

Perceived Usefulness and Adoption of Digital Journalism among Journalists in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed journalistic practices not only in Pakistan but globally. In this study, researchers applied the technology acceptance model to examine the journalists' perception of the usefulness of digital journalism and its adoption.

Methodology: Current study is based on quantitative research and researchers conducted a survey for data collection. The questionnaire was designed on five Likert scales based and distributed via email, WhatsApp and in printed form. The data were collected from (n=170) journalists who were working for both television news channels and digital media simultaneously. Sample was collected from Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, and other cities of Pakistan. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and standard deviation, and inferential statistics including Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used to examine journalists' perception of the usefulness of digital journalism.

Findings: The correlation analysis indicated a strong positive relationship between perceived usefulness of digital journalism and the adoption of digital journalism ($r = .786, p < .01$). Regression results further confirmed that perceived usefulness significantly predicts the adoption of digital journalism in Pakistan.

Conclusion: The study concluded that journalists highly perceived digital journalism as useful. Among the most useful indicators, digital journalism allows editorial freedom, considered as the most useful indicator, followed by keeping them updated with the latest news as the 2nd most useful indicator, whereas digital journalism is useful for their job, noted as the 3rd most useful indicator.

Keywords: Digital Journalism, Journalists, Perceived Usefulness, Adoption of Digital Journalism, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

1. INTRODUCTION

The fast-growing digital technologies have changed journalistic practice globally, reshaping how news is collected, produced, disseminated, and consumed. Digital journalism provides faster reporting, wider audience reach, continuous information access, and interactive engagement, bringing digital tools essential to contemporary news work (Pleijter, 2009). As traditional media moved from older platforms to

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a digital environment, journalism is becoming technology-driven, and professional practices are being redefined within growing and developing information ecosystems (Matsiola & Pilitsidou, 2025). The development of this digital information environment has combined digital technologies and newsroom practices, demanding from journalists immediate response audience engagements and altering professional expectations (Shahid & Naz, 2022). Digital journalism provide affordable news production and live updates, which enhance professional news production and workflow efficiency (Pasha et al., 2022). Due to the advancement in digital technologies, journalists' perception regarding the usefulness of digital journalism has become an important factor to understand how journalists adopt and use digital tools in professional work (Tariq et al., 2022). The development of digital media and social platforms in Pakistan has significantly changed traditional journalism by providing speed, accessibility, and audience interaction (Pamungkas et al, 2021). Meanwhile digital shift created challenges such as misinformation, citizen journalism, and concern about professional journalistic ethics and news credibility (Chaudhary et al., 2025). As old media and digital media coexist in emerging media environments, examining journalists' perception regarding the usefulness of digital journalism is important for understanding modern newsroom and future directions of journalism (Matsiola & Pilitsidou, 2025).

Technological advancement is further evident in the integration of AI-based and digital tools into daily news production and journalistic practices. Journalists increasingly utilize digital applications to automate repetitive tasks, manage data, and improve workflow speed (Shah et al., 2024). Studies based on the technology acceptance model show that journalists' adoption of digital platforms is shaped and affected by job performance, digital skills, organizational support, and ethical considerations (Shah et al., 2024). The journalists' perception regarding digital journalism is associated with their training and organizational preparedness. Journalists identified digital tools as essential for enhancing writing, multimedia production, and digital and online publishing (Abokhoza et al., 2023). However, lack of systematic training, financial limitations, and limited practical support remain challenges in many media organizations (Abokhoza et al., 2023).

1.1 Problem Statement

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed journalism. Journalists are rapidly adopting digital journalism, which has changed the process of news production, distribution, and audience engagement. Previous research has identified various external factors, such as faster publishing news, freedom to share news, technological advancement, and audience demand, that significantly influenced journalists to adopt digital journalism in Pakistan (Ayoub, 2026). However, limited research has examined internal factors, such as the perceived usefulness of digital journalism, which may also influence journalists to adopt digital journalism. Therefore, there is a need to examine journalists' perception of the usefulness of digital journalism that influences journalists' adoption of digital journalism in Pakistan.

1.2 Research Question

RQ: How do journalists perceive the usefulness of digital journalism in Pakistan?

