



MODERNIZING MEDIA EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

A Mapping Study of University and College-Level Journalism
and Communication Studies Programs and Departments -
Challenges and Solutions



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Dr Shafiq Ahmad Kamboh and Adnan Rehmat



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a landmark study aimed at developing a digital database and conducting a comprehensive mapping of journalism, media, and communication studies departments affiliated with/situated in public and private universities/colleges in Pakistan and their academic programs. Supported by the International Media Support, one of the key global leaders in media development, the study provides evidence-based insights into the current state of media education, focusing on sectoral distribution, growth trends, academic programs, enrollment statistics, faculty research output, infrastructure overview, industry linkages and capacity challenges and constraints.

A total of 100 verified departments/faculties were identified based on stringent inclusion criteria—spanning all seven administrative units of Pakistan— and offering at least a BS (Hons) or MS program in the relevant field. Primary data were collected through a mixed-methods approach, utilizing Google Forms¹, WhatsApp outreach, and telephonic follow-ups, resulting in 92 valid responses. Key findings that offer a mid-2025 snapshot reference, include:

- **Institutional Distribution:** 68% of departments are located in the public sector, while 32% operate under private institutions. Punjab leads with the highest concentration of departments (54%).
- **Growth Trajectory:** A significant expansion occurred after the year 2000, particularly between 2006–2025, with 77% of all departments established in this period—closely linked to policies and trends related to media liberalization and digital growth.
- **Academic Offerings:** All departments offer BS (Hons) programs; over half provide MPhil/MS degrees, and 29% offer PhD programs. Specializations like *PR & Advertising*, *Digital Media*, *Journalism*, and *Electronic Media* dominate the curricular landscape.
- **Digital Presence & Accreditation:** 93% of departments have a website (though often limited in depth and interactivity), and 100% have accreditation from federal *Higher Education Commission (HEC)* or Provincial *Higher Education Commission (PHEC)*.
- **Enrollment Trends:** With over 37,500 students enrolled, private sector departments show a higher average student intake per department than public institutions.
- **Curricular Innovation:** 54% of departments include courses on disinformation, fact-checking, or media literacy, indicating growing responsiveness to global media challenges.
- **Infrastructure & Resources:** While 57% have digital media labs and 54% operate student publications, only 16% run TV studios, and 9% lack all practical media facilities—highlighting uneven development.

¹ <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRPXwi92LB3loJZ8tKfbrmbbH41eGI-uOV-WwV2QrSHD5vkw/viewform>

- **Academic Publishing:** Only 16% of departments publish in-house journals, and a mere 12% offer public access to student/faculty research, pointing to underdeveloped research ecosystems.
- **Industry Linkages:** Just 41% of departments report formal partnerships with media houses, and only 14% with professional associations—suggesting a pressing need to bridge academia-industry gaps.
- **Internship Support:** Positively, 98% of departments actively facilitate internships, although their structure and quality require further examination.
- **Gender Inclusion:** 83% of departments offer co-education, with a prominent number of girls-only institutions reflecting positive strides in female media education.
- **Coalition Readiness:** 85% of departments expressed willingness to join the *Coalition Against Disinformation (CAD)*, an academia-centered independent alliance², underscoring a strong institutional interest in combating misinformation through academic collaboration.

The findings offer a rare and holistic snapshot of media education in Pakistan, highlighting both achievements and systemic gaps. The report concludes with strategic recommendations for stakeholders, including the need for curriculum modernization, investment in media infrastructure, enhanced research visibility, and stronger inter-academic/academic-industry collaborations.

These insights are critical for policymakers, education regulators, media support organizations, and international donors aiming to strengthen democratic communication ecosystems and build media resilience in Pakistan. With growing student interest in media professions and increasing demand for qualified graduates, there is an urgent need to bridge existing gaps and further professionalize media education throughout the country.

² <https://cadpk.com/>

SECTION A. RESEACRH METHODOLOGY

Study Sample and Method for Data Collection

This study, titled “*Modernizing Media Education in Pakistan*”, adopted a purposive sampling technique based on specific inclusion criteria. The primary aim was to identify and document relevant data on all active academic departments offering advanced-level programs in any field related to media and communication studies across higher education institutions in Pakistan.

a. Inclusion Criteria and Geographic Scope

The study included both public and private degree-awarding universities and colleges that:

- host a dedicated and operational department of journalism, media, mass communication, or communication studies;
- offer a minimum of a BS (Hons) 4-year undergraduate program or an MS program in the relevant field; and
- are located in any of the seven administrative units of Pakistan, i.e., *Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Baluchistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and the Federal Territory (Islamabad).*

b. Identification and Verification of Eligible Institutions

To verify the presence of functional departments meeting the above criteria, an initial mapping was conducted using publicly available information from institutional websites. Eventually, a set of 109 departments/faculties primarily offering BS (Hons) 4 years and other certificates to postgraduate programs was identified as the target population. However, due to inconsistencies and data gaps online, telephonic verification was employed as an alternative. This included both landline calls and WhatsApp communication with administrative representatives in Registrar/Admission/Reception Offices of the selected universities/colleges. The goal was to ascertain whether these departments/faculties:

- currently operate within their respective public or private sector universities/colleges,
- are currently running a BS (Hons) 4-year program or an MS program with an adequate number of enrolled students, and
- have identifiable heads of department (HoDs), faculty members, and active academic sessions.

Universities/colleges that listed programs online but failed to provide any verifiable evidence—such as contact details of HoDs/faculty members, number of enrolled students, details of ongoing student batches, name/location of the department, or operational history—were excluded from

the final sample. After this rigorous verification process, a total of 100 departments/faculties were confirmed to meet the inclusion criteria (See Annex 1 for a complete list).

c. Data Collection Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method online survey approach for primary data collection. A structured questionnaire comprising 55 items, including both closed-ended and open-ended questions, was developed and hosted on Google Forms (See Annex 2).

An email directory of HoDs from the identified 100 departments was compiled to distribute the questionnaire. To refine the instrument and identify potential gaps in data collection procedures, the form was initially piloted with 10 HoDs from selected institutions. However, the pilot highlighted a significant barrier—many email invitations were either ignored or redirected to spam folders, resulting in poor response rates. To address this limitation, a more personalized, direct outreach and multi-modal follow-up strategy was implemented:

- WhatsApp numbers of all HoDs were obtained,
- Audio calls, messages, and voice notes were sent explaining the purpose of the study,
- Where necessary, local data collectors were mobilized to visit select departments in person and build rapport,

Subsequently, the final Google Form link was shared directly via WhatsApp messages with the HoDs or other faculty members. This trust-building and targeted communication approach significantly improved participation.

d. Final Sample Size

Out of the 100 verified departments, 92 departments filled the full questionnaire (either the HoD or, in his/her non-availability, by another faculty member). The data was received on a response sheet at the receiver's end, offered by Google Forms. Eight departments either refused to participate or remained unresponsive despite multiple follow-up attempts. Therefore, except for Tables and Figure 1, 1.1 and 1.2, which reflect the consolidated information of all 100 departments, all subsequent analyses and data tables are based on the 92 validated responses received.

SECTION B: KEY FINDINGS

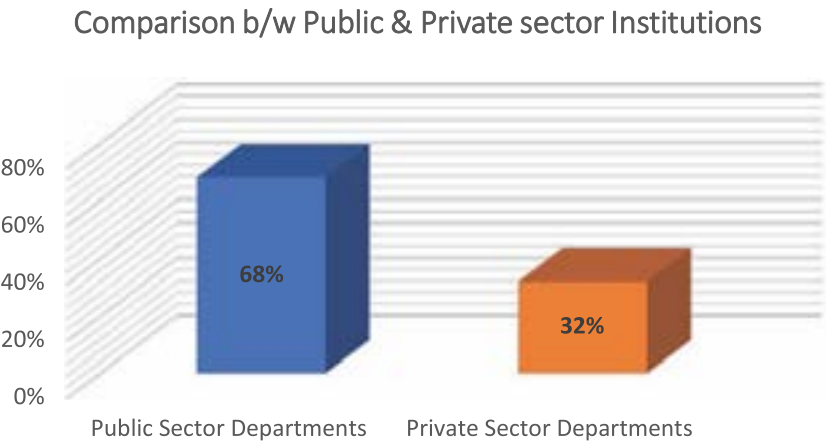
1. Institutional Distribution of Media Studies Departments by Sector (Public vs. Private)

This section presents data on the total number of universities and colleges (i.e., 100) across Pakistan that offer journalism, media, or communication studies at the BS (Hons) level, based on the verified inclusion criteria, not on the Google Form response sheet. While 92 departments submitted responses via the Google Form, eight eligible departments did not respond, though they were confirmed to be functional through phone verification and other means. Accordingly, Table & Fig. 1 reflects the complete picture of 100 verified departments, of which 68 are affiliated with and located in public sector universities, and 32 operate under private sector institutions.

Table 17: Comparison between Departments in Public and Private Universities/Colleges (N=100)

Status	Universities/Colleges
Public	68 (68%)
Private	32 (32%)
Total	100 (100%)

Figure 5: Comparison between Departments in Public and Private Universities/Colleges



1.1 Countrywide Distribution of Public and Private Universities/Colleges

Table and Fig. 1.1 highlight the countrywide distribution of journalism, media, and communication studies departments across all seven administrative units of Pakistan. The majority are affiliated with public sector universities and colleges in the *Punjab* region (38%), reflecting both the province’s population density and its extensive higher education infrastructure. The presence of 16 private sector departments in Punjab also reflects the

availability of journalism and digital media-related job opportunities, particularly in Lahore and Islamabad—the provincial and national capitals, respectively—where vibrant social, political, and media activities create a conducive environment for media education and employment.

Interestingly, *Sindh* exhibits a higher concentration of privately owned departments (10%) compared to the public sector (8%). During the data collection phase, it was learnt that all private institutions in *Sindh* are located in Karachi, reflecting the city’s corporate orientation and its role as a hub for media production and advertising industries.

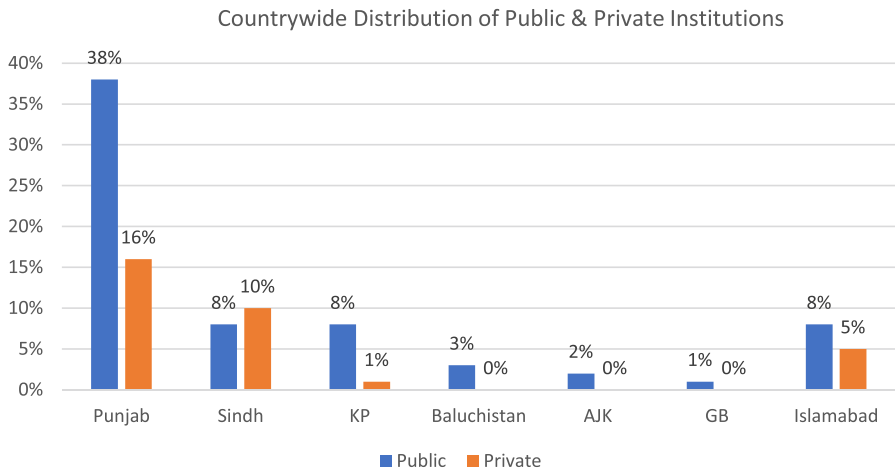
In contrast, no private sector departments were identified in *Baluchistan*, *Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK)*, or *Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)*. This absence may be attributed to the peripheral nature of these regions, their smaller populations, and the limited presence of media-related industries and associated job opportunities.

Departments in the public sector universities/colleges, however, maintain a presence in every administrative unit of the country, albeit with varying numbers. This indicates a broader institutional recognition of the importance of Journalism, Media, and Communication Studies and suggests growing demand from students across the provinces, even in less/least developed regions of the country.

Table 1.1: Countrywide Distribution of Public & Private Institutions (N=100)

No.	Administrative Units	Public	Private	Total
1	Punjab	38 (38%)	16 (16%)	54 (54%)
2	Sindh	8 (8%)	10 (10%)	18 (18%)
3	KP	8 (8%)	1 (1%)	9 (9%)
4	Baluchistan	3 (3%)	0 (0%)	3 (3%)
5	AJK	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
6	GB	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
7	Islamabad	8 (8%)	5 (5%)	13 (13%)
Total		68 (68%)	32 (32%)	100 (100%)

Figure 1.2: Countrywide Distribution of Public & Private Institutions



1.2 Distribution of Departments between Universities and Colleges

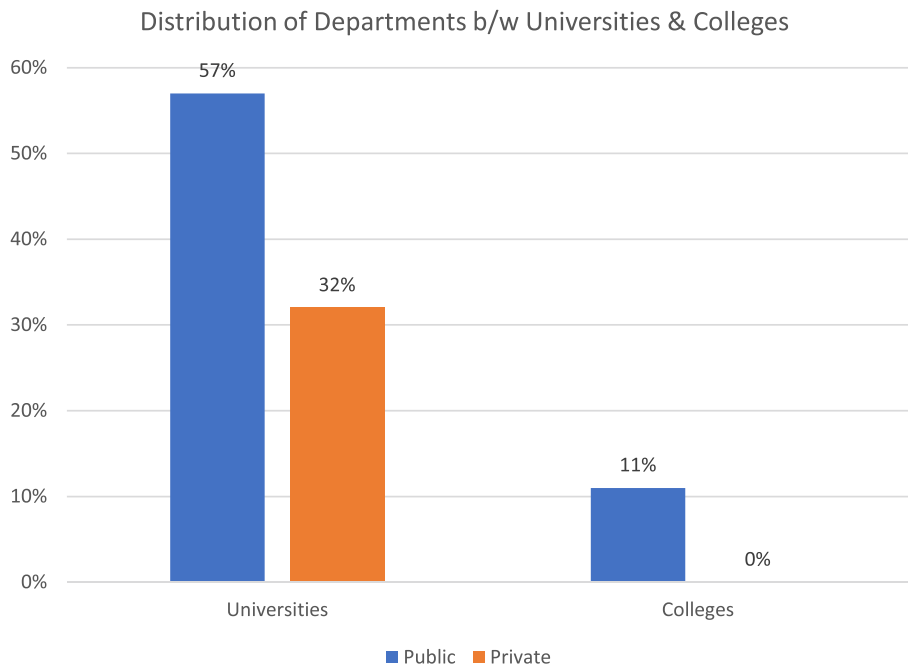
Data in Table and Figure 1.2 indicate that universities run an overwhelming majority of departments (89%), while only 11% are associated with colleges. Interestingly, all 11 departments affiliated with colleges offering Journalism, Media, or Communication Studies at the BS (Hons) level are located in the public sector, and exclusively in the Punjab province.

