

Media Diet: A survey-based analysis of young political workers fostering political awareness through different sources

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the media diet patterns of young political workers in Karachi. The survey has been conducted to understand the role of various media platforms in shaping the political opinions, attitudes and behaviors of political workers. With the rapid growth of digital media and its increasing influence on political processes, it is crucial to examine how young political workers engage with different media sources and how this impacts their political engagement. The research methodology employs a quantitative survey administered to a precise sample, aiming to provide a broader understanding of media consumption patterns and preferences among the target population. Preliminary findings reveal that social media platforms, particularly, Facebook and Twitter play a significant role in the media consumption landscape of young political workers in Karachi. Traditional media sources such as television and newspapers continue to hold relevance, albeit to a lesser extent. The findings suggest that these individuals tend to gravitate towards media sources that align with their existing political beliefs, potentially reinforcing preconceived notions and limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints. Understanding the media consumption patterns of young political workers in Karachi is crucial for political parties, media organizations, and policymakers. It provides insights into effective strategies for political communication and engagement with the demography of the city. By recognizing the preferences and influences shaping their media consumption, political parties can tailor their messaging to effectively reach and engage young political workers. Furthermore, media organizations can adapt their content and platforms to ensure that diverse perspectives are represented and media literacy is promoted.

Keywords: Facebook, Media Diet, Politics, survey, workers.

Introduction:

Media diet is a collection of information or awareness that a person or group of people get from different sources of media. This information may be political, theoretical, educational, and religious or relates to the other domain of life. Media is not limited to only newspaper, magazine, TV, radio or today's social media; but books and speeches are also the basic sources of information. New media have made available a wide range of platforms and content choices. (Harsh Taneja, JamesG Webster, Thomas B. Ksiazek, 2012) Choice of medium is anyone's prerogative as suitable for him but the approach could not be same between book reader and a listener of vlogs or you-tube content. Social media is powerful tool of the day because everyone has easy access to social media where all topics of society is discussed and creating propaganda and chaos as well. It is widely believed that social media have negative impacts on society especially on youth. "With negative news or anything that stirs us up in a negative way, our brain releases the stress hormones cortisol and adrenaline. It's the same process as when something really scary happens, just on a smaller level," said psychotherapist, Annie Miller. According to Wikipedia, 'Media consumption or media diet is the sum of information and entertainment media taken in by an individual or group'. 'Practicing good nutrition keeps your mind sharp, your body fit, and your life long. The same could be said for consuming media' (Steven Leckart, 2009) Media diet is that information which develops some one's concept on any topic or field from media. On the basis of that particular information, he adopts a view. If that information is correct then he would be on the right side and make better decisions and if that information is incorrect or less standard then it is expected to be highly wrong and its result would badly affect the people or society. Social media isn't the only source for Information gathering as there are more reliable sources including books, newspaper, TV, radio, magazines and others. Social media is not a reliable source for many, for healthy media diet because of its nature; however, it has strong impact on different fields of life. Research based content with reliable sources is the best diet for viewers which is also available on social media with limited circles. It is up to users that which medium satisfy them in the process of getting information. Social media content creators, often depend on such narratives that develop, sometime, chaos in the society. To specify

the media consumption of youth in Karachi, a study was conducted on the effects of media on the political views of young people in Karachi and the awareness they gain through various mediums. A survey has been conducted based on specific questions to gather opinions from the youth, and their views have been taken into consideration. The study has involved 100 participants from different age groups, including 50 male and 50 female respondents, who have shared their opinions.

Media influence in Politics

Media is an important tool for political campaigns and political parties manage media wings for their campaigns. Social media teams of political parties in Pakistan are famous, and few parties are also investing on social media teams to gain people's attention. Media influence voters as well, for this, social media teams are playing a vital role in spreading their manifesto and message while degrading the opponents, mostly social media teams are involved in negative propaganda campaign, fake news, disrespecting opposition leaders and create unfriendly environment that leads to a hostile situation between particular political parties' workers.

Use of Media

Shape of media as a source to inform people has been changed with the passage of time. In past, when paper was not invented or discovered to be used for writing, people used to get information from the designated persons of the regimes, who would verbally give information about government and other state affairs. As world progressed and invented different tools, so, people started using some form of papers for writing and then the era of newspaper started. Newspaper was a revolution in mass media communication and it did develop with time. Scientific inventions provided modern sources of media like TV and internet and now mobile phones with social media applications.

