

# Strategies and Policies for the Survival of Printed Newspapers in the Digital Era

Aliza Shah Muhammad Shah, Zulkifli Abd Latiff & Nur Atiqah  
Sia Abdullah

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies UiTM, MALAYSIA

Corresponding Author Email: zulatif@yahoo.com

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## Abstract

Technological advancement and the digital era have brought together many changes, including the way people are getting their daily news. Digital and online platforms that provide free information have now taken over printed newspapers as the preferred source of information. This resulted in low circulation and, eventually, the death of printed newspapers. In Malaysia, Malay Mail and Tamil Nesan are among those that succumbed to the situation. Past studies have shown that the death of printed newspapers, however, would lead to, among others, the loss of local news, untold stories, leaving people vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation and exacerbating political polarisation. This study was conducted to understand the situation involving printed newspapers in Malaysia and explore strategies and best policies that printed newspapers could adopt to survive the digital era. Twelve strategies and best policies have been identified, they are - provide comprehensive advertising packages, establish a clear demarcation between traditional and digital content, focus on marketable content, the collaboration between media agencies, other departments and sections, establish supporting company policies, manage production and marketing cost, established trust, print and online compliment each other, quality editorial team, have strong willpower to push for good content and take advantage of any special event.

**Keywords:** Strategies, Policies, Sustainability, Printed Newspaper, Survival, Digital Era

## Background of the Study

Printed Newspapers have played a vital role since their inception in the 1800s; however, technological advancement has brought many challenges to the traditional medium, particularly with the advent of free information provided by social media and other online platforms.

Apart from having to compete with radio, television and the internet - newspapers nowadays are fighting for their survival against the emergence of mobiles and other hand-free gadgets that allow readers to have a wider choice of media (Makaruddin, 2006). The Reuters Digital News Report in 2022, which is based on data from all six continents including

Malaysia, noted that newspaper readership has spiralled from 40 per cent in 2017 to 17 per cent in 2022. The report also revealed that 89 per cent of their respondents use social media as the main source of news (Newman et al., 2022).

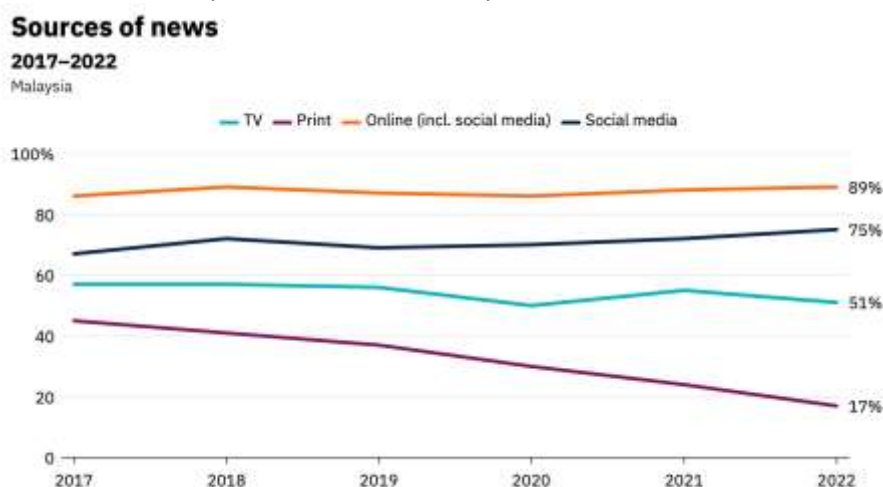


Figure 1: Shows the Delineation of Print Newspapers as a Source of News in Malaysia (Newman et al., 2022)

Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), in their reports, noted how printed newspapers' circulation started to decline in 2013. The report revealed that only 5,813,812 newspapers were sold in 2015, compared to 7,450,738 copies in 2012. This trend is expected to continue in the upcoming years. This has raised concern especially given that past studies have shown how the death of printed newspapers has left undesirable impacts on various levels. This includes losing local news, many untold stories, creating misinformed and disinformed society and political polarisation. This study will therefore look into some of the strategies and best policies printed newspapers could employ to ensure their survivability in the digital era.

