

Is print dying? A critical analysis of the digital convergence of west java media from a postmodern perspective

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Abstract

This study explores how local print media in West Java sustain their business amid increasing competition in the media industry and the challenges of the digital era. Employing a case study approach, data were collected through interviews with editors-in-chief of local media, observations of print media activities, and analysis of related documents. The study finds that the digital era has significantly influenced business models, pushing print media to transform in order to survive. Several key factors support the resilience of local print media in West Java. First, they keep close ties with municipal and provincial governments, which ensure access to government grants. Second, they play role as partners in government advertising and publicity. Third, they maintain relatively affordable cost of advertising compared to national print outlets. Fourth, their strong connection with local communities. Fifth, the use of social media platforms that complement their print operations. Moreover, local print media continue to have loyal readers, while their leaders face the added responsibility of innovating and developing sustainable business strategies.

Keywords: adaptation; business; print media; ecosystem; digital

Introduction

In the digital age, print media faces significant challenges, ranging from declining circulation and shifts in advertising interests toward digital platforms to drastic changes in revenue models (Newman et al., 2024). In various countries, long-established print media also struggle to survive in the media industry. Although print media has seen a decline in distribution, it has not completely disappeared; it still exists alongside new media as part of an interrelated process (Stiernstedt & Kaun, 2024).

The large number of print media that have closed down is influenced by several factors. According to the World Press Trends 2024 report from WAN-IFRA, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of advertising revenue for print media, which only contributed around 23.8% of total media revenue (WAN-IFRA, 2024). In addition, it is also influenced by the decreasing number of print media readers who have shifted to social media (Pickard, 2020). This condition is similar to what happened in Zambia, where many advertisers and print media readers have shifted to digital platforms, resulting in a very significant decline in print media revenue and circulation (Kalombe & Phiri, 2019).

The decline in advertisers and readers of print media has resulted in many print media managers shifting from print media to digital media, since online media can be accessed easily and in real time via mobile devices. This convenience is what makes digital media grow so quickly and be used more by the public than print media (Pickard, 2020); (WAN-IFRA, 2024).

Print media is under pressure from multiple directions. Advertising revenues are declining, while operational costs continue to rise, starting from print production and distribution, which are becoming increasingly expensive, thus burdening the industry. The response made by print media entrepreneurs to situations and conditions like this is namely print media adopting various adaptive strategies, such as digital convergence, paywalls, content monetization, and cross-platform collaboration (WAN-IFRA, 2024). For example, The Irish Times managed to turn losses into profits in 2023 by increasing

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the number of digital subscriptions and operational efficiency (Marhamah & Fauzi, 2021);(UK, 2024).

Print media that have undergone digitalization can be found in several countries with leading newspapers. Many offer both print and digital versions, showing that print editions remain in demand through various modifications and creative strategies by media managers. For instance, The New York Times in the United States, which has been around since 1851, still publishes a daily print edition, although digital subscriptions are more popular. Similarly, the Guardian, founded in England in 1821, is published in print from Monday through Saturday alongside its digital version. *The Times* in England (est. 1785), *Le Monde* in France (est. 1944), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* in Germany (est. 1949), and *The Asahi Shimbun* in Japan (est. 1879) all maintain both formats. *The Hindu* in India, first published in 1878, continues to thrive as a popular English-language newspaper in both print and digital forms. Other notable examples include *El País* in Spain (est. 1976), *Corriere della Sera* in Italy (est. 1876), and *The Wall Street Journal* in the United States, all available in dual formats.

In Indonesia, print media have experienced similar challenges, with many outlets shifting toward digital platforms due to the increasingly difficult business environment. According to Press Company Association (SPS) records, 593 print outlets were registered in 2021, but this number dropped to 399 in 2022. Average circulation also fell from 7.5 million copies per issue in 2021 to 5 million in 2022, a decline of 2.5 million copies (Farhan, 2023).