Media's impact on Pakistani politics

Pakistan is considered as one of the politically polarized country where military has ruled for decades and it still challenges political parties and democracy. Marshal laws and direct and indirect military influence has badly harmed the understandings of democracy and political thoughts in the minds of citizen and political workers. Pakistani political workers are gravely disintegrated in the realm of this grim politics. But media and scholarly personalities have always nurtured political workers through their books and speeches. Newspapers and books have been vital source for politics, democracy, political parties and their workers to continue the democratic cause.

Books as a source of awareness

Political workers must be aware of the history and political ideologies, for that, books can play a crucial role to provide a deep understanding of the history of politics, political ideologies, and political movements. This knowledge can help them make sound decisions and shape their political beliefs.

Books can provide exposure to different perspectives and viewpoints and they can gain a better understanding of the complex issues of politics. Books can inspire young political workers to take action and make a difference in their communities and find ways to contribute to the political discourse. Books can be a powerful tool for spreading awareness among young political workers. By providing them with knowledge, inspiration, and a deeper understanding of the political landscape, books can help them become more effective and engaged political leaders.

Media has played a significant role in influencing political workers in Pakistan. It has provided a platform for political parties and leaders to reach a wide audience, disseminate their messages, and shape public opinion. Media has helped in holding politicians accountable by reporting on their actions and decisions, leading to increased transparency and accountability in the political process. Media can also be biased and influenced by certain political interests, leading to the spread of misinformation and partial reporting. Overall, media has had both positive and negative impacts on the political landscape in Pakistan.

The role of newspapers

Newspapers can play a vital role in spreading awareness among young political workers in Pakistan. The newspapers are still highly relied upon in terms of a good source for: providing accurate information, promoting critical thinking, encouraging civic engagement, holding leaders accountable, and highlighting success stories. Newspapers can inspire young people to become more engaged in politics and work towards building a better future for themselves and their communities.

Overall, newspapers can be an important source of information and inspiration for young political workers in Pakistan. They are expected to provide accurate information, facilitate discussions, promote transparency

and accountability and encourage civic engagement. In this way, newspapers can help young people become well-informed and engaged citizens who can help shape the future of Pakistan.

The role Social media:

Social media has become an increasingly important tool for political workers in Pakistan. It has provided new avenues for politicians to connect with their constituents, promote their agendas, and engage in direct communication with the public. Social media has also allowed political workers for the creation of political movements and campaigns that can mobilize support and bring attention to important issues.

Social media can be a powerful tool for young political workers in Pakistan to spread awareness, build networks, amplify their voices, promote transparency and accountability, and encourage civic engagement. However, it is important to use social media responsibly and ethically, and to be aware of the risks and challenges associated with online activism. However, social media can also be a double-edged sword for political workers in Pakistan. It can be used to spread misinformation, create and amplify divisive narratives, and attack political opponents. Additionally, political workers must navigate the challenges of online harassment and cyber bullying, which can be particularly severe for women and minority groups. Meanwhile, social media has had a significant impact on the political landscape in Pakistan, it is important for political workers to use it prudently and consider its potential negative effects.

Literature review:

Media is a basic tool for opinion building and information gathering. Research on media diet is not conducted often in our society (Pakistan), but, in other parts of the world, media diet research has been conducted with different aspects. Same as, a study was conducted by some faculty members of Portugal University and they targeted the youth with the theme of ‘uses and media consumption by Portuguese university students’, is an exploratory study.

Basic objective of this study was to understand the modes of media appropriation and media consumption to define ‘media repertoires, classify information consumptions, describe media preferences, assess forms of access to information, gauge the type of content consumed in different media, identify if there are media consumptions in cross-media. (I. Amaral, P. Silveira, B. Reis, 2019)

Another research article, ‘Media consumption across platforms Identifying user defined repertoires’, was produced by American Researchers Harsh Taneja, James G. Webster and Edward C Malthouse from northwestern University and Thomas B. Ksiazek from Villanova University.

