

The Impact of the Technological Boom on Traditional and Social Media in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of technological advancements on traditional and new media in Kazakhstan through surveys and SWOT analysis. The research examines shifts in media consumption, the roles of traditional and new media, and the associated challenges. Survey results indicate a significant preference for digital platforms, with 92.3% of respondents favoring new media over traditional forms like TV and radio. SWOT analysis highlights the strengths of traditional media, such as audience expansion through digitalization and enhanced engagement, while noting weaknesses like declining print media and intense competition. New media strengths include accessibility, independence, and innovation, but face issues with content reliability and financial sustainability.

Opportunities for traditional media involve audience growth via digital platforms and multimedia integration, whereas new media can leverage independent journalism platforms and diverse monetization models. Both traditional and new media confront threats such as declining trust, financial difficulties, disinformation, and cyber threats. Despite advancements, media freedom in Kazakhstan remains limited, with fluctuating rankings by Reporters Without Borders indicating persistent challenges.

The research underscores the transformative impact of digital technologies on Kazakhstan's media landscape, revealing shifts towards digital platforms that democratize information but pose threats to traditional media. The rise of new media forms, such as blogs and social networks, enhances public engagement but brings challenges of content quality and misinformation. Journalists must adapt to new roles emphasizing analytical and communicative skills. Balancing commercial interests with public service, addressing the digital divide, and ensuring equitable access to digital media are crucial.

In conclusion, the digital transformation presents both growth opportunities and challenges, necessitating adaptive strategies from media organizations and policymakers to navigate the evolving media landscape in Kazakhstan while upholding high journalistic standards and media independence.

Keywords: traditional media, social media, technological boom, media innovation, challenges, digital platforms, media in Kazakhstan

1. Introduction

The current technological revolution has enticed a portion of the population to gravitate towards digital journalism, forsaking printed media and traditional communication networks. These shifts in behavior have prompted individuals to engage in distinct modes of interaction, both with the media and among themselves. As the media undergo a transformation into a more organic and participatory entity, traditional communication channels are compelled to navigate a similarly arduous path. This is an exhilarating era to be employed in a newsroom, as it presents a myriad of possibilities and portends an exciting future. However, it also gives rise to complications and hurdles within the realm of journalism. In reality, the role of the journalist will need to be reconceptualized around a more analytical and communicative persona.

Technological advances have caused the Kazakh media to evolve. Since the moment the country gained its independence, we have been observing the media undergoing a process of shape-shifting. This paper is an attempt to identify the impact that these transformations - driven, above all, by changes in communication technologies (digital and social networks) - have left on traditional media in Kazakhstan and the degree to which they have affected journalism (Laila et al.2020).

In recent years, Kazakhstan has witnessed a significant technological boom, which has had a profound impact on

traditional and social media in the country. (Алимбетов et al., 2020) The rapid development of information technologies, including the emergence of new media such as the blogosphere and social networks, has transformed the cultural and information landscape of Kazakhstan (Zhanbayev et al., 2020). The development of the media in Kazakhstan has gone through a series of stages largely due to the form of government's influence. Throughout its development, the media has functioned as official publications and promoted the state's desires and initiatives. Today, we are witnessing a change. The state wants to invest in this industry, thereby turning it into a business with immediate returns. But there is an inconsistency that no one has been able to identify or resolve.

The digitalization of the economy has played a crucial role in this transformation, as it has brought about innovative developments in various sectors, including the media industry. The state program "Digital Kazakhstan" launched in 2017 aims to accelerate the implementation of digital technologies and create conditions for the transition to a digital economy. This program has had a direct impact on the media landscape, as it has led to the expansion of digital infrastructure, such as satellite communications, digital television, and mobile internet. The influence of new information and communication technologies on the development of the information society in Kazakhstan is significant (Barlybayeva, 2019). The media industry is undergoing a transformative shift driven by the increasing adoption of digital platforms. This transition has redefined how audiences consume content, favoring immediacy, interactivity, and accessibility. Traditional forms of media, such as newspapers and television, are experiencing declines in audience engagement as digital formats continue to dominate. This paper explores the implications of these changes, with a focus on how technological advancements influence media consumption, content production, and trust among audiences. The technological revolution has dramatically reshaped the media landscape globally, including in Kazakhstan, where the evolution of media has been particularly pronounced since the country gained its independence (Zatonskaya, 2021).