Many once-iconic Indonesian print outlets have either ceased operations or migrated to digital. Examples include SINDO, which ended print in 2023; *Republika*, which went fully digital in 2022; and a series of magazines and tabloids such as *Mombi (Balita)*, *Nova*, *Mombi SD*, and *Bobo Junior*. Other closures include *Suara Pembaruan* (2021), *Tempo* print edition (2020), several *Jawa Pos Group* outlets (2020), and various tabloids like *Bintang* and *Cek & Ricek* (2019), and *Bola* (2018). Lifestyle magazines such as *GoGirl*, *Cosmo Girl Indonesia*, *Esquire Indonesia*, *Rolling Stone Indonesia*, *FHM Indonesia*, *Grazia Indonesia*, *Maxim Indonesia*, and *High End Teen* also closed in 2017. In the same year, *HAI* transitioned to digital, while *Commando*, *Oto Plus*, and *TRAX* ceased operations. Earlier closures include *Sinyal* (2016), *Kawanku* and *CHIP* (2016), *Sinar Harapan* (2015), and *Soccer* (2014) (Heppy, N. & Puspita, 2023).

In addition to making changes to digital formats, research results of Sari and Nugraha (2023) shows that some outlets, such as *Kabar Banten* and *Majalah Ekspert*, have adopted digital convergence strategies and product diversification to sustain their operationse.

Then Kompas expanded the reach of Kompas.com and its digital news application in order to maintain audience engagement (Sulistiyo, 2020). Rahardjo (2021) stated that Harian Kompas and Tempo.co provide exclusive material for subscribers. CNN Indonesia and Detik.com use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to tailor headlines and content (Novianti, L. & Kurniawati, 2022). Narasi TV is active in building communities through social media and YouTube (Siregar, R. & Harahap, 2020). Environmental media, namely Saling.id also expand content distribution via social media (Putri & Pratiwi, 2022).

In addition to shifting from print to digital, print media also implement reskilling programs for journalists and media managers to strengthen digital content production skills such as videos, podcasts, and infographics. For instance, *Media Indonesia* trains its editorial team to produce multimedia content to remain competitive (Nugroho, 2019). This phenomenon, referred to by Jenkins (2006) in the theory of media convergence, represents the integration of old media (print, radio, television) with new media (digital, online, interactive). Print media are therefore not disappearing entirely but transforming into digital platforms such as online news portals, e-papers, and social media.

Digitalization However, digitalization efforts to sustain print media businesses are risky. They reduce the popularity of print editions while creating uncertainty in journalism, impacting business models, revenue streams, media variations, and production practices (Creech & Mendelson, 2015). Nugroho (2012) also highlight that digital transformation has fundamentally changed news consumption patterns. Audiences increasingly access information directly through online portals, social media, and mobile apps, rendering print media less effective as a channel of knowledge

dissemination. This shift leads to declining readership, sales, and advertising revenue (Nugroho et al., 2012).

The transition to digital media also affects journalists, who are required to master new skills. Cohen (2019) argues that the media must direct journalists to focus more on digital platforms and expects journalists to be able to use social media effectively, conduct surveillance, and evaluate information when carrying out their duties.

Nevertheless, the transformation from print to digital is not always smooth. Print media managers must overcome challenges such as high technology investment costs, shifts in organizational culture, and the adaptation of new business models, all of which require time and skilled human resources. This is reinforced by the findings of Natalia and Yoedtadi (2020) noting that not all print media can successfully undergo digital transformation—particularly local outlets with limited human and technological resources, which struggle to match the speed and flexibility of digital media

Regarding the migration of print media to digital media, it has been proven by several studies. Kalombe and Phiri (2019) in their study in Zambia found that most print media in Zambia have moved towards digital but are still experiencing problems in seeking profits and creating new business models. Then Nossek et al. (2015), who studied print media in several European countries, which are increasing their existence through the use of digital technology that is increasingly in demand by the public.

In contrast, the trajectory of print media in Central and Eastern European countries has been shaped by political and economic pressures. Despite efforts to improve transparency and accountability, print media in these regions face significant challenges. Following the fall of communist regimes, fundamental shifts occurred in the structure and practice of journalism, with many outlets struggling due not only to declining readership and advertising but also to insufficient regime support (Stępińska, A. & Szabó, 2016).

Research by Nossek et al. (2015) also shows contradictory conditions. When comparing print and digital consumption across nine European countries, they found that print media remain important, particularly for older readers. Established reading habits and cultural traditions have helped sustain the popularity of print in several European contexts. Nossek et al. (2015).

Based on these research findings, a similar situation can be observed in West Java. Despite the rise of digital media, several local print outlets—such as *Pikiran Rakyat*, *Tribun Jabar*, and *Inilah Koran*—continue to operate. This phenomenon underscores the importance of conducting in-depth research on how local print media in West Java develop their business strategies in the digital era.