### Problem Statements

Printed newspapers have played a significant role in disseminating news, explaining new policies and promoting the government's ideology. It is, in fact, one of the mediums that provide readers with general insights on not only local but also world events (Adoni & Nossek, 2007; Adoni & Nossek, 2013). Newspaper reading is also said to gratify needs for information, orientation and interpretation.

Past studies have shown that the death of printed newspapers could result in the loss of local news, resulting in untold stories (Napoli & Mahone, 2019; Rogers, 2019). Researchers Napoli and Mahone (2019), in their study, found that local newspapers remain the most significant journalism providers in their communities and losing the traditional medium would result in the loss of local news. Both researchers noted that printed newspapers provide more original, local and critical information than their online counterparts (Napoli & Mahone, 2019)

Another study by Ardia et al (2020) highlighted how losing local newspapers could severely impact the community. The researcher noted that local news outlets have an important role in informing the community about their local government, elections, and other civic events. They also shape community views around common values and beliefs, creating a sense of shared purpose that can be a powerful unifying force within a town or country. Without local newspapers, community members source their news from social media, leaving

them vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation, and exacerbating political polarisation.

Explaining further on this, Ardia et al (2020) noted that local news outlets have played a key role in combating the spread of misinformation by giving reports on local facts and expert opinions. The disappearance of local news would have created an information vacuum that allows for the spread of factually incorrect information creating a misinformed society.

Rogers (2019) noted that a report by the Federal Communication Commission revealed that the layoffs exercised by newsrooms in the past years have jeopardised the newspapers' function as an independent watchdog. It has resulted in stories not written, unexposed scandals, government waste undiscovered, health dangers not being identified in time and local elections involving candidates whom we know little (Waldman, 2011).

A few printed newspapers in Malaysia have been forced to shut down their operation in recent years. Malay Mail and Tamil Nesan are among those that were forced to close down their operations. This study intends to identify some strategies printed newspapers can adopt to survive the digital era. Their survival is important to prevent the negative impacts of losing printed newspapers, as mentioned by others.

### **Research Objectives**

- RO 1 : To examine the current state of printed newspapers in Malaysia.
- RO 2: To explore the best strategies for gaining the attention of readers and advertisers towards print newspapers.
- RO 3: To determine optimal policies that can ensure the survival of printed newspapers

### **Literature Review**

Printed newspapers have played a vital role in Malaysia since its emergence in the 1800s. The medium was used to unite the Malays, particularly to fight for our independence. Later, it was utilised to help the government educate and shape public opinion to strengthen our democracy. The traditional medium, unfortunately, is dying following the emergence of technology in the current digital era.

Reuters Digital News Report 2022, which is based on data from all six continents that include 46 countries, including Malaysia, noted that newspaper readership has spiralled from 40 percent in 2017 to 17 percent in 2022. The report also revealed that 89 percent of their respondents use social media as the main source of news (Newman et al., 2022). Data from the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) also supported Reuter's study, noting a significant decline in numbers of circulation of printed newspapers in Malaysia since 2013. The report revealed that only 5,813,812 newspapers were sold in 2015, compared to 7,450,738 copies in 2012 (Audit Bureau of Circulations Malaysia, 2014; Audit Bureau of Circulations Malaysia, 2015; Audit Bureau of Circulations Malaysia, 2016).

Most media uses the two-sided platform - a traditional business model whereby two or more distinct interdependent groups of consumers are brought together to achieve a high number of users. One group would normally be subsidised (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). In Malaysia, media organisations often provide free online content but impose minimal charges for printed versions. These organisations would basically depend heavily on advertisements, apart from printed newspaper sales, to survive. However, with more advertisement channels, it has become harder to depend on advertising revenue to fund content delivery (Clemons, 2009). The technological advancement also allows for the creation of new advertising

channels such as Ebay and Craigslist, which acquired a large share of advertising revenue from classified ads, and even competition from social media platforms such as Facebook and Google.

A few printed newspapers in Malaysia were forced to shut down their operations - Malay Mail and Tamil Nesan among them. The death of printed newspapers should be prevented to prevent the implications of losing the traditional medium. Past studies have shown that among the implications of losing printed newspapers include the loss of local news resulting in untold stories (Napoli & Mahone, 2019; Rogers, 2019).

