilled graduates as (Wotkyns, 2014; Clair, 2015; Tanner, 2014) suggest.

In this regard, we recommend that:

1. Practical steps at HEC level and in all universities and colleges offering media related programs be taken to address the new media aspects in the curriculum.

2. Communication/journalism/media departments in their individual capacities should be reviewing their curricular regularly to address new trends.

3. Meaningful collaborations between the academia and the industry be maintained because this symbiotic approach is likely to satisfy all the key stakeholders.

4. Refresher courses with specific focus on new media be offered to media educators in order to make them relevant to their learners.

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