This study aims to contribute to that understanding. By examining how local print media adapt their business models and pursue digital transformation strategies, this research seeks to provide insights for media practitioners, academics, and policymakers concerned with media sustainability in the digital age.

Method

This study adopts the constructivist paradigm, which assumes that social reality is not singular or objective but is shaped by individual experiences and interpretations. Thus, the purpose of this research is to understand the perspectives and meanings constructed by the subjects themselves (Creswell, 2014); (Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, 1994). Creswell (2010) states that individuals continually interpret their experiences, develop new understandings, and apply them in subsequent activities.

A qualitative approach is employed to explore phenomena related to the work culture and business practices of local print media in West Java. Qualitative data primarily consist of words and narratives collected through interviews with informants (Creswell, 2014). The research design follows a case study method, which enables an in-depth analysis of specific cases (Idrus, 2007). According to Creswell (2010) the case study approach requires clear specification of the case under investigation and attention to its unique characteristics. In this study, the case concerns the condition of the local print media industry in West Java during the digital era.

In this study, the data collection methods used include observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The objects of this study include newspapers in West Java such as *Tribun Jabar*, *Pikiran Rakyat*, and *Inilahkoran*. The selection of informants is based on several requirements.

First, the informant must be a journalist who has worked both before and during the digital era, so that they can provide a comparative perspective across different periods. Second, the informant must possess relevant expertise and be willing to share the information needed in this study.

In this study, the data will be analyzed according to the guidelines suggested by Creswell (2014). The researcher will begin by grouping interview data in line with the research objectives before proceeding with deeper analysis. This classification process serves as an important step to help structure the subsequent stages of research. Once the data are organized, the next stage involves identifying material that is relevant to the research focus and marking key findings from both informant interviews and documentation studies. The purpose of this stage is to provide a clear description and explanation of the important aspects of the research problem. To strengthen the analysis, statements from informants will be presented alongside supporting evidence drawn from observations and documentation studies, allowing the findings to become more comprehensive and convincing. Afterward, the researcher will interpret the data to produce meaning that is clear and easy to understand. The next step is to present the findings in the form of a research report, written as a narrative that aligns with the objectives of the study. The final step is to evaluate the findings by linking them to relevant theories, expert perspectives, and existing concepts, as well as to the broader research problem.

To ensure that the data obtained from interviews and documentation studies are reliable and valid, the researcher will adopt strategies commonly applied in qualitative research. This includes the use of data triangulation, as suggested by Moustakas (1994). Data collected from interviews and documentation will be re-examined and cross-checked through follow-up discussions with informants in order to receive feedback and confirmation of their accuracy. In this process, the researcher aims to secure both input and recognition of the data's truth from the informants themselves. In addition, the triangulation process also involves drawing upon multiple references, including books and journal articles related to the research theme, to further strengthen the credibility of the findings.

Results and Discussion

Philip Meyer (in Rusnandha, 2021) once predicted that print media would no longer be published. In fact, however, local print media in West Java continue to survive and are still published daily, serving loyal readers, even though they have undergone changes such as reduced size, fewer pages, and declining circulation. This can be seen in the case of *Pikiran Rakyat*, which now has a circulation of around 40,000 copies per day, compared to the past when circulation could exceed 100,000 copies (Majalahintrust, 2024).

In contrast, *Tribun Jabar* has been able to maintain its circulation and even increase it in 2025. According to information from the *Tribun Jabar* advertising agency, the newspaper printed around 198,324 copies per day in 2025. This figure shows an increase from the previous year, which recorded daily sales of around 181,750 copies. With this circulation, *Tribun Jabar* maintains its position as one of the largest regional print media outlets in West Java, particularly in Bandung and its surrounding areas (Agency, 2025).

The survival of *Tribun Jabar*'s print edition is supported by its strong reputation and the trust of many companies, both large and small, which use it as a medium for promotion and advertising. Well-known as well as emerging brands often place advertisements in *Tribun Jabar*, and marketers generally report satisfaction with the results, citing the effectiveness of advertising in the newspaper (Agency, 2025).

Although the size and number of pages of local print media in West Java have decreased, this does not reduce the quality of their design. Design remains crucial because it is the first aspect readers notice. Therefore, local print media must present attractive and distinctive designs that set them apart not only from other print media but also from online media, which have the advantage of incorporating audio and video elements.