In this research they used different theoretical perspectives. The first focuses on how structures, such as, program schedules shape media consumption. The second highlights the importance of psychological factors, like, needs and preferences, in determining media choice. (Harsh Taneja, James G. Webster, Edward C Malthouse, Thomas B. Ksiazek, 2012)

Sample of this study was US adults, who were former panelists of the Nielsen TV people meter panel. ‘Study identified four distinct repertoires that Americans used to manage a growing supply of media content and services. The results offer a parsimonious illustration of cross-platform media used in an increasingly abundant and complex environment. As both academics and practitioners are just beginning to make sense of how individuals consume media in this dynamic digital age’. (Harsh Taneja, James G. Webster, Edward C Malthouse, Thomas B. Ksiazek)

A brief research by news agency Reuters on ‘Georgia: Media consumption and Audience perceptions’ discussed different aspects based on survey of TV and social media users of Georgian urban areas while using the quantitative and qualitative research methodology tools.

Purpose of Research:

In recent years, youth is actively participating in Pakistani politics but commentators think that while youth is taking part in politics with polarization and decency of politics is not seen in their behavior. Many of them are not aware of the basic philosophy of politics and democracy but reacting like a fan follower of a celebrity or as cult. Youths’ role in politics is very important because every development and reform needs their role to be implemented. Also, the youth is leader of the future, for that, their recruitment in politics is crucial. For this polarization and following the importance of youth in politics, it is important to determine their political ideas and media diet where they get information. News media has vast sources in this digital age, it includes: books, newspapers, you-tube, social media, TV and other sources. While all these sources

are creating content on political affairs and keep the audience aware to pave their way towards political field. It is important to determine whether the political workers are consuming media about politics. Furthermore, it is essential for media to know that while creating content on this basic beat, lest it should miss the very concepts of people. In short, following is the objectives of this study:

1. Determination of popular sources of information (Book, TV, radio, print media, Digital, Social media).
2. To determine the role of media for political thinking.
3. If media is helpful to accept new narratives or change political views.
4. To determine the response of political workers to media through different ways.

Methodology:

Survey methodology refers to the systematic process of collecting data from a specific population or sample using a set of structured questions is applied here. The objective of survey methodology is to gather accurate and authentic information about a particular topic engaging the general population. In this study, quantitative approach has been applied by using questionnaire. In questionnaire, different responses were collected on feeding political information by different sources of media. Karachi based respondents were approached consisting of 50% male and 50 % female; they belong to different age groups and have qualifications.

Data Analysis

In this research, a sample of 100 male and female youths from Karachi, who is involved in politics in various ways, was taken. They were asked about the role and impact of media in relation to political information, and they expressed their positions in response to the questions. First question was about gender.

Table 1

Describe your Gender	
Male	50%
Female	50%

Respondents were equal in numbers with 50 male and 50 female.

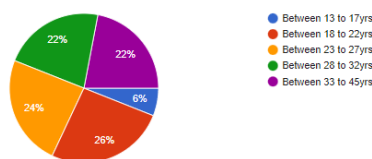
2. Second question was about respondent’s age:

Table 2

What is your current age?	
Between 13 to 17	6%
Between 18 to 22	26%
Between 23 to 27	24%
Between 28 to 32	22 %
Between 33 to 45	22%

Out of 100 respondents, 6% were between 13 years and 17 years, 26% of the respondents were between 18 and 22 years, which was the highest number of respondents. Furthermore, 24% of the respondents were between 23 and 27 years, 22% were between 28 and 32 years, and 22% were between 33 and 45 years.

Age

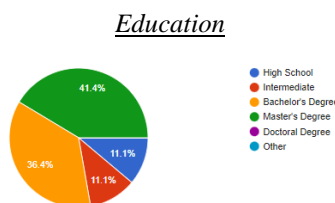


3. respondents were asked about their education.

Table: 3

Specify your education	
High School	11.1%
Intermediate	11.1%
Bachelors Degree	36.4%
Masters Degree	41.4%
Others	-

Out of 100 respondents 41.4 % had Masters Degree, 36.4% had bachelor degree, 11.1 % were intermediate and High School pass outs respectively.



Most of them were highly educated but a few were intermediate; although, a number of very young respondents who replied were in high school, as they are in school level but involved in political gatherings.

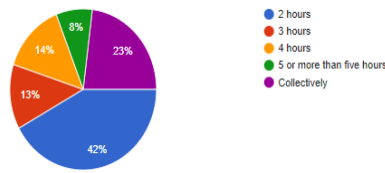
4. Question 4 was about the engagement duration of respondents.

