

Exploring the Impact of Media Content on Social Media Engagement Through Comment Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigates audience participation on the social media platforms of Kantipur Daily, Sagarmatha Radio, and Nepal Television using survey data collected in 2024. A review of comments on Facebook and X(Twitter) indicated that positive feedback is primarily focused on sports and social/health/lifestyle news. Moreover, opinions and economic news receive relatively less attention than political news. The study highlights particular areas that need more research and offers insightful information about audience dynamics in the context of digital communication. This finding emphasizes the value of social media as a political communication tool, which is especially clear from the positive comments on Political News. Additionally, despite certain restrictions, the results show how the communication landscape is changing and how social media is improving news accessibility and content quality. The finding indicates that social media has become a new arena for public affairs, and its results show that Facebook is more widely used than X.

Keywords: audience engagement, digital communication, political news, social media

Introduction

Communication is needed for individuals to relate to others, build connections, and help our human relationships. These days digital communication is so common. It is crucial to establish clear limits with social media and how it interacts with your work when you take on a professional position. When examining the shift from print to online media, academics frequently take a conflict-oriented stance, taking into account elements such as digital disruption, uncertainty, hedging, crisis, falling readership, and fear-driven innovations (Chyi

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and Sylvie 1998; Boczkowski 2001; Boczkowski 2004; Nguyen 2008; Mesquite 2017). The innovation in online newspapers between 1980 and 2008 is divided into three cultures by Pablo Boczkowski: pragmatic, defensive, and reactive. Reactive follows trends, defensive safeguards print companies, and pragmatic is concerned with short-term objectives (Boczkowski, 2004). He notes that news organizations are adopting online newspapers due to the rising expenses of newsprint and their stagnant circulation (Boczkowski 2001, 37).

Academics talk about the worry that newspapers may become obsolete, especially in industrialized nations where people are worried about new media displacing traditional media (Martin 2003; Fidler 1997). The fear that videotext, an early form of online newspaper technology, would replace core business drove the implementation of the technology in 1980s-saturated newspaper markets such as Japan, Northern Europe, and North America (Carey and Pavlik 1993, 165; Davenport 1987; Ettema 1989 cited in Boczkowski 2004, 263; Chyi and Tenenboim 2019, 158). Newspaper corporations were worried that videotex would replace traditional media, as David A. Patten pointed out (Patten 1986, 95). When it became evident that new media no longer posed a realistic threat to newspapers, Knight-Ridder ended its videotext service in the US (Boczkowski 2004, 261; Herndon 2012, 58). The dynamic landscape of information dissemination presents media firms with opportunities and problems never seen before in the digital age. The emergence of digital technologies has caused a radical shift in the old paradigms of journalism, necessitating quick adaptations on the part of media companies to change audience preferences and technological developments (Boczkowski, 2004). Media outlets must master the complexities of multimedia reporting and interaction as news consumption patterns change to online platforms to effectively engage their consumers (Boczkowski, 2004).

It was a private channel that aired daily TV broadcasts from Nepal starting in 1993. The Internet began to gain traction in Nepal a year later, coinciding with its US launch. The government's efforts to integrate the nation's history and culture with the burgeoning internet technology facilitated this progress in Nepal. That being said, it was some time before most people in Nepal could genuinely use the internet. Fortunately, once they were online, Nepalese people—even those who resided abroad—found that their access to the internet was unrestricted by geography. As a result, individuals may maintain their connection and get services and information from any location in the globe. Nepal's media history began during the Rana regime, with the installation of the Giddhe Press in 1851, which later became Gorkhapatra, a weekly newspaper and daily government mouthpiece (Baral, 2017). During the Panchayat era (1961-1990), Nepal established state-run media organizations like Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS), Press Council Nepal, and Nepal Television (Onta, 2001). After liberalization in 1990, private news channels increased significantly, with the first broadsheet national dailies published in 1993 (Onta, 2001). (Press Council Nepal, 2023) There are 3,865 registered newspapers, with 655 daily newspapers. Online media has also increased, with over 2,300

registered. By February 2021, the report shows that 1,127 FM radios and 220 televisions had licenses.

Social media is a collection of online platforms that allow users to share information, ideas, and interests. It plays a significant role in brand communication due to its rapid development and usability. Key platforms include message sheets, talk rooms, web journals, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Keller, 2013, 238).