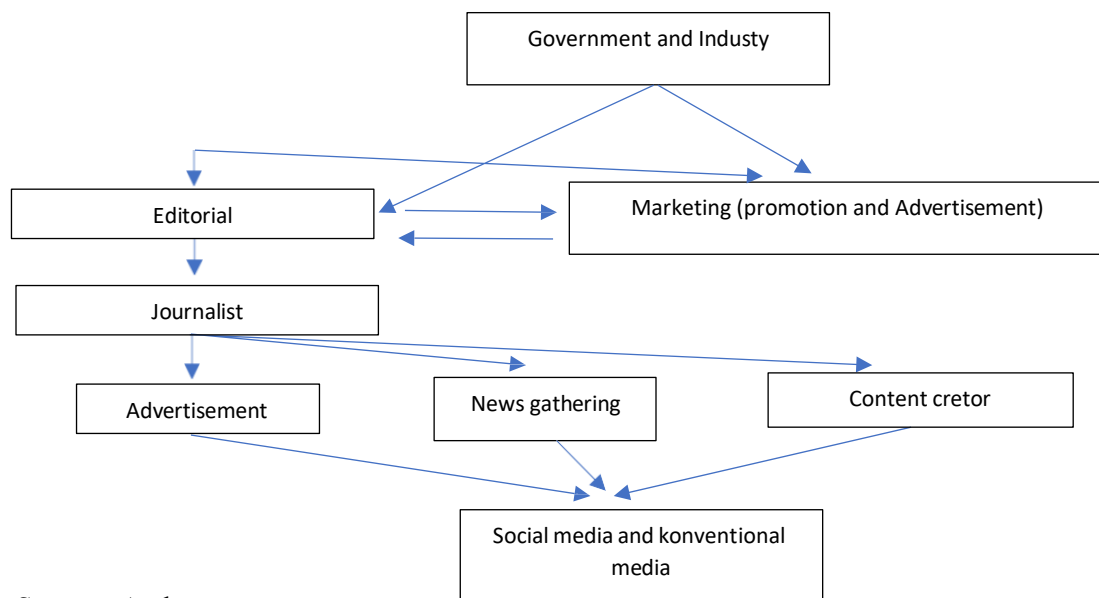
Maintaining local print media in West Java is indeed difficult amid the intense competition in the mass media industry and the continuous challenges that arise. These include media convergence across platforms, which has transformed newsroom work patterns; the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused local media to lose revenue as funds were redirected to pandemic response; and now the rise

of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which poses a threat to journalists and the media as many tasks can be performed by AI-driven tools.

Nevertheless, several strategies are employed by local print media in West Java. Government advertising expenditure remains an important source of support, facilitated by the close ties between local media and government institutions, which enables cooperation in various activities. Advertising costs in local print media are also cheaper than in national media, giving them an advantage. Moreover, local media strengthen their bargaining power by distributing content not only through print platforms but also across social media. Importantly, there are still loyal readers who continue to support local print outlets. In some cases, journalists who are considered competent are also given additional marketing responsibilities, such as seeking advertisements and exploring potential partnerships that are mutually beneficial.

Concerning the transformation carried out by print media in West Java, this can be illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 1. Transformation of print media in West Java in the Digital Era



Source : Author

Advertising and Closeness to Government

Among the reasons why local print media in West Java still survive and can retain their loyal readers is government advertising spending. The presence of print media in West Java is still considered relevant to the advertising and publication needs of the West Java Provincial Government. Local print media in West Java can serve as a forum, partner, and support for the government in publishing various activities, policies, and advertisements from the provincial government, including advertisements about government achievements and programs, so that the public is informed and supportive.

These advertisements are not only from the West Java Provincial Government; local print media also receive advertisements from agencies under the provincial government, as well as from district and city governments and their respective agencies in the West Java region. Thus, local print media managers can obtain advertisements from several levels of government.

Government advertisements are regular and routine for local print media in West Java. Although there are many online media, television, and local radio outlets in West Java that also cooperate with the government, the government still allocates part of its advertising budget to local print media.

The types of advertisements offered by local print media vary, ranging from property, automotive, pharmaceutical and health, HORECA (hotels, restaurants, cafes), banking, insurance, announcements, job vacancies, congratulatory messages, condolence messages, and others. Advertising prices also vary depending on each newspaper, as circulation rates differ and influence advertising costs (Agency, 2025).