There is no private sector college anywhere in Pakistan that currently hosts a dedicated department in this field. Also, all 11 departments attached to public sector colleges are situated in the city of Lahore. This highlights a significant gap and opportunity for private education networks—particularly in urban hubs of *Punjab*, *Sindh*, and *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)*—to invest in and expand media and journalism education. Well-established groups such as the Punjab Group of Colleges, Superior Colleges, KIPS, and Aspire Group of Colleges could potentially expand into this domain to meet the growing demand for media and communication education.

Table 1.4: Distribution of Departments between Universities & Colleges (N=100)

Status	Universities	Colleges	Total
Public	57 (57%)	11 (11%)	68 (68%)
Private	32 (32%)	00 (00%)	32 (32%)
Total	89 (89%)	11 (11%)	100 (100%)

Figure 1. 4: Distribution of Departments between Universities & Colleges



Action recommendations:

1a. Strengthen public sector support: Given the high concentration of public sector departments in all regions of Pakistan, existing journalism programs, infrastructure, and resources can be enhanced for greater relevance. This can include increasing funding for journalism and media programs, providing professional development opportunities for faculty, and enhancing collaboration with media organizations in regions with a large concentration of private media, such as Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Multan, Hyderabad, Quetta, and Peshawar, to create more internship and job opportunities for students.

1b. Promote private sector growth: With a notable absence of private sector departments in regions with large concentrations of private media houses, such as Sindh, Punjab, and Islamabad, further growth can be encouraged by offering incentives for private institutions to expand their journalism and communications programs. This can involve providing tax benefits, facilitating partnerships with media and advertising industries, and supporting initiatives that promote media education and training.

1c. Address disparities in periphery regions: The absence of private sector departments in Balochistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) highlights a significant gap in competitive journalism education. Policies and programs can be created that attract private

institutions to these regions. This can include offering financial incentives, improving infrastructure, and promoting the importance of media education in these areas.

1d. Support specialization to promote opportunities: While journalism and communication studies departments are present across Pakistan, their numbers vary, but not necessarily their programmatic/curriculum specialization. Diversity and specialization should be supported to ensure a competitive educational environment that can strengthen sustainability and quality, thereby maintaining and enhancing their journalism and media programs. This can involve allocating more resources to less developed regions, linking academia with the media industry, and providing training and development for faculty.

2. Growth Trajectory of Journalism/Media/Communication Studies Departments

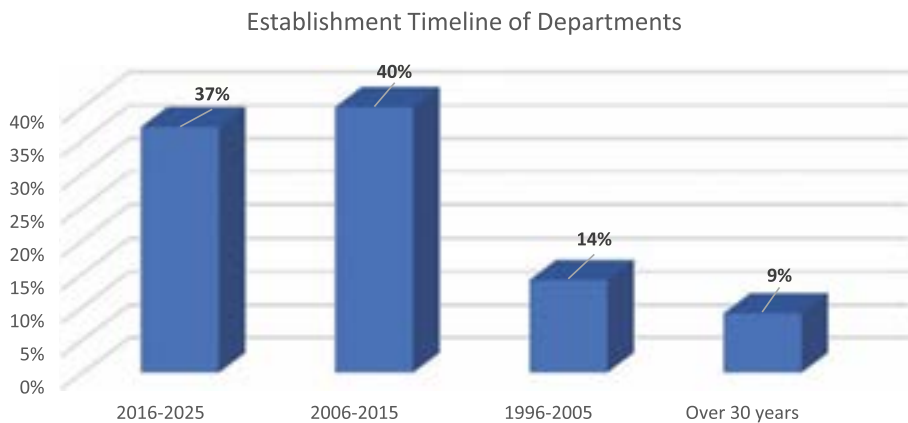
This section illustrates the growth trajectory by revealing data about the age of academic departments offering BS (Hons)/MS programs in journalism, media, or communication studies. Departments are categorized into four groups: 0–10 years old (2016-2025), 11–20 years old (2006-2015), 21–30 years old (1996-2005), and over 30 years old (1947-1995), with corresponding frequencies and percentages reflecting their establishment timelines across the country.

Table 18: Growth Trajectory of Journalism/Media/Communication Studies Departments (N=92)

Age of Departments (Timeline)	No. of Departments	Percentage
0-10years old (2016-2025)	34	37%
11-20 years old (2006-2015)	37	40%
21-30 years old (1996-2005)	13	14%
Over 30 years old (1995-before)	8	9%
Total	92	100%

Table and Figure 2 present the age distribution of Journalism, Media, and Communication Studies departments across 92 public and private sector universities and colleges in Pakistan. The data reveals a strong correlation between the growth of media education and the liberalization of Pakistan’s electronic and digital media landscape.

Figure 6: Growth Trajectory of Journalism/Media/Communication Studies Departments (N=92)



A noteworthy pattern emerges in the early 2000s, following the media policy reforms introduced by the government. During this period, the government issued licenses to private TV channels

and FM radio stations, significantly diversifying the media landscape. As a result, the first major surge in the establishment of media departments occurred between 1996 and 2005, with 13 new departments (14%) being founded—more than 1.5 times the number established in the previous 48 years (1947–1995), which saw only 8 departments (9%).

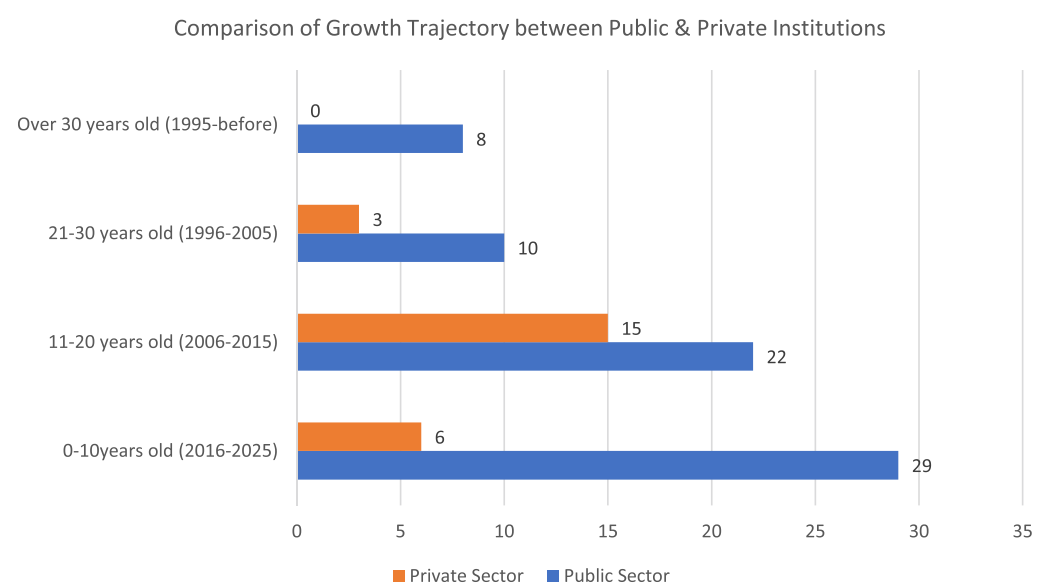
The most dramatic expansion occurred over the last two decades (2006–2025), coinciding with the rise of digital, online, and social media platforms. During this period, 71 new departments (77% of the total sample) were established—37 departments (40%) between 2006–2015, and 34 departments (37%) between 2016–2025. This rapid proliferation illustrates the growing demand for professionally trained graduates equipped to meet the needs of an increasingly complex and technologically driven media industry.

The data underscores how shifts in national media policy and technological adoption directly shaped the academic demand and institutional growth for journalism/communication education in Pakistan, both in the public and private sectors (See Table, Figure 2.1). This trend highlights the strategic importance of aligning academic curricula with industry trends, particularly as media technologies continue to advance. Furthermore, it highlights a policy success story: regulatory liberalization of the media sector can stimulate corresponding growth in academic and professional development, developing a more vibrant and skilled media workforce for the country.

Table 2.2: Growth Trajectory Comparison among Public & Private Universities/Colleges (N=92)

Timeline	Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
0-10years old (2016-2025)	28	06	34
11-20 years old (2006-2015)	22	15	37
21-30 years old (1996-2005)	10	03	13
Over 30 years old (1995-before)	08	00	08
Total	68	24	92

Figure 2.2: Growth Trajectory Comparison among Public & Private Universities/Colleges (N=92)



Action recommendations:

2a. Align journalism curricula with industry trends: The rapid expansion of media departments, particularly in the last two decades, underscores the need for academic programs to stay current with industry trends, and should be able to make it easier to be innovative in this early institutional trajectory. Curricula should be regularly updated to incorporate the latest advancements in digital, online, and social media technologies. Journalism and media programs should embed contemporary modules on digital storytelling, data journalism, AI-driven media tools, and multimedia production. This will help produce graduates who are well-equipped to meet the demands of a tech-centric, evolving media industry.

2b. Strengthen public-private partnerships: The significant growth in both public and private sector media departments highlights the potential for collaboration in-between that can be achieved through joint academic projects, shared faculty exchanges, co-hosted seminars or conferences, and the development of standardized curriculum frameworks that reflect both innovation and academic rigor. Such partnerships are highly worthwhile, as they allow public institutions to benefit from the agility, technological adoption, and often more experimental teaching methods of private universities, while private institutions can draw on the established credibility, research depth, and broader networks of public universities. Together, they can pool resources, share access to specialized facilities such as studios or labs, and create cross-institutional student exchange programs, ultimately enhancing the quality of education,

enhancing diversity of perspectives, and producing better-prepared graduates for an evolving media landscape. In developing contexts like Pakistan, where the media sector is expanding but resources and expertise are unevenly distributed, these collaborations not only strengthen academic quality and industry competitiveness but also contribute to a more informed, skilled, and responsible media workforce that can better serve society.

2c. Promote regional development: The data indicate a concentration of new media departments in certain metropolitan areas/regions. Regional development should be promoted by ensuring a more balanced distribution of media education opportunities across the country, particularly in the underrepresented areas. A targeted policy approach could incentivize universities to establish or strengthen media studies programs in underserved areas in sub-campuses, backed by infrastructure development, faculty exchange programs, and public awareness campaigns on the value of media education. Given the recent proliferation and widespread penetration of digital and social media throughout the country—especially in less developed, remote regions—establishing sub-campuses of universities with media studies departments can help local influencers and digital content creators develop a stronger sense of ethical responsibility, improve production quality, enhance storytelling skills, and produce more engaging content.

2d. Invest in faculty capacity and pedagogical innovation

Faculty expertise must match the pace of technological change in industry and the rapid growth of media studies departments. Continuous professional development programs—covering emerging media tools, latest research methods, and inclusive pedagogies—will ensure educators are equipped to deliver relevant, high-quality instruction. International faculty exchange and short-term industry placements for educators can enhance teaching quality and research relevance.

2e. Establish quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms

To sustain growth without compromising quality, *HEC/PHEC* and professional media associations should collaborate—in the form of a more effective accreditation council— and oversee accreditation of journalism/media programs, assess alignment with industry standards, and monitor graduate employability outcomes. Periodic evaluations can also help maintain the global competitiveness of Pakistan’s media education sector.

3. Availability of Official Departmental Websites/Digital Visibility of Departments

This section presents the number and percentage of journalism, media, and communication studies departments in Pakistan that maintain an official departmental website. The data distinguishes between departments with and without an active online presence, highlighting the current state of digital visibility in the academic media landscape.

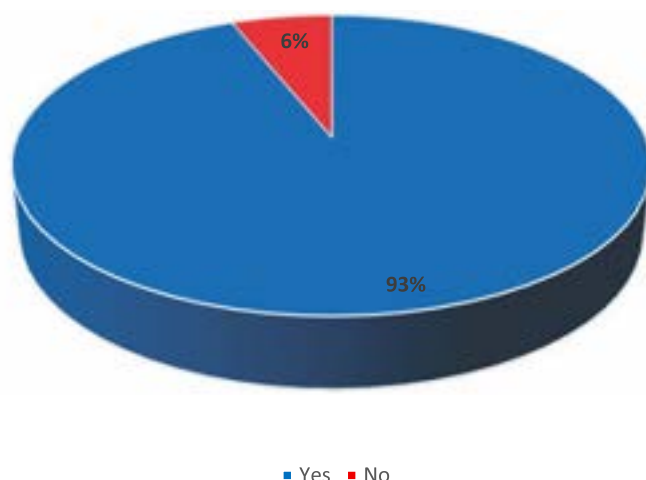
Table 19: Availability of Official Departmental Websites (N = 92)

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage
Yes	86	93%
No	6	7%
Total	92	100%

Table and Figure 3 present data on the online presence of journalism, media, mass communication, and communication studies departments in Pakistan, with a specific focus on whether departments maintain a dedicated web presence. Out of 92 departments analyzed, 86 (93%) reported having a web page on the official website of their affiliated university or college, while 6 departments (7%) lacked any form of dedicated online presence.

It is important to note, however, that while a high percentage of departments claim digital visibility, a deeper review revealed that no department has a fully independent, standalone website. Instead, most departments operate under subsections or pages embedded within broader institutional websites, often grouped with other departments within the same faculty or school. This is particularly common in public sector universities and affiliated colleges.

Figure 7: Availability of Official Departmental Websites (N = 92)
 Percentage Availability of Departmental Websites



Moreover, qualitative analysis of these webpages—especially for departments in peripheral regions and some private sector departments—highlighted concerns regarding content quality and completeness. Many of these departmental pages lacked essential academic and operational details, such as updated lists of faculty members and their profiles, clear program offerings, course descriptions, departmental news, events, or achievements, student support facilities, or labs.

In some cases—particularly among college-affiliated departments—even where a dedicated page existed, it was found to be inactive, outdated, or poorly maintained. This poses a challenge to transparency and accessibility for prospective students, academic collaborators, and policy stakeholders.

Action recommendations:

3a. Invest in webpage quality and maintenance: Prioritize institutional investment in upgrading and regularly updating departmental webpages. This includes ensuring that all pages contain essential academic and operational details, such as updated lists of faculty members and their profiles, clear program offerings, course descriptions, student projects, departmental news, events, achievements, and information on student support facilities and labs. Regular maintenance and updates will enhance transparency and accessibility for prospective students, academic collaborators, and policy stakeholders.

3b. Develop independent departmental websites: Where feasible, departments should establish independent, standalone websites rather than relying solely on subpages embedded in broader

institutional sites. This dedicated presence will allow for greater flexibility, richer multimedia integration (e.g., student work portfolios, virtual tours), and more comprehensive content. Such sites can also better represent departmental identity, research outputs, and industry engagement, helping attract both students and collaborators.

3c. Enhance digital presence in underserved regions: Special attention should be given to improving the digital presence of departments in peripheral regions, including necessary resources and support. This will help align them with norms of higher education visibility and outreach, and ensure that all departments, regardless of location, can effectively engage with their audiences.