(Jae-Young, 2016) Nepal's social media market is dominated by Facebook, with 9,857,000 users, making up 32.6% of the population. Instagram and X have 1,300,800 and 2,300,000 users respectively. Facebook, launched in 2005, has over 1.7 billion users and 2.6 billion monthly active users in 2021 (Jae-Young, 2016). X, launched in 2006, is popular for social media marketing, with over 330 million active users (Purohit et al., 2013). The platform's Blue Tick rules and verification process aim to enhance transparency and ensure verified accounts belong to notable individuals or organizations.

The impact of social media on increasing the public's access to media information is investigated in this study. Social media breaks down barriers of time and place, allowing readers and media outlets to engage in dynamic two-way conversation instead of the one-way that was previously the norm. This change not only makes it easier for the public to participate more, but it also improves media content quality by providing ongoing feedback. Social media thus functions as a newly developing platform for public spheres. With an emphasis on Facebook and X, the study particularly examines comments on news items made on the websites of three different media companies: privately held Kantipur Daily, community-based Sagarmatha Radio, and government-owned Nepal Television. Furthermore, within the context of Nepal, the study looks into user preferences for social media sites.

Reviews of Related Literature

In Nepal, digital transformation has reshaped political communication, as revealed in a study by Shrestha and Thapa (2019). Social media sites like Facebook and X have created new avenues for political communication by making it possible to organize events, mobilize supporters, and disseminate information.

Shakya and Acharya (2021) point out that increased internet and smartphone access has expanded the reach of political campaigns in Nepal, particularly among young people. The landscape of political communication and citizen participation has changed as a result of political actors using online tactics like social media marketing and live-streamed rallies to engage with voters (Shrestha & Thapa, 2019; Shakya & Acharya, 2021).

Hannan Khan Tareen and Malik Adnan from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur examined the effects of social media on the perceptions and efficacy of young people in Pakistan about politics in their research paper, "Political Communication with Social Media in Pakistan:

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Internal and External Efficacy" (Tareen & Adnan, 2021). To investigate the impact of social media on young people's opinions and political efficacy, the study examined participant answers. The results show that young people's self-perceived political efficaciousness is positively correlated with their use of social media for political reasons. It also has an impact on their capacity to effect political change in society as well as their political attitudes (Tareen & Adnan, 2021).

(Umesh, 2014) News distribution has changed due to technological advancements in communication media. This study's methodology provides information about how well readers comprehend it. A significant portion of respondents utilize real identities despite worries about fake news (Umesh, 2014). The study emphasizes that readers' opinions are diverse and that there is little overlap among them. In the context of digital communication, rigorous and frequent monitoring is necessary to handle problems like filthy and unpleasant statements.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive research design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to explore patterns, trends, and relationships in political leaders' social media posts, using large-scale data from surveys and content analysis.

This study analyzed the feedback on daily posts from three media outlets, Kantipur National Daily, Nepal Television, and Radio Sagarmatha, on their Facebook and X platforms from December 1, 2023, to December 7, 2023. The study divided comments into four groups: positive, negative, neutral, and irrelevant. Positive comments represent viewers' viewpoints, negative comments use vulgar language, neutral comments are those who don't have an opinion, and irrelevant comments are emojis and statements that add little to no value to the discussion.

Theoretical Framework

According to Jürgen Habermas, the public sphere is an area where people can have free and logical conversations without interference from the government or the private sector (Habermas, 1964). The public sphere, which first appeared in newspapers and coffee shops, serves as a venue for critical discussion and helps shape public opinion. Social media has become a new forum for public spheres in today's culture, allowing for broad and varied discussion involvement. However, the idealized notion of the public sphere in the digital age is threatened by issues like commercialization and filter bubbles.

Examples of Positive comments, Negative comments, Neutral Comments, and Irrelevant comments in the social media accounts of Respective Media House.

Examples of positive, negative, neutral, and irrelevant remarks from various media companies' social media platforms are shown in the table. Between December 1, 2023, and December 7, 2023, the comments are sampled. The daily comments made on Kantipur's Facebook page are displayed in the table below as an example to help you comprehend the research.