Especially for print media, Tribun Jabar offers advertising with discounts or attractive prices, as well as various effective advertising packages. Advertising in Tribun Jabar provides several benefits, including: 1) free design services; 2) original prices with more attractive discounts; 3) greater security and convenience; 4) many choices of advertising packages; 5) very small agency fees, or even no agency fees at all; and free advertising on social media (Agency, 2025).

In addition to advertisements from provincial and city governments in West Java, local print media also receive advertisements from state-owned enterprises (BUMN) and companies based or operating in West Java. These advertisements are often supported by requirements in procurement auctions that mandate placement in local print media. According to a survey conducted by Research (2023), as many as 72% of MSMEs are more likely to advertise in local print media because the costs are more affordable. MSME products also need wider promotion since they are less well known by the public or consumers.

According to a survey conducted by Research (2023), as many as 72% of MSMEs prefer to advertise in local print media because it targets local audiences more effectively and builds stronger relationships with readers compared to national media. In West Java, MSMEs are among the main priorities of the regional government, which is actively developing small and medium entrepreneurs. This creates a mutual need between local print media and MSMEs: the media needs advertising revenue, while MSMEs need product promotion at affordable costs.

The close relationship between the government, BUMN, and regional companies with local media in West Java also strengthens local media's position. This ensures that local media receive priority in news coverage as well as support in the form of CSR, sponsorships, and advertising from provincial and regional governments, BUMN, and private companies. Local media also have easier access to information and news materials provided by local governments, ensuring a steady supply of issues and stories.

There is also a close emotional relationship between local print media journalists and local governments because they often meet in government offices, where special areas for journalists are provided. By contrast, national print media journalists rarely interact with local governments because their coverage focus is national. In addition, there is a long-standing historical relationship between local journalists and local governments. For instance, *Pikiran Rakyat*, *Inilah Koran*, and *Tribun Jabar* have long collaborated with the Bandung City Government and the West Java Provincial Government.

Government support for print media is not unique to West Java. A report from the Center for International Media Assistance (CIMA, 2021) noted that several countries provide support to print media to help them survive. For example, the Indonesian government supported many media outlets during the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, the Australian government adopted the News Media Bargaining Code, which required large technology companies to channel hundreds of millions of dollars to print media outlets.

Colin Sparks (in Nossek et al., 2015) emphasized that print media plays an important role in democracy as a tool for public enlightenment. Changes in print media also mean changes in democracy itself. Thus, by supporting local print media to survive and continue publishing, the West Java Provincial Government and regional governments contribute to maintaining democracy.

This closeness to the government also serves as a strength for print media, allowing them to build a brand as trusted media outlets endorsed by provincial and city-district governments in West Java. Readers' trust in local print media can increase as a result of this support, response, and recognition from local governments. For example, readers may feel more confidence when seeing coverage that includes provincial or city-district officials, entrepreneurs, and BUMN leaders in West Java.

Print Media Advertising is Cheaper

Another factor that allows local print media in West Java to survive is that advertising rates are relatively lower compared to national media. Advertising rates in local print media in West Java vary, with offers that are affordable for advertisers with small budgets and accessible to the surrounding community. Research conducted by the Indonesian Advertising Association (P3I, 2022) shows that the average advertising price in local media such as *Serambi Indonesia*, *Bali Post*, or *Harian Fajar* is IDR 15,000–IDR 35,000 per column cm, while in national media it can reach IDR 80,000–IDR 150,000 per column cm. Local print media in West Java generally apply similar advertising rates.

Unlike national media, where advertising prices are very high and inaccessible to local businesses, local print media are more affordable and reach the target audience directly. National media circulation is concentrated in big cities with a limited number of copies, while local print media circulate in regional areas, directly targeting advertisers' intended markets in West Java.

Based on research conducted by (Sari, 2021), it was found that advertising prices in local newspapers (such as *Pikiran Rakyat* and those in the Jawa Pos Group regions) are on average 30–50% lower than in national newspapers such as *Kompas* or *Media Indonesia*. The main reason is that the readership of local media is limited to specific regions, and the purchasing power of the local media market is lower compared to the national media market.