The Evolution of Media in Kazakhstan

Since Kazakhstan's independence, its media landscape has undergone significant changes, influenced heavily by technological advancements. Initially, the media served as an official mouthpiece for the government, reflecting the state's desires and initiatives. However, the current trend is towards a media industry that is more business-oriented, aiming for immediate returns. This shift is encapsulated in the state program "Digital Kazakhstan," launched in 2017, which aims to accelerate the adoption of digital technologies and foster a digital economy. This program has directly impacted the media sector by expanding digital infrastructure, including satellite communications, digital television, and mobile internet.

Impact of Digital Technologies

The influence of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) on Kazakhstan's media is multifaceted. These technologies have ushered in a new era where traditional media must adapt to survive in an increasingly digital world. Key impacts include:

1. **Shift to Online Platforms:** There has been a notable shift in media consumption from traditional print and broadcast media to online platforms and social networks. This mirrors global trends where digital media offer more interactive and immediate access to information.
2. **Emergence of New Media Forms:** The rise of the blogosphere and social networks has introduced new forms of media, contributing to a more participatory and dynamic media environment. These platforms enable greater public engagement and allow individuals to share their voices more freely, challenging traditional media's dominance.
3. **Analytical and Communicative Roles:** The role of journalists is being reconceptualized. In a digital age, journalists need to develop more analytical and communicative skills to interpret data, engage with audiences, and navigate the complexities of digital information dissemination.

Challenges and Opportunities

While the digital transformation presents numerous opportunities, it also brings significant challenges. Traditional media must navigate the complex landscape of maintaining relevance and financial viability in the face of digital competition. This includes adapting to new business models, such as paywalls and subscription services, and leveraging digital tools for content creation and distribution.

Moreover, the rapid pace of technological change can lead to inconsistencies and unresolved issues within the media industry. For instance, while the state aims to invest in the media sector to turn it into a profitable business, there are underlying inconsistencies regarding regulation, freedom of expression, and the role of media as a public service versus a commercial entity.

2. Literature Review

In the course of a study by one of the scientists, it was concluded that the consumption of media content has increased significantly recently, since most respondents agree that the consumption of media content has increased significantly,

especially involuntary consumption, i.e. when the content is not searched for by the consumer, but vice versa. This growth in consumption can and should be seen as an opportunity for brands as traffic on digital platforms grows (Rui Gonçalves, 2022).

According to Ryan Idea Lab emphasizes the critical importance of media literacy in an era where information is readily accessible. It highlights the need for students to develop skills to evaluate media content effectively. By equipping students with tools and techniques to question, scrutinize, and assess media, they can better navigate the digital landscape. The rise of the blogosphere and social networks has introduced new forms of media, reshaping the way content is created and consumed. While this trend is evident globally, its implications vary across regions. For example, in Western nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom, blogs and social networks have become dominant sources of political discourse and citizen journalism, often challenging traditional media outlets. Similarly, in developing regions like Southeast Asia, platforms such as Facebook and Instagram play a significant role in democratizing content creation, but they also contribute to the rapid spread of misinformation (Ryan Idea Lab, 2024). In Kazakhstan, the adoption of blogs and social networks reflects a hybrid dynamic. On one hand, these platforms offer a space for independent voices and alternative narratives; on the other, they face challenges such as censorship, low digital literacy among some demographics, and uneven internet access in rural areas. Comparing these trends with those in other nations highlights the unique interplay of cultural, technological, and regulatory factors shaping Kazakhstan's media landscape. This study builds on such comparisons to explore how the global shift toward digital media is experienced and localized in the Kazakh context, offering insights into both shared challenges and region-specific opportunities.