1.3 Research Variables

Independent variable: Perceived usefulness of digital journalism

Dependent Variable: Adoption of Digital Journalism

1.4 Hypothesis

H1. The perceived usefulness of digital journalism significantly influences journalists' adoption of digital journalism in Pakistan.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is significant for various stakeholders. Comprising the media industry, journalists, journalistic bodies, government, academic research, and human rights organizations. Examining the internal factor, the perceived usefulness of digital journalism, will provide insights and a deep understanding of how journalists perceive the usefulness of digital journalism. For the media industry, this study is important because its finding highlights how digital journalism improves job performance. For the government, it provides insights regarding reducing journalists' reliance on traditional journalism and gaining editorial freedom that help the government to understand journalists' needs and make policies accordingly. For academic research, it fills the literature gap, whereas for human rights organization it provides a deep knowledge about editorial freedom and independence as perceived usefulness of digital journalism in Pakistan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The existing literature revealed that digital journalism is mostly perceived as useful because it enables immediate news production, digital storytelling, and latest updates that enable journalists to work more efficiently on digital media than traditional media environment (Shahid & Naz, 2022). Digital technologies enhance newsroom productivity by promoting live updates and adoption of daily routines in journalistic practice, emphasizing journalists' perceptions that digital journalism supports their professional work, which increases competence (Tariq et al., 2022).

The shift from traditional journalism to digital journalism has changed news room structure and professional roles. Research on digital news room transformation identified that journalists declared digital tools increase news flow, increasing multimedia production, and enhancing audience interaction; however, these transformations also enhance job assignment and need modern capabilities (Sonni et al., 2024). This transformation has increased journalists' roles beyond news production to include viewer engagement and platform running, indicating how digital journalism is changing professional journalistic activities (Chaudhary et al., 2025). Digital journalism further improves journalists' prominence, professional acknowledgment, and user reach. Researchers identified that digital platforms enable journalists to reach larger viewers and consumers to interact directly with readers, and get greater editorial freedom as compared to traditional media (Shahid & Naz, 2022).

Digital platforms support specifically multiplatform distribution, live updates, audience engagement, and information collection, which journalists perceive as highly useful in journalistic practices (Kumar & Ahmad, 2025). Studies on the technology acceptance highlighted that journalists' adoption of digital tools is highly influenced by perceived usefulness and productivity. The chances of adoption of digital technologies increase when journalists perceive these tools enhance information retrieval, verification, and the communication process (Pleijter, 2009).

Adoption of digital media is further shaped by applicable usefulness, such as distributing content easily, users reach. And technological suitability within the newsroom organization (Pasha et al., 2022). In evolving media environment, the benefit of online media is also associated with professional acceptance. In Pakistan, digital media enable immediate access, are budget-friendly, and media integration, which enhances journalistic professional practices (Pamungkas et al., 2021). Studies related to the Pakistani perspective indicate that performance expectancy has an important role in changing journalists' positive attitudes regarding adopting artificial intelligence and digital applications for enhancing proficiency and controlling daily assignments (Shah et al., 2024).

Modern technologies like AI are significantly converging into journalism, that make sure to automate daily assignments and improve newsroom productivity. Different research shows that journalists adopt AI to enhance workflow speed and enable greater focus on analytical and innovative tasks (Peña-alonso & Peña-fernández, 2025). These results support the discussion that perceived usefulness drives digital technology adoption in journalism.

Despite these benefits, existing studies identified essential problems. Researchers explained that even though digital journalism increases speed, immediacy, reach, and audience interaction, it also creates challenges regarding misinformation, citizen journalism, and weakening professional practices (Pamungkas et al., 2021). Journalists also show insecurity about job continuation, assignment burdens and editorial freedom in the digital era (Matsiola & Pilitsidou, 2025).