3d. Move from visibility to engagement: Beyond static visibility, departments should use digital platforms for interactive engagement with stakeholders. This could include integrating social media channels, hosting webinars, publishing blogs or podcasts, and creating online student/alumni networks. Such practices can enhance reach, build/enlarge community, and position departments as active contributors to public discourse in journalism, communication, and media studies.

4. Accreditation Status of Journalism/Communication Studies Programs

This section presents the accreditation status of journalism, media, mass communication, and communication studies programs across public and private universities and colleges in Pakistan. The table reflects the proportion of departments whose academic programs (BS (Hons), MS) have received formal accreditation from the *Higher Education Commission (HEC)* of Pakistan, and the *Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC)*, highlighting institutional compliance with national and provincial quality assurance standards.

Table 20: Accreditation Status of Journalism & Communication Studies Programs (N=92)

HEC/PHEC Accreditation Status	Number of Departments	Percentage
Yes	92	100%
No	0	0%
Total	92	100%

Table and Figure 4 indicate that all 81 departments (100%) of Journalism, Media, Mass Communication, and Communication Studies housed within public and private universities across Pakistan offer HEC-accredited BS (Hons) and/or MS programs. Similarly, all 11 college-based departments (100%), located in Lahore (Punjab), have received accreditation from the *Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC)*.

Contextually, following the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010, the responsibility for regulating higher education institutions was devolved to the provinces. As a result, colleges in Punjab are required to seek program approval and accreditation from the *Punjab Higher Education Commission (PHEC)*. Additionally, several universities in Punjab (e.g., *Gift University, Gujranwala, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, University of the Punjab, Lahore*, to name a few) have obtained accreditation from both *HEC* and *PHEC*, reflecting a stronger commitment to quality assurance through dual oversight.

Figure 8: Accreditation Status of Journalism & Communication Studies Programs (N=92)

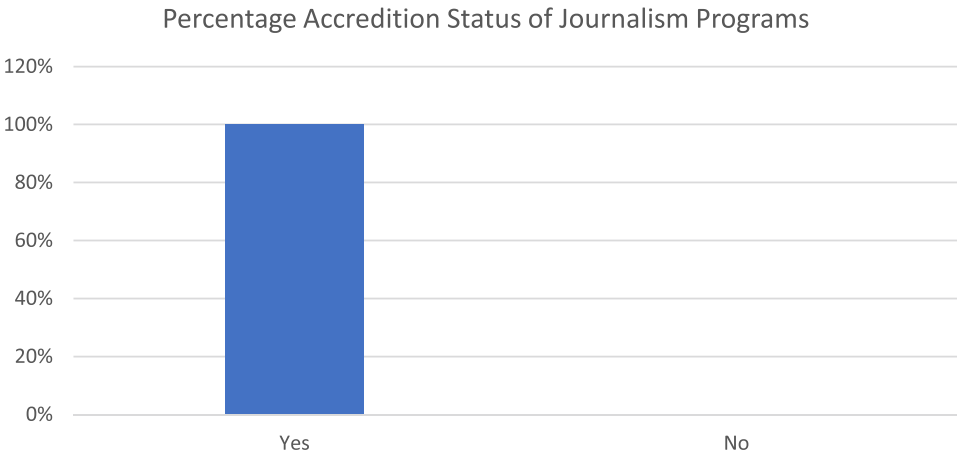
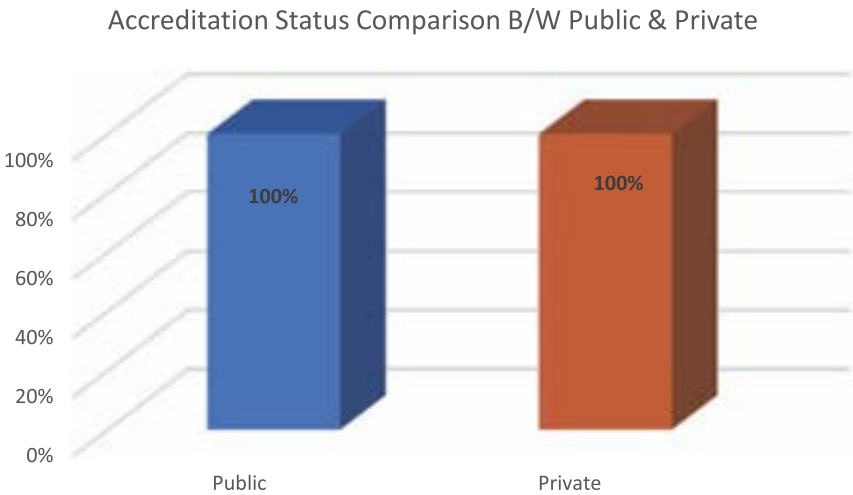


Figure 4.2: Comparison of Accreditation Status B/W Public & Private Sector Programs



This universal accreditation across both university- and college-based programs reflects a positive national trend toward standardization and regulatory compliance in media education. It suggests that institutions are generally aligned with national and provincial quality assurance frameworks, particularly in maintaining core academic infrastructure, offering comparable curricula, and adhering to minimum academic and administrative benchmarks. This consistency enhances the credibility of media education in Pakistan and ensures that graduates are being trained under recognized standards, irrespective of institutional type.

Action recommendations:

4a. Strengthen provincial accreditation processes: Given the devolution of higher education regulation to the provinces following the 18th Constitutional Amendment, strengthening provincial accreditation processes for journalism, mass communication, and communication studies programs should be a priority. This includes providing adequate resources and support to provincial HECs to effectively oversee and maintain quality assurance standards. Strengthening provincial capacity and oversight will ensure that quality benchmarks are consistently applied across diverse regions and institutional types, both public and private.

4b. Promote dual accreditation for enhanced quality assurance: Where feasible, the practice of obtaining accreditation from both federal HEC and the relevant provincial HEC can be a consideration. This can promote both national and provincial quality assurance standards and enhance the credibility and quality of media education programs.

4c. Institutionalize continuous improvement mechanisms: Mechanisms should be implemented for continuous improvement and compliance with accreditation standards. This can involve regular audits, feedback loops, and professional development opportunities for faculty and administrative staff. This can help departments align with evolving quality assurance frameworks and maintain higher standards of education.

4d. Integrate innovation and learning outcomes into accreditation criteria: Beyond infrastructure and curriculum compliance, accreditation processes should assess innovation in teaching, integration of digital tools, industry linkages, and student learning outcomes. Embedding these elements in evaluation criteria will ensure that media education remains relevant, future-oriented, and aligned with both local and global media trends. If feasible, HEC/PHEC should take the professional media associations on board—to establish a new form of accreditation council—to have better oversight and evaluation.

5. Total and Average Student Enrollment in Journalism/Media Studies Departments

This section provides an overview of the cumulative student enrollment across all 92 journalism, media, and communication studies departments included in this study, along with the calculated average number of students per department. The average was calculated by dividing the total reported student enrollment by the number of departments surveyed. This metric provides a comparative measure of departmental capacity and student distribution across selected universities/colleges.

Table 21: Total and Average Student Enrollment per Department

Metric	Value
Total Number of Students	37542
Total Number of Departments	92
Average Students per Department	408

The data presented in Table 5 reveals that a total of 37,542 students are currently enrolled across 92 departments offering Journalism, Media, and Communication Studies programs in Pakistan. This results in an average of 408 students per department, which indicates a strong level of student interest and institutional capacity in this academic field.

This high enrollment figure is a positive indicator of the growing recognition of media and communication as a viable and attractive career pathway among Pakistani youth. It suggests that an increasing number of students are now seeking formal education and professional qualifications before entering the media industry, which traditionally relied heavily on experiential learning or informal training.

The scale of enrollment also highlights the critical need for capacity building within departments—such as improved faculty-to-student ratios, updated curricula, modern production facilities, and stronger industry-academia linkages—to ensure that this surge in demand is met with quality education and relevant skill development.

This trend aligns with global shifts where media literacy, digital content creation, and strategic communication are becoming essential across sectors, reinforcing the strategic importance of strengthening media education in developing countries like Pakistan.

Table 5.2: Private vs. Public Sector Enrollment Trends in Journalism/Media Studies Departments

Metric	Private Sector Departments	Public Sector Departments
Total Number of Students	10,982	27,540
Total Number of Departments	24	68
Average Students per Department	457	405

Building on the earlier analysis, the disaggregated data in Table 5.1 provide further insights into the distribution of student enrollment between public and private sector departments. Out of the total 37,542 students enrolled in Journalism, Media, and Communication Studies programs, 27,540 students (73%) are studying in 68 public sector departments, while 10,982 students (27%) are enrolled in 24 private sector departments.

What is particularly noteworthy is that despite the smaller number of private sector departments, they show a higher average student enrollment per department (457) compared to their public counterparts (405). This suggests that private institutions, although fewer in number, tend to operate larger or more centralized media departments—likely reflecting their urban concentration, aggressive admission strategy, and alignment with the demands of the commercial media industry.

This higher average in the private sector may also indicate 1) a growing student preference for practice-oriented programs is often associated with private institutions; 2) flexible and industry-aligned curricula that attract aspiring media professionals; 3) the concentration of private universities in metropolitan hubs (e.g., *Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad*), where demand for skilled media graduates is high.

Action recommendations

5a. Enhance capacity in public sector departments: Given the greater number of student enrolments in fewer private sector departments, enhancing the capacity of public sector departments should be a priority. This can be achieved by improving faculty-to-student ratios, updating curricula to align with industry standards, and investing in modern media production facilities. Strengthening these areas will help public institutions remain competitive and meet the growing demand for media education without compromising quality.

5b. Expand practice-oriented and industry-aligned curricula: Development and expansion of practice-oriented and flexible industry-aligned curricula/programs in both public and private departments should be supported. This involves designing modules in collaboration with industry experts, offering experiential learning through internships and on-campus media labs, and adapting curricula to cover digital-first journalism, data storytelling, and strategic/crisis communication skills. , By doing so, particularly public sector departments can attract more students and better prepare them for successful careers in media and communication.

6. Distribution of Academic Programs Offered by Journalism/Media Studies Departments

This section presents a comparative overview of the academic programs and specializations offered by journalism, media, and communication studies departments across public and private universities/colleges in Pakistan. The data highlights the extent to which departments are engaged in offering undergraduate to doctoral-level education or any other certificate to postgraduate diploma programs, providing insights into the vertical depth of academic offerings in the field.

Table 22: Distribution of Academic Programs Offered by Journalism/Media Studies Departments

Academic Programs	No of Departments Offering	Percentage (%)
BS (Hons) 4-year Program	92	100%
Master's (MA/MSc)	15	16%
MPhil/MS/Equivalent	51	55%
PhD	27	29%
Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program	1	1%
Certificate Program	11	12%
2-Year Associate Degree Program (ADP)	5	5%
Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) Program	4	4%

The data in Table and Figure 6 highlight the growing academic maturity and diversification in Pakistan’s journalism, media, and communication studies landscape. Pakistani universities and colleges are offering a wide array of academic programs to cater to the evolving demands of the local and global media industry—ranging from foundational undergraduate degrees to advanced research fellowships and skill-based short courses.

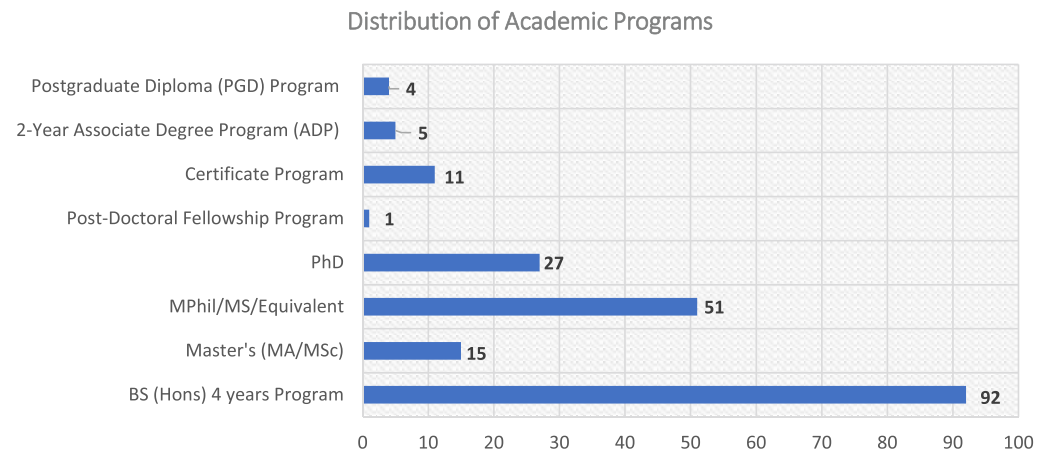
The BS (Hons) 4-Year Program stands out as the most widely offered qualification, available in all 92 (100%) departments. This degree serves as the foundational entry point into the media education and profession, open to students who have completed 12 years of education (intermediate or equivalent). Its universal adoption by all departments countrywide underscores the prioritization of structured, professional media education at the undergraduate level.

Significantly, MPhil/MS or equivalent programs are offered by over half of the departments 51 (55%), reflecting the growing interest in advanced studies and research. These 18 years of academic qualifications not only enhance students’ understanding of theory and practice but also qualify them for PhD admissions at both national and international universities.

PhD programs, offered by 27 (29%) departments, indicate a healthy trajectory towards building indigenous research capacity in media and communication fields. This is further supported by a

unique case: *Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan*, which has initiated a Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program, a rare yet encouraging development in Pakistan’s academic ecosystem, offering senior scholars an opportunity for continued academic inquiry without going abroad.

Figure 6: Distribution of Academic Programs Offered by Journalism/Media Studies Departments



Additionally, departments are responding to the industry's demand for applied skills by offering short-term and flexible learning options. Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) programs (4%) and Certificate Courses (12%) are targeted at professionals and aspirants who are unable to commit to full-time degree programs but wish to upskill in areas such as *television production, development communication, animation, and immersive media technologies*. These programs are especially useful for mid-career journalists and content creators.

A 2-Year Associate Degree Program (ADP), offered by 5% of the departments, is a relatively new addition, designed for students seeking quicker entry into the workforce with practical knowledge.

In sum, the breadth of academic offerings demonstrates how Pakistani institutions are not only catering to traditional degree pathways but also creating flexible, skill-oriented programs that enhance professional competencies in media and communication studies. This programmatic diversity ensures pathways for early entrants, mid-career professionals, and advanced researchers alike, thereby cultivating a media workforce that is both academically grounded and practically equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly evolving media ecosystem.

Meanwhile, the presence of terms like *“Game Design”*, *“Immersive Technologies”*, *“Digital Marketing”*, and *“Development Communication”*—albeit in smaller fonts—signals the emergence of cutting-edge, specialized programs. These newer tracks cater to evolving media ecosystems and indicate that academic programs in Pakistan are gradually adapting to technological convergence, innovation, and global communication trends. Additionally, tracks such as *“Film & TV”*, *“Drama Production”*, *“Theatre”*, and *“Animation”* suggest a widening scope of media education toward the creative industries and visual storytelling.