Napoli and Mahone (2019) in their study of 100 randomly sampled media outlets across the United States, found that local newspapers remain the most significant journalism providers and losing the medium would result in the loss of local news. The researcher noted that the scarcity of online-only local media outlets and the limited journalistic output of these outlets proved that the medium is nowhere near matching local newspapers that became the significant source of reporting with its original, local and critical information.

Another study by Ardia et al (2020) noted that the loss of local news sources forced many to also lose the ability to understand what is happening in their own local communities and how they are related to one another in the communities. The researcher explained that local news outlets have an important role in informing the community about their local government, elections, and other civic events. They also shape community views around common values and beliefs, creating a sense of shared purpose that can be a powerful unifying force within a town or country. Without local newspapers, community members source their news from social media, leaving them vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation, and exacerbating political polarisation (Ardia et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, Rogers (2019) explained that the past layoffs conducted by newsrooms had jeopardised newspapers' function as independent watchdogs. It also resulted in stories not written, unexposed scandals, government waste undiscovered, health dangers not being identified in time and local elections involving candidates whom we know little.

These implications, however, could be prevented should printed newspapers find the strategies and policies that would allow them to survive in the digital era. Ali and Radcliffe (2017) in their study listed at least eight strategies that local newspapers should consider to reinvigorating themselves. They are

1. Focus on original reporting: Both researchers noted that local newspapers should publish content that readers can't find anywhere else to be able to find paying audience. They quoted the director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issue, Al Cross, saying, "The kinds of things people get from a local newspaper are the kinds of things that people will continue to want one hundred years from now. What's going on within my locality? What's happening with my school system? What's happening with my taxes? What's happening with planning and zoning? What kind of businesses or jobs might we get? Only the local newspaper is likely to be the consistently reliable source of that information," he said.
2. Own the master narrative of your community: Local newspapers are encouraged to consider which beats they want to own, and which they want to approach differently. The researcher noted that with the dramatically reduced resources, it is impossible for media outlets to adopt the "general store" approach. The researcher highlighted that some beats, such as arts, had evolved to incorporate user-generated content instead of work from paid journalists. User-generated content is original, brand-specific content

created by customers and published on social media or other channels. The researchers noted that given the limited resources, editors should think carefully whether to use it on non-local content or unique content which is more likely to ensure local newspapers' sustainability.

3. What are the metrics telling you? : Seattle PI senior editor Levi Pulkkinen noted that data from tools such Google Analytics, Chartbeat, Parse.ly and Omniture might challenge traditional journalistic practices such as incremental reporting. Understanding the metrics helps the media to produce content that readers want. Paying attention to analytics means producing clickbait. "People like smart things. Our experience has been that smart things do just fine. What doesn't do well are boring things and uninteresting things," Pullkinen said.
4. Consider content partnership: This is one of the approaches local newsrooms are beginning to embrace to reduce pressure following fewer resources. Besides content support, partnerships also allow for experimentation with new media such as augmented reality and 360 video work produced by Digital Media Design students at Klamath Community College, which was published by the Herald and News. Media organisations can also collaborate with partners on campaigns and create opportunities for local newspapers to join larger groups via organisations such as the Local Media Consortium when selling advertising inventory.
5. Have the right mix of structure, staff and skills: With digital output becoming central, hiring requirements have changed and some newsrooms are restructuring. Newsrooms are looking not just for journalists with traditional skillsets but those with experience with engagement, analytics, social media and multimedia.
6. Diversify your income: The majority of small-market newspapers cannot survive with the mix of subscriptions, advertising and single-copy sales. Multiple income streams are needed to ensure a stable future.
7. Make time to experiment: Small-market newspapers should test new ideas and experiment across the content and business development side of their operation since they have a slower pace of change. The Morning Call publisher and editor-in-chief Robert York said, "You just have to be willing to take a look and measure the actual value, both real and perceived by your audience and decide to spend your time doing things that matter to them and stop spending your time on stuff that they are not even looking at," he said.
8. Stop talking the industry down: Local newspapers are said to be in a stronger position than Metro due to their exclusive content, the dynamics of ultra-local advertising markets and the ability to leverage proximity to their audience. Local journalists believed there was a need to change the "one foot in the grave" image often attached to the industry. "We are allowing the naysayers to kill our industry. We still offer something unique which residents want but we allow the screaming voices of gloom and doom to convince people that we are worthless," a reporter said. Local newspapers instead should do more to showcase and reiterate the good work they are doing.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The researcher identified a Conceptual Framework that guided the whole research and illustrated the expected relationship between the variables. Strategies and best policies have been identified as the independent variables for this study, whereas printed newspapers' survivability is the dependent variable. In order to address the declining printed newspapers'

