

New Media, New studies and innovative research tools

Dr. SID Adel*

Media Studies and Digital Media Lab, Oum Elbouaghi University (Algeria),
Adelinfo@hotmail.com

Dr. RAHMOUNI Loubna

Media Studies and Digital Media Lab, Oum Elbouaghi University (Algeria)
Rahmouni.loubna@univ-ueb.dz

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Abstract:

This article is part of a range of critical analytical articles and aims to monitor the new reality of media research in Algerian universities through an in-depth examination of a sample of such research, focusing on the following indicators: Subjects addressed, scientific theories and curricula, research tools used, as well as the most important samples adopted; To see whether these procedures (theory and methodology) are in keeping with various research developments.

To achieve this goal, a systematic approach has been used, combining theoretical readings with critical analysis of the studies. The main findings of the study include: The new focus of media research on topics relating to the roles and uses of the new media, the dominance of classical scientific theories over the research in question, the most notable being the theory of uses and revelations, the reliance of new media research on quantitative approaches and their classical tools, as well as most of them on the intentional sample, despite the homogeneity of their research samples.

key words: Media studies; New media studies; theories; samples; methods; innovative tools.

* Corresponding Author

Introduction

The rapid and continuous development of the new media and its technologies has brought to the attention of most researchers, in various fields and sciences, in particular information and communication sciences, the study and research of the uses and implications of this new information technology for the lives of individuals and its effects on the sociological and cultural structure of our societies, which has created many challenges and unprecedented problems in scientific research in general and in the media in particular.

In the light of these fundamental changes and changes imposed by the new media environment, this study examines the status of new media research at the University of Algeria, in order to determine whether it has followed these developments by monitoring their realities by focusing on the various theoretical and methodological procedures used to study new media phenomena.

The problem of this study stems from the findings of several scientific studies that have attempted to assess and evaluate new information research. They have recognized that there have been fundamental changes in the theoretical and methodological procedures used to study the new media environment.

These changes have been necessitated by the various difficulties and challenges that most scholars have experienced in this environment. We will therefore try to examine the new reality of media research at the Algerian University, through the following main questions:

What are the most important challenges and tools of new media studies in Algeria?

2. *Theoretical background:* This article was based on a number of concepts:

2.1 Scientific research

Scientific research is defined as fact-finding, question-answering, and problem-solving. It is a targeted and structured survey, which seeks clarification or interpretation of an unclear phenomenon, and aims to investigate or examine carefully, to discover new information or relationships, to grow or verify current knowledge.

In its definition of scientific research, Moneer Al-Azeer emphasizes the various objectives and characteristics mentioned earlier, and adds other objectives that I saw as serving the subject of my study: Scientific research is the systematic understanding aimed

at discovering new facts or clarifying and examining old ones, analysing the relationships between them and their causes, and developing new tools, concepts and theories that facilitate the study of human behaviour.

From the above, we conclude that scientific research is an organized process aimed at clarifying and interpreting an unclear phenomenon, discovering new facts or other old ones, and thus developing new theories, which contribute to the growth of current knowledge.

2.2 New Media concepts

Lester defined it as the set of communication technologies generated by the intermingling of computers with traditional media, printing, photography, audio and video, and the new term media refers to the new set of digital methods and activities, which enable us to produce, disseminate, and consume media content in its various forms through electronic (intermediate), Internet-related and non-Internet devices.

It's that information that was born in the information age, and exactly in the last decade of the 20th century that resulted from the integration of communication and information technology, that gave us a range of technologies, models, and services that enable us to have information content in its interactive digital form at any time, anywhere.

2.3 New Media Research :

It is a collection of scientific studies and research on new media linked to the Internet, with all its tools, blogs, social networks, photo sites, videos, and electronic journalism.

In his study, Mr. Bakhet also identified it as one of the research that was designed to study the various new media patterns and forms introduced by the digital environment, such as social media, electronic journalism, citizen media and others, while studying the impact of these patterns on traditional media.