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Table 1: Examples of positive, negative, neutral, and irrelevant comments

'एनसेल प्रकरणमा भएको भ्रष्टाचार रोक्न सरकार, सडक र संसद् सबै ठाउँबाट प्रतिवाद गरौं: महामन्त्री थापा'	December 7, 2023	Kantipur Daily
Positive Comments	आफै सरकारमा बसेर आन्दोलन गर्ने रे , अब कसैले भन्दैमा जनताका छोराछोरेि अबुझ छैनन् सडकमा जान,	
Negative Commentsको भाग परेन्छ कि के हो, फेरि दाजु भाउजू रिसाउलान, आफ्नो भागको पैसो फीर्ता गर्न पर्छ नी त्यो चाही संझ्नीनु	
Neutral Comments	Good, गरे भैगाेनि के हेरेर बसेकाे	
Irrelevant Comments	आर ईउ कमेडी मि, म्याँ, 	

Source: Content Survey 2024

The comments on the political news that Kantipur Daily posted on December 7, 2023, are explained in the above table (Table 1). Here, we can see the kinds of remarks that people leave on Kantipur Daily's Facebook page. Examples of positive, negative, neutral, and irrelevant remarks are included in the table.

Total Respond on Facebook Pages of Nepal Television, Kantipur Daily and Sagarmatha Radio

The Table 2 categorizes Facebook responses from Nepal Television, Kantipur Daily, and Sagarmatha Radio into Political News, Opinions, Social-Health-Lifestyle, Business News, Sports News, and Foreign News.

Table 2: Categorization of Respond on Facebook Pages of Nepal Television, Kantipur Daily and Sagarmatha Radio. Top of Form

News Category	Comments				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Irrelevant	Total
Political	512	491	84	359	1,446
Opinions	13	1			14
Social, health, and Lifestyle	123	10	19	41	193
Business	13	2	2	1	18
Sports	28	3	6	1	38
Foreign	2	6	2	5	15
Total					1,724

Source: Content Survey 2024

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The data shows a significant engagement with 1,446 comments on Political News, with more negative comments than positive ones. The data also shows a diverse range of opinions on social health lifestyle and Sports News. Understanding sentiment and engagement levels across different content categories helps media organizations tailor their content strategy and engage efforts, identifying topics or themes that resonate more positively with the audience.

Respond on the Facebook Pages of Nepal Television.

The provided table (Table 3) offers a comprehensive breakdown of audience engagement on a media platform's social media accounts across diverse news categories. The categories include Political News, Opinions, Social, Health, and Lifestyle, Business News, Sports News, and Foreign News. Each category is further analyzed based on four distinct comment types: Positive Comments, Negative Comments, Neutral Comments, and Irrelevant Comments. The data originates from a survey conducted in 2024.

Table 3: Categorization of Respond on Facebook Pages of Nepal Television.

News Category	Comments				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Irrelevant	Total
Political	190	207	48	95	540
Opinions	13	1			14
Social, health, and Lifestyle	36	5	8	15	64
Business	0	2	0	0	2
Sports News	10	0	0	0	10
Foreign	1	1	0	1	3
Total					633

Source: Content Survey 2024

The analysis of Political News reveals significant engagement, with 190 positive and 207 negative comments. Opinions show a positive reception (13 positive, 1 negative), indicating polarized responses. Social, Health, and Lifestyle news are generally well-received (36 positive, 5 negative), with varied perspectives (8 neutral) and some irrelevant discussions (15). Business News lacks positive comments (0), with minimal disagreement (2 negative). Sports and Foreign News both garner positive engagement (10 and 1 positive comments, respectively), with minimal or no negative comments. However, Foreign News has some irrelevant discussions (1).

Respond on the Facebook Pages of Kantipur Daily.

Based on a 2024 survey, Table 4 presents comments made on Kantipur Daily's Facebook pages in various content categories. A polarized response is evident in Political News, where there is a significant amount of involvement with 312 good and 284 negative

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comments, along with 136 neutral and 160 irrelevant remarks. Sadly, opinions don't provide precise information.

A balanced range of audience viewpoints is indicated by the 85 positive, 32 negative, 11 neutral, and 15 irrelevant comments received by the Social, Health, and Lifestyle categories. Thirteen comments are positive, two are indifferent, and one is irrelevant, suggesting that Business News is leaning in the right direction.