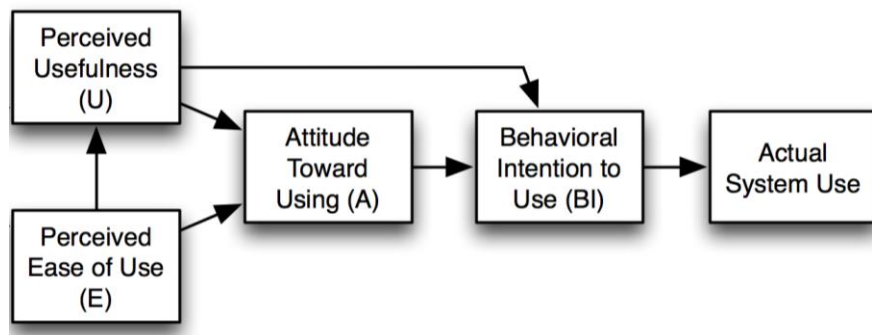
Many studies on a large scale regarding digital journalism highlighted ethical challenges, agenda-setting issues, and the requirement for media literacy and organizational guidelines (Suleiman & Malkawi, 2025). In conclusion, journalists' perception regarding the usefulness of digital journalism is mainly influenced by training and institutional preparedness. Studies highlight that journalists perceive digital tools as useful for writing, multimedia production, and digital publishing when they get proper training and organizational support (Abokhoza et al., 2023).

However, lack of training opportunities, fragile organization, and limited financial resources overcome their capability and talent to completely get the advantages from digital technologies, showing that perceived usefulness depends on both skill and growth, and institutional support (Sonni et al., 2024).

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The researchers applied the Technology Acceptance Model in this study to examine journalists' perceptions of the usefulness of digital journalism in Pakistan (see figure 1).

Figure 1: *The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)*



The “Technology” “Acceptance” “Model” was initially designed by “Fred” D. “Davis” in 1989”. It was an “adaptation” of the “Theory” of “Reasoned Action” (TRA). The Technology Acceptance Model was initially developed to show how users adopt a new technology. The model indicates that when consumers are presented with a new technology, various factors influence their decision process to adopt it (Masrom, 2007). There are two core elements of the model, the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Park et al., 2008).

2.1.1 Perceived Usefulness (PU)

The perceived usefulness is the main determinant of the technology acceptance model, which was explained by Fred Davis as the degree to which a person believes that using a specific system would improve their job performance. It means whether or not someone perceives that technology to be useful for what they want to do (Park et al., 2008). According to this study, it is journalists' overall perception regarding the usefulness of a new technology or practice, whether it is useful for them or not. If journalists perceive digital journalism as useful for them, they are likely to adopt digital journalism.

2.1.2 Actual System Use

Actual system use refers to the acceptance and actual usage of new technology, which is the last element of the technology acceptance model. According to this study, it is the adoption of digital journalism.

2.1.3 The Application of the Technology Acceptance Model to the Study

In this study, the researchers applied the “Technology” “Acceptance” Model to examine the journalists' perception of the usefulness of digital journalism and adoption of digital journalism whereas the other elements of the model are not taken into consideration because they are not relevant to the study.

2.2 Conceptualization of Digital Journalism

Digital journalism refers to selecting, gathering, editing, and distributing real information to a large audience through digital media (Steensen & Westlund, 2020). Digital journalism is the exercise of digital technologies in journalism where journalists use multimedia for storytelling, informing, and connecting with the audience (Perreault, 2022).

2.3 Operationalization of Digital Journalism

In this study, digital journalism is operationalized as the journalistic practices where journalists use digital media platforms to collect and distribute news and information. News and information can be in the form of video, images, and text. Journalists use digital technologies like smartphones, cameras, a laptop, and editing software for news production and distribution through social media.

2.4 Conceptualization of Perceived Usefulness of Digital Journalism

Perceived Usefulness of digital journalism means journalists believe that practicing digital journalism is useful for their job (Park et al., 2008). In this study, perceived usefulness is measured through nine items, each item reflecting a particular usefulness of digital journalism. These items are explained in the following.