In addition, referring to Rahmadani (2020) although advertising costs in local print media are cheaper, advertising in these outlets is more effective for reaching specific target markets, especially MSMEs and for promoting local events. Rahmadani (2020) added that local media offer more flexible promotional packages, such as discounts for repeat advertising and advertorial bonuses. Likewise, local print media in West Java are relatively flexible as part of their excellent service to the government, which often advertises with them. These services include flexible pricing, ad design development, advertorial creation, and other forms of support.

Although advertising in local print media in West Java is relatively cheap compared to national print media, it is still slightly more expensive than online media, which are now abundant in the region. As shown in Rasyid (2020) newspapers in Medan experienced a significant decline in advertising revenue as advertisers switched to digital media, which offers lower rates and greater accessibility. This situation also applies to West Java, where local print media need strategies to remain competitive; otherwise, advertisers may shift entirely to online platforms.

To address this, local media have adopted several strategies. These include offering various forms of compensation and improved services to retain advertisers, such as combining print advertising with promotion on social media at relatively lower costs, or providing coverage in online editions after advertisers place ads in print. This approach is feasible because most local print media in West Java already operate digital platforms alongside their print editions.

Have Loyal Readers

Print media still survives today because of its loyal readers. It is difficult to eliminate a print product when there are loyal fans who maintain the tradition of reading print media, even though sales continue to decline every year. Nevertheless, print media will remain present as long as these loyal customers exist. This is especially true for the older generation, who were familiar with radio, television, and print media long before the rise of online media, which is more popular among young people and teenagers.

There are habits that are not easily replaced by online media when it comes to reading print. Although the prestige of print in the millennial era has declined, decades of presence in society have left a strong imprint, shaping a reading culture at home, in offices, schools, and public spaces. As a result, print media is not easily forgotten.

When compared to the conditions described in the *Reuters Institute Digital News Report*, the trend is different. Globally, the number of print media readers has decreased by around 10% annually since 2018, while digital news readers continue to increase each year. However, loyalty to certain newspapers, such as *The Economist* and *The New York Times*, in their print editions, remains strong (Newman et al., 2023). The evidence is that, even now, in addition to *The Economist* and *The New*

York Times, several print media outlets in various countries, including in West Java, are still publishing and circulating in their communities.

Regarding the decline in print media readership, Noviana (2020) found that there has been a shift in news consumption behavior from print to online, particularly among younger readers (aged 18–35 years) who prefer online news to print. On the other hand, print readers, especially those over the age of 50, continue to consume print media, particularly for local news and in-depth reports (Rahmadani, 2020). This is also one of the reasons why local and city governments in the West Java region continue to maintain partnerships with print media—because print outlets, by providing local news, maintain a sense of closeness and relevance to their readers.

Regarding the findings of the age of print media readers, it is different from the results of Nielsen's (2021) study, which found that the majority of print media readers in Indonesia were on average 40 years old and above, about 10 years younger than previously thought, and at least had a high school education background. Nielsen also noted that, apart from being over 40, those who enjoy reading print media are generally people who live in big cities such as Jakarta. In West Java, however, the lack of a strong reading culture and the limited distribution of local print media—mainly confined to urban areas, districts, and cities—means that rural communities are largely unreached.

As for young people, their engagement with print media is often not out of personal initiative or genuine interest, but rather due to external demands, such as school assignments, work requirements, or job searches. Pradipta (2019) found in his research that students tend to read print media primarily because of academic assignments, not as part of their daily leisure activities.

Print media readers, most of whom were born in the 1990s, have their own reasons for continuing to read print media, even though many people have switched to digital platforms. These readers find comfort in the printed format, which does not easily strain the eyes. They also appreciate the integrity of information in print media, which is free from the distractions often found in online media, such as pop-up ads, videos, and small text on mobile screens.

For these readers, print media provides a distinct experience, and many miss the unique moments of reading print, even if they are also accustomed to digital news. They also value the higher journalistic quality of print, which prioritizes depth and credibility, unlike much of digital media that often chases virality and recycles identical content under different headlines.

According to Hasan (2022), loyal readers trust print media because it offers reliable news with depth, produced by adhering to sound journalistic principles. This remains a major factor in why readers continue to choose print media over online alternatives. Similarly, Farhan (2023) argues that print media is a reliable source of information because it provides content that can be trusted and maintains journalistic quality.