Table 4

How much time do you spend watching or reading for information or political awareness?	
2 hours	42%
3 hours	13%
4 hours	14%
5 hours	8%
collectively	23%

According to the research, when asked about their information gathering habits regarding politics, the respondents provided the following insights: Out of the total respondents, 42% stated that they spend 2 hours daily utilizing various media sources for political information. Additionally, 23% mentioned that they do not frequently rely on media sources, including books, for political information. Furthermore, 4% of the respondents reported spending 4 hours daily, while 13% stated they spend 3 hours daily for this purpose. Interestingly, 8% of the respondents claimed to dedicate 5 hours or more per day to activities such as watching television, reading newspapers or books, and utilizing other sources for obtaining political information.

Time spending



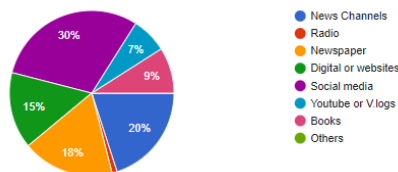
5. Question 5 was about popular medium.

Table 5

Which media sources do you trust the most for your information?	
Social media	30%
News Channels	20%
Newspaper	18%
Digital or Website	15%
Books	9%
Youtube of Vlogs	7%
Radio	1%
others	-

A significant portion of the respondents in the research indicated their reliance on different sources for political affairs and news. Out of the total respondents, 30% mentioned that they depend on social media for their political information. Additionally, 20% of the respondents stated that news channels serve as their primary source, while 18% still rely on newspapers. Digital media, although slightly behind television and newspapers, also play a significant role, with 15% of the respondents obtaining political updates from websites or other online platforms. Interestingly, 9% of the population reported to have been reading books to strengthen their political understanding. The popularity of you-tube and Vlogs is also increasing in Pakistan, but it is still not as prominent as other sources, as only 7% of the respondents mentioned relying on this medium. Additionally, 1% of the respondents stated that they also listen to the radio for political information.

Popular medium



These findings highlight the diverse range of sources that, individuals in the research sample, used to stay informed about political affairs.

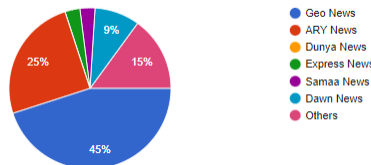
6. Popularity of news channels was also an important question.

Table 6

Which television news channels do you watch most often?	
Geo News	45%
Ary News	25%
Dawn News	9%
Express News	3%
Saama News	3%
Dunya News	0%
Others	15%

Among the respondents, Geo News emerged as the most popular channel in the electronic media segment for political affairs and news, with 45% of the respondents stating that they watch Geo News. Following closely behind, 25% of the respondents mentioned watching ARY News for political updates. In addition, 9% of the respondents reported watching Dawn News, while 3% indicated that they watch Express News and Saama News, respectively, for political information.

Popular News Channels



These statistics provide insights into the viewership preferences of the respondents regarding different news channels for political affairs and news in the electronic media segment.

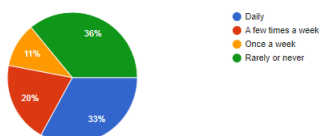
7. Newspaper is still one of the strong sources of news for respondents and asked about their reading habits.

Table 7

How often do you read newspapers (print or online)?	
Daily	33%
A few times in a week	20%
Once a week	11%
Rarely or never	36%

During the survey, respondents were asked about their newspaper reading habits, whether in print or online format. The results revealed that a significant proportion, 36% of the respondents, stated that they rarely or do not read newspapers. This indicates a substantial number of individuals who are disassociating themselves from newspaper consumption. On the other hand, 33% of the respondents mentioned that they read newspapers on a daily basis. Additionally, 20% were reported to have been reading newspapers a few times a week, while 11% stated that they read newspapers once a week.

Newspaper reading habit



These findings shed light on the varying newspaper reading habits among the respondents, with a considerable percentage opting not to engage with newspapers, while others maintain regular or occasional readership.

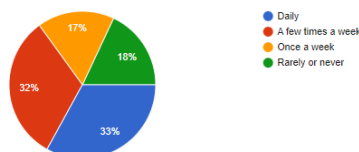
8. Another question was about book reading habits.