In summary, this visual reports how Pakistani universities are not only preserving traditional fields like journalism and print media but are also innovating their curricula to prepare students for multi-platform, interdisciplinary, and future-oriented media environments.

Action recommendations:

6a. Expand and diversify program offerings: Journalism, mass communication, and communication studies departments should continue to expand and diversify academic programs to cater to the evolving demands of the media industry. This can include introducing niche specializations and short-term courses that focus on emerging areas such as digital media, science communication, constructive journalism, AI-assisted journalism/advertising, immersive media, crisis communication, and development communication. Before launching new programs, departments should conduct market and audience needs assessments to ensure alignment with employment trends and community needs. This will help avoid oversupply in already saturated media sectors while future-proofing graduates’ skills. By offering a wide range of programs, institutions can attract a diverse student body and meet the needs of both early entrants and mid-career professionals.

6b. Enhance research capacity with policy and innovation impact: With growing interest in advanced studies, institutions must invest in research infrastructure, competitive grants, and dedicated research centres focused on pressing media issues. Encouraging initiatives like the Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program at Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) can further support senior scholars and contribute to the development of indigenous research capacity. Emphasis should be placed on producing research that informs media policy, advances ethical practices, and drives innovation in content creation and communication strategies.

6c. Expand the Development-focused communication curriculum and linkages: As a developing country, Pakistani universities should ensure that their communication studies departments expand their course/program offerings to include development communication, development support communication, science communication, crisis/disaster communication, and development journalism. Alongside curriculum enhancement, these departments must establish formal partnerships with development sector organizations — including NGOs, INGOs, NPOs, and

CSOs — which consistently require skilled communication and campaign development professionals. Collaborative initiatives such as internships, joint projects, and guest lectures would provide students with vital practical exposure, bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical-world application.

6d. Ensure regional parity and equitable access: Cutting-edge specializations and short courses should not be limited to metropolitan campuses. departments should develop virtual programs, digital learning platforms, and targeted outreach to peripheral and underserved regions, both in formal and informal settings, ensuring that rural and remote students also benefit from emerging media education opportunities. Informal settings can be established by offering a short course in a summer camp while collaborating with a local college or university in remote areas. This can help bridge the urban–rural media skills gap and diversify the talent pipeline.

7. Presence of Disinformation, Fact-Checking, and MIL Courses in Media Studies Syllabi

This section presents data on the number and percentage of journalism, media, and communication studies departments that offer dedicated courses addressing *disinformation*, *fact-checking*, and *Media and Information Literacy (MIL)*. These courses are critical for preparing students to understand and respond to the challenges of the contemporary information environment, especially in the context of rising misinformation in digital landscapes and on social media platforms.

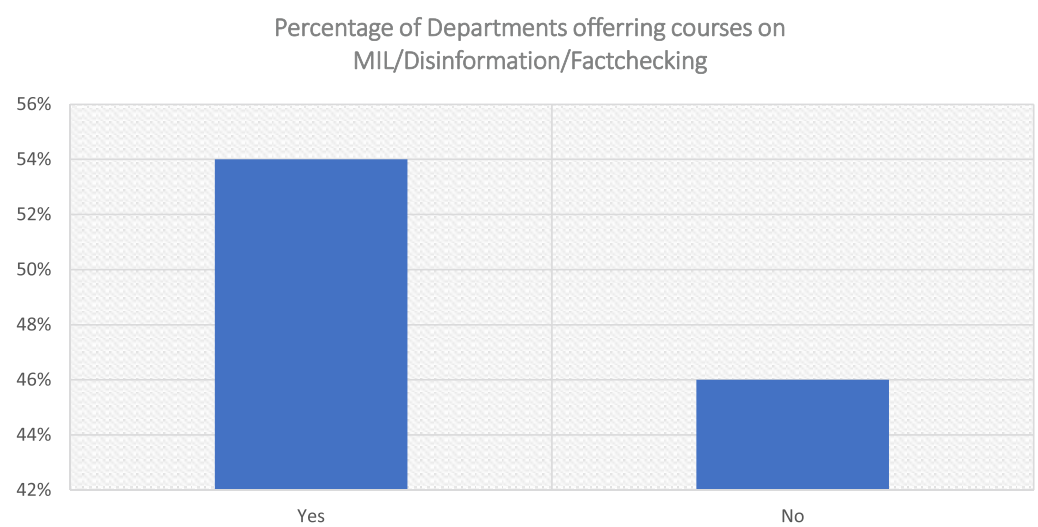
Table 23: Presence of Disinformation, Fact-Checking, and MIL Courses in Media Studies Syllabi

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	54%
No	42	46%
Total	92	100%

The data in Table and Figure 7 reveal a promising yet evolving trend in the integration of *Disinformation*, *Fact-Checking*, and *Media & Information Literacy (MIL)* courses in journalism and media studies curricula across Pakistan. Out of 92 departments surveyed, 50 departments (54%) have incorporated such content into their academic programs, either as standalone courses or integrated modules within broader subjects like digital journalism, ethics, or media law.

This majority indicates a growing institutional recognition of the urgent need to equip future media professionals with critical thinking, verification skills, and digital literacy to combat the pervasive spread of disinformation and misinformation, especially in the digital age, where fake news and propaganda are rampant.

Figure 7: Presence of Disinformation, Fact-Checking & MIL Courses in Media Studies Syllabi (N=92)



However, the absence of such content in 42 departments (46%) is also significant. It suggests that nearly half of the institutions have yet to respond adequately to the evolving global media landscape and the role of journalists as frontline defenders against misinformation.

Given the critical importance of media literacy in democratic societies, particularly in countries like Pakistan facing political polarization, extremist narratives, and low digital literacy, there is an urgent need for policy-level curriculum reforms at the *HEC* level and capacity-building initiatives. Media educators, regulatory bodies like *HEC/PHEC*, and international partners should support departments lagging to mainstream fact-checking and MIL education through faculty training, course development, and resource-sharing.

This finding signals a strategic opportunity for collaboration between universities, media development organizations, and international partners to develop standardized, contextualized, and practice-oriented content on disinformation and digital literacy, tailored to Pakistan’s unique media ecosystem.

Action recommendations:

7a. Integrate contextualized MIL and fact-checking into core curricula: Given the critical importance of media literacy in democratic societies, policy-level curriculum reforms need to be a priority, particularly with the support of federal and provincial level higher education regulatory authorities. This should include integrating dedicated courses on disinformation, fact-checking, and Media and Information Literacy (MIL) into the core curriculum of journalism and media studies programs. These courses should be contextualized to Pakistan’s socio-political and cultural realities, addressing challenges

such as political polarization, extremist narratives, weak science culture, and low digital literacy. Existing initiatives by the Coalition Against Disinformation (CAD) can serve as a foundation for standardized curriculum frameworks.

7b. Invest in faculty expertise and pedagogical innovation: To support departments lagging in mainstreaming fact-checking and MIL education, there should be a priority on faculty training and development. This can include organizing training of trainers, workshops, seminars, and specialized e-courses for educators to enhance their understanding and teaching capabilities in these critical areas. By equipping faculty with the necessary skills and knowledge, institutions can improve the quality of education and ensure that students are well-prepared to combat misinformation and disinformation. This is already supported by CAD. Additionally, exposure to global MIL pedagogical models—through faculty exchange programs—will enable media educators to learn/adapt innovative teaching strategies for local use.

7c. Co-create learning resources with media development organizations: There is a strategic opportunity for collaboration between universities, media development organizations, and international partners—including but not limited to International Media Support (IMS), UNESCO, United National Development Program (UNDP) and Deutsche Welle Akademie (DWA) – to develop standardized, contextualized, multilingual, and practice-oriented content, simulation-based exercises, and e-courses on disinformation and digital literacy. These organizations should facilitate partnerships that promote resource-sharing, joint course development, and the creation of educational materials tailored to Pakistan’s unique media ecosystem. These collaborations can help bridge the gap between academic training and real-world application, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills needed to address the evolving global media landscape.

8. Prevalence of Co-Education in Journalism/Media/Communication Studies Departments

This section presents the number and percentage of journalism, media, and communication studies departments in Pakistan that offer co-education.

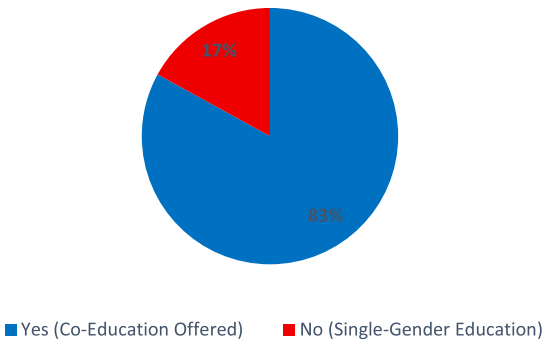
Table 24: Presence of Co-Education in Journalism/Media/Comm. Studies Departments (N=92)

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Yes (Co-Education Offered)	76	83%
No (Single-Gender Education)	16	17%
Total	92	100%

The data indicate that a substantial majority of journalism and media studies departments in Pakistan (76 out of 92, or 83%) offer co-education, reflecting a progressive trend toward gender inclusion and equal opportunity in higher education across both public and private institutions (Table/Fig. 8). This signifies that most academic environments in the field of media education are promoting mixed-gender learning, which aligns with the collaborative nature of media and communication industries/environments where men and women work side by side.

Figure 8: Presence of Co-Education in Journalism/Media/Comm. Studies Departments (N=92)

Percentage Division of Co and Single Gender Departments



Conversely, 16 departments (17%) still operate as single-gender institutions, which is due to cultural, religious, or institutional policies, particularly in conservative or semi-urban areas. These single-gender institutions, while catering to specific social contexts, may limit exposure to diverse classroom interactions that are vital in media training.

8.1 Gender-Based Division among Single-Gender Departments

The data further show that among the 16 single-gender journalism/media/communication studies departments, 15 (94%) are exclusively for female students, while only one department (6%) is designated for male students (Table/Fig. 8.1). This bulging disparity highlights a strong emphasis on promoting women’s access to media education through gender-exclusive institutions, likely driven by cultural preferences, societal norms, and parental concerns in conservative settings.

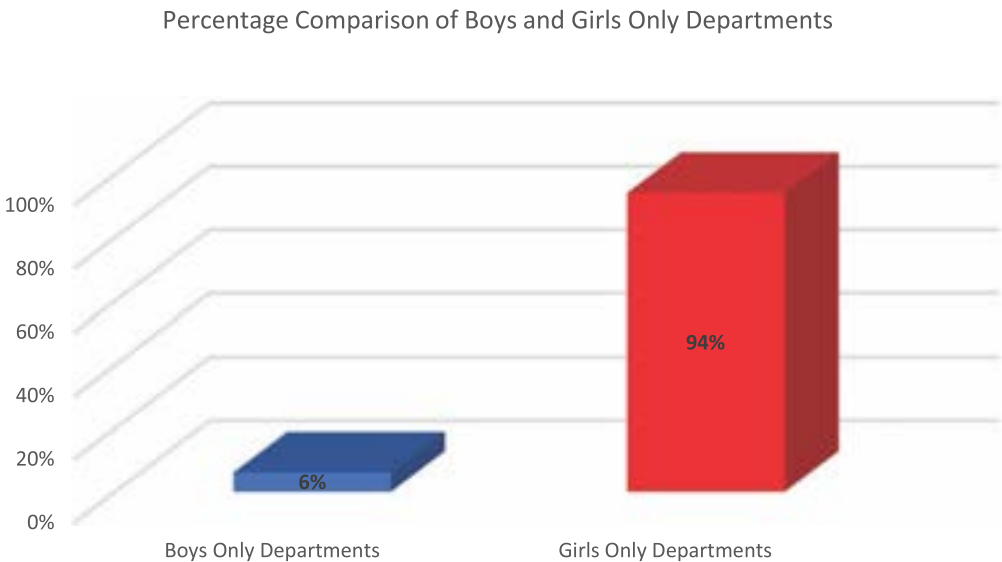
The dominance of girls-only departments suggests a positive trend toward empowering women in a field that was historically male-dominated in many parts of the country. These institutions—often part of larger women-only universities or colleges—are playing a critical role in increasing female participation in the media and communication sectors.

On the other hand, the scarcity of boys-only departments reflects a broader societal acceptance of co-educational models for male students and indicates that single-gender restrictions are more often applied to women due to cultural and familial considerations.

Table 8.2: Gender-Based Division among Single-Gender Departments (N=16)

Gender Type	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Boys Only Departments	1	6%
Girls Only Departments	15	94%
Total	16	100%

Figure 8.2: Gender-Based Division of Single-Gender Media Studies Departments (N=16)



Action recommendations:

8a. Support and expand co-educational models: Given the progressive trend toward gender inclusion in journalism and media studies departments, support for and expansion of co-educational models should be continued. This can involve creating policies that encourage the transition of single-gender departments to co-educational ones, where feasible. Moreover, pilot programs, engagement of local opinion leaders in support of coeducation departments, parental awareness campaigns, and phased policy changes can help reduce resistance in conservative areas. By promoting mixed-gender learning environments, institutions can better prepare students for the collaborative nature of the media industry, enhancing interaction, collaboration, and gender parity.

8b. Enhance support for girls-only departments: While promoting co-education, it is also important to continue supporting girls-only departments that are already playing a critical role in empowering women in media education. Partners should support such departments with adequate resources, funding, and opportunities for growth. This can include modern facilities, professional development for faculty, and creating partnerships with media organizations to offer internships and job placements for female media students. To address the limited cross-gender interaction inherent in such settings, structured academic exchange or joint project opportunities with co-educational counterparts should be introduced, enabling female students to benefit from broader perspectives and collaborative skills.

8c. Introduce gender-sensitivity and inclusivity training: Regardless of institutional type, all journalism, media, and communication studies departments should integrate gender-sensitivity and inclusivity training modules into their curricula. These could cover workplace equality, anti-harassment protocols, and strategies for integrating in mixed-gender professional environments. This ensures that graduates from both co-educational and single-gender settings can transition smoothly into Pakistan's gender-diverse media landscape.

9. Partnerships Between Journalism/Media Studies Departments and Media Houses

This section presents data on the presence of formal partnerships/collaborations between journalism/media/communication studies departments and professional media houses (e.g., TV channels, newspapers, radio stations, digital media platforms) across universities/colleges in Pakistan. These partnerships typically include internship opportunities, input on curriculum development from industry experts, joint projects, technical support for student projects, guest lectures, and hands-on training provisions, among other benefits. The data highlights the extent to which academic institutions are integrating real-world industry exposure into their programs.