To retain its audience, local print media in West Java must continue to keep readers informed about developments through their publications. Pavlik (2013) emphasizes that, in order to remain competitive with digital media, print outlets should focus on long-form journalism, in-depth investigations, and critical analysis—forms of reporting that digital platforms, with their focus on speed and virality, often neglect.

Content Diversification

The next step taken by print media managers is to produce two versions, namely the print version and the digital version, along with a more diverse content menu. This effort aims to prevent loyal readers from switching to other media. Data from the Worlds of Journalism Study 2012–2015 show that media outlets worldwide need to transform, grow, and evolve in order to keep pace with the development of the media business (Hanusch & Hanitzsch, 2017). This is largely driven by rapid technological advancements, which have significantly influenced changes across various sectors, including the media (Ward, 2023).

The widespread use of technology in society has also been addressed by local print media in West Java, which now distribute news and advertising content through multiple platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. This strategy is intended to keep readers engaged and reduce the likelihood that they will shift to other media outlets.

When diversifying their content and offerings, print media already have an inherent advantage: they possess well-established brands that are familiar to the public. This brand recognition

makes it easier to attract new readers and retain existing ones. It also strengthens their position when seeking partnerships with advertisers, government bodies, state-owned enterprises (BUMN), and private companies.

Local print media in West Java have applied what Saragih and Harahap (2020) emphasized: in the digital era, journalists and media organizations face tough competition between mainstream and new media, and survival requires the ability to identify and seize opportunities. The speed with which local print media adapt to change, however, varies depending on the readiness and capacity of their human resources.

Not all local print media in West Java are quick to adapt; some are slower in making changes. Yet this does not necessarily pose an immediate threat, as the current transition is expected to unfold over several years. As Foust (2011) noted, the media still have opportunities to develop in the digital era. With audiences increasingly free to choose the news they consume, this trend is predicted to last. Therefore, as long as local print media in West Java are willing to provide a wide variety of news to capture the attention and interest of audiences, they will remain capable of surviving in the evolving media business.

In addition, Foust (2011) advised that in the digital era, print media must pay attention to several things, such as ensuring that every news broadcast has its own weight (nonlinear). Although the media needs to create and distribute as much news as possible, it should still be able to produce one complete news story without relying on other pieces of news.

Foust (2011) further explained that there are several advantages in the digital era that local print media managers in West Java can maximize in order to remain competitive. First, news can be easily documented and accessed again when needed (data storage and retrieval). Second, the media has the ability to create and present news in detail because it is no longer limited by space (unlimited space). Third, the media can disseminate any news or information quickly and directly to the public (time proximity). Fourth, when producing news, the media has the freedom to add various elements such as text, sound, visuals, animations, photos, and videos, making the content more engaging for audiences (multimedia capability). It would be a wasted opportunity if the media failed to present its news by fully utilizing these features to attract readers. Content that is not presented in an engaging way will eventually be abandoned by users, who will naturally look for more appealing options. Finally, every medium has the ability to invite users to interact directly with the news (interactivity). This provides an opportunity to maintain audience engagement and encourage continued consumption or subscriptions.

The efforts of local print media in West Java to diversify content and distribute it through multiple platforms are in line with Henry Jenkins' expectations (in Haryanto, 2014). He emphasized that, in distributing news, local print media should take advantage of various social media platforms that match market preferences. In addition, local print media need to use interconnected social media features, turning them into strengths that can generate profits for the media business.

Local print media managers in West Java must not only focus on improving public services but also on strengthening journalistic practices. This includes enhancing professionalism and ethics, as well as upgrading the skills and competencies of their journalists. Such improvements will have a direct impact on the quality of journalism, which can ultimately increase audience satisfaction (Lauk & Harro-Loit, 2017). Satisfied consumers are more likely to pay for subscriptions or purchase products offered by print media, whether in print or digital formats.

According to Rayburn and Hoch (2005) and (Haryanto, 2014), local print media in West Java also need to develop three key aspects to survive and increase income in the digital era: content monetization, control of distribution channels, and customer conversion. Print media must be able to increase sales significantly through the content they produce so that revenue comes not from a single source, but from multiple sources aligned with current trends in the media industry.

Local print media journalists in West Java also need to learn how to generate revenue directly from their content, making it a new source of income for their companies. Beyond this, journalists must broaden their skills in the digital era, particularly in using multimedia when covering, producing, and distributing news to the public (Saltzis & Dickinson, 2008). Print media journalists should not remain satisfied with the skills they have mastered in the past, because changing times demand new

competencies. To stay relevant, they must be willing to continually upgrade their skills so they can produce content that meets market needs.