1. *Digital journalism improves job performance*: the extent to which journalists perceive that digital journalism helps them to work efficiently and increase efficiency in their job.
2. *Reduces reliance on traditional journalism*: The extent to which journalists perceive that practicing digital journalism reduces their dependence on traditional media for journalistic practices.
3. *To gain popularity*: the extent to which journalists perceived that digital journalism helps them gain popularity.
4. *To gain recognition*: the extent to which journalists believe digital journalism helps in gaining recognition as a journalist in society.
5. *Financial benefits and economic pressures*: The extent to which journalists perceived that practicing digital journalism helps journalists to get financial benefits that overcome financial issues
6. *Editorial freedom and independence*: the extent to which journalists perceived that they can practice journalism freely and independently on digital platforms.
7. *Professional growth and career development*: The extent to which journalists perceive that practicing digital journalism helps journalists to grow professionally by enhancing skills, knowledge, and advancing their professional career.
8. *Stay updated with the latest news*: the extent to which journalists perceived that digital journalism helps journalists to stay updated with the latest news, trends, and information.

9. *Overall usefulness of digital journalism for the job*: the extent to which journalists perceived that digital journalism is overall useful for their job.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative research in which the researchers conducted a survey to examine journalists' perception of the usefulness of digital journalism in Pakistan.

1.1 Population

Journalists who were involved in journalism for both television news channels and digital journalism in Pakistan.

1.2 Sample & Sample Size

The responses have been collected from 175 journalists who were involved in journalism for a television news channel and digital media simultaneously. These journalists were working in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, and other cities.

1.3 Sampling Technique

The "convenience" sampling technique was applied to collect responses from the journalists. This technique ensures that only those journalists are selected who are most appropriate to the objectives of the study.

1.4 Data Collection Methods and Research Instrument

Survey (Quantitative Data): The questionnaire was designed in advance based on a five-point Likert scale and distributed in both soft and hard copies to get maximum responses from the journalists. Online questionnaires were prepared in Google Forms and distributed through WhatsApp and email, whereas printed questionnaires were distributed to those journalists who demanded to respond offline.

1.5 Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the Perceived Usefulness construct was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The 9-item scale indicated good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.877$), showing that the items consistently assessed the same construct.

1.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using SPSS software. Before applying the descriptive and inferential statistics, the data were screened for reliability and validity. Descriptive analysis was used for the research question, whereas correlation and regression tests were applied for the hypothesis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the analysis of the data collected from 175 respondents to examine journalists' perception of the usefulness of digital journalism and its adoption among journalists in Pakistan. The data are analyzed using SPSS software and presented in tabulated form along with descriptions in the following.

Table 1: *The Demographic Information of 175 Respondents*

S.N	Demography	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender		
	Male	128	75.3%
	Female	42	24.7%
2	Age		
	21-30	30	17.6%

	31-40	62	36.5%
	41-50	24	14.1%
	51-60	36	18.8%
	Above 60	18	12.9%
3	Qualification		
	Matric (10 years of education)	2	1.2%
	FA/FSC (12 years of education)	6	2.9%
	BA/BSc (14 years of education)	16	9.4%
	BS/ MA (16 years of education)	85	50.0%
	MS/MPhil (18 years of education)	60	35.3%
	Ph.D. (21 years of education)	2	1.2%
4	Experience		
	Less than 2 years.	10	5.9%
	2-5 years.	20	11.8%
	6-10 years.	42	24.7%
	More than 10 years	98	57.6%
5	Working City		
	Islamabad	96	56.5%
	Karachi	8	4.7%
	Lahore	35	20.6%
	Peshawar	12	7.1%
	Quetta	7	4.1%
	Other	12	7.1%

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the 175 respondents who participated in the study. Demographic information comprises gender, age, qualification, experience, and working city. The majority of the participants were male (75.3%), whereas (24.7%) were female. The age of the respondents from 31 to 40 years was (17.6%), followed by 31 to 40 years (36.5%), 41 to 50 years (14.1%), 51 to 60 years (18.8%), and above 60 (12.9%). The qualification of the respondents who had matric were (1.2%), whereas (2.9%) had FSC, followed by (9.4%) BA/BSC where as (50%) were BS/MA/MS degree holder, (35.3%) Mphil/MS degree holders whereas (1.2%) had a Ph.D. regarding their professional experience, (51%) had more than 10 years of experience in journalism whereas (28%) had 6-10 years, (12%) had 2-5 years, and (9%) had less than 2 years of experience in journalism. In terms of geography (56.5%), respondents were from Islamabad, (4.7%) from Karachi, (20.6%) from Lahore, (7.1%) from Peshawar, (4.1%) from Quetta, and (7.1%) were from other cities of Pakistan.