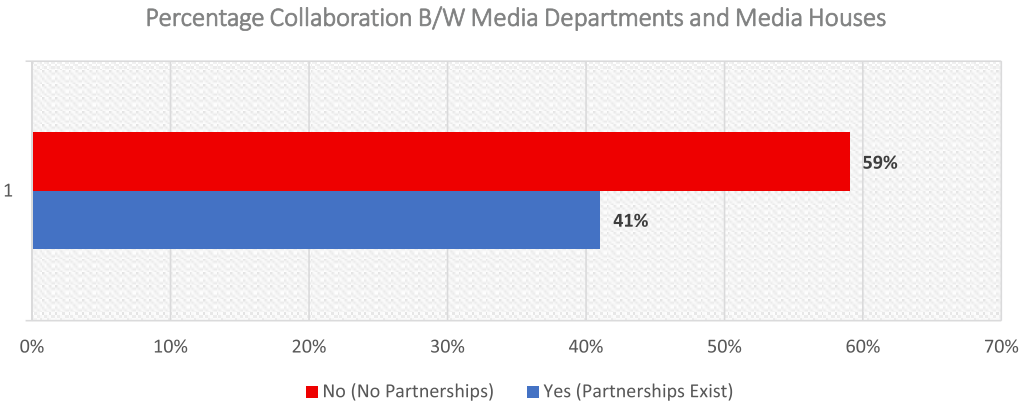
Table 25: Partnerships Between Journalism/Media Studies Departments and Media Houses (N=92)

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Yes (Partnerships Exist)	38	41%
No (No Partnerships)	54	59%
Total	92	100%

The data presented in Table and Figure 9 reveal a significant gap between academia and industry in the context of journalism, media, and communication studies in Pakistan. Out of 92 departments surveyed, only 38 (41%) reported having formal partnerships with media industry organizations, while a substantial majority of 54 departments (59%) acknowledged the absence of any such collaboration. This indicates a critical disconnect, particularly in a field that thrives on practical experience, real-world exposure, and constant engagement with evolving industry practices.

The absence of institutional partnerships limits students’ opportunities for hands-on learning, internships, and professional networking. Students graduating from departments without industry linkages often lack practical skills in digital journalism, content creation, video production, and media entrepreneurship. As a result, their transition into the job market becomes more challenging.

Figure 9: Partnerships Between Journalism/Media Studies Departments and Media Houses (N=92)



Moreover, these departments miss the chance to update and refine their curricula in line with the latest media trends, such as artificial intelligence in journalism, fact-checking and verification tools, immersive storytelling, and platform-specific content strategies, due to the non-engagement of experts from the media industry and development sector, particularly during the course development process. To fill this gap, one solution could be that media and communication studies departments should adopt the D-J-M Model³. This model advocates consolidating the expertise of all stakeholders (i.e., development sector experts, journalism academicians, and media professionals) in curriculum development to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

³ Kamboh, S. A. (2020). Missing links in the Practical Journalism of Developing Pakistan. *Journalism and Journalism Education in Developing Countries*, published by Manipal Universal Press, India (pp. 166).

Image 2: Patterns of Academic-Industry Collaborations in Pakistani Media Education



The word cloud in Image 2, generated from institutional data, reveals a clear pattern of academic-industry collaborations in journalism and media studies departments across Pakistan. The most frequently referenced organizations—*Radio Pakistan* and *Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV)*—stand out prominently, indicating that the majority of university departments maintain formal partnerships with these state-owned broadcasters.

These collaborations often take the form of internship opportunities, training workshops, occasional guest lectures, and student trips, reflecting the legacy ties between academic institutes and government-run media outlets. While these relations provide students with access to established infrastructures and exposure to national media practices, they also suggest a reliance on traditional, state-centric modes of journalism that may not fully prepare students for the complexities of modern, digital-first media landscapes.

Equally noteworthy is the absence of formal academic collaborations with Pakistan’s leading private newspaper organizations, such as daily *Dawn*, daily *Jang*, daily *Dunya*, daily *The Express Tribune*, and daily *The News*. Despite their influence and journalistic prestige, these outlets appear to have no structured engagement with media departments, depriving students of critical exposure to investigative journalism and editorial depth.

Furthermore, international digital journalism platforms operating in Urdu, such as *BBC Urdu*, *DW Urdu*, *VOA Urdu*, *Urdu News*, *Arab News*, and *Al-Arabiya Urdu*, remain disconnected from

academic curricula and institutional partnerships (except *Independent Urdu*, which has been running the Indy Urdu In-Campus initiative⁴). This lack of engagement with both prestigious print and globally connected digital media suggests a serious gap in the current media education framework.

Action recommendations:

9a. Diversify and deepen local industry partnerships: Journalism, and communication studies departments should proactively seek to diversify industry partnerships beyond traditional state-owned broadcasters like *Radio Pakistan* and *PTV*. This includes establishing formal collaborations with leading private media groups (e.g., *Dawn*, *Jang*, *Dunya*, *Express Tribune*), as well as regional and community-based outlets. By engaging with these influential media outlets, students can gain critical exposure to investigative journalism and editorial depth, which are essential for a well-rounded media education. These collaborations should go beyond mere internships to include co-designed research/production projects, newsroom simulations, and skill-focused workshops.

9b. Engage with international media platforms: To bridge the gap with global best practices, departments should actively seek partnerships with international digital journalism platforms. Collaborations with *DW Urdu*, *BBC Urdu*, , *Arab News*, *Urdu News*, and *Independent Urdu* can provide students with valuable insights into global media practices and digital-first journalism. Similar partnerships should be established with local partners of international advertising agencies (e.g., *Adcom Leo Burnett*, *Ogilvy Pakistan*, *IAL Saatchi & Saatchi*, *Orient McCann*), film/documentary production houses (such as *SOC Films*, *AJ Docs*, *Vice Media*), and development communication actors (*Greenpeace*, *WWF*, *UNICEF*, to name a few). This will help prepare students for the complexities of modern media landscapes and enhance their adaptability in a rapidly evolving industry.

9c. Adopt the D-J-M model for curriculum innovation: Media studies departments should adopt the D-J-M model (Development sector experts, Journalism academics, and Media professionals) to ensure that their curricula are aligned with the latest media trends and industry practices. This involves incorporating courses on AI in journalism/advertising/production, fact-checking and verification tools, immersive storytelling, crisis/disaster communication, and platform-specific content strategies. By engaging industry experts in the course development process, departments can ensure that their programs remain relevant and responsive to the changing nature of the media and communication landscape.

⁴“Independent Urdu launches Indy Urdu In-Campus Initiative across Pakistan.” Daily City News, Oct 20, 2022. <https://citynews.com.pk/independent-urdu-launches-indy-urdu-in-campus-initiative-across-pakistan/15509/>

9d. Establish joint media innovation labs: Departments and partner media organizations should co-create Media Innovation Labs where students can experiment with emerging technologies—such as AR/VR storytelling, mobile journalism kits, AI-assisted editing tools, public relations and advertising campaign building tools, and produce publishable work under professional mentorship. These labs can serve as hubs for collaborative research, skill development, and rapid content prototyping.

10. Partnerships Between Media Studies Departments and Industry Representative Media Associations

This section presents data on the existence of formal collaborations between journalism, media, and communication studies departments in Pakistan and major professional media associations that represent various media industry sub-sectors such as the *Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA)*, *All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS)*, *Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE)*, *Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ)*, and local press clubs, to name a few.

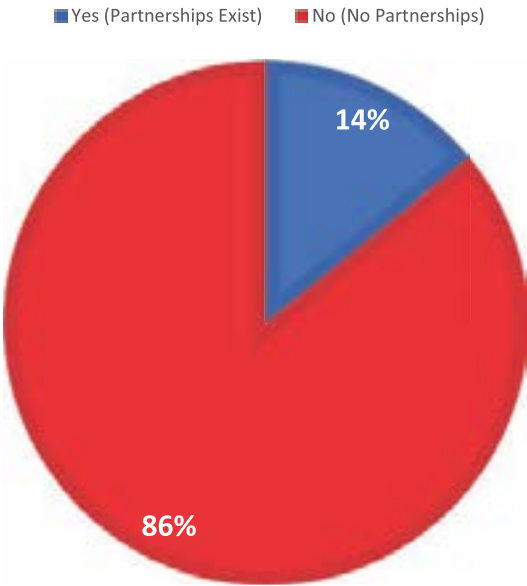
Table 26: Status of Institutional Partnerships B/W Media Departments & Media Associations

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Yes (Partnerships Exist)	13	14%
No (No Partnerships)	79	86%
Total	92	100%

The data presented in the table and Figure 10 highlight a substantial gap in institutional collaborations between the surveyed departments and professional media organizations involved in practical journalism, as well as other key areas of media practice, including film, public relations, and advertising. Among the 92 departments surveyed, only 13—representing a mere 14%— reported having formal partnerships with any such organizations. In contrast, an overwhelming 86% of departments indicated no existing collaborations, revealing a widespread disconnect between academic institutions and the media industry.

Figure 10: Status of Institutional Partnerships B/W Media Departments & Media Associations

PERCENTAGE OF INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS B/W MEDIA DEPARTMENTS AND MEDIA INSTITUTIONS



The absence of formal institutional linkages deprives students of critical opportunities for professional exposure, mentorship, hands-on training, and industry insights that are essential for understanding the evolving demands of journalism and media practice. Without direct engagement with established journalist bodies and media associations, academic programs risk remaining insulated and outdated, failing to equip students with the industry-world knowledge, ethical frameworks, labor rights, media policy debates, understanding of newsroom cultures from peers, and adaptive skills required in today's fast-changing media landscape. This disconnect also limits departments' access to practitioner input, curriculum enhancement, media codes of ethics development process, and job placement pipelines.

Action recommendations:

10a. Establish formal partnerships: Academic departments should proactively seek formal collaborations with professional media industry associations such as the Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ). These partnerships should go beyond ceremonial MoUs and include structured mentorship programs, students' trips to press clubs, joint ethics seminars, and exposure visits to newsroom meetings. These partnerships can provide students with essential professional exposure, , knowledge of journalists' rights/media laws, and media policy/advocacy debates, ensuring they are well-prepared for the demands of the media industry.

10b. Establish professional associations for popular and emerging media disciplines: Given that PR and Advertising are among the most frequently offered specializations, whereas Film/Drama and Performing Arts are emerging specializations in Pakistani media studies departments, it is imperative to create structured national-level professional associations for these disciplines as well. Academic departments in metropolitan cities can lead these initiatives by mobilizing alumni networks and providing the initial organizational and intellectual support. Unlike countries with established bodies such as the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the African Public Relations Association (AFPR), the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A's), or Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), Pakistan lacks similar professional bodies. These associations/media trade unions should serve as platforms for networking, professional development, policy advocacy, and industry training, enabling practitioners to enhance skills, uphold ethical standards, and influence sectoral growth.

10c. Engage media associations in curriculum and ethics development: Media industry associations should be actively engaged in the process of media academic curriculum development. Their input can help ensure that the curriculum remains relevant, incorporates

industry insights, collective wisdom, and trends, and addresses the evolving needs of the media landscape. This collaboration can also facilitate the development of media codes of ethics and enhance job placement pipelines for graduates.

10d. Facilitate collaboration through accreditation bodies: Provincial and national accreditation bodies, such as federal and provincial HECs, can play a pivotal role in institutionalizing collaborations between academic departments and media industry organizations. These bodies can create frameworks and support programs that encourage and facilitate partnerships, ensuring that academic training is aligned with industry realities and public interest imperatives, such as countering disinformation and that students receive comprehensive, applied education.

11. Internship Facilitation by Journalism and Media Studies Departments in Pakistan

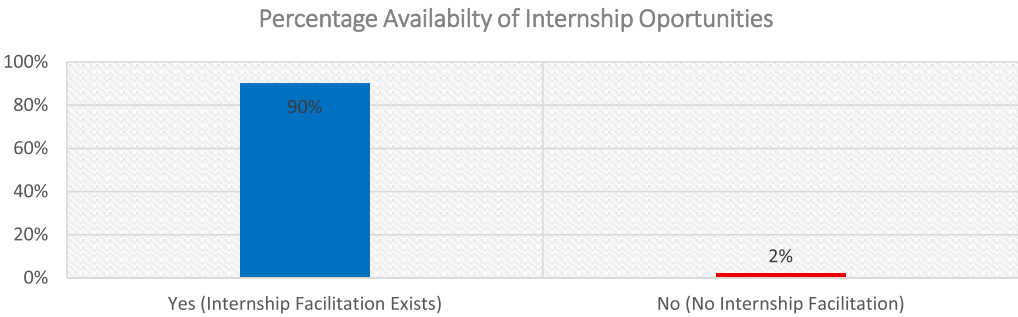
This section presents the number and percentage of journalism, media, and communication studies departments in Pakistan that actively facilitate their students in securing internships. Internship support is a vital bridge between academic training and professional readiness, enabling students to gain practical experience in real-world media environments during their studies.

Table 27: Internship Facilitation by Media/Journalism/Communication Studies Departments (N=92)

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Yes (Internship Facilitation Exists)	90	98%
No (No Internship Facilitation)	2	2%
Total	92	100%

The data presented in the Table and Figure 11 reveal that an overwhelming majority—98% of the 92 media and journalism studies departments surveyed—facilitate internships for their students, whereas only 2% reported no such facilitation. On the surface, this appears to be a highly encouraging statistic, suggesting that practical training through internships is widely recognized and incorporated into academic programming across media departments in Pakistan. It reflects an institutional awareness of the importance of experiential learning in professional fields such as journalism, public relations, TV production, development communication, and advertising.

Figure 11: Internship Facilitation by Media/Journalism/Communication Studies Departments (N=92)



However, while the near-universal presence of internship facilitation is commendable, this quantitative indicator alone does not provide insight into the quality, structure, or relevance of the internship experiences offered. For example, the data does not tell us whether the

internships are meaningfully integrated into the curriculum, whether students are placed in credible and diverse media outlets, or if there is any system of mentoring, feedback, or evaluation in place.

Furthermore, without corresponding institutional collaborations or formally inked MoUs with professional media organizations—as indicated in a previous dataset—these internships may be ad hoc or dependent on informal networks, limiting their educational value. Therefore, while the numerical finding reflects institutional intent, it should be interrogated further through qualitative measures to assess whether internship facilitation is translating into effective professional preparedness, industry exposure, and skill development for students.

Action recommendations:

11a. Enhance internship quality and structure: Academic departments should develop and implement standardized guidelines for internships with the media industry to ensure they are meaningfully integrated into the curriculum. This includes establishing criteria for credible and diverse media outlet placements, creating systems for mentoring, feedback, and evaluation, and ensuring that internships provide substantial professional exposure and skill development. Each internship can be accompanied by pre-placement orientation, mentorship during the placement, and post-internship reflective assignments/presentations or viva voce examination to ensure the experience translates into measurable skills.