3. New Media Research, Social media Research

3.1 Historical background

The development of the history of information research has gone through several stages:

Phase one: Attention was paid to the same method by answering the following questions: What are you? How do you arrive? What services and functions do you do? How much does it cost? And how are they similar or different?

It should be noted that researchers at this stage viewed the masses negatively, but changed by the early 1940s, after drawing their attention to the existence of other factors that they called extraneous, as well as the influence of the media, showing other models of social factors that mediate the influences of the media.(Taha Abdulali Najm, 2015, p18).

Phase two: Researchers focused on how to use the method, accumulating at this stage specific information on the motivation of the public to use the method and the revelations achieved by answering the following questions:

How is the medium used in actual life?

What are the reasons why the public used the means?

What rumors does the medium offer to the public?

Phase three: The information media impact monitoring phase, summarized by the researcher Loubna Rahmouni in three main aspects of the impact of the use of the medium on the recipient:(Loubna Rahmouni, 2018 ; p119)

- **Knowledge aspects:** These relate to individuals' knowledge and views on different issues.
- **Emotional aspects:** And it's the ones that specialize people's trends and tendencies towards different things.
- **Behavioral aspects:** During the 1960s the lobbyist spread and there became a need to balance their interests, monitoring the impact of the media on certain segments of the public.

Phase 4: Studies at this stage have focused on the possibility of improving the performance of both its use and its technological development.

For the past few years Media studies have evolved considerably at various levels, as a result of the steady developments in information and communication technology that have taken place in the world since the early 1990s, and the ever-increasing spread and use of these technologies, which have made possible many new phenomena and issues

that humans have never known before, such as virtual spaces, multimedia, hypertext, citizen journalism, the participating public.

On the new classification of media research, Lefroy and his colleagues assert that such research cannot be included in the mainstream of information and communication research, but must have a special classification within it because it contains a variety of uses and applications.(Taha Abdulali Najm, 2015, p19)

In the same vein, the study of Roger Wimmer and Joseph Dominic completed in 2000, which was based on one model that attempts to provide a broad and comprehensive explanation of the evolution of the Internet-related scientific and media research agenda, concluded that research in this area has evolved through four different phases:

- Relying on other sciences, such as theories of knowledge, psychology, political science, as well as economics, sociology, culture and technology.
- In recent years, microscopic research has been based on the application of traditional communication theories, and researchers have developed new theories for new media, including Network Theory, Action Network Theory and others.(Rahmouni, 2018, p121)

3.2 . Research Areas in new media :

The review of the studies on research methods in different sciences indicates that there are several different classifications of research types, and that this difference is due to the fact that each classification is governed by a different variable(Hussein, 2016,p 120) from the variables governing other classifications.

• **Communicator's Research in New Media Studies:** In view of the developments brought about by technology in the new field of information, it has become incumbent upon the media researcher to study the communicator, who has lost his basic advantage between himself and the recipient. He is no longer the only one who can produce and manufacture the information material. Therefore, researchers in this type of study have focused on the communicators of social networks, in particular blogs and citizen Journalism (Abdulaziz , 2012).

• **New Media Audience Research:** In the new media, the recipient became the master of the situation, and an actor in the midst of a global medium, the Internet, which gave him enormous potential, making it a new area worthy of research and study.

Media researchers have therefore been keen to know the extent to which the public has been exposed to and uses of online information materials, such as the subject of exposure to electronic newspapers or websites, and also the uses and rumors that focus on the variables concerning the characteristics and trends of the public, etc., which have attracted the interest of media researchers at the beginning of the spread of the network(Alhazen,2010,p 191) . However, the development of new media and its technologies, as well as the development of its uses, have made possible new phenomena.The researcher also adds that public studies help to discover microscopic strategies on which the contact person can rely to ensure that the goals of his or her messages are achieved.

- **Information production's research in new media studies:**

Researchers in this kind of research have been interested in studying the process of producing and designing newspapers and websites through the monitoring, analysis and evaluation of electronic building blocks, such as diverse media, interactive texts and links (hypertext)...