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Usefulness of Digital Journalism*

S.	Percived Usefulness	N	Mean	SD
1	Digital journalism improves job performance	170	4.29	.719
2	Digital journalism reduces reliance on traditional journalism	170	4.06	.928
3	Digital journalism helps in gaining popularity	170	4.31	.910
4	Digital journalism helps in gaining recognition	170	4.19	.929
5	Digital journalism provides financial benefits	170	4.20	.921
6	Digital journalism allows editorial freedom	170	4.34	.645
7	Digital journalism helps in professional growth and career development	170	4.25	.798
8	Digital journalism keeps updated with the latest news	170	4.35	.665
9	Overall, digital journalism is useful for a job	170	4.32	.692

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the study regarding journalists' perceived usefulness of digital journalism. The results show that most of the journalists perceived digital journalism as highly useful for their professional jobs. All items of the study indicated relatively high mean values ranging from 4.06 to 4.35 measured on five likert scale.

Among the indicators of the research, digital journalism keeps journalists updated with the latest news, noted the maximum mean score ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.665$), showing strong agreement among participants. Followed by digital journalism enabling editorial freedom ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.645$) and overall usefulness of digital journalism for the job ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.692$), also indicated high mean scores, presenting that journalists perceive digital journalism improves editorial freedom and is useful for their job. Furthermore, respondents agreed that digital journalism helps them gain popularity ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.910$) and improves job performance ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.719$). Items related to professional growth and career development ($M = 4.25$, $SD = 0.798$) and financial benefits ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.921$) also indicated strong agreement among journalists. In addition, journalists perceived that digital journalism helps them gain recognition ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.929$) and reduces reliance on traditional journalism ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.928$). Overall, the results show that journalists strongly perceive digital journalism as useful for their professional practices and career development.

Hypothesis: H1. The perceived usefulness of digital journalism significantly influences journalists' adoption of digital journalism in Pakistan.

Table 3: *Correlations Between Perceived Usefulness of Digital Journalism and Adoption of Digital Journalism*

Variables	1	2
Perceived usefulness of digital journalism	—	.786**
Adoption of digital journalism	.786**	—

Note. $N = 170$. $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Table 3 shows the result of a Pearson correlation, which was conducted to examine the relationship between the perceived usefulness of digital journalism and the adoption of digital journalism. The results showed a strong positive correlation between perceived usefulness and the adoption of digital journalism ($r = .786$, $p < .01$). This indicates that journalists who perceived digital journalism as more useful are more likely to adopt digital journalism.

Table 4: *Regression Analysis of Perceived Usefulness Predicting Adoption of Digital Journalism*

Predictor	B	SE	β	T	P
Constant	.746	.220	-	3.385	.001
Perceived Usefulness	.844	.051	.786	16.463	<.001

Note. $R^2 = .617$, $F(1,168) = 271.04$, $p < .001$, $N = 170$.

Table 4 indicates that the outcome of the linear regression analysis examining the perceived usefulness of digital journalism predicts the adoption of digital journalism. The results show that the regression model statistically significant, $F(1,168) = 271.04$, $p < .001$, showing that the model significantly predicts the adoption of digital journalism. The model explains 61.7% of the variance in adoption ($R^2 = .617$).

The results indicated that perceived usefulness significantly influence the adoption of digital journalism ($B = .844$, $\beta = .786$, $t = 16.463$, $p < .001$). This shows that when journalists perceive digital journalism as useful, their chances of adopting digital journalism increase. Therefore, the findings support the hypothesis that perceived usefulness significantly influences journalists' adoption of digital journalism in Pakistan. Hence, H1 is supported.

5. DISCUSSION

In this study, the researchers examined journalists' perceptions regarding the usefulness of digital journalism that influenced journalists to adopt digital journalism in Pakistan. The majority of the respondents were male, which was 75.3 percent, whereas 24.7 percent were female journalists who participated in the survey. The data were collected from the journalists working in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, and other cities of Pakistan.