11b. Establish formalized and diversified collaborations: Departments should actively pursue formal collaborations or MOUs with professional media houses to traditional journalism organizations, and with the emergent ecosystem of non-legacy, indie digital media platforms to podcast networks. This diversification will ensure that students are exposed to both established industry practices and innovative storytelling methods, shaping the future of media practice in Pakistan. These partnerships can help ensure that internships are not ad hoc but are part of a structured program that benefits both students and media organizations, where students contribute meaningfully to host organizations and receive structured guidance in return. Such collaborations can also facilitate the exchange of industry insights and best practices, enriching the academic experience.

11c. Conduct/implement qualitative monitoring/assessments: Academia can, with the assistance of media development organizations and alumni networks, pursue qualitative measures to assess the effectiveness of internship facilitation. This can include surveys, exit interviews, and focus groups with students, faculty, and media professionals to gather feedback on the quality, relevance, and skill impact of internships. Media departments should establish reliable monitoring mechanisms to ensure that students are consistently present and actively engaged at their assigned internship organizations. These assessments can help identify areas for

improvement and ensure that internship programs are effectively preparing students for professional careers in the media industry.

11d. Create centralized internship coordination units. Universities with media studies departments should consider establishing centralized internship coordination offices that maintain a vetted database of host organizations, track student placements, and manage partnership renewals. This will reduce reliance on informal faculty networks, increase placement equity among students, and strengthen the institutional memory of successful collaborations.

12. Existence of Student Exchange Programs with Local and Foreign Universities

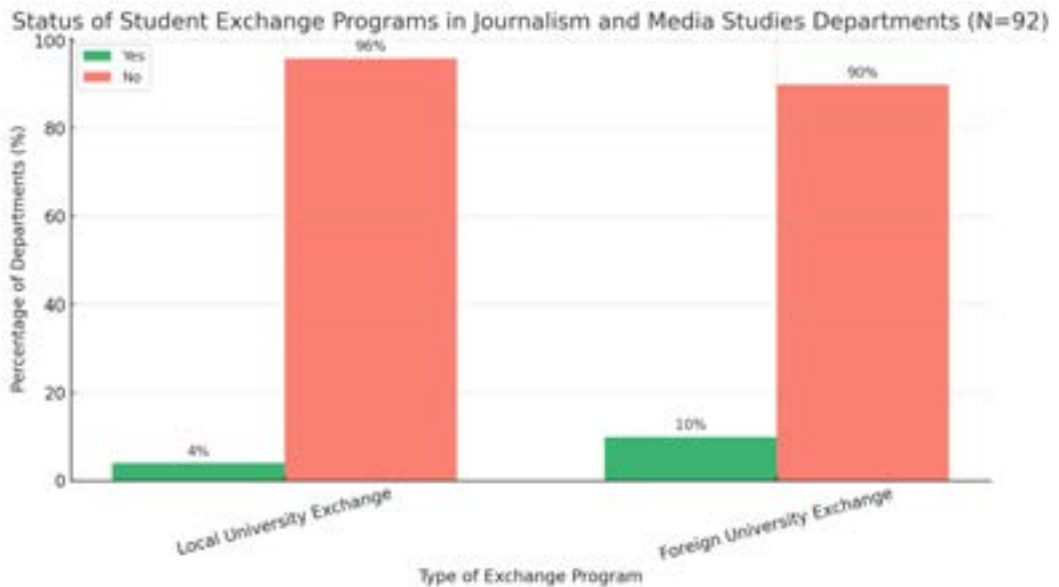
This section illustrates the extent to which media, journalism, and communication studies departments in Pakistani universities and colleges have established student exchange programs with local or international partner academic institutions. These programs are critical for supporting academic mobility, cross-cultural learning, and promoting global perspectives/competitiveness among students. The presence (or absence) of such programs also reflects the level of internationalization and institutional networking within the field.

Table 28: Status of Student Exchange Programs with Local and Foreign Universities (N=92)

Type of Exchange Program	Yes (Number of Departments)	Yes (%)	No (Number of Departments)	No (%)	Total
Local University Exchange	4	4%	88	96%	92
Foreign University Exchange	9	10%	83	90%	92

The findings presented in the Table and Figure 12 provide a concerning yet insightful snapshot into the limited institutional collaborations in Pakistan’s journalism, media, and communication studies departments. Only 4% of the departments have active student exchange programs with local universities, and just 10% maintain such partnerships with foreign universities. These numbers underscore a stark deficiency in academic mobility and cross-institutional learning inside the country’s media education landscape.

Figure 12: Presence of Student Exchange Programs with local and Foreign Academic Institutions



The absence of inter-institutional student exchange programs and academic collaborations in Pakistan—whether between public and private institutions, universities and colleges, or centrally located and peripheral departments—has led to a significant disconnect among students. This lack of academic mobility and shared learning experiences limits exposure to diverse teaching methods, technological resources, and professional networks. As a result, students from less-resourced or geographically marginalized institutions are often deprived of the academic enrichment, career opportunities, and peer learning that their counterparts in more established departments enjoy, further deepening the educational and professional divide within the country.

This lack of exchange programs—both national and international—directly hampers the institutional capacity to expose students and faculty to diverse pedagogical styles, professional standards, and emerging local and global trends in media and communication.

Most journalism and media departments in Pakistan appear to operate in academic silos, disconnected from broader knowledge networks and professional communities. Without meaningful academic exchanges, students miss opportunities to engage with peers from diverse institutional contexts, while faculty are deprived of collaborative research, curriculum innovation, and international exposure. This limits the departments' ability to align with international standards in journalism education, especially in fast-evolving domains such as digital journalism, science communication, data storytelling, immersive media, and media entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, in an age of globalized media and transnational communication challenges—ranging from disinformation to climate reporting—academic isolation also results in missed opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, participation in global forums, and funding access. The lack of integration with regional and global networks contributes to a slow response to innovations in media technologies and communication strategies.

Action recommendations:

12a. Develop and expand student exchange programs: Media and communication studies departments should prioritize the establishment and expansion of student exchange programs with both local and international partner institutions. This can be achieved by actively seeking partnerships and formalizing agreements that facilitate academic mobility, cross-cultural learning, and exposure to diverse teaching methods and technological resources. These programs should include short-term exchanges, semester-long placements, and virtual/hybrid exchanges to make participation accessible for students from geographically or economically disadvantaged institutions. These programs will help bridge the educational and professional

divide, providing students from less-resourced or geographically marginalized institutions with the same opportunities as their counterparts in more established departments.

12b. Integrate exchange into faculty development and curriculum innovation/alignment: To combat academic isolation, the departments should encourage and support collaborative research projects and curriculum innovation initiatives with other institutions, including counterparts within their regions. This can include joint research endeavors, co-teaching arrangements, and shared curriculum development efforts. By engaging with peers from diverse institutional contexts, faculty can gain international exposure and align their programs with global standards/trends, particularly in fast-evolving domains such as digital and data journalism, science communication, and media entrepreneurship.

12c. Institutionalize support through accreditation bodies and international organizations: Bodies like the HEC/PHEC and proposed media accreditation councils, in partnership with international organizations such as *IMS*, *UNESCO*, *UNDP*, *DW Akademie*, and others, can play a catalytic role in initiating and supporting bilateral and multilateral exchange frameworks. These organizations can provide funding, resources, and strategic guidance to facilitate academic exchanges and collaborations. Additionally, Pakistani embassies, cultural missions, and alumni networks abroad can be instrumental in building academic bridges and ensuring global connectivity.

12d. Monitor and evaluate exchange impact: Institutions should establish systems to track participant outcomes—including academic performance, skill enhancement, employability, and professional networking—after the exchange period. This data-driven approach will help justify continued investment, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate tangible returns for both students and faculty.

13. Willingness of Media Departments to Join the Coalition Against Disinformation (CAD)

This section presents the responses of departments surveyed regarding their willingness to become members of the Coalition Against Disinformation (CAD)⁵, a multi-stakeholder alliance of academia, media, and civil society that works to counter disinformation through educational interventions in Pakistan. The responses are categorized as “Yes,” “Maybe,” or “No” to reflect varying degrees of interest and commitment toward combating disinformation through academic collaboration and curricular engagement.

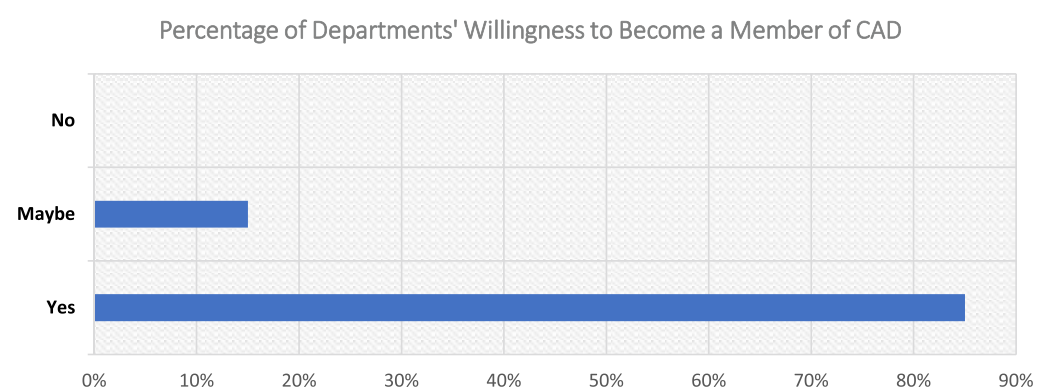
Table 29: Journalism/Media/Communication Departments’ Willingness to Join CAD Initiative

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Yes	78	85%
Maybe	14	15%
No	0	0%
Total	92	100%

The data presented in the table and Figure 13 reflect an overwhelmingly positive response from departments of media, journalism, and communication studies throughout Pakistan towards joining CAD. Out of the 92 departments surveyed, 78 (85%) expressed a clear willingness to become members, while the remaining 14 (15%) responded with “Maybe,” indicating a potential openness. Significantly, not a single department rejected the idea, which indicates a sector-wide recognition of the urgency and importance of addressing disinformation in the country’s evolving media and information landscape.

⁵ Coalition Against Disinformation. (2025, April 25). *Home-Coalition against Disinformation*. Available at <https://cadpk.com>

Figure 13: Willingness of Media/Journalism Departments to Join Coalition Against Disinformation (CAD)



This positive inclination is a strong indicator of a growing institutional awareness about the harmful impacts of online disinformation and the need for collaborative, knowledge-based responses. It also highlights the departments' motivation to build their internal capacity to tackle misinformation through evidence-based training, educational interventions, and critical engagement. The innovative initiative, CAD, being a multi-stakeholder coalition that includes academia, civil society, and media professionals, serves as an ideal platform for such engagement. Its offerings—ranging from research reports and learning resources to specialized training modules—present unique opportunities for these departments to align their curricula, student learning, and faculty research with pressing real-world challenges.

Furthermore, the data affirms that the academic community in Pakistan does not view the fight against disinformation as the sole responsibility of journalists or regulators but sees its own role as essential in producing resilient information ecosystems by equipping future journalists with research-based tools. By expressing a strong willingness to join CAD, these departments are positioning themselves at the forefront of promoting media literacy, supporting fact-based journalism, and contributing to national-level policy dialogues. Their engagement can strengthen CAD's mission and simultaneously benefit students, faculty, and broader media practices through access to updated knowledge, hands-on training, and global collaborations. This alignment between academia and professional initiatives like CAD is a promising and necessary step toward countering the complex, evolving challenge of disinformation in Pakistan.

Action recommendations:

13a. Formalize membership and active participation: Journalism, media, and communication studies departments can benefit enormously from formalizing their membership with the Coalition Against Disinformation (CAD), established by IMS, and actively participating in its

initiatives. This includes engaging in research projects, contributing to the development of educational resources, particularly curricula development, and hosting/attending CAD-led training sessions. By doing so, departments can build their internal capacity, for example, to tackle misinformation, embrace AI, and align their curricula with real-world challenges.

13b. Integrate CAD resources into curriculum: Academic departments can consider integrating CAD offerings, such as research reports, learning resources (e.g., fact-checking toolkits), and specialized (digital literacy) training modules and e-courses, developed by its partners such as *IMS, UNESCO, UNDP, DW Academie*, and others, into their curriculum. This can facilitate the students to receive evidence-based training and equip them with the tools needed to combat challenges such as disinformation. Incorporating these resources can also enhance students' critical thinking skills and their ability to engage with media literacy.

13c. Promote collaborative engagement and visibility, including a dedicated web portal for media education: Media studies departments can co-organize joint events with CAD, such as training workshops, awareness seminars, and networking conferences that bring together academia, media professionals, and civil society, along with media support groups. These events can facilitate knowledge sharing, promote best practices, and strengthen the collective effort to counter disinformation. Additionally, departments can encourage students to participate in CAD initiatives, providing them with hands-on experience and exposure to national-level policy dialogues. The departments and CAD should also collaborate in developing a dedicated web portal focused on the strengthening and professionalizing media education and departmental development that brings together ideas, knowledge resources, digital tools and partnerships to provide these endeavors visibility and voice.

13d. Evaluate and report impact: Academic departments should work with CAD to develop impact evaluation metrics, e.g., tracking improvements in student fact-checking skills, public awareness outcomes, and contributions to national disinformation response strategies. Publishing these results annually can demonstrate the tangible benefits of academia's role in countering disinformation, attract funding, and inspire more institutions to join.

14. Availability of Academic Journals in Media and Communication Studies Departments

To assess the research publishing capacity of academic departments, respondents were asked whether their department publishes an in-house academic journal. Running an in-house academic journal is paramount for departments in media, journalism, and communication studies because it provides a structured platform for faculty, researchers, and students to publish and circulate original research. The following section presents the distribution of responses, highlighting the extent to which departments have established their independent research publication platforms.

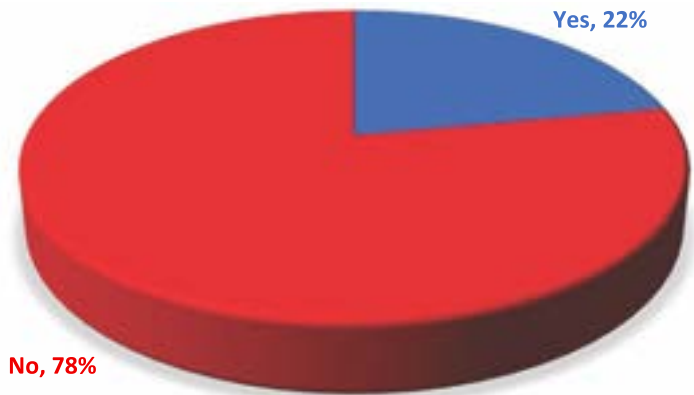
Table 30: Existence of In-House Academic Journals in Communication Studies Departments

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	16%
No	77	84%
Total	92	100%

The findings from Table and Figure 14 clearly illustrate a concerning trend in the academic publishing landscape of media/journalism/communication studies departments in Pakistan. Out of 92 departments surveyed, only 15 (16%) reported having their in-house research journal, while a striking 84% (77 departments) indicated that they do not run any such academic publication. This sharp imbalance suggests a significant institutional gap in terms of promoting a vibrant research culture in the media and communication disciplines. The absence of in-house journals in a majority of institutes may limit both faculty and students from engaging in regular scholarly publishing, which is essential for knowledge production, peer exchange, and academic growth.