In this context, some new theories have been developed, including the usability theory that emerged in 1993 by Jacob Nielsen and others, who have revolutionized the design of websites and the presentation of information and services, considering the extent to which a particular website can be used, by specific users, to achieve specific goals efficiently, effectively and favourably in a given context of use.

- **New Media Impact's Research:** Researchers were interested in studying the effects of new media that were characterized by diversity, interactive and other features that they were curious to try to determine their impact on the degree to which users received the information material provided through the Internet.

In the same context, other research has focused on different topics such as the influence of new media applications on traditional media(Azza Abdulaziz, 2012) :

- ***Social media research***

What makes the study of social media relevant to many disciplines is the availability of vast amounts of varied data. Social media produces what has been referred to as big data and is characterized by high velocity, large volume, diverse variety, exhaustivity in scope, fine-grained resolution, relational in nature, and flexibility in its approach. This creates new challenges for scholars, while also presenting great opportunity this has given rise to

several questions. The social media research has prompted questions that force researchers to look inward to grapple with its inherent challenges.

- ***Methodological questions:***

Novel methodological questions emerge from the collection, analysis, and visualization of social media data. Some of these questions are platform-specific while others are applicable to all kinds of social media. To some extent social media allows easy convenient access to large quantities of data, on the other hand, it can be costly or even impos sible to obtain a specific data set. Melissa Terras (2012) for instance lamented on a blog post entitled 'What Price a Hashtag? The cost of #digi talhumanities', how it would cost her around US\$25,000 to purchase from Gnip the historical set containing the hashtag #digitalhumanities. In other words, data is readily available if scholars can pay the price.(Sloan , Haase, 2017, 20- 21)

- ***Ethical questions:***

Data collection, aggregation, and reporting of social media data has raised numerous ethical questions relating to issues such as personal privacy, accuracy, and account ability with which researchers and practition ers are only beginning to grapple. While social media data is often publicly available, there are still many ethical considerations that should give researchers reason to pause. Consent is often at the center of debates, as not all users. of social media sites are comfortable with (or aware of) the use of their data for analysis. Ethical considerations do not exclusively apply to scraping big data, but are also of relevance in small-scale studies relying on few cases. As Quan-Haase and McCay-Peet argue this 'may actually be an even greater concern for small-scale qualitative research ers, where it is easier to identify single users . Hence, scholars need to address a wide range of research ques tions around data stewardship and what ethical guidelines need to be set up to both help scholars gain new insights, while protecting the right of users to data privacy. These kinds of discussions become increasingly relevant with new legisla tion being introduced in various countries. For example, the European Union has passed a new law that allows individuals to better control per sonal data on the web, which has been discussed under the right to be forgotten. Unfolding legal challenges open up new research questions for scholars relating to the biases of the data col lected for analysis as well as the legality of stor ing data that users may want deleted.

- *Questions of scale:*

Scale is one of the greatest challenges to be overcome by social media scholars. Social media data allow for the examination of a different phenomenon or issue from different angles. A study can rely on either large data sets that aggregate terabytes of information or, through small-scale studies, examine the local behaviour of a few users. While both approaches are relevant and valid, they provide qualitatively different insights into a single phenomenon. So, how do we integrate findings from such disparate means of gaining knowledge? New theoretical and methodological assumptions are needed to link and integrate distinct data sets and findings. (Sloan , Haase, 2017, 20- 21)

In this context we argue that Incorporating new media into research may create specific value for each community. For the research community the consideration of using new approaches in research design may increase the relevancy of the research outputs in relation to the contemporary world of consumption. For the teaching community, the maintenance of currency in research methods teaching through outlining the applications of new media may add credibility to the subject. For institutions and research bodies value can be created through the extended reach of research projects. Marketing practitioners will be seen to be responding to commercial requirements for 'fast' research through the appropriate use of new media in the research design and thus create value for their clients. The greater use of new media in research may assist in improving goods and services for consumers and may, importantly, empower citizens to have a voice and contribute to providing insight into societal issues. Can the academic community afford not to, at least, consider further adoption of new media in research? New media may afford enhanced relevancy to research outputs and may, in certain cases, strengthen the rigor of those outputs. By adopting new media, where appropriate, in academic research the gap identified in this paper would be diminished. The originality of this paper lies in the consideration of how to integrate new media with the new digital research reality within which we, as academics, exist. How and to what extent should research practices reflect the digital world is a question worthy of further research. The embedding of new media in research provides challenges but also considerable opportunities for academic practice and research methods subject advancement (Quinton, 2014, 307).