circulation, the study aims at exploring and identifying strategies and best policies that would allow the platform to attract not only readers but also advertisers to ensure its survivability in the digital era. Figure 1.2 demonstrates the conceptual framework for this study.



Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

### ***Uses and Gratification Theory***

The study adopted the Uses and Gratification theory which explains how people use mass media for different reasons and seek to derive various gratifications (Gallion, n.d; Asemah, 2011). Knowing why readers and advertisers choose certain platforms would help media organisations serve them better.

### **Methodology**

The study employs a qualitative research method whereby in-depth interviews were conducted with a few experts in the journalism field. These experts were chosen for their over 20 years of experience and vast industry knowledge. Their input is crucial to allow the researcher to understand the country's real situation and explore the best strategies and policies that suit the local situation. An in-depth interview protocol was prepared to help guide the researcher during the implementation of the interviews. Instructions were listed clearly to ensure consistency between interviews and increase the findings' reliability. The interview protocol was adapted from researchers (Boyce and Palena, 2006).

An in-depth interview guide was prepared to ensure that the researcher who will be interviewing the selected respondents does not miss any important questions that need to be answered. The study's main objectives would be used to prepare the guide.

Adams and Cox (2008) recommendation for designing a questionnaire will be adopted and adapted for this study. Both researchers highlighted the need to ensure that the questionnaires are concise, structure the questions carefully, group the questions under a common theme, make sure that the frame of reference is clear by giving definitions, for example, and avoid biases. The questionnaire will be formulated according to the research objectives.

### **Research Analysis**

Data gathered from these interviews were analysed using Nvivo. The researcher decided to employ a thematic analysis in analysing the data.

Thematic analysis is a method that focuses on identifying patterned meaning across a dataset. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe Thematic analysis as a method that allows for a systematic way of seeing and processing qualitative information using "coding". There are several phases of analysing the data:

1. Data Familiarisation, whereby the researcher will transcribe the data, read and re-read the data and note down initial ideas. Major ideas were highlighted and written down for each transcript.
2. Generating initial code: Features were coded as a small phrase or keyword representing a specific idea while translating and transcribing.
3. Searching for themes across the data: "Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). The data were read and re-read, and the cycle was repeated several times to narrow down the number of codes and categorise them into identifiable themes.
4. Reviewing themes: "Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts at the first level and then the entire data set at the second level, generating a thematic map of the analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). The complete interview data were re-read to validate the codes.
5. Producing the report: "The final analysis; selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, the final analysis of selected extracts, relating to the analysis to their search question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Several vital statements/features representing the data were extracted to showcase the resulting outcomes as statements in the form of ideas and feelings. Visual representations are drawn using interconnections between codes.

### Finding

The researcher has managed to identify 12 strategies from her interviews with key industry experts. The elements are

1. Provide more comprehensive advertising packages	7. Manage production and marketing cost
2. Established clear demarcation between traditional and digital content	8. Established trust
3. Focus only on marketable content	9. Print and online complement each other by doing cross-promo
4. Collaboration with other media agencies	10. Quality editorial team
5. Support from other departments and sections	11. Strong willpower to push for good content
6. Established supporting company policies	12. Take advantage of any special event or big issue

### 1. Provide More Comprehensive Advertising Packages

The death of other newspapers will definitely create more business opportunities for those who survive, especially the media groups with various platforms under their wings, such as Media Prima Berhad, Star Media Group, Astro and Kumpulan Media Karangraf. These groups can attract advertisers with advertising packages allowing their messages to be published on various platforms.