Figure 14: Existence of In-House Academic Journals in Communication Studies Departments (N=92)

PERCENTAGE AVAILABILITY OF DEPARTMENTAL IN-HOUSE RESEARCH JOURNALS



In the context of media and communication studies, having an in-house journal is more than just a prestige marker—it serves as an intellectual platform for promoting indigenous research, documenting critical debates on evolving media trends, and encouraging early-career researchers to publish in accessible forums. These journals can also enhance the visibility of local media scholarship, especially in areas underrepresented in global research, such as vernacular media, community journalism, development communication, or digital misinformation in the developing countries context.

Moreover, editorial experience and peer-review practices associated with journal management can significantly build departmental capacity in academic publishing and research ethics. In simpler terms, in-house journals serve as valuable training grounds for students in editing, peer review, and academic publishing — all critical skills for future scholars and media professionals. The current data, therefore, indicates an area in need of strategic development, calling for institutional support to build editorial capacities, encourage and incentivize faculty engagement, and create sustainable publication models within departments. This step would significantly contribute to strengthening the academic backbone of media education in the country.

Action recommendations:

14a. Establish and support in-house journals: Academic departments should prioritize the establishment of in-house academic journals, preferably in digital, open-access formats, to minimize costs and maximize reach. This involves providing the necessary resources, training, and support to faculty and students to manage and contribute to these journals. These can be

single-department initiatives or joint ventures between universities to pool resources and broaden thematic coverage. These journals can serve as platforms for publishing original research, promoting indigenous scholarship on underrepresented areas of media research in Pakistan, including vernacular journalism, development communication, community/mobile media, regional digital ecosystems, and documenting critical debates on evolving media trends. By doing so, departments can help build a vibrant research culture and enhance the visibility of local media scholarship.

14c. Build editorial and peer-review capacities: Departments can focus on building editorial and peer-review capacities among faculty and doctoral students. Workshops on how the publishing world works, mentorship programs with well-published scholars, and collaborations with established journals in media/communication studies (national or international) can help develop a skilled editorial team capable of maintaining rigorous quality standards. Developing these skills/initiatives is essential for maintaining high standards of research ethics and quality in academic publications. Additionally, editorial experience can significantly contribute to the professional growth of students and early-career researchers.

14c. Incentivize faculty engagement and sustainable publication models: To ensure the sustainability of in-house journals, departments should develop incentive packages—such as workload recognition, research grants, and career advancement points—for faculty contributing to editorial work, reviewing manuscripts, or leading/guest-editing special issues. At the same time, in-house media studies journals should work toward indexation in national and international databases (e.g., DOAJ, Scopus, HEC-recognized lists) to enhance credibility and visibility. By promoting a supportive environment, departments can create sustainable publication models that contribute to the academic growth, media studies scholarship, and development of research-oriented media education in Pakistan.

14d. Establish partnerships for global visibility: Media studies departments should actively collaborate with reputable international academic networks, authors, and publishing platforms to secure seed funding, co-authorship, and technical/intellectual expertise. Such partnerships could facilitate issuing special editions of international journals or joint publications focused on issues of the Global South, providing talented local scholars with much-needed global exposure. They would also spotlight locally designed research on pressing regional issues, bringing it to the attention of international audiences. In addition, these collaborations can support the adoption of modern publishing practices, maintain regular publication cycles, and expand readership beyond both regional and global academic communities.

15. Availability of Public Access to Student/Faculty Research by Media Studies Departments

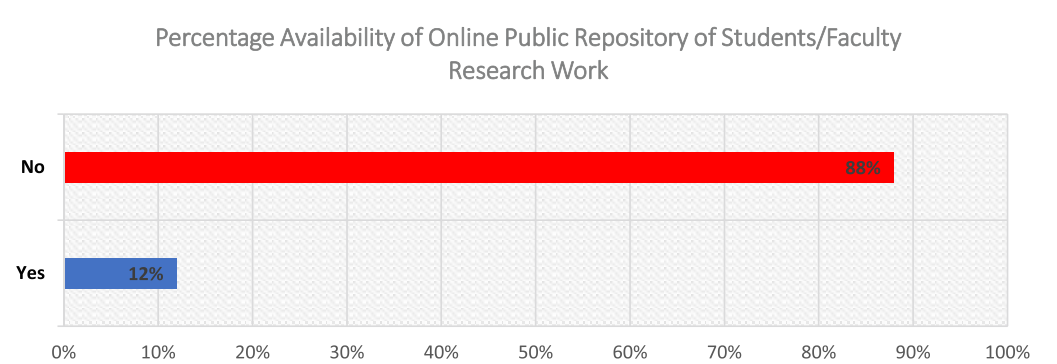
This section presents the number and percentage of departments that offer public access to student and faculty research work, including theses, dissertations, research reports, and research articles in the form of an online public repository. Making research publicly accessible is a key indicator of academic transparency, knowledge sharing, and a department’s commitment to contributing to the global body of media and communication scholarship.

Table 31: Online Availability of Student/Faculty Research/Theses in Media Studies Departments

Response	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Yes	11	12%
No	81	88%
Total	92	100%

The findings in the Table 15 and Figure 15 present a sobering picture of the current state of research visibility and academic openness among media, journalism, and communication studies departments. Only 12% of the 92 departments surveyed (n=11) reported having any form of public research repository, while a staggering 88% (n=81) lack such a facility altogether. This wide gap indicates that the overwhelming majority of departments are failing to meet basic global academic standards related to transparency, research dissemination, and open access—normative practices that are especially critical in media and communication disciplines, where public engagement and knowledge exchange are central goals.

Figure 15: Availability of a Public Repository of Student/Faculty Research Work by Departments



Even among the few departments (12%) that claim to maintain public repositories, deeper scrutiny reveals several critical structural and functional issues/shortcomings. Some repositories

are not updated regularly and fail to reflect recent academic activity, reducing their relevance and usefulness. Others do not provide full-text access to theses, research papers, or faculty publications, offering instead only metadata or summaries. This restricted access undermines the very purpose of a repository—to facilitate open access to scholarly work.

A few departments have made their repositories accessible only to internal users, such as their own students or faculty, contradicting the notion of public knowledge dissemination. Perhaps most markedly, one department simply listed the titles of recent faculty publications without providing downloadable links or further details—hardly qualifying as a genuine research repository. This tokenism not only reflects a lack of commitment to research transparency but also suggests institutional inertia in adopting modern academic practices.

Unless media and communication departments proactively invest in properly structured, regularly maintained, and genuinely accessible digital repositories, they risk marginalizing their own academic contributions. Given the emphasis on critical media literacy and evidence-based communication in today's information society, public access to institutional research must be seen not as optional, but essential.

Action recommendations:

15a. Establish comprehensive and accessible public repositories: Journalism, media, and communication studies departments should prioritize creating well-structured and comprehensive public repositories that provide full-text access to theses, dissertations, research reports, and faculty publications. These repositories must be regularly updated to reflect recent academic activity and ensure their relevance and usefulness. By making research publicly accessible, departments can promote academic transparency, knowledge sharing, and position their scholarship within the global body of media and communication research.

15b. Implement standardized repository management practices: Departments should adopt standardized practices for managing their repositories, including defined and regular update schedules, full-text availability, and unrestricted public access. This involves providing training and resources to faculty and staff responsible for repository management/oversight, ensuring that the repositories are well-maintained and genuinely accessible. By doing so, departments can enhance the visibility and impact of their research contributions.

15c. Encourage institutional commitment to research transparency: To build a culture of research transparency, departments should encourage and incentivize faculty and students to contribute to the public repository. This can include recognizing and rewarding contributions to the repository, providing research grants, and creating collaborative research opportunities.

Following best practices in advanced countries, no thesis or dissertation should proceed to public defense unless it has first been uploaded to the department's public, open-access repository. This ensures transparency, promotes knowledge sharing, and strengthens the culture of academic accountability. By promoting a commitment to research transparency, departments can ensure that their academic contributions are widely disseminated and accessible to the broader academic community and the public.

15d. Build digital capacity and link to global visibility platforms: Media departments should seek technical support, funding, and partnerships to develop repositories using globally recognized open-access frameworks. Linking repositories to platforms like Google Scholar, DOAJ, and the HEC Pakistan Research Repository will ensure international discoverability. Partnerships with global media research networks can further amplify the reach of locally produced scholarship.

16. Availability of Practical Media Facilities in Communication Studies Departments

The section presents the number and percentage of departments (out of 92 surveyed) that reported having key media production and communication facilities, such as in-house FM radio stations, TV studios, student-run newspapers or magazines, and digital media labs. These resources are essential in providing hands-on, practical training to students and promoting media literacy and content production skills critical for contemporary journalism and communication education.

Table 32: Availability of Key Facilities in Media/Communication Studies Departments (N=92)

Facility Type	Number of Departments	Percentage (%)
Radio Station	39	42%
TV Production Studio/Lab	15	16%
Student Newspaper/Magazine/News Website	50	54%
Digital Media/Podcast Production Studio/Lab	52	57%
None of these facilities	8	9%

The findings presented in the table reflect a mixed landscape regarding the availability of in-house media-related facilities across the 92 surveyed departments of media, journalism, and communication studies. While some foundational infrastructure exists, there are evident shortfalls when assessed against the professional demands of a rapidly evolving media industry.

Radio stations are available in 42% of the departments, which, though noteworthy, also indicates that more than half of the departments lack access to this basic broadcast facility. This limitation could hinder students' exposure to live audio journalism, scripting, sound editing, and voice training—skills fundamental to both traditional and digital storytelling.

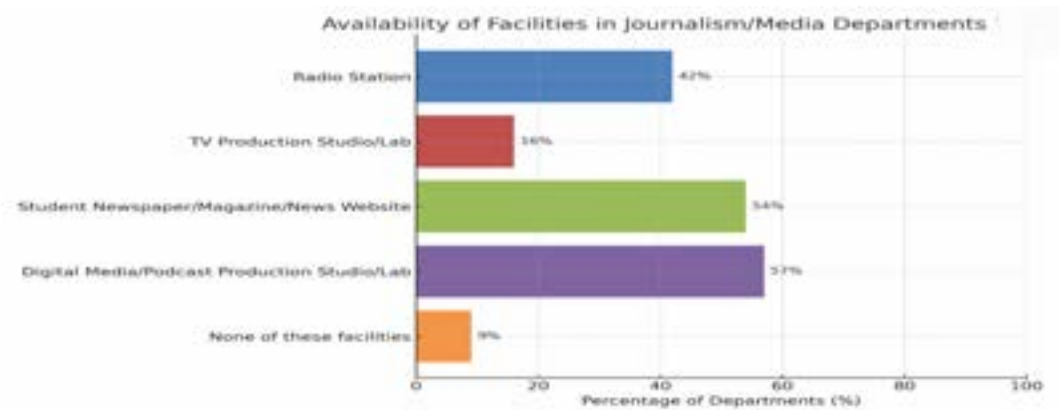
The situation is even more constrained when it comes to TV production studios, which are present in only 16% of departments. This is a stark indicator that many departments are ill-equipped to provide adequate training in visual storytelling, video production, and on-camera reporting—competencies that are indispensable in today's multimedia newsrooms.

On a relatively positive note, 54% of departments offer student-run newspapers, magazines, or news websites, which reflects a relatively strong engagement with print and online editorial practices. These platforms are essential for fostering journalistic writing, editing, and newsroom management skills among students. The most encouraging finding, however, is that 57% of departments now report having digital media or podcast production studios and labs. This shift toward digital infrastructure signals a positive adaptation to the evolving media landscape, where

podcasting, multimedia content creation, and digital storytelling are becoming dominant forms of communication. This trend also suggests that departments are beginning to respond proactively to the demands of a convergent media environment and the growing consumption of on-demand digital content by younger audiences.

However, the data also reveals that 9% of departments lack all of the surveyed facilities—a worrisome gap that suggests a segment of institutions is severely under-equipped to train students in any practical domain of media production. This absence potentially deprives students in those departments of any meaningful experiential learning opportunities, which are critical for bridging the gap between theory and practice in media education. The limited presence of TV studios and the absence of any facilities in some departments underscore the need for targeted investments and policy-level interventions to ensure more equitable access to media training infrastructure.

Figure 16: Percentage Availability of Key Facilities in Media Studies Departments (N=92)



Overall, while the presence of digital media and podcasting facilities marks a progressive shift, the broader picture points to uneven development and a need for greater institutional commitment across the board. Collaborative support from university administrations, media industry stakeholders, and governmental or donor agencies could play a vital role in addressing these gaps and ensuring that students in all departments are equally prepared for their future professional roles in a rapidly changing media environment.

Action recommendations:

16a. Prioritize investment in comprehensive media training infrastructure: University administrations, media industry stakeholders, and governmental or donor agencies should collaborate to invest in comprehensive media training infrastructure across all departments. This

includes establishing in-house FM radio stations, TV studios, and digital media labs to ensure students receive hands-on, practical training in various media production skills. Importantly, these facilities must be developed with sustainability plans—covering maintenance, staffing, and integration into the curriculum—to ensure long-term usability. Such investments will help bridge the gap between theory and practice, preparing students for the demands of a rapidly evolving media industry.

16b. Enhance access to digital media facilities: Given the encouraging expansion of digital media and podcast facilities, departments should further strengthen this trend by equipping labs with state-of-the-art multimedia production tools, editing software, and immersive storytelling technologies. Specialized training workshops in multimedia journalism, mobile reporting, and digital content strategy should accompany these upgrades, enabling students to meet the demands of convergent media and respond to the growing appetite for on-demand and interactive content.

16c. Promote equitable access to media resources: To address the uneven development of media-related facilities on the Pakistani academic landscape, media development actors like IMS, UNESCO, UNDP, DW Akademie, and others should support the departments in pursuing policy-level interventions that promote equitable access to media resources. This can include providing targeted funding and support to departments that lack essential media production facilities, ensuring that all students have equal opportunities for experiential learning. By fostering a more balanced distribution of resources, stakeholders can help create a more inclusive and effective media education ecosystem.