3.2 New media studies in Algeria

To monitor the new reality of media research in Algeria, a number of Algerian studies have been examined in the same area, with a view to evaluating them, criticizing them and attempting to critically evaluate and analyse them. In fact, this research does not

differ in practice, theory and approach from the research itself in the Arab world in general, which is characterized by:

The dominance of a functional perspective based on statistics, monitoring and characterization in most new media research, which Mr. Bakhet described as the typical method of addressing some of the research problems without trying to further analyse them and probe them, thus making them superficial research, inhabited by sketchy conclusions that offer no addition to science.

Researcher Maha Abdul Majid asserts that most researchers in the study of the field in question have used the same methods, research tools and theoretical entry points that they used to use in the study of traditional media, despite the deep differences between them and the phenomena produced by the new media environment (Maha Abdul Majid, ‘ 2015) .

In the view of Mr. Bakhet (Bakhit, 2015), addressing the various phenomena generated by the new media has taken several different research paths, such as:

The first track recognizes the validity of classical research methods in addressing new media as an evolution and progress of traditional media.

The second track, which attempted to develop the same old procedures for volunteering and matching this new and different entity.

The third track seeks to discover new theoretical perspectives that help to explain new media phenomena and to develop research and methodological tools suited to the phenomena in question.

Despite the existence of such research currents in the new field of information, Mr. Bakhit's study confirms the dominance of the traditional research mainstream in research, systematic and educational, the same conclusion as that of researcher Cheria Ahmed Al-Badawi, considering that the Internet and its consequences are an extension of, rather than a substitute for, traditional methods.

4. Methodological challenges in new media studies in Algeria

Accelerated technological development has led to dramatic changes in the quality and quality of scientific media research, and has contributed to the participation of a large number of media researchers in the study of a range of topics related to these new media

technologies, which they have encountered in their study many of the problems of research and methodology.

4.1 Challenges in studying new media content and audiences

- The challenge of analytical samples, where Rahmouni's structures confirm that the Internet often does not provide accurate data on the groups, blogs and spaces through which users interact, forcing the content analysis researcher to select intentional samples according to his or her indicators that may be subjective. This is problematic for researchers either when identifying sample units, when wanting to apply honesty and persistence tests, or re-analyzing previously analyzed content (Rahmouni, 2018, 126).

- The challenges of dealing with a vast amount of available data that is difficult to study with traditional manual techniques is that it is not a single track, it appears not in a single format, but in a number of formats and paths, which calls for the use of automated analytical programmes, which Maha Abdul Majid considered to be one of the problems of new media research, since automated encoding and electronic software are used to analyse content posted on the Web (Bakhit, 2015 ☺) ; It ignores the different cultural and social contexts through which content is produced, circulated and interacted, often leading to misleading results when applied (challenging the knowledge of messages ideologies and trends).

- The credibility challenge in new media content studies that can result from inaccurate data on certain aspects of the use of websites or social media; Similarly, the number of fans on a Facebook page does not necessarily mean that they are constantly frequenting and interacting with it, especially when there have been commercial and promotional aspects that make it possible to buy followers for online accounts on those sites (Maha Abdul Majid, 2015 ☺).

- The challenge of scientific credibility and credibility is one of the most solid scientific foundations for carrying out sound and scientifically acceptable research. In new media studies, many questions are raised about the credibility and authenticity of the data published across different media. In this regard, Claire Hewetsen and her colleagues point out that the Internet has always been seen as a tool for research before it was a subject, since it has made it easier for researchers to access a large number of researchers, such as inaccessible (Hemicic, 2014, p 74). That was confirmed by Rahmouni (Rahmouni,2018, p126) : The media researcher finds himself confronted with the fundamental problem of the validity of the data he deals with in a virtual world that is still beset by many problems such as research thefts and cybercrime.