There are 18 positive, 3 negative, 6 neutral, and 1 irrelevant comments for Sports News, indicating a largely good response. A more critical audience response is evident from the 1 good, 5 negative, 2 neutral, and 4 irrelevant comments received by Foreign News.

Table 4: Categorization of Respond on Facebook Pages of Kantipur Daily.

News Category	Comments				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Irrelevant	Total
Political	312	284	136	160	892
Opinions					
Social, health, and Lifestyle	85	5	11	15	116
Business	13		2	1	16
Sports	18	3	6	1	28
Foreign	1	5	2	4	12
Total					1064

Source: Content Survey 2024

In conclusion, business news tends to be good, social/health/lifestyle and sports news are generally well-received, while political news elicits strong reactions. Opinions and certain categories have limited data, which highlights areas that could benefit from additional research. The survey provides insightful information about the mood and level of audience participation on Kantipur Daily's Facebook pages in 2024.

Feedback on Facebook Pages of Sagarmatha Radio

Feedback on Sagarmatha Radio's Facebook pages is categorized in Table 5 according to the following content types: business news, sports news, opinions, social/health/lifestyle, political news, and foreign news. Positive, Negative, Neutral, and Irrelevant Comments are shown in columns.

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Table 5: Categorization of Respond on Facebook Pages of Sagarmatha Radio

News Category	Comments				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Irrelevant	Total
Political	10			104	204
Opinions					
Social, health, and Lifestyle	2			11	23
Business					
Sports					
Foreign					
Total					227

Source: Content Survey 2024

Ten comments were positive and 104 were negative in Political News. No particular comment was received for Opinions and Business News. Social/Health/Lifestyle received two affirmative and eleven superfluous comments. Details about Foreign News and Sports News are not provided. The information, which comes from a survey conducted in 2024, offers a glimpse of the tone and significance of Sagarmatha Radio's Facebook reviews.

Feedback on X Pages of Nepal Television.

Official X of Nepal Television remains inactive during the period of this study.

Feedback on X Pages of Kantipur Daily.

Table 6 categorizes feedback on Kantipur Daily's X accounts into various content genres, including Opinions, Business News, Sports News, Social/Health/Lifestyle, and Political News. The table shows positive, negative, neutral, and irrelevant comments for each category.

Table 6: Categorization of Feedback on X Pages of Kantipur Daily

News Category	Comments				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Irrelevant	Total
Political	5	120	18	15	158
Opinions	14	9		5	28
Social, health, and Lifestyle	1	4		8	13
Business					
Sports	4				4
Foreign	1				1
Total					204

Source: Content Survey 2024

The table provides a concise summary of the tone and significance of X's remarks on Kantipur Daily-related news topics. In the Political News section, five comments were positive, while 14 were positive and 9 were negative. In the Social/Health/Lifestyle and Foreign News categories, four compliments were received, while Business News' specifics were left out. However, the lack of information about Business News points to a possible weakness in the analysis and calls for more research. All things considered, Table 6 is a useful resource for figuring out the relevance and tone of comments made by the public on news stories linked to Kantipur Daily.

Feedback on X Pages of Radio Sagarmatha.

Official X account of Radio Sagarmatha is inactive during the time of study.

Conclusion

This research explores how social media can improve public access to media content. Social media turns traditional one-way communication into dynamic two-way interactions between readers and media outlets by erasing geographical and temporal constraints. This change improves the caliber of media content by fostering continued feedback and encouraging greater public participation. Social media, especially Facebook and X, is being closely examined as a new public sphere platform. Comments on news articles from three different media sources—the government-owned Nepal Television, the privately held Kantipur Daily, and the community-based Sagarmatha Radio—are used to measure audience engagement. The study also looks into user preferences for social media platforms in the Nepali environment.

In summary, the study offers insightful information about audience participation across multiple social media channels for the media organizations under investigation. Positive comments are scattered throughout the categories, but Political News received the most positive feedback, demonstrating the increasing significance of social media as a political communication medium. While certain regions show scant data, highlighting the need for more investigation, the findings show a change in communication strategies and a predilection for Facebook audience comments. Social media has a clear effect on raising the caliber of material and making news more accessible, demonstrating its proactive role in the changing media landscape.

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