Table 8

How often do you read Books?	
Daily	33%
A few times a week	32%
Once a week	17%
Rarely or neve	18%

Out of the 100 respondents, 33% stated that they read books daily, while 32% mentioned reading books a few times a week. Additionally, 17% reported reading books once a week and 18% admitted to rarely or not reading books at all. It is worth noting that a cursory look-over of a book can also be considered beneficial, but it is particularly satisfying to observe that 33% of the respondents read books on a daily basis.

Book reading habit



It is important to consider that the majority of the respondents hold Master's and Bachelor's degrees, yet only 33% of them engage in regular book reading. While this figure may appear relatively low, it is crucial to acknowledge that not all respondents are included in this percentage. Overall, promoting the habit of reading books among young political workers in Karachi can be beneficial in fostering knowledge, critical thinking and broadening perspectives. Encouraging regular book reading through various initiatives and highlighting its advantages could be valuable additions to their personal and professional growth.

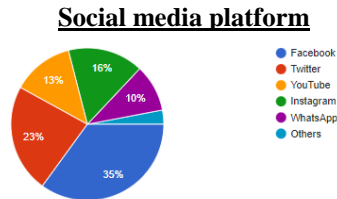
9. Social media is common source of communication and different websites are popular among people, for question was asked which platform is suitable for news.

Table 9

Which social media platforms do you use most often for news and information? Please select all that apply.	
Facebook	35%
Twitter	23%
Instagram	16%
Youtube	13%
Whatsapp	10%
Othera	3%

When the respondents were asked about their preferred social media platforms for news consumption, considering that social media was identified as their major source of news, they provided the following

responses that 35% of the respondents mentioned using Facebook as their primary social media platform for news. 23% of the respondents reported using Twitter for news consumption. 16% of the respondents stated that they rely on Instagram for news diet. 13% of the respondents said you-tube as their preferred platform for news. 10% of the respondents mentioned using WhatsApp for news content. Remaining 2% of the respondents stated that they follow other social media platforms for their news needs.



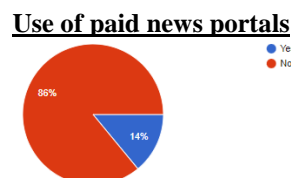
It is worth noting that while social media, including platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, you-tube, and WhatsApp, are popular sources of news among the respondents, it is important to encourage critical evaluation and fact-checking of information obtained through these platforms. Additionally, considering the influence of social media in shaping public opinion, promoting media literacy and responsible sharing of news can be valuable additions for young political workers in Karachi.

10. A question was asked about paid news portals.

Table 10

Do you have ever subscribed any paid news web portal?	
Yes	86%
No	14%

Web portals or websites often encounter financial challenges. In response to these issues, paid portals have emerged as an alternative on the internet. However, the results of this survey indicate that 86% of the respondents do not pay for access to these paid web portals, while only 14% of the respondents stated that they utilize paid web portals.



This finding suggests that a significant majority of respondents are not willing to invest in paid web portal subscriptions. It highlights the need for web portals to explore alternative revenue models or seek sustainable funding sources to ensure the continued availability of reliable and quality content. Furthermore, it may be beneficial for web portals to explore strategies such as offering value-added services or developing partnerships with relevant stakeholders to diversify their income streams. Additionally, considering the preferences of the respondents, it could be valuable to assess the specific reasons behind their choice to not pay for web portal access, potentially providing insights for web portals to improve their offerings and address user concerns.

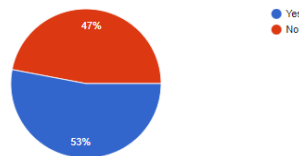
11. Through media audience change their views also for determine that question was asked.

Table 11

Have you ever changed your political views after watching news channels and read news or books?	
Yes	53%
No	47%

One of the basic functions of media is to educate the people, and to achieve this, it is crucial to create useful content that may resonate well with viewers or readers. In this survey, respondents were asked if their opinions have been influenced or changed by the media content. The results showed that 53% of the respondents responded affirmatively, stating that they have accepted or been influenced by the views presented in the media and changed opinion. On the other hand 47% of the respondents said that they have never changed their political opinions through media exposure.