In the same vein, Maha Abdul Majid adds that sometimes published opinions and ideas are not an accurate indication of real reality, as some user interactions and literature do not reflect their behavior on the ground. It is normal for an individual (researcher) to feel that his comments and interactions are being monitored.(Abdul Majid, 2015)

- The challenge of identifying the search community and identifying the sample: It's a difficulty - or an impossibility. - To identify and define a general framework for the Internet user community in general, whereby researchers resort to continuous follow-up procedures and then identify and withdraw the sample. Around this point, Claire Hewson and her colleagues confirm that the majority of the observations used in Internet research are inconsistent and biased, because researchers use the choice of intentional and optional samples, which are originally a deviation from the rules of traditional social research, where they often imagine that (Hemici, 2014, p 74)

In the same vein, Mr. Bakhet adds that there are many challenges to the selection of samples appropriate to the nature of the research, the most important of which is the fear of being accused of hacking into the privacy of the researchers, and of violating the ethics of scientific research through access to the pages and materials of users of the new media, who may not understand or agree to employ what they have published as research material (Bakhit, 2015).

4.2 Challenges in terms of research methods used in new media research:

They are the result of the aforementioned problems; The result is mainly from different new media technologies that have created a new media environment that is completely different from its traditional counterparts.

- The difficulty of keeping pace with the constant evolution of the types, uses, features and components of new media that make theories not consistent with this evolution. Changing the nature and characteristics of the media phenomenon that is being studied, and the different realities that produce it, so that different factors overlap in its composition and it is difficult to account for or disseminate it (Bakhit, 2015).

- The challenge of identifying the most appropriate theoretical and methodological entry points that can be adopted in the study of new media phenomena is to highlight several questions, including (Abdul Barry, 2018 ‘):

- Do new media research need theoretical, methodological, and procedural knowledge creation?

- Are traditional scientific procedures still valid for the study of new media? The lack of agreement on whether the various research jurisprudence that has developed some new theories, methods and tools are valid and effective, can be relied upon as scientific procedures in the study of the new media. The entry points and new research theories are seen as an attempt to feed media studies into what is new knowledge, but they cannot be said to be accepted and adopted in general and in real terms (Abdul Barry, ‘ 18 ‘2012), which has led every researcher to study new media subjects and phenomena‘

- The use of quantitative approach to the study of new media phenomena and, in turn, the reluctance to use qualitative methods and tools have given rise to obvious problems in the ability of scientific research to provide new knowledge to explain the phenomenon, as confirmed by the researcher Beni Rahmouni, who has shown in an article that developments made available by the new media and media have introduced new research topics centred on the representation, consumption and use of this medium, thereby enhancing the status of qualitative research in Western countries that it enables the researcher to understand the details associated with the context of the phenomenon and its interactions, which we do not find in most Arab States (Rahmouni, 2018 ? p 126)

Which, according to Nacer eddine al Ayyadi (Alayadi, 2018 ‘), has made it an exploratory descriptive study that lacks an increase in my knowledge that explains these transformations so that as researchers or audiences, or as political or media decision makers, we can deal with this new structural entity.

The problem of relying on a single tool for research makes it inadequate. For example, the use of questionnaires has become electronic, thereby reducing the credibility of the results of the questionnaires. The use of content analysis also faces many difficulties related to the circumvention of the text itself, its changing paths, its ability and accurate measurement.

- This makes it problematic or challenging for a researcher to choose the most appropriate research methods and tools, whether quantitative, how or both, to complete his study, how to derive new research tools based on understanding the technical and technological vocabulary of these new tools, how to analyse them technically, technologically and qualitatively, and to draw their conclusions in a way that all concerned can understand, given the difficulty of using traditional research methods and procedural tools to study new media and their audiences. Like the shift that touched the audience that got active versus the negative audience.

