Article

Digital Deadlines: Time Pressure and Workflow Challenges for Multimedia Journalists in Malaysia

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Abstract: The digital era has significantly transformed Malaysian TV newsrooms, establishing cross-platform journalism as a standard for delivering real-time content across television, web portals, and social media. While this shift creates new opportunities for audience engagement, it also introduces acute time pressures and complex workflow challenges. This study examines