The findings of this study indicated that the majority of the journalists perceived digital journalism as highly useful for their professional jobs. The descriptive statistics indicated high mean scores for all the items, which were related to the perceived usefulness of digital journalism. Among the most perceived indicators, keep updated with the latest news, editorial freedom, gain popularity, and overall useful for their job considered as the high perceived useful indicators. The means of digital journalism keeps updated with the latest news is (M=4.35 and Standard deviation is .665), digital journalism provides editorial freedom (M=4.34 and Standard deviation .645), Overall usefulness of digital journalism (M=4.32 and Standard deviation .692), and digital journalism helps in gaining popularity (M=4.31 and Standard deviation .910) among these four indicators the editorial freedom considered as the most influential indicator because it has 2nd highest mean (4.35) and the lowest Standard deviation (.645). The 2nd most perceived useful factor is keeping updated with the latest news (M=4.35) and (.665) standard deviation, whereas the 3rd most perceived is overall useful for their job, having (4.32) mean and (.692) standard deviation. The lowest mean score in this study was recorded for reducing reliance on traditional journalism (M=4.06), which also can be considered the highest mean score, but overall, in this study, it is the least useful indicator.

Relating this research's findings with previous studies, the most perceived useful indicator is that digital journalism allows greater editorial freedom (M=4.34 and standard deviation .645) support previous studies that suggested digital media provides journalists with more editorial freedom (Shahid & Naz, 2022). Keeps updated with the latest news, the highest mean score for this was recorded (4.35, and the 2nd lowest standard deviation .665), supports the previous study that digital technology provides real-time updates that enable journalists to work efficiently (Shahid & Naz, 2022). (Similarly, previous research highlighted that digital platforms facilitate faster news dissemination in modern journalism (Tariq et al., 2022).

The findings of the study further indicated that digital journalism improves job performance and contributes to professional growth and career development, aligned with a previous study that digital tools enable journalists to produce multimedia content, interact with the audience, and work more efficiently (Sonni et al., 2024). Another research supported the findings that digital technology improves workflow efficiency by providing real-time multimedia storytelling, faster information verification that improves job performance (Pleijter, 2009). This study confirms that Pakistani journalists also perceived that digital journalism improves job performance and career development. Furthermore, journalists expressed their opinion that digital journalism helps them gain popularity, recognition, and financial benefits. This finding suggests that digital platforms not only improve job performance but also increase journalists' personal visibility and financial benefit. This study's item, digital journalism provides recognition (M=4.19), also considers an influential factor that was confirmed in previous research that digital media allow journalists to build a personal brand, expand their audience, and gain professional recognition (Kumar & Ahmad, 2025).

The hypothesis of this research, which predicted that the perceived usefulness of digital journalism significantly influences journalists' adoption of digital journalism in Pakistan, is supported. The correlation analysis shows a strong positive relationship between perceived usefulness of digital journalism and adoption of digital journalism ($r = .786, p < .01$). This shows that the journalists who perceive digital journalism as more useful are more likely to adopt digital journalism in their professional work. The regression analysis further confirmed this relationship, showing that perceived usefulness significantly predicts the adoption of digital journalism ($\beta = .786, p < .001$). The regression model explained 61.7% of the variance in adoption, which indicates a strong predictive relationship between the two variables.

The findings of this study strongly support the Technology Acceptance Model, which suggests that perceived usefulness is a key determinant of technology adoption (Park et al., 2008). According to the technology acceptance model, an individual adopts a new technology when they believe it improves their

job performance. The findings of this research confirm that the adoption of digital journalism improves their job performance.

Overall, the discussion concluded that journalists perceived digital journalism as useful in their professional work, as it provides editorial freedom to the journalists, helps keep them updated with the latest news, helps in gaining popularity and recognition, supports career development, and is overall useful for their job, while reducing reliance on traditional journalism revealed as less useful.

6. CONCLUSION

This study's objective was to examine journalists' perceptions of the usefulness of digital journalism and how these perceptions influenced journalists' adoption of digital journalism in Pakistan. The study concludes that the respondents agreed about the usefulness of digital journalism with respect to editorial freedom, staying updated about the latest news and information, and effectiveness in performing routine tasks. It also indicates a strong relationship between the perceived usefulness of digital journalism and adoption of digital journalism, claiming that the journalists who perceived digital journalism as more useful are more likely to adopt digital journalism in Pakistan

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