Dual Duty

Finally, the secret to the survival of local print media in West Java lies in journalists taking on additional tasks. Journalists, especially senior ones, not only learn new competencies required in the digital era but also perform duties they never did before because of changing job descriptions. Due to limited resources, the pressures of competition in the media industry, and the demand for efficiency, some journalists are required to double as advertisers, secure sponsors for events, negotiate for government assistance, and more.

This situation forces existing journalists to shoulder heavier workloads so that media operations can continue running despite efficiency cuts. Although burdensome, these efforts are seen as necessary to sustain the existence of print media.

According to (Junaedi, 2023) the transformation experienced by local print media in West Java reflects major changes in journalism worldwide. Many media outlets have transformed journalists into media entrepreneurs in the digital era. In the past, journalists mainly focused on gathering and writing news before publishing it. Today, however, the presence of digital technology has opened opportunities for journalists to start their own media ventures, producing diverse content such as video, audio, and writing. They are also expected to develop broader skills in marketing, business management, and technology. In many cases, journalists must be ready to design layouts, take photographs, or even manage websites. In other words, today's conditions require journalists to be multitasking professionals with a wide range of skills.

Other additional tasks also include creating opportunities for collaboration in activities such as seminars, training sessions, and community events. For example, news-writing workshops can help companies and government institutions not only prepare press releases but also provide quality materials for media coverage. Similarly, photography training can assist public relations staff in producing media-standard photos for official events.

Print media managers may also organize events such as marathons, photo contests, or essay competitions that can attract sponsorship and generate extra income. They may hold awards ceremonies or facilitate focus group discussions (FGDs) on current issues, working with expert speakers. Such activities position the media as consultants or partners for government agencies and companies in West Java, helping with branding, product promotion, and public engagement.

Local print media journalists in West Java generally enjoy credibility and public trust, and many have strong ties with the government, BUMN, and private companies. This trust serves as valuable capital when building partnerships for mutually beneficial activities. While such collaborations may not happen all the time, they are consistent enough to contribute to company revenues.

As for more sensitive tasks, such as intervening with public officials or agencies, there is no data to support that local print media journalists in West Java have engaged in such practices. However, as monitors of government performance, they have long played an intensive watchdog role, particularly before the digital era. For instance, they have reported on corruption cases, helping to curb misconduct within agencies. This aligns with findings by Humanes et al., (2021), who analyzed 10,512 articles from 22 newspapers across the United States, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and Greece. The study found that journalists often combine various professional roles, such as intervention, watchdog, loyal facilitator, service provider, citizenship promoter, and infotainment producer. These findings highlight that the relationship between professional roles is shaped by organizational structures, journalistic routines, and local contexts.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions, several notes can be drawn regarding the strategies used by local print media in West Java, which explain why the prediction that print media would cease operations has not come true. Until now, print media—especially local outlets in West Java—have managed to survive. In fact, *Tribun Jabar*'s circulation has increased, even though other print media have reduced their pages and circulation as part of their survival strategies. Certain conditions and

situations have also benefited local print media, such as ongoing government grants and specific policies that still require advertising in print outlets. These provide a valuable source of income. Moreover, local print media in West Java have long enjoyed strong brand recognition, established well before the rise of digital media, which has fostered loyalty among readers despite the dominance of online platforms. Another factor is the long-standing good relationship between the government and local print media, which creates strong chemistry and facilitates mutually beneficial cooperation. Advertising in local outlets is also much cheaper than in national media, while remaining effective because of the proximity and familiarity between local media and their audiences. In addition, local outlets hold stronger bargaining power since they not only publish in print but also distribute content across multiple platforms, including social media.

A further note is that leaders of print media companies encourage journalists to expand their business roles by maximizing potential collaborations with digital-based technologies. Experienced and qualified journalists are also assigned additional responsibilities in marketing and government lobbying to help maintain clients from the public sector, private companies, state-owned enterprises, and small businesses. Research on how media can sustain itself in the digital era must continue—not only because of the rapid pace of technological change but also to enrich findings that can support the survival of print media. Inevitably, such research should employ diverse objects of study and methodological approaches.

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