Changed views



These findings indicate that the content produced by the media holds significance and has an impact on individuals. It suggests that media has the potential to shape and influence public opinion. However, it is essential to note that a considerable portion of respondents remains steadfast in their political opinions, indicating the diverse range of factors that shape individual beliefs and values. Understanding the factors that contribute to the acceptance or rejection of media views can provide valuable insights for media organizations to create more impactful and informative content that caters to the needs and perspectives of their audiences.

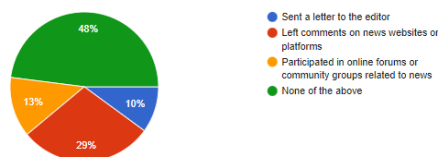
12. Last question was about the feedback.

Table 12

Have you ever provided feedback on news articles or stories or books through any of the following source?	
Left comments on news websites or platforms	29%
Participated in online forums or community groups related to news	13%
Sent a letter to editor	10%
None of the above	48%

The final question of the survey asked respondents if they had ever expressed their opinions in response to media content, such as through letters to the editor or online platforms. 48% of the respondents stated that they have never shown their opinions in any form. 29% of the respondents mentioned leaving comments on news websites or social media platforms to express their views. 13% of the respondents reported participating in online forums or community groups specifically related to news topics. 10% of the respondents stated that they have sent a letter to the editor to express their own views.

Feedback



These findings reflect the varied levels of engagement and participation among the respondents when it comes to reacting to media content. It suggests that a significant portion of individuals remains passive consumers of news and does not actively express their opinions. Encouraging more individuals to engage in constructive dialogue, whether through online platforms or traditional means like letters to the editor, can foster a more inclusive and participatory media environment. Media organizations can explore ways to facilitate and encourage audience feedback and interaction to create a more vibrant and interactive media landscape.

Conclusion and suggestion:

This survey highlights the significant role that media plays in shaping political narratives and influencing people to think differently, breaking away from the traditional expressions. It emphasizes the substantial responsibility that media carries in creating content, considering that people are actively following and absorbing the information provided. The findings indicate that media has the power to shape public opinion and influence individuals' perspectives on political matters. It underscores the need for media organizations to be conscious of this influence and approach their content creation with a sense of responsibility and accuracy. Moreover, the survey highlights the importance of media in nurturing critical thinking among the audience. By presenting diverse viewpoints and encouraging open discourse, media can contribute to a more informed and engaged citizens.

It is crucial for media outlets to recognize their significant role in shaping political discourse and to continuously strive for balanced, accurate, and responsible reporting. By doing so, they can contribute to the healthy functioning of a democratic society and foster an informed and participatory political worker.

This study suggests that social media plays a significant role on political thinking. The majority of respondents identified social media as their primary source of news, indicating the importance of platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for accessing political information. Respondents mentioned a range of sources for political information, including news channels, newspapers, digital media and books. This suggests that individuals utilize various mediums to stay informed.

Electronic media is also a basic source for political workers. Among the news channels, Geo News has emerged as the most popular choice for political news, followed by ARY News and Dawn News. This highlights the channel preferences among respondents.

Political workers don't think that book reading is a basic source for them to develop strong views. While a significant portion of respondents hold Bachelor's and Master's degrees, only a relatively small percentage reported reading books on a regular basis. This indicates the need to promote book reading among young political workers to enhance their knowledge and critical thinking abilities.

According to this survey Facebook was the most commonly used social media platform for news consumption, followed by Twitter, Instagram, you-tube and WhatsApp. This highlights the varying preferences of respondents when it comes to accessing to news or political development through different platforms.

This research paper sheds light on the media consumption patterns of young political workers and emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of their media preferences and the potential implications for political discourse and engagement. By addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by their media consumption habits, stakeholders can work towards a more informed and inclusive political environment.

Feedback from viewers isn't satisfactory. A significant percentage of respondents indicated that they had not expressed their opinions or remained unengaged in media feedback channels. This suggests that there is room to encourage greater participation and active engagement among the audience.

This study recommends and the data underscores the need for media organizations to adapt their strategies to cater to the preferences of young political workers. This includes utilizing social media platforms effectively, promoting book reading, encouraging active audience participation, and creating diverse and engaging content across multiple mediums. It is recommended that an easy criteria need to be developed for feedback that audience can express their views and reaction easily as they are doing in social media accounts.

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