*“Malysiakini is just an online platform, Astro has no print medium (under them) but Media Prima, NSTP has everything. So it is a waste if we didn't utilise our advantage and no matter what, demands from advertisers are still there,” informant 4 said.*

## **2. Established Clear Demarcation Between Traditional and Digital Products**

There is a need to have a clear demarcation between content that will be published online and those solely for printed newspapers. Currently, the media uploads every story online, so readers would be reluctant to spend money to buy printed versions, as they would rather wait for the news to be posted online.

*“Content that is best presented online (with visual or motion graphics) has no business in print... You only put content that matters, which is best presented in print,” informant 1 said.*

Informant 1 also believed that there is no point in “reserving” certain news for the printed version as this would only push away their readers to other platforms.

*“If you choose to be stingy with news on your online platform, hoping to preserve it for your print edition, then save it because people will scour the net to look for the information and they will find it. But if you can promise me that you have extra information that is beneficial to me, I will be informed, enlightened, entertained, and satisfied, then I will buy your printed newspaper,” informant 1 said.*

## **3. Print and Online Complement Each Other by Doing Cross-Promo**

Print and online platforms, should not work in silos. In order to survive, the researcher found that both platforms should complement each other, especially in promoting their content.

## **4. Choose Only Marketable Content**

Newspapers would have editors who would decide on their content. Their decisions would normally be based on their experience and perception of what would attract most of their readers.

*“A good editor will always ask himself, “Will people buy this story tomorrow?.” If the answer is “yes”, it means that the content is marketable.*

*“A newspaper editor must always think about content that he can develop as follow-up stories and in doing so he must ensure that the content is free from any legal implication. The editor must select an issue carefully to ensure that the issue is affecting the majority of the newspaper readers.” informant 6 explained.*

## **6. Cooperation Between Media Agencies**

Collaboration between a few media agencies is nothing new, in fact, a few media in Malaysia has adopted such practices. The collaboration would provide a win-win situation for each agency. Given that every media would have its own audience, the collaboration would also indirectly allow the collaborating agencies to achieve greater coverage.

*“Exclusive content will remain exclusive online for only three minutes before other media reproduce it. In order to survive, Sinar Harian needed a partner, so they partnered with Astro Awani. Astro Awani need content, and Sinar Harian needs*



*recognition and publicity, so when we organise a forum, Astro will get to use the content,” said informant 6.*

Other informants also believed that the media would be able to achieve more should they work together.

*“What if all of us work together to reject YouTube and Facebook, we don't allow them to use our content, we do like a publishers pack. If that can be done, advertisers have no other choice but to entertain us,” informant 2 said.*

## **6. Cooperation from Every Department or Section in a Media Organisation**

The content department should not be left to work in silos; instead, other departments, particularly the marketing and circulation departments too, have a role in ensuring the survivability of a printed newspaper. Each team member should be able to understand their product - the newspaper - for them to effectively promote or “sell” it to advertisers.

*“For newspapers to survive, the editorial team should not work alone, they need to work closely with the circulation and marketing department too because you may have a good story, but if the circulation department fails to make sure that newspapers reach the newsstand, then the newspaper wouldn't be able to survive. There is also no point in having good news, high circulation if your sales team failed to promote and attract advertisers,” informant 6 said.*

Informant 2 shares the same argument saying team members of every section in a particular newspaper too should play their role to churn out good and quality content, and not only depend on a certain section.

## **7. Cope with Production and Marketing Cost**

While most of our respondents believed it was content that would help to ensure the survival of printed newspapers, one of our respondents, however, believed that one would only be able to survive should they be able to cope with the increasing production cost.

*“We can see that some newspapers that publish good and popular content are still diminishing, so I think the key to ensuring the survivability of a print newspaper is to be able to cope with the increasing cost of production and marketing,” informant 6 said.*

Another informant also did not discount the fact that managing production costs is crucial in ensuring print survival.

*“Content is important, managing production cost is good, but the content is also crucial, and it is not something we can tolerate,” informant 5 said.*

## **8. Established Trust**

Trust is one of the most important elements to encourage people to buy any particular newspaper.

