

RECONSIDERING MEDIA POLICY IN PAKISTAN: EVIDENCE FROM MEDIA ACADEMICS' PREFERENCES FOR ONLINE, ELECTRONIC, AND PRINT MEDIA

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Abstract

The present research explores how perceptions of news media functions relate to the gratifications sought by media academics in Pakistan across online, electronic, and print media. Based on uses and gratifications theory, this study answers how media functions determine the consumption patterns of academics who have expert knowledge about media processes and theories. A cross-sectional survey design was used; 160 media academics from 38 universities of Pakistan were surveyed with the help of an online questionnaire. The instrument was first pretested and then pilot-tested, followed by confirmatory factor analysis, and reliability and discriminant validity assessments were checked. One-way ANOVA and Tukey HSD post hoc tests indicated significant differences in gratifications across media types, with online media consistently yielding the highest levels of surveillance, socialization, and sensation. However, the results of the structural model were dramatically opposite to these findings: weak or non-significant associations emerged between perceived media functions and the gratifications sought. This difference suggests that although academics explicitly distinguish between media platforms in terms of the gratifications they receive, these gratifications are no more heavily determined by traditional perceptions of media functions. Overall, the findings suggest a shifted media ecology in which gratifications remain strong at the platform level but their linkages with conventional news media roles have weakened substantially.

INTRODUCTION

News media play a variety of roles in the contemporary media landscape, shaping and influencing how audiences seek information, act socially, and react emotionally. These functions are particularly relevant for media academics who consume media not only as sources of information but also as a means to critically understand media processes, theories, and their societal roles. Based on the uses and gratifications framework, media

consumption is an active process whereby individuals choose media to meet their cognitive, social, and affective needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974). Among these needs, surveillance, socialization, and sensation represent key functions through which media fulfill audience expectations. The news media's surveillance function primarily concerns monitoring societal events, informing about potential threats, and promoting issues of

public interest. Media scholars have stressed that news media serve as an agenda-setter, alerting audiences to governmental actions, social problems, and crises, while serving as watchdogs to protect democratic processes and uncover corruption (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Entman, 1993; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). Natural disasters, economic ups and downs, and crime are also part of surveillance, providing the audience with timely and relevant information to assess risks and make appropriate decisions (Mileti & Fitzpatrick, 1992; Coombs, 2007; Chiricos et al., 1997). Beyond surveillance, news media socialize by transmitting societal norms, cultural values, and collective expectations. Media consumption enables people, including media scholars, to comprehend their social functions, acquire appropriate behavior, and attain a sense of belonging and social cohesion (Katz & Foulkes, 1962; Acemoglu et al., 2020; Weaver & Wilhoit, 2020; Putnam, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). It is through the socialization process that audiences gain knowledge which guides them in their interactions, perpetuating social capital that helps in engaging with their communities (Huesmann et al., 2003; Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001). Sensationalism is another important dimension of media functions. Sensationalized news exaggerates or dramatizes events that catch the attention of an audience through eliciting emotional responses of shock, fear, or astonishment (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Zillmann & Bryant, 2013). Sensationalism makes news more engaging and exciting but raises some ethical concerns with regard to credibility and accuracy of news and public trust, mainly in the academically informed audience (Sikanku, 2013; Tsifti & Cappella, 2003). All these sensational practices may be amplified by commercial pressure and competition for audience attention and change perceptions, decision-making, and emotional reactions to information (Tuchman, 1978; Curran & Seaton, 2018; Singer, 2004; Zillmann, 2012; Pennycook & Rand, 2019). Media academics, as informed and critical consumers, are uniquely positioned to seek and evaluate media gratifications associated with these functions.

Understanding how surveillance, socialization, and sensation shape their media consumption provides insight into the cognitive, social, and affective needs of this audience. Such research on the patterns across online, electronic, and print media can shed light on the differences in media use, the extent to which content meets academic requirements, and can help media professionals, educators, and policymakers in Pakistan consider better initiatives. This study, therefore, proposes an investigation into the relationships between media functions and gratifications sought by media academics in order to add to the literature on media consumption and uses and gratifications theory within an academic context.

1.1 Research Objectives

1. The perceived influence of news media functions of surveillance, socialization, and sensation on the gratifications sought by media academics in Pakistan.
2. To compare the gratifications sought from online, electronic and print media among media academics.
3. To determine the type of media that best meets the cognitive, social, and affective needs of the media academic.

1.2 Research Questions

1. How do media academics in Pakistan perceive the surveillance, socialization and sensation functions of news media?
2. What gratifications do media academics seek from online, electronic, and print media?
3. Are there significant differences among online, electronic, and print media on gratifications sought by media academics?

1.3 Hypotheses

- H1.** The perceived news media functions of surveillance, socialization, and sensation are significantly related to gratifications sought by media academics.
- H2.** Online media provides much greater gratifications compared to electronic and print media in terms of surveillance, socialization, as well as sensation.

H3. The significant differences in gratifications sought are observed across online, electronic, and print media among the media academics.

2. Uses and Gratifications of News Media

News media serve several functions in the society, reflecting their core place in shaping public knowledge, social behavior, and audience engagement. Among the primary functions of news media is surveillance, by which is meant monitoring events throughout society, informing the members of the public about possible threats, and promoting awareness of issues of public interest. Communication studies research underscores that news media are instrumental in agenda-setting, alerting audiences to societal problems, government action, and crises, and acting as watchdogs for democratic processes and corruption exposure (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shoemaker & Reese, 2013; Entman, 1993; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). While definitions of surveillance often emphasize political or civic threats, the concept also encompasses other natural disaster risks, economic instability, crime, and other forms of threat to public safety and well-being (Mileti & Fitzpatrick, 1992; Coombs, 2007; Chiricos et al., 1997). In support, empirical research demonstrates that audiences strongly perceive the role that the media can play in delivering timely, relevant information which enables them to evaluate risks, make appropriate decisions, and prepare for societal challenges. As a complement to the surveillance function, news media also serve as agents of socialization by transmitting cultural norms, values, and societal expectations, which shape individual perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. Media content reflects the structure of society and its dominant narratives, helping individuals learn their place in social groups, cultivating a sense of belonging and shared identity (Katz & Foulkes, 1962; Acemoglu et al., 2020; Weaver & Wilhoit, 2020; Tajfel &

Turner, 2004). Individuals will gather from their exposure to news knowledge concerning acceptable conduct, social roles, and the dynamics of community life, contributing to community social capital, cohesion, and levels of trust (Putnam, 2000; Huesmann et al., 2003; Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001). One further dimension of the socialization process involves attitude and behavior change at the level of the individual. Media messages shape civic involvement, prosocial behavior, and social responsibility. In addition to surveillance and socialization, sensationalism represents a further fundamental dimension of news media consumption. Sensationalism is best described as dramatization or exaggeration to capture audience attention, often emphasizing shock, fear, or astonishment to increase engagement (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; McCombs &). While sensationalized news can enhance audience interest and emotional involvement, it also heightens ethical concerns about journalistic credibility, accuracy, and public trust (Sikanku 2013; Tsati & Cappella 2003). Some scholars believe commercial pressures for ratings, coupled with competition, have driven sensationalist practices where the logic of entertainment can override the informative or civic function of news (Tuchman 1978; Curran & Seaton 2018; Singer 2004). The emotional effects and a call for attention resulting from sensationalism may create anxiety, fear, or mistrust among audiences, affecting decision-making processes and the perception of societal risks (Zillmann 2012; Pennycook & Rand 2019). Put together, these functions of news media-surveillance, socialization, and sensationalism-underscore the complex, multifunctional nature of news media in contemporary society, revealing how audiences use media not only to stay informed about, but also to understand, social norms, and to navigate emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of daily life.

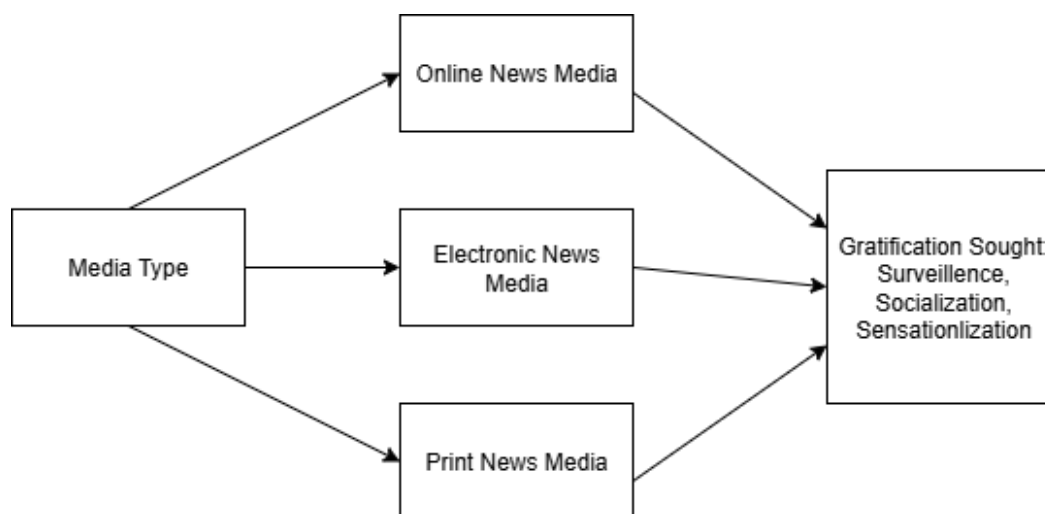


Figure 1. Conceptual model of gratification sought of media academics

This study is grounded in the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), first developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), which theorizes that audiences are active agents who purposively choose media to fulfill certain cognitive, social, and affective needs. The type of media used—online, electronic, and print media—is the independent variable, while gratifications sought, such as surveillance or information-seeking, socialization, and sensation or excitement, are the dependent variables. The different types of media possess different affordances. Online media, being more interactive and available on-demand, is expected to gratify cognitive or surveillance needs, social or socialization needs, and affective or sensation needs more effectively than traditional print media. On the contrary, traditional print media, based on their linear and less interactive format, have a high probability of serving merely information-seeking or cognitive needs. Empirical evidence from Pakistan supports these distinctions. Zulqarnain, Hashmi, and Zulqarnain (2019) discovered that social media more effectively satisfies informational (surveillance) and socialization needs than traditional media. Similarly, Ahmed and Zia (2022) observed that among "digital natives", social media interactivity is primarily driven by connectivity, awareness, and self-expression. This conceptual framework shows how different types of media satisfy these three

dimensions of gratification, which in turn shed light on how Pakistani media academics select media based on their needs and how the structural affordances of each medium influence their behavior in pursuing gratifications.

3. Methodology

A quantitative survey design was utilized in this study to understand media academics' uses and gratifications of online, electronic, and print media in Pakistan. Data was collected using a cross-sectional survey, where the intention is to record at one instance in time, thus soliciting participants' perceptions of news media's surveillance, socialization, and sensationalization functions. The population consisted of media academics in Pakistan. From this population, data was collected from 160 respondents by using a Google Form spread via email as well as social media platforms. Therefore, the respondents were purposively selected so that they could be sufficiently familiar with media processes and media theories. Collection was facilitated through a structured questionnaire comprising three scales: Surveillance Sought, Socialization Sought, and Sensation Sought. High internal consistency, as evidenced from reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha 0.914 for Surveillance, 0.896 for Socialization, and 0.885 for Sensation) indicated the extent of variance shared by indicators of constructs. Conformity to construct reliability and

validity was also determined through Composite Reliability (ρ_c), Dijkstra-Henseler's ρ_A (ρ_A), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The details are given as sensationalization $\rho_c = 0.947$, $\rho_A = 0.935$, and AVE = 0.742; socialization $\rho_c = 0.935$, $\rho_A = 0.922$, and AVE = 0.704; and surveillance $\rho_c = 0.861$, $\rho_A = 0.885$, and AVE = 0.607. Also, correlation analysis explained the moderate positive association of constructs between the range of 0.328 and 0.513, and

interrelated yet distinct media gratification dimensions. Lastly, descriptive statistics such as mean scores, variance, and standard deviations were computed for each construct, and item-total correlations served to further establish the reliability and validity of the measures. Items and their reliability measures are shown in Tables 1 and 2. The complete list and properties of all the constructs measured are shown in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1

Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (ρ_c)	Composite Reliability (ρ_A)	Average Extracted (AVE)	Variance
Sensationalization	0.914	0.947	0.935	0.742	
Socialization	0.894	0.935	0.922	0.704	
Surveillance	0.841	0.861	0.885	0.607	

Table 2

Psychometric Properties and Reliability of Scales

Scale	Item	Description / Rationale	Cronbach's Alpha	N
Surveillance Sought	Sur1: Consume news media because it warns about frightening happenings and actions	Highlights news media's role in informing about alarming events or threats (Slovic et al., 1982; Mileti & Fitzpatrick, 1992).	0.914	160
	Sur2: Consume news media because it conveys information about transgressions to authorities	Emphasizes news media facilitating social control by exposing societal transgressions (Surette, 2011; Wood & Hill, 1994).		
	Sur3: Consume news media because it informs us about threats like natural disasters, economic downturns, or military attack	Highlights timely, relevant information about risks and crises (Coombs, 2007; Reynolds & Seeger, 2005).		
	Sur4: Consume news media because it informs you about crime affecting societal peace	Reflects news media's role in reporting crime and influencing public perception and trust (Chiricos et al., 1997; Surette, 2011).		

	<i>Sur5: Consume news media because news about stock market, products, fashion, foods are also disseminated</i>	Shows news media's role in economic, lifestyle, and cultural developments (Barber, 2019; Lewis, 2001).		
Socialization Sought	<i>Social1: Consume news media because news media is the reflector of society</i>	Suggests news media mirrors societal values, norms, and behaviors (Bandura & Walters, 1977; Entman, 1993).	0.896	160
	<i>Social2: Consume news media because media help consumers to socialize</i>	Highlights media's role in acquiring social skills, values, and beliefs (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013; Livingstone, 2004).		
	<i>Social3: Consume news media because it helps you to learn how to become a member of society</i>	Shows media's educational function in learning norms, roles, and expectations (Grabe et al., 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 2004).		
	<i>Social4: Consume news media because it helps shape your conduct (behavior/attitude)</i>	Emphasizes media influence on individual behavior and attitudes (Bandura, 2001; Huesmann et al., 2003).		
	<i>Social5: Consume news media because it brings people close and ties them into single unity</i>	Highlights media's role in fostering social cohesion and collective identity (Putnam, 2000; Kavanaugh & Patterson, 2001).		
Sensation Sought	<i>Sen1: Consume news media because truths are expanded to seem more exciting and dramatic</i>	Suggests news media exaggerates facts to make stories more compelling (Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000; Mansell & Raboy, 2011).	0.885	160
	<i>Sen2: Consume news media because news contents include appeal to emotions like shock, fear, and astonishment</i>	Highlights emotional engagement through sensationalism (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010; Zillmann, 2012).		
	<i>Sen3: Consume news media because it creates stories that get attention for ratings</i>	Reflects commercial motives driving sensational stories (Tuchman, 1978; Singer, 2004).		
	<i>Sen4: Consume news media because it treats users as customers instead of citizens</i>	Indicates prioritization of commercial interests over civic responsibilities (Curran & Seaton, 2018; Livingstone & Das, 2013).		

Sen5: Consume news media because it invokes audience reactions by selling bad journalism

Highlights dissemination of biased or unethical content (Waisbord, 2000; Pennycook & Rand, 2019).

4. Result & Findings

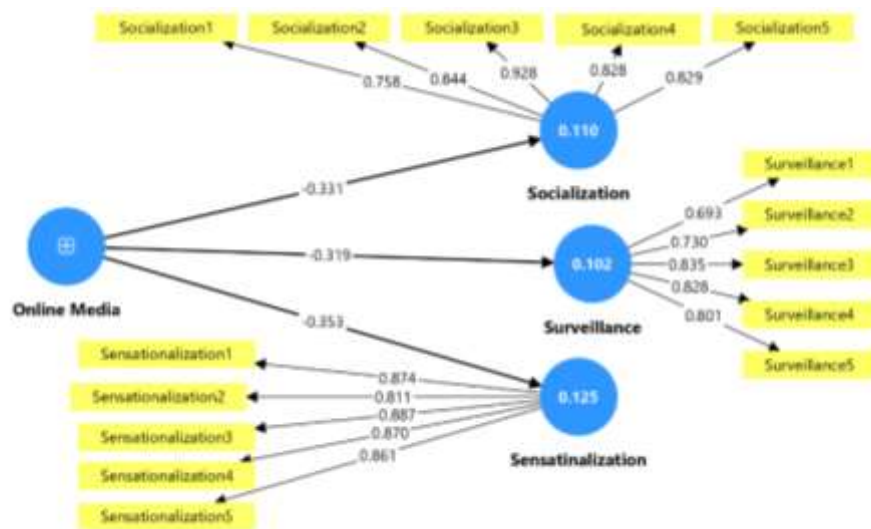


Figure 2. Online media use of Academics

Based on the structural model (Figure 2), online media use showed significant negative relations with all three dependent constructs: online media use negatively predicted socialization, $\beta = -0.331$; surveillance, $\beta = -0.319$; and sensationalization, $\beta = -0.353$. Each latent construct was reliably measured by its indicators, while the factor loadings ranged between .758 and .929 for socialization, between .693 and .835 for surveillance, and between .811 and .887 for sensationalization, thus showing that the items

strongly contributed to their respective constructs. On the level of constructs, R^2 values were modest, with online media explaining 11% of the variance in socialization, 10.2% in surveillance, and 12.5% in sensationalization. Overall, based on these findings, it seems that higher exposure to online media may be related to decreased tendencies for socialization, decreased motivations for surveillance, and lower susceptibility to sensationalization among individuals.

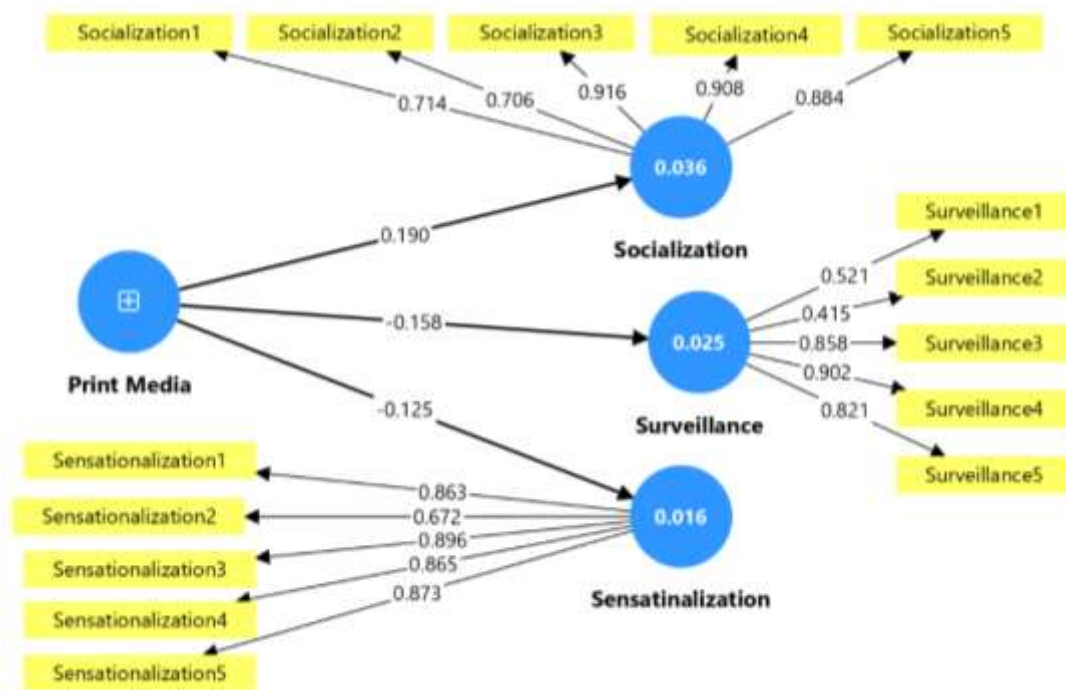


Figure 3. Print media use of Academics

The structural model testing the effects of print media use on perceived news media functions showed weak and nonsignificant relationships with all three constructs (Figure 3). Print media were positively, yet weakly, related to socialization, $\beta = .190$, while negatively related to surveillance, $\beta = -.158$, and sensationalization, $\beta = -.125$. Variance explained by print media was very small, including 3.6% in socialization, $R^2 = .036$; 2.5% in surveillance, $R^2 = .025$; and 1.6% in sensationalization, $R^2 = .016$. Despite these weak structural paths, the measurement model supports strong reliability for each latent construct. Factor

loadings for socialization ranged from .714 to .916; for surveillance from .415 to .902; and for sensationalization from .672 to .896, indicating that each individual scale item meaningfully contributed to its respective constructs. In summary, the findings suggest that print media use among respondents had little predictive influence upon perceptions of socialization, surveillance, and sensationalization functions, reflecting a diminished role of print platforms for these traditional news media functions.

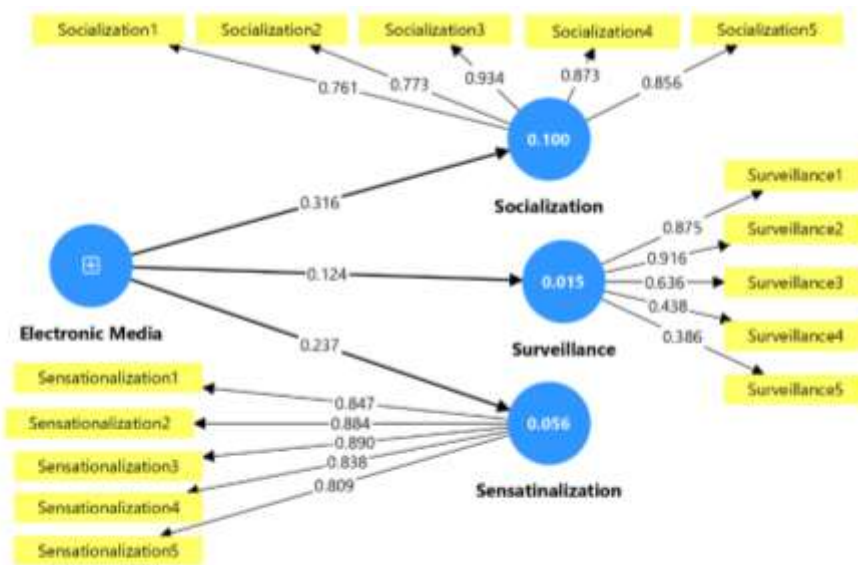


Figure 4. Electronic media use of Academics

This structural model examined the effect of electronic media use on perceived news media functions. Weak and mostly nonsignificant effects for electronic media use were evident across all constructs. Electronic media use was weakly and positively linked to socialization, with a beta weight of .316; insignificantly, to surveillance at .124; and more strongly associated with sensationalization, .237. However, electronic media explained minimal variance for each construct, accounting for 10.0% of the variance in socialization ($R^2 = .100$), 1.5% of the variance in surveillance ($R^2 = .015$), and 5.6% of the variance in sensationalization ($R^2 = .056$). Conversely,

despite the weak predictive pathways, the measurement model demonstrated strong reliability across all latent constructs. The factor loadings for socialization ranged from .761 to .934, while for surveillance, loadings ranged from .386 to .916, and sensationalization varied between .809 and .890 for each item, indicating that each item meaningfully contributed to its respective construct. Generally, findings seem to indicate that although electronic media is a stronger predictor than print media, it too has limited predictive capability in shaping perceptions of socialization, surveillance, and sensationalization functions among respondents.

Table 3
Media Gratifications Differences among Academics in Pakistan

Gratification Sought	Media Type	N	M	SD	F	p	Significance Tukey HSD (p > .05)	Mean Difference (I-J)	95% CL Lower	95% CL Upper
Surveillance	Online	109	19.94	3.30	3.093	.007	—	2.39	0.006	4.801
	Electronic	395	19.85	3.28				Online vs Electronic	—	—
	Print	125	19.75	2.10				Online vs Print	—	—

Socialization	Online	10	19.0	3.4	3.58	.00	Electronic vs Online	2.76	0.00	5.515
		9	3	9		2			4	
	Electronic	39	18.9	3.2			Electronic vs Print	5.625	1.09	10.15
			5	2					8	2
	Print	12	18.5	3.1			–	–	–	–
			0	0						
Sensationalization	Online	10	18.6	4.0	3.392	.00	Print vs Online	3.661	.069	6.697
		9	5	5		4			7	
	Electronic	39	18.7	3.3			Print vs Electronic	3.836	0.07	7.594
			9	2					8	
	Print	12	17.0	3.8			–	–	–	–
			0	7						

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare media gratifications (surveillance, socialization, and sensation) of academics in Pakistan by media type: online, electronic, and print. For surveillance, there was an overall effect of media type, $F(2, 158) = 3.09$, $p = .007$. The post hoc Tukey HSD showed that online media users exhibited higher means, $M = 19.94$, $SD = 3.30$, than electronic media users, $M = 19.85$, $SD = 3.28$, and print media users, $M = 19.75$, $SD = 2.10$, with a mean difference, $MD = 2.40$, 95% CI $[-0.006, 4.801]$, indicating that online platforms were more effective in monitoring news and information.

Media type also had a significant effect on socialization, $F(2, 158) = 3.58$, $p = .002$. Tukey HSD comparisons showed that online media users ($M = 19.03$, $SD = 3.49$) reported higher socialization gratification than users of electronic media ($M = 18.95$, $SD = 3.22$; $MD = 2.76$, 95% CI $[0.004, 5.515]$) and print media ($M = 18.50$, $SD = 3.10$; $MD = 5.63$, 95% CI $[1.098, 10.152]$), indicating the role of online media in facilitating social engagement.

The ANOVA results indicated a statistically significant effect of media type on sensation, $F(2, 158) = 3.39$, $p = .004$. Tukey HSD revealed online media users ($M = 18.65$, $SD = 4.05$) and electronic media users ($M = 18.79$, $SD = 3.32$) had higher sensation gratification than print media users ($M = 17.00$, $SD = 3.87$), at mean differences of $MD = 3.66$, 95% CI $[0.697, 6.624]$ and $MD = 3.84$, 95% CI $[0.078, 7.594]$, respectively, indicating greater excitement and novelty in the news from both online and electronic media. Overall, online media consistently yielded the highest

gratifications across surveillance, socialization, and sensation for academics in Pakistan.

5. Discussion

The results of the current study thus show congruence with, as well as extension to, the growing number of international and regional studies that explore how digital transformation has recontoured media gratifications and perceptions of media functions. In the light of Research Objective 1 and Research Question 1, which probed the levels at which media academics in Pakistan perceive news media functions of surveillance, socialization, and sensation, the findings suggest that the perceived influence of such functions varies substantially across different media types. The weak and, in the case of online media, negative relationships observed between media use and perceived news functions intimate that academics may not view digital platforms as having effective institutional roles within information monitoring, community connectedness, or emotional arousal. This pattern diverges somewhat from the literature of earlier work showing a strong link between online news uses and perceived informational reliability (Flanagin, 2015), but converges with more recent work attributing declining trust in digital news to misinformation and algorithmic personalization (Tandoc et al., 2018). Thus, Hypothesis 1, which predicted significant positive associations between perceived media functions and gratifications sought, is supported only partially; while the constructs are conceptually related, the structural path coefficients reveal that perceived functions

play a limited role in shaping users' actual gratifications. Relating to Research Objective 2 and Research Questions 2 and 3 on differences in gratifications sought across online, electronic, and print media, the findings indicate clear and significant differences. Complementing Uses and Gratifications scholarship (Katz et al., 2017; Papacharissi, 2015), online media turned out to be the most gratifying medium for surveillance, socialization, and sensation. This is consistent with previous studies within South Asia and beyond that find higher gratification for online platforms due to their immediacy, multimedia richness, and participatory affordances (Lee & Ma, 2012). The ANOVA results confirm these tendencies among Pakistani media academics, showing that online media users have the highest cognitive, social, and affective gratifications. Thus, Hypothesis 2, which stated that online media would offer significantly higher gratifications than electronic and print media, is well confirmed. These results also support Hypothesis 3, which stated that there would be significant differences between the three media types in terms of gratifications. Electronic media provided moderate levels of sensation and socialization gratification, thus corroborating previous research indicating that television and broadcast content continue to hold an emotional and entertaining appeal for audiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2009). Print media, on the other hand, provided the lowest gratifications across all categories. This is expected from literature documenting the global and regional decline in print consumption, especially among highly educated and digitally fluent cohorts (Ittefaq et al., 2021; Raza et al., 2022). The observed pattern reflects broader shifts in media ecology, where print is increasingly valued for depth but fails to fulfill immediacy and interactivity, the growing desire for which underlines contemporary audiences' preference for electronic media. As for Research Objective 3, in which the objective was to determine which media type best satisfies cognitive, social, and affective needs, the findings immediately position online media as the most potent source of gratification for academics in Pakistan. Although online media exhibited lower strength in

conceptual linkages with perceived media functions in the proposed structural models, the actual role it plays in satisfying the needs of surveillance, socialization, and sensation is strong. This articulation of lower levels of conceptual trust, juxtaposed with high functional reliance, aligns well with recent U&G scholarship suggesting that gratification sources in the post-digital era rely more on issues of usability, convenience, and technological affordance than on the institutional media function per se (Wohn, 2019). In this regard, the present study establishes that online media serves as the most potent medium for fulfilling informational, relational, and emotional needs of media academics, followed by electronic media, which serves as a secondary but significant source; while print media has a minor role to play. These findings add significantly to the wider scholarly conversation on the use of media in academic contexts and present some important shifts in perceptions, motivations, and gratifications in the changing media landscape of Pakistan.

6. Conclusion

The present study investigated how media academics in Pakistan perceive news media functions of surveillance, socialization, and sensation, and the extent to which these are related to the gratifications sought from online, electronic, and print media. The structural models indicated that media functions have weak and, more often than not, nonsignificant influences across all media types, suggesting that perceptions of traditional news media roles no longer strongly predict the gratifications users pursue. On the other hand, the ANOVA results clearly and significantly indicated variations in gratifications across media platforms, with online media invariably emerging as the most effective for surveillance, socialization, and sensation needs. These findings point to an emerging media ecology in which academics increasingly rely on online platforms for informational, social, and emotional fulfillment, despite conceptual skepticism about their functional reliability. Overall, the study underlines an increasing disparity between traditional news media

functions and contemporary user gratifications, reflecting a structural transformation in the ways academics engage with media. These results indicate that gratifications among media academics are no longer strongly linked to traditional media functions, which promises a shift toward the practical, situational, and user-driven motivation shaped by the digital environment. This underlines the need to update the theory of uses and gratifications by adding factors such as algorithms, participatory media, and information overload. For journalists, news organizations, and policymakers, the results emphasize online platforms' strong potential in engaging academic audiences, but point to the necessity of building credibility, interactivity, and depth in digital content. For broadcasters, the value will remain in their contribution to emotional and sensory engagement, though innovation will be necessary; and print media may only remain relevant in niche, investigative, or hybrid formats. To media educators, this study again confirms the importance of teaching digital literacy, fact-checking, and algorithmic awareness to better prepare students and professionals for today's complex news ecosystem.

7. Limitations and Future Research

There are a number of limitations to this study. It relies on self-reported data, hence there is a possibility of recall or social desirability bias. Secondly, the sample was only limited to media academics, which has implications for generalizability. Its cross-sectional design does not allow any causal conclusions. It also examines only three media types while excluding some emerging platforms like podcasts, micro-video apps, and AI-based aggregators. The current investigation calls for an extension into wider groups of participants, like journalists, students, and the general public, and necessitates the use of a longitudinal design. Factors that could be further considered include media trust, digital literacy, and political orientation, as well as more recent or hybrid forms of media technologies, in order to develop an understanding of how people make their way through today's rapidly changing media environment.

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