16d. Build faculty and student capacity for effective facility use: Infrastructure alone is insufficient without trained faculty and motivated students. Departments should implement structured training programs for faculty and lab staff to maximize the pedagogical use of facilities. Similarly, student-led initiatives (e.g., campus radio shows, online magazines, or collaborative digital storytelling projects) should be formally integrated into coursework. This will not only ensure that facilities are fully utilized but also cultivate creativity, teamwork, and media entrepreneurship skills.

SECTION C: ROADMAP FOR MODERNIZING MEDIA EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN: SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the key findings of this survey and action recommendations outlined in the earlier sections, the following roadmap is proposed for relevant stakeholders to facilitate the process of revamping media and communication studies in Pakistan. These recommendations collectively aim to modernize media education in Pakistan, ensuring it is equitable, globally competitive, and responsive to broader national needs:

1. Strengthen institutional distribution of media studies departments: Media education should grow equitably between the public and private sectors. Public sector departments require enhanced resources, faculty development, and infrastructure upgradation, while incentives should encourage private sector expansion, particularly in underserved regions such as Baluchistan, AJK, and Gilgit-Baltistan. Specialization should be promoted across both sectors to diversify programs, improve competitiveness, and address sustainability challenges.

2. Steer the growth trajectory of media education: As departments expand, curricula must align with industry trends/needs, embedding modules on digital storytelling, AI-driven tools, and multimedia production. Public–private institutional collaborations—through shared projects, faculty exchanges, and student mobility—can pool resources and broaden perspectives. Growth should also prioritize underserved regions, using sub-campus and distant learning tools to train local influencers and content creators. Investment in faculty capacity, accreditation mechanisms, and pedagogical innovation will sustain quality while keeping pace with technological change.

3. Strengthen digital presence in media education: To enhance the digital presence of media studies departments, it is crucial to invest in webpage quality and maintenance, develop independent departmental websites, and focus on improving digital visibility in underserved regions. This can be achieved by regularly updating departmental webpages with essential academic and operational details, creating standalone websites for each department, and providing necessary resources and support to departments in peripheral regions. Beyond websites, departments should use social media to engage stakeholders through blogs, podcasts, webinars, and alumni networks, positioning themselves as thought leaders in journalism and communication studies.

4. Enhance accreditation for quality media education: To ensure consistent and credible quality assurance in higher education, it is essential to strengthen provincial accreditation processes,

promote dual accreditation, and facilitate continuous improvement and compliance. This can be achieved by providing adequate resources to provincial HECs, encouraging both federal and provincial accreditation, and implementing regular audits and professional development opportunities. The possible inclusion of media associations in accreditation councils can build a more responsive quality assurance ecosystem.

5. Enhance journalism department capacities: Public sector departments must improve faculty–student ratios, curricula, and facilities to handle high enrolments without sacrificing quality. Curricula should be more practice-oriented, offering industry-aligned modules and experiential learning opportunities. Scholarship schemes and outreach programs can expand access for marginalized groups, while stronger industry linkages will improve graduate employability and retention.

6. Diversify and contextualize academic programs: Departments must expand program offerings to include new specializations/courses such as science communication, AI-assisted journalism/advertising/content production, development communication, and crisis/disaster communication. Programs should be informed by market needs assessments to avoid oversupply in saturated fields. Research capacity should be strengthened through dedicated centers, competitive grants, and partnerships with development actors, producing scholarship with both policy relevance and innovation impact. Virtual programs and outreach initiatives should ensure rural and remote students benefit from advanced training.

7. Institutionalize media literacy and expand partnerships: Dedicated courses on disinformation, fact-checking, and Media and Information Literacy (MIL) should be mainstreamed into curricula with regulatory support. Faculty require training to deliver these courses effectively, supported by exchange programs and adopting global pedagogical models. Collaborations with organizations like CAD, IMS, UNESCO, UNDP, and DW Akademie can develop localized content, simulation-based exercises, and multilingual e-courses. Such reforms will prepare students to tackle misinformation and strengthen democratic discourse in the country.

8. Promote gender inclusion in media education: Co-educational models should be promoted/expanded for gender inclusion, with pilot programs and awareness campaigns to reduce resistance in conservative areas. At the same time, girls-only departments must be strengthened with modern facilities, partnerships, and professional pathways for women. All departments should integrate gender-sensitivity and inclusivity training into curricula, preparing graduates for gender-diverse workplaces and supporting parity in the country’s media sector.

9. Deepen partnerships with media houses: Departments must diversify partnerships beyond state-owned broadcasters to include private, regional, and community outlets. Collaborations

should go beyond internships to include newsroom simulations, co-designed projects, and skill-focused workshops. Partnerships with international media/advertising/documentary-making platforms and development communication sector projects can expose students to global best practices. Innovation can be accelerated through joint Media Innovation Labs, where students experiment with emerging technologies under professional mentorship.

10. Collaborate with professional media associations: Departments should build structured partnerships with associations like PBA, APNS, CPNE, and PFUJ, ensuring students are exposed to professional ethics, media/labour laws, newsroom cultures, and policy debates. Associations should be involved in curriculum development and accreditation frameworks. At the same time, emerging disciplines such as PR, advertising, film, and performing arts require the establishment of dedicated professional bodies to provide structured growth, training, and advocacy platforms.

11. Improve internship structures and monitoring mechanisms: Internships should be standardized with clear criteria, mentoring, and evaluation systems to ensure meaningful learning. Collaborations must expand beyond traditional news outlets to digital-first and non-legacy media. Departments should monitor placements through feedback systems and centralized internship coordination units that maintain vetted databases of partner organizations. Alumni and development organizations can assist in evaluating internship quality and outcomes.

12. Expand student and faculty exchange programs: Student and faculty exchanges with local and international institutions should be formalized through agreements, offering both physical and virtual mobility opportunities. These programs will reduce isolation, enhance cross-cultural understanding, and align curricula with global standards. Accreditation bodies and international organizations can facilitate such programs with funding and strategic support. Institutions must also monitor exchange outcomes to demonstrate impact and ensure long-term sustainability.

13. Strengthen journalism education through expanding and collaborating with Coalition Against Disinformation (CAD): To enhance journalism education, it is crucial to expand and formalize membership with the Coalition Against Disinformation (CAD), integrate CAD resources into curricula, co-host events on disinformation/digital literacy, and promote collaborative engagement. This can be achieved by actively participating in CAD initiatives, incorporating the Coalition's research and training modules into academic programs, and organizing joint events to foster knowledge sharing and counter disinformation.

14. Support academic excellence through in-house journals: Departments should establish digital, open-access journals—either independently or collaboratively—to promote and highlight indigenous scholarship. Editorial capacity must be built among faculty and doctoral students

through training and mentorship. Faculty engagement should be incentivized, and journals should aim for indexation in reputable databases. International partnerships can help secure funding and co-publishing opportunities, enhancing global visibility for local scholarship and spotlighting Global South perspectives.

15. Promote research transparency through public access to research outputs: To enhance research transparency and accessibility in media education, it is crucial to establish comprehensive public repositories, implement standardized management practices, and encourage institutional commitment. This can be achieved by regularly updating repositories with full-text access to academic work, providing training for repository management, and incentivizing contributions from faculty and students. To get in line with international best practices, no thesis should proceed to defense without prior repository publication.

16. Build a practical media training infrastructure: Investments are needed to establish comprehensive training facilities—FM stations, TV studios, and digital labs—across all departments, supported by sustainability plans. Digital media labs should be upgraded with cutting-edge tools for multimedia journalism, AR/VR storytelling, and podcast production. Equity must be ensured through targeted support for under-resourced departments, while structured faculty and student training will maximize facility use. Integrating hands-on projects into coursework will foster creativity, teamwork, and media entrepreneurship.

This 16-point roadmap provides a holistic modernization framework. It balances structural reforms (distribution, accreditation, infrastructure), curricular updates (digital literacy, MIL, AI), inclusivity (regional and gender equity), and global integration (exchange programs, publishing partnerships). Collectively, these steps can make Pakistan's media education globally competitive, nationally relevant, and locally inclusive.

SECTION D: ANNEXURES

Annex 1 - List of Institutions

└─ Baluchistan (03 Universities, 0 College)
1. Baluchistan University, Quetta
Department of Media Studies
2. BUIITEMS, Quetta
Department of Mass Communication
3. Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University, Quetta
Department of Media & Journalism
└─ Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) (01 University, 0 College)
1. Karakoram International University-Gilgit
Department of Media & Communication
└─ Sindh (18 Universities, 0 College)
University of Sindh, Jamshoro
Department of Media & Communication Studies
Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur
Department of Media & Communication Studies
Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Benazir Abad
Department of Media & Communication Studies
Sukkur IBA University
Department of Media & Communication
University of Karachi
Department of Mass Communication

Indus University-Karachi
Department of Media Studies & Design
Sindh Madressatul Islam University, Karachi
Department of Media & Communication Studies
SZABIST-Karachi Campus
Department of Media Science
Federal Urdu University-Karachi Campus
Department of Mass Communication
Iqra University-Karachi Campus
Department of Media Studies
Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi
Centre for Excellence in Journalism
Greenwich University, Karachi
Department of Media, Art & Design
Habib University, Karachi
School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
ILMA University, Karachi
Department of Media Science
Jinnah University for Women, Karachi
Department of Media Studies
Salim Habib University, Karachi
Department of Social Sciences & Humanities
Ziauddin University, Karachi

College of Media Sciences
Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVS)
Department of Communication Design
— Federal Capital – Islamabad (13 Universities, 0 College)
Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU)
Department of Mass Communication
Bahria University
Department of Media Studies
COMSATS University-Islamabad Campus
Department of Humanities
Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science & Technology
Department of Mass Communication
Abasyn University-Islamabad Campus
Department of Management and Social Sciences
Foundation University, Islamabad
Department of Arts & Media
International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI)
Department of Media & Communication Studies
National University of Modern Languages-Islamabad Campus
Department of Media and Communication Studies
National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST)
Department of Mass Communication
Riphah International University

Riphah Institute of Media Sciences
SZABIST-Islamabad Campus
Department of Media Sciences
Virtual University of Pakistan
Department of Mass Communication
Iqra University-Islamabad Campus
Department of Media Studies
└ Punjab (43 Universities, 11 Colleges)
The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
Department of Media & Communication Studies
Thal University of Bhakkar
Department of Communication & Media Studies
Government College Women University, Faisalabad
Department of Media & Communication Studies
Government College University, Faisalabad
Department of Mass Communication
GIFT University, Gujranwala
Department of Mass Communication & Media Studies
University of Gujrat
Centre for Media & Communication Studies
Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Lahore
School of Media and Mass Communication
Forman Christian College (FCC) University, Lahore

Department of Mass Communication
Government College (GC) University, Lahore
Department of Media Studies
Institute of Art & Culture (IAC), Lahore
School of Digital and Cinematic Art
Lahore College for Women University (LCWU)
Department of Mass Communication
Lahore Garrison University
Department of Mass Communication
Lahore Leads University
Department of Mass Communication
Minhaj University, Lahore
School of Media & Communication Studies
Rashid Latif Khan University, Lahore
Department of Media & Communication
Superior University, Lahore
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Central Punjab (UCP), Lahore
Faculty of Media & Mass Communication
University of Home Economics-Lahore
Department of Media & Communication Studies
The University of Lahore (UOL)
School of Creative Arts

University of Management & Technology (UMT)-Lahore
School of Media & Communication Studies
University of South Asia, Lahore
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
University of the Punjab-Lahore Campus
Department of Digital Media
University of the Punjab-Lahore Campus
Department of Public Relations & Advertising
University of the Punjab-Lahore Campus
Department of Film & Broadcasting
University of the Punjab-Lahore Campus
Department of Media & Development Communication
University of the Punjab-Lahore Campus
Department of Communication & Media Research
University of the Punjab-Lahore Campus
Department of Journalism Studies
COMSATS University-Lahore Campus
Department of Media & Communication Studies
National University of Modern Languages (NUML)-Lahore Campus
Department of Media and Communication Studies
Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU), Multan
Institute of Media & Communication Studies
Emerson University, Multan

Department of Media, Creative Arts & Global Political Studies
University of Southern Punjab, Multan
Department of Mass Communication
The Women University, Multan
Department of Mass Communication
Kohsar University, Murree
Department of Mass Communication & Media Studies
University of Narowal
Department of Mass Communication & Media
University of Okara
Department of Media & Communication Studies
Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), Rawalpindi
Department of Communication & Media Studies
Rawalpindi Women University (RWU)
Department of Media & Communication Studies
National University of Modern Languages (NUML)-Rawalpindi Campus
Department of Media and Communication Studies
University of Sargodha
Department of Communication & Media Studies
University of Sialkot
Department of Media & Communication Studies
National College of Arts (NCA)-Lahore
Faculty of Film & Television

Lahore School of Economics (LSE)
Department for Media Studies, Art and Design
Colleges (11)
Govt. MAO Graduate College, Lahore
Department of Communication Studies
Govt. Islamia Graduate College for Women-Cooper Road, Lahore
Department of Media and Communication Studies
Govt. Graduate College Gulberg, Lahore
Department of Communication Studies
Govt. Graduate College for Women-Gulberg, Lahore
Department of Media and Communication Studies
Govt. Queen Mary Graduate College, Lahore
Department of Communication Studies
Govt. Graduate College of Science-Wahdat Road, Lahore
Department of Mass Communication
Govt. Graduate College for Women-Township, Lahore
Department of Communication Studies
Govt. Graduate College-Township, Lahore
Department of Mass Communication
Govt. Dyal Singh Graduate College-Lahore
Department of Media Studies
Govt. Fatima Jinnah Graduate College for Women-Chuna Mandi, Lahore
Department of Communication Studies

Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore
Department of Media Studies
└─ Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (09 Universities, 0 College)
University of Peshawar
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
Hazara University, Mansehra
Department of Communication & Media Studies
Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST)
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Malakand, Lower Dir
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Swat
Department of Media & Communication Studies
Women University of Swabi
Department of Journalism & Mass Communication
Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak
Department of Communication & Media Studies
Iqra National University, Peshawar
Department of Media Studies & Mass Communication
Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan
Department of Journalism & Mass Communication
└─ Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) (02 Universities, 0 College)
The University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir

Department of Journalism & Mass Communication
Mirpur University of Science & Technology (MUST)
Department of Mass Communication

“The department names highlighted in green shared their data in response to a questionnaire prepared on Google Forms, whereas the others remained unresponsive.”

IRADA

Institute for Research, Advocacy, and Development (RADA), is an independent social enterprise aimed at catalyzing participatory reforms and development through innovative research, proactive policy strategies, and vigorous capacity building initiatives. Registered as a company limited to shares with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), the organization endeavors to promote inclusivity and pluralism governance and information, freedom of expression and media development, and the rule of law and access to justice.

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- governance and information through support for right to information transparency and open government;
- freedom of expression and media development through support for professionalism in media, safety of journalists and enabling laws for free speech;
- rule of law and access to justice through support for fundamental rights and equality before the law.



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