- It is problematic to adopt the same methods of thinking in preview units, and to draw random samples when studying any existing web application or website, ignoring the characteristics of a search community that is quite different from a traditional media audience (Abdul Majid, 2015 ‘).

5. How to deal with methodological challenges of new media research:

- Identifying the problems that researchers face in studying new media phenomena is the first step to controlling them and finding solutions.

- Attention to the depth of the difference between the nature and characteristics of new media, how they operate and the public's use of them from traditional media, thus treating new media as a separate entity.

- This brings us to reflect on the change in the theoretical and systematic handling of the new media and its phenomena.

- Around this change, we recall some scientific insights and suggestions that can be relied upon to achieve research objectives when studying this new environment:

- To rely on scientific procedures adapted to the nature of the new media and able to deal with its topics, through the re-production of various existing references (theoretical, methodological and procedural systems) in order to adapt them to new developments in the media, as well as to seek to formulate and innovate new ones.

- Moving towards scientific research that tests the effectiveness and credibility of theoretical, methodological and even procedural frameworks, whether traditional or updated, for each given period of time, to ascertain the validity of the researcher scientific references on which his research was based, on the one hand, and on the other, to refute hasty visions that recognize the death and futility of classical theoretical scientific heritage.

- Opening up to other sciences in a study of new media phenomena is one way out of the systemic problems of new media research, an idea encouraged by many researchers, including Abdullah El Haidari, who argued for the need to change the course of descriptive media research deeper and more precisely, which, according to the researcher, requires an open mind over the different knowledge fields, in what he calls the basis for a regressive approach that allows for the consolidation of information (Alhaydari, 2009 ‘).

- Attempting to make use of electronic programs that are now classified as analytical tool methods, the researcher is able to research, measure, and analyze

se web content that is complex in nature beginning with its production process, receiving and interacting with it.

- This proposal makes it necessary for the researcher to be able to make use of new information technologies. This skill allows him to carry out richer and deeper studies by using the various software and information rules mentioned earlier.

- The trend towards a combination of theories, curricula and tools in the context of a single study, under the framework of complementarity, because most of the phenomena presented by the new media are comprehensive and not specific, according to Mr. Bakhit (Bakhit, 2015 ‘).

- This has led many researchers to encourage collective action to study this new entity.

- While some researchers are incited to abandon quantitative methods and tools, and in return to encourage the use of her qualitative counterpart, Maha Abdul Majid, in a study I referred to earlier, calls on her to rely on what she called a dual model, whose idea is to use qualitative and quantitative methods in a balanced and integrated manner.

- Digital methodologies. As an increasing number of activities involve using technology, more ‘digital traces’ are created. These may include, for example, email trails, forum discussions, interactions on social media, hyperlinks between different sites and geo-location data. Researchers can collect and analyse such data, potentially making wider behaviours and processes relevant to education more visible than was possible previously. In related disciplines, such as Sociology, there has been much discussion of how these new approaches may change the shape and nature of the field (e.g., Savage and Burrows 2007) yet in Education, these questions (and the use of such data) have been largely left to learning scientists from the learning analytics and educational data mining communities, who have used data trails created in MOOCs for example, to try to develop primarily psychological insights about learning. This is a missed opportunity, as analysis of large scale digital trace data (e.g., via social network analysis, analysis of click-stream data, visualisation) could be used to help address an array of critical ed tech questions. For example, mapping networks of actors, analysing discourse across different digital ed tech communities, and capturing inequalities in the use of technology by individuals and by educational institutions (Williamson, Potter & Eynon, 2019, 87-91)

6. CONCLUSION

Recent technological developments have given us a new media entity, completely different from the previous one, called the New Media. This great difference, which

characterized the new media environment from its traditional counterpart, caused researchers to encounter many difficulties and problems in studying its phenomena, especially when they came to use the same methods, and the classic theoretical entrances, to which they were accustomed. In the absence of theoretical and methodological frameworks, explained and appropriate, for this new phenomenon, characterized by its dynamic specificity, the various classical research procedures and the development of new ones must be adapted to keep pace with the developments of this new and increasingly important entity.

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