*“The most important thing that a newspaper needs is trust from the readers. That is something we need to build because if they trust your newspaper, they will buy it without even having to look at the headlines.” informant 6 said.*

Another informant believed that newspapers should be truthful to their readers, and this must be done despite it contradicting the owner's political alliance. She said any newspaper that chooses not to cover certain news for political reasons would only push away its readers.

*"We have media houses that are owned by political parties, but at the end of the day, it is still a business entity. You need to realise that if you are not being truthful, people will leave because everybody else can write over everything... there are a lot of sources that could offer your audience what they are looking for," informant 1 said.*

### **9. Quality editorial team**

It is also very important for media agencies to hire editors and journalists who are capable and willing to go the extra mile to look for more information, find value-added information and avoid depending only on press releases provided by organisers.

Informant 4 said journalists should know their responsibility - they should verify each and every piece of information they get and not succumb to the virality trend. A pure journalist would also strive to get more information to differentiate what we have from others.

*"Young reporters should know their duty, or they will become citizen journalists. We are journalists, we can't carry the same thing that people make viral. We need something different, and that is what sets us apart," informant 4 added.*

### **10. Strong willpower to provide good content**

The study found that printed media commonly deal with all sorts of interference - from its ownership, political party to even the advertisers. This forced the publication to "self-censor" or "restrict" their coverage of certain issues. Our informant believed that everyone, including the editors and managers who decide on the news daily line-up, should have a passion for producing good stories and strong willpower to push for the publication of the stories.

### **11. Newspaper sells during a special event or big issue**

Our informants revealed that circulation for their publications increases significantly, especially during big events or when there are big issues. One example mentioned was during the day after the General Election's polling day. Informant 4 said every newspaper under Media Prima Berhad recorded a significant increase in circulation a day after the polling day. This, he believed, was due to the public thirst for more information, which drove them to buy print newspapers.

*"Harian Metro is not a political newspaper, but at that time (a day after election day), every Malaysian was eager to hunt for news even though they knew the result. The next day whether the result (printed on newspapers) is incomplete or not, we will still find our circulation improved," informant 4 said.*

### **12. Supportive company's stand**

The organisation's stand could indirectly affect its income. Explaining this, informant 2 said some media tend to choose to focus on only one platform and this, unfortunately, would indirectly be reflected in the way the marketing team market their products. For example, if a media choose to focus on print, its marketing team would only focus on selling advertisement space in its print platform and do the bare minimum for its digital platform or stop once they achieved the required "sales target".

**Conclusion**

Twelve strategies and best policies that could help printed newspapers survive the digital era have been successfully identified at the end of the study. They are - to provide comprehensive advertising packages, establish a clear demarcation between traditional and digital content, focus on marketable content, collaboration between media agencies, other departments and sections, establish supporting company policies, manage production and marketing costs, establish trust, print and online compliment each other, quality editorial team, having strong willpower to push for good content and take advantage of any special event.

Media organisations with various platforms under their wings, such as Media Prima Berhad, Star Media Group, Astro and Karangkraf should consider offering better - more comprehensive advertisement packages that allow advertisers to promote their products or services on various platforms at a reasonable price. The ability to reach wider and various groups of audiences would definitely attract advertisers to advertise in any particular media agency. Continuous profit from advertisement would help to ensure printed newspapers' survivability. However, as mentioned by Ali and Radcliffe (2017), it is very important for media organisations to look at diversifying their revenue streams to ensure a stable future.

Content is also one of the most important elements that would ensure printed newspapers' survivability. Every media organisation should draw a line between the content they wish to publish online and those reserved only for print. This is to encourage readers to buy printed newspapers and they would only do so should they know they would be getting different content from those they can read for free on social media and other online platforms. The finding supported Ali and Radcliffe (2017)'s study, where they highlighted the importance of having original content in order to attract paying audience. Media organisations can do cross-promo among the platforms to promote their content. This way, they could attract their online readers to buy printed newspapers and vice versa.

One of the key aspects of attracting readers is by establishing trust towards the brand. Printed newspapers should adopt non-bias and balanced reporting to gain readers' trust. Employing selective reporting would only push away readers. Another important note to remember as mentioned in the past study is to stop talking about the possible demise of the platform as it would give readers the idea that the platform is worthless. Local newspapers instead should do more to prove that they are worth the reader's money.