ANA CECÍLIA BISSO NUNES and JOHN MILLS wrote in their article "how media labs are shaping the future of media and journalism" explores how media labs are driving innovation in the field of journalism. It highlights that media labs are experimental spaces where new technologies, tools, and methods are developed and tested to enhance journalistic practices. These labs focus on integrating digital technologies, fostering collaboration between journalists and technologists, and experimenting with new forms of storytelling and audience engagement (Bisso Nunes, Ana Cecília, and John Mills, 2021).

The analysis of scientists concludes that social media user numbers are steadily rising, presenting a significant opportunity for businesses to capitalize on. Specifically, endorsements and paid promotions on Instagram effectively enhance brand awareness, which is a critical factor in influencing consumer behavior and boosting purchase interest. This increased brand awareness can lead to higher product sales. Additionally, using digital marketing content is proven to be effective, as audience responses have been notably positive (Umami, Zakiya, and Gede Sri Darma, 2022).

Besides personal brand Instagram can help promote any media content and can gather an audience.

The scientists also touched upon the new genres that the Internet has brought to new media.

A. Kaplan and M. Heinlein define social media as a group of Internet applications based on one or another ideological and technological web 2.0 base that allow participants in social services to create content (content) to share it. Classifications of genres in social media are based on communicative (features of the functioning of these social media) and technological factors. So, the main communicative features of these mussels include the following:

- fast creation of user-generated content;
- the ability to instantly and simultaneously edit;
- collaboration on any text or project;
- the possibility of almost constant communication;
- storing large amounts of information directly on the network; and not on electronic media;
- ease of working with content;
- dissemination of user-friendly interfaces;
- enhancement of the audiovisual format in data transmission and presentation;
- mixing of boundaries between public and private on the Internet, when traditional private information or information for a select few becomes public and accessible to everyone, and some other properties (Kaplan, A. M., Haenlein, M. 2012).

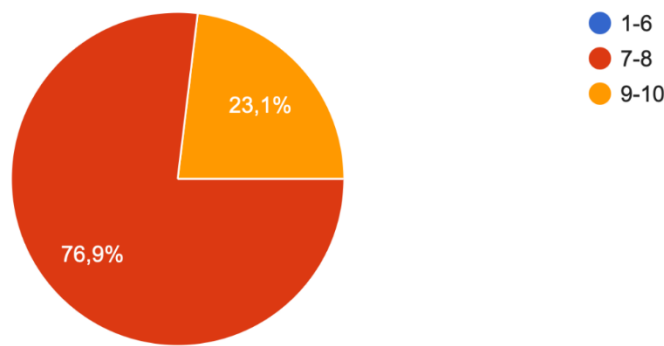
The emergence of Internet technologies of the second web and the rapid development of social media based on this web concept (social networks, blogs, file exchangers for storing user audio and visual information) led to the emergence of new genres, which can be conditionally called genres 2.0. Among them, hybrid genres began to appear, which they do not have their paper counterparts and rather represent pure products of Internet technologies, the birth of which is due to the unification of several Internet genres within a single Internet service or platform. Such new hybrid or convergent genres include twisting or blogging (E.Goroshko, T.Polyakova, 2015).

True professionals in the field of journalism understand that the digitalization of the media does not bring death to the print media, but rather gives them unique opportunities to conquer new territories and to implement new tasks. It is necessary to search for new forms of strengthening the "health" of the periodical press. Interestingly, a new, rather unexpected trend has emerged recently: the return of some publications that originally existed only on the Internet to the traditional print media. For example, the international Internet site style.com, which writes about fashion and style, has started publishing a paper magazine. In Russia, such an example is the online business newspaper "Marker", which also publishes a paper version as an application for the newspaper "Izvestia". It is possible to discuss the tasks that these publications solve in such a non-standard way (most often it is an increase in profits), but this indicates the continuation of the process of media convergence in new, unexpected directions. It seems that the paper media has already begun to move away from the shock of the new media's attack on them and learn to use the challenges of the digital revolution for their own development (O.V. Smirnova, 2013).

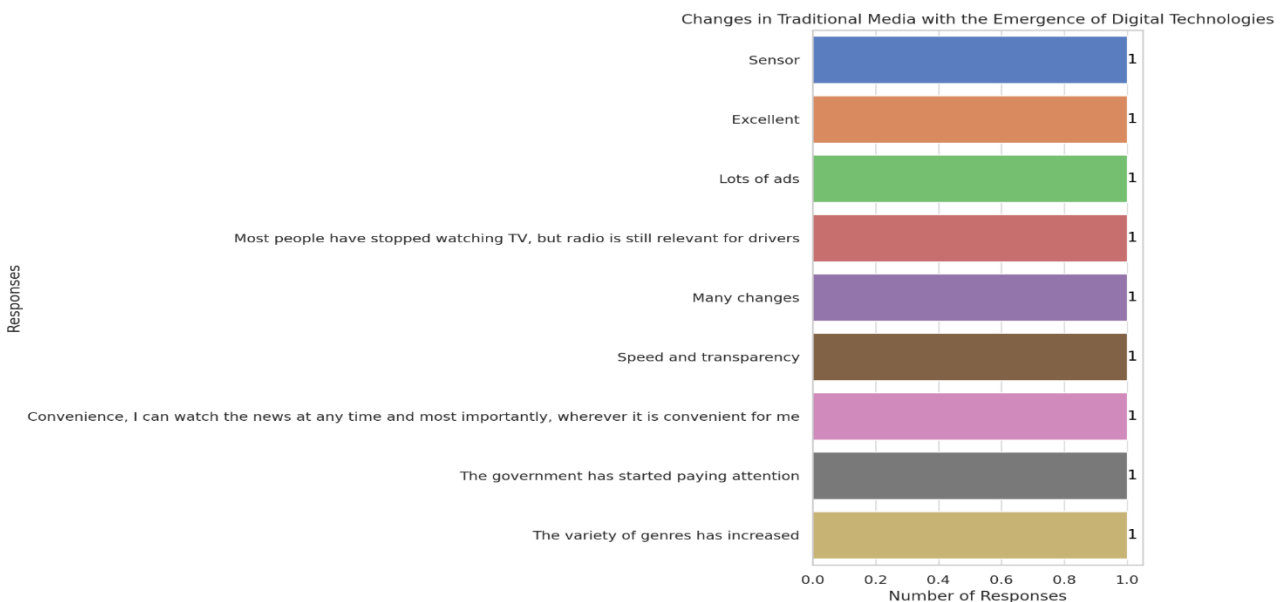
3. Methods

Several methods were used to study the topic. One of them is a survey. The survey instrument was designed with both closed and open-ended questions, enabling the collection of quantitative and qualitative data. It was pretested with a pilot group of 100 participants to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity of the questions before full deployment. The survey was administered via online questionnaires, ensuring accessibility and consistent data collection across the participant group.

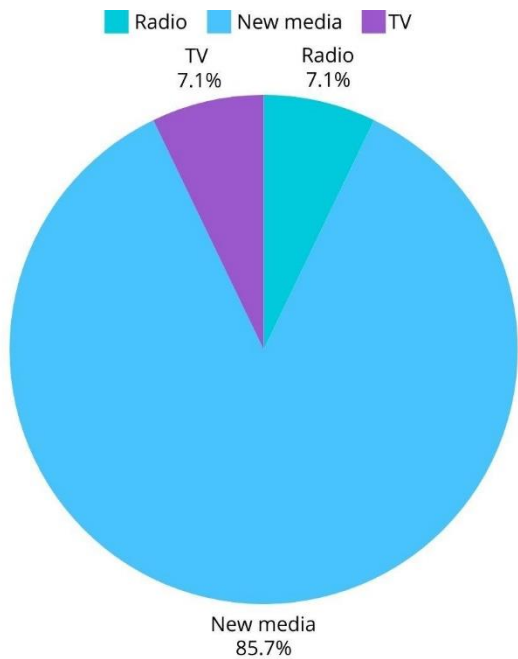
The findings are summarized in four key visuals:



Picture 1. Shows respondents' evaluation of impact technologies on media

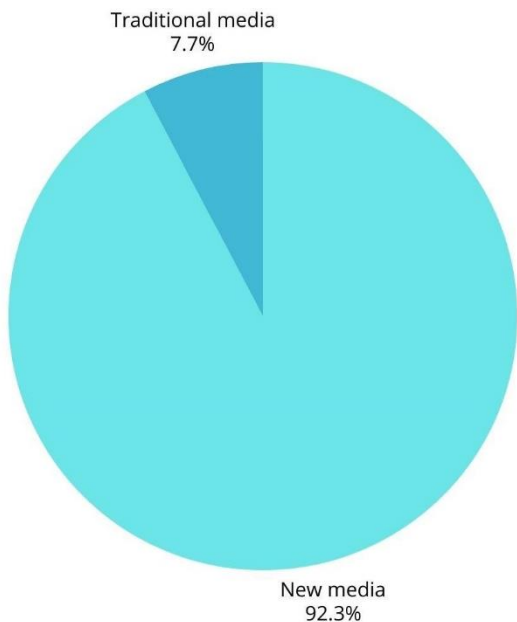


Picture 2. Shows respondents' opinion on changes in the media with the advent of technology



Picture 3. Shows which type of media is used a lot by respondents

Picture 3, which illustrates the types of media most frequently used by respondents, reveals important trends in media consumption. The data highlights social media (new media) platforms being the most frequently used, and provides valuable insights into consumer preferences. These trends are critical to understanding the broader landscape of media usage and directly support the findings outlined in the SWOT analysis.



Picture 4. Shows respondents' opinion on which media has a qualitative content

In order to analyze the impact of the development of technology on traditional and new Kazakh media, a SWOT analysis was carried out.

Strength*On traditional media:***Digitalization of content:**

Traditional media such as television and newspapers are actively moving to digital platforms. This allows them to expand their audience and provide content in more consumer-friendly formats, such as online articles and on-demand videos.

Interactivity and audience engagement:

Modern technologies allow traditional media to actively interact with the audience through social networks, comments and live broadcasts. This enhances user engagement and makes the content more personalized and relevant.

Data analysis and targeting:

With the help of big data analytics, traditional media can better understand audience preferences and offer targeted content, which increases their competitiveness in the information services market.

*On new media:***The growth of the number of platforms:**

The technological boom is leading to the emergence of many new media platforms such as blogs, podcasts and social media channels. This contributes to the diversity of content and points of view presented in the media space of Kazakhstan.

Mobility and accessibility: New media is usually easily accessible via mobile devices, which makes information more accessible to a wide audience, especially young people who prefer to receive news and entertainment content via smartphones.

Independence and freedom of expression:

New media provides an opportunity for independent journalists and bloggers to express their opinions and conduct investigations without depending on large media holdings. This promotes diversity of opinion and improves the quality of journalism in general.

Innovation and creativity:

Technological innovations contribute to the development of new formats and styles of information presentation, such as interactive articles, multimedia projects and virtual reality, which makes content consumption more interesting and exciting.

Weakness*On traditional media:***The decline of print media:**

The growing popularity of digital media has reduced demand for printed publications. As a result, newspapers and magazines are losing audiences, leading to declines in both circulation and advertising revenue.

Competition with new media: Traditional media face fierce competition from new media platforms such as social media and news sites. This requires significant investments in digitalization and technology upgrades, which is not always possible for all companies.

Decrease in audience confidence: Traditional media is often seen as less relevant and more censored, particularly by young people, which diminishes its influence and audience trust.

*On new media:***Quality and reliability of information:**

Unlike traditional media, which undergo strict editorial verification processes, new media often disseminate unverified information and fake news. This can lead to misinformation and a decrease in trust in the media in general.

Content glut:

A large number of platforms and content can lead to information glut. Users may have difficulty finding high-quality and relevant information, which reduces the overall quality of the content consumed.

Economic problems:

New media often depend on advertising revenue, which can be unstable. Small independent projects may have difficulties with monetization and sustainability, especially in conditions of economic instability.

Cybersecurity and privacy:

With the development of technology, cybersecurity and data privacy risks are increasingly prevalent in the Kazakh media landscape. These risks include unauthorized access to sensitive user data, phishing attacks targeting media organizations, and the spread of misinformation through compromised platforms. Addressing these risks is critical to maintaining trust and ensuring the secure dissemination of information.

Opportunities

For traditional media:

Audience expansion through digital platforms:

Traditional media can use the Internet and mobile applications to reach a wider audience, including young people and people living in remote regions.

Interactivity and user-generated content:

The introduction of interactive elements such as surveys, comments and live broadcasts allows traditional media to interact more actively with the audience and receive feedback in real time.

Multimedia features:

Technologies allow the integration of text, video, audio and infographics, which makes the content more diverse and attractive to users. This can increase audience engagement and satisfaction.

Content personalization:

The use of data and analytics allows traditional media to provide more personalized content that matches the interests and preferences of individual users, which increases audience loyalty.

For new media:

Platforms for independent journalists:

The technology boom is creating opportunities for independent journalists and bloggers who can create and distribute their content without having to work through large media holdings. This promotes diversity of opinion and improves the quality of journalism.

Monetization through various models:

New media can use various monetization models such as subscriptions, crowdfunding and advertising, which allows them to be financially sustainable and independent from traditional sources of financing.

Global reach:

The Internet allows new media to reach a global audience, which expands the opportunities for content distribution and increases their influence internationally.

Innovation and Creative Formats:

New media can experiment with innovative formats and technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, making content more interesting and interactive.

Threats

For traditional media:

Declining trust and legitimacy:

With the growth of new media and social networks, traditional media may face the problem of declining audience trust. People may perceive them as less operational and subject to influence from the authorities or corporate interests.

Financial difficulties: Increased competition from new media may lead to lower advertising and subscription revenues for traditional media. This can make it difficult for them to be financially stable and able to invest in high-quality content.

Technological adaptation:

Traditional media have to invest significant resources in digitalization and updating of their technologies, which is not always possible for all companies, especially small and regional publications.

For new media:

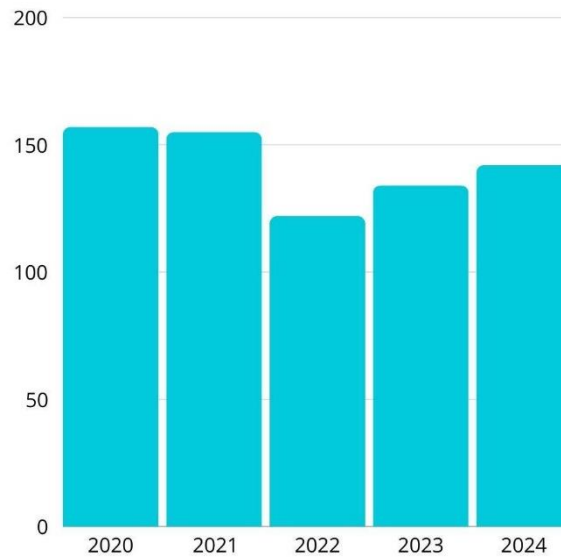
Spreading disinformation: In the absence of strict editorial standards, new media can become channels for the dissemination of fake news and disinformation, which undermines the credibility of information in general.

Cyber threats:

New media is often subject to cyber attacks, including hacks, data leaks and cyberbullying. This requires significant investments in cybersecurity and can become a serious threat to their work and reputation.

Income instability: Monetization models such as advertising and crowdfunding can be unstable and depend on the economic situation and audience preferences. This can create financial problems for new media, especially during periods of economic crisis.

Recently, journalists have been increasingly communicating with high-ranking officials through personal blogs, for example, blogs of ministers. This does not always bring results, but it gives you the opportunity to "reach the heavens." In addition, some problems that citizens write about in blogs become the subject of journalistic investigations and come to the attention of law enforcement agencies.



Picture 6. Indicators of freedom of speech in Kazakhstan last 5 years

Despite the development of the Internet, freedom of speech in the country is limited. Figure 6 shows the rating of freedom of speech over the past 5 years. Kazakhstan ranks 157th in 2020, 155th in 2021, 122nd in 2022, 134th in 2023 and 142nd in 2024. That is, over the past 2 years, freedom of speech has been restricted again (Reporters without borders, 2024).

Discussion and Result. The study on the impact of technology on traditional and new media in Kazakhstan utilized surveys and SWOT analysis to gather respondents' opinions on various aspects of media influenced by technological advancements. The surveys focused on how technology affects media, changes in the media landscape, frequently used media types, and perceived content quality.

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths:

- **Traditional Media:**
 - Digitalization of Content: Expands audience reach with digital platforms.
 - Interactivity and Audience Engagement: Social networks and live broadcasts enhance engagement.
 - Data Analysis and Targeting: Big data helps understand audience preferences and improves content targeting.
- **New Media:**
 - Growth of Platforms: Blogs, podcasts, and social media diversify content.
 - Mobility and Accessibility: Accessible via mobile devices, appealing to younger audiences.
 - Independence and Freedom of Expression: Independent journalists and bloggers can express opinions freely.
 - Innovation and Creativity: New formats like interactive articles and virtual reality enhance engagement.

Weaknesses:

- **Traditional Media:**
 - Decline of Print Media: Reduced demand and revenue.
 - Competition with New Media: Requires significant digital investment.
 - Decrease in Audience Confidence: Perceived censorship and irrelevance reduce trust.
- **New Media:**
 - Quality and Reliability of Information: Lack of editorial standards can lead to misinformation.
 - Content Glut: Abundance of content makes it hard to find quality information.

- Economic Problems: Unstable advertising revenue impacts financial sustainability.
- Cybersecurity and Privacy: High risk of cyber attacks.

Opportunities:

- **Traditional Media:**

- Audience Expansion: Digital platforms reach diverse audiences.
- Interactivity and User-Generated Content: Real-time engagement and feedback.
- Multimedia Features: Integration of various media types enhances appeal.
- Content Personalization: Data analytics enables personalized content.

- **New Media:**

- Platforms for Independent Journalists: Empower independent content creation.
- Monetization Models: Subscriptions, crowdfunding, and advertising provide revenue streams.
- Global Reach: International content distribution.
- Innovation and Creative Formats: Use of virtual and augmented reality for engaging content.

Threats:

- **Traditional Media:**

- Declining Trust and Legitimacy: Competition may erode trust.
- Financial Difficulties: Competition reduces revenue, impacting quality content.
- Technological Adaptation: Requires significant resources.

- **New Media:**

- Spreading Disinformation: Lack of editorial standards can spread fake news.
- Cyber Threats: Vulnerability to cyber attacks.
- Income Instability: Economic fluctuations affect revenue models.

Despite technological advancements, freedom of speech in Kazakhstan remains limited. Rankings by Reporters Without Borders show fluctuating media freedom, highlighting ongoing challenges. The study reveals that both traditional and new media in Kazakhstan face significant strengths and opportunities but also notable weaknesses and threats that need addressing. Traditional media benefits from digitalization and interactivity but faces challenges like declining print media and competition. New media offers diverse content but struggles with reliability, economic sustainability, and cybersecurity.

Technological advancements have led to shifts in media consumption patterns, with more consumers turning to online platforms. This democratizes information but poses threats to traditional media. The rise of new media forms, like blogs and social networks, has created a participatory environment but brings challenges of content quality and misinformation. Journalists must adapt to new roles, emphasizing analytical and communicative skills. Government influence remains a concern, despite digital advancements. Balancing commercial interests with public service is crucial, as is addressing the digital divide to ensure equitable access to digital media.

The digital transformation of media has brought about significant changes in both consumption patterns and content production. However, this shift also exposes several vulnerabilities, particularly in the areas of cybersecurity and misinformation. To address cybersecurity risks, media organizations should prioritize the implementation of robust security protocols, such as end-to-end encryption, regular security audits, and staff training on cyber threats. Additionally, collaboration with cybersecurity experts and regulatory bodies can help ensure compliance with emerging data protection laws and safeguard both user data and organizational integrity. Countering misinformation remains a critical challenge, especially as social media platforms become major sources of news. Media organizations can combat this by investing in AI-driven content moderation systems to identify and flag false information more efficiently. Furthermore, fostering partnerships with fact-checking organizations and encouraging media literacy programs will help empower audiences to critically evaluate content. Finally, strengthening trust in media requires a commitment to transparency and accountability. Media outlets should openly disclose their sources, provide balanced coverage, and engage with audiences through interactive, participatory platforms. These strategies will not only enhance the credibility of media organizations but also ensure that they remain competitive in an increasingly digital landscape.

5. Conclusion

The current technological revolution has enticed a portion of the Kazakh population to gravitate towards digital journalism, forsaking printed media and traditional communication networks. These shifts in behavior have prompted individuals to engage in distinct modes of interaction, both with the media and among themselves. As the media undergo a transformation into a more organic and participatory entity, traditional communication channels are compelled to navigate a similarly arduous path (Zatonskaya, 2021). This is an exhilarating era to be employed in a Kazakh newsroom, as it presents a myriad of possibilities and portends an exciting future. However, it also gives rise to complications and hurdles within the realm of journalism (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2017). In reality, the role of the journalist will need to be reconceptualized around a more analytical and communicative persona.

Technological advances have caused the Kazakh media to evolve. Since the moment the country gained its independence, we have been observing the media undergoing a process of shape-shifting. This paper is an attempt to identify the impact that these transformations - driven, above all, by changes in communication technologies (digital and social networks) - have left on traditional media in Kazakhstan and the degree to which they have affected journalism. In recent years, Kazakhstan has witnessed a significant technological boom, which has had a profound impact on traditional and social media in the country.

The results of this research underscore the transformative impact of digital technologies on the media landscape in Kazakhstan. While digitalization has opened up new opportunities for media engagement and diversity, it also presents challenges related to credibility, independence, commercial pressures, and accessibility. Addressing these issues requires a balanced approach that supports media innovation and independence while ensuring equitable access and upholding high journalistic standards. The future of journalism in Kazakhstan hinges on its ability to adapt to these changes and navigate the complexities of the digital age.

The digital transformation of the media landscape in Kazakhstan presents a complex interplay of challenges and opportunities. Adapting to these changes requires a multifaceted approach that addresses issues of media consumption, the role of journalists, government influence, commercial interests, and accessibility. As the media industry continues to evolve, it is imperative to strike a balance that leverages technological advancements while upholding the principles of responsible journalism and ensuring media independence.

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Authors contributions

Dr. NK and Dr. ET were responsible for study design and revising. Prof. ZB was responsible for data collection. Prof. NA drafted the manuscript and Dr. NK revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. In this paragraph, also explain any special agreements concerning authorship, such as if authors contributed equally to the study.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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