One interesting finding we gathered through this study is that newspapers sell like hotcakes when there are special events or big issues. Every media organisation should take advantage of this situation to churn out good content, attract readers and subsequently capture their hearts so that they remain loyal to the brand

Media organisations should also have strong willpower to eliminate any possible interference that would hamper efforts to bring forward good content. This can be done if the organisation has a good editorial team. The team should also be able to perform their responsibility and be willing to go the extra mile to bring back quality stories. Ali and Radcliffe (2017) too highlighted the importance of having the right mix of structure, staff and skills. He noted how the digital era has led to some changes to the hiring requirement with newsrooms no longer looking for journalists with traditional skills only but those with experience in engagement, analytics, social media and multimedia.

Different media organisations could also collaborate among themselves to achieve greater coverage and other benefits. Sinar Harian and Astro Awani's collaboration is an example of how media agencies could have worked together to achieve a win-win situation. In their collaboration, Sinar Harian is now getting a boost in their coverage, whereas Astro

Awani would have good content to be shown on their platform. The same strategy was also mentioned by Ali and Radcliffe (2017) who believed that content partnership could also help reduce the pressure of having to operate with fewer resources. They also noted the opportunity to experiment with new media and for local newspapers to join larger groups such as the Local Media Consortium to sell their advertising inventory.

Other survival strategies include getting support from other sections such as sports, lifestyles, and politics. This is important to ensure quality content is offered across every section of the newspapers. This is also important to cater to as many readers as possible given the fact that every individual would have their own news preferences.

Lastly, printed media requires strong cooperation from all departments, especially between the content, marketing and advertising departments. This is important because a good product needs promotion and printed newspapers need advertisers to survive. It is crucial for the content team to be able to produce good products, whereas the marketing and advertising teams should understand well the strength and the offering of their products (printed newspapers) in order to aptly market them to the advertisers.

### **Contribution**

Previous studies have examined various aspects related to the comparison between print and new media, the effects of technology on news presentation (Schoenbach et al., 2005, Rajendran & Thesingraja, 2014), the reasons for the decline in printed newspaper circulation (Rajendran & Thesingraja, 2014; Liew & Gan, n.d.), the impact of new media on traditional media (Ali Salman et al., 2011), the adaptation of newspapers to technological advancements and how the changes alter consumer demands (Everett, 2011; Patel, 2010) and the consequences of losing printed newspapers within a community (Hayes and Lawless, 2018; Shaker, 2014; Snyder and Strömberg, 2010; Schulhofer-Wohl & Garrido, 2013).

So far, there are no pertinent studies that look into strategies for encouraging the sustainability of print newspapers in light of the present digital landscape. The study will thus fill this void in knowledge.

The acquisition of knowledge from this study is of utmost importance in mitigating the demise of printed newspapers. This is possible by implementing the right strategies and policies that enable media organisations to print newspapers of the highest calibre while sustaining a steady profit. Ensuring the sustainability of printed newspapers is of paramount importance in order to mitigate the many negative effects resulting from the loss of local printed newspapers that have been cited in numerous studies.

The study presents an alternative perspective, emphasising that printed newspapers require not only high-quality content to sustain themselves but also effective strategies and policies to ensure profitability and survivability.

The study also has a theoretical contribution in which it helps to provide news knowledge on why readers and advertisers choose printed newspapers even in the digital era. The knowledge is particularly important as it helps industry players to improve their offerings, attracting readers and advertisers and ultimately ensuring their survivability.

### **Recommendation**

The study provides information that will benefit academicians and researchers who might be interested in the field. As a recommendation, future studies should look at the issue from a different perspective. A survey or in-depth interviews can be done with printed

newspapers as the respondents. Readers are basically the most critical aspect of ensuring the survivability of printed newspapers.

Media organisations could also look at boosting their advertising revenue by also taking into consideration what advertisers would want from printed newspapers in order to survive and in-depth interviews with key players from the advertising industry should be able to give a better perspective on the matter.

Apart from policies and business studies, content is also one of the important aspects to attract readers. The future researcher could look into the types of content readers want to read in printed newspapers. This information is crucial for the media organisation to understand better what their readers want and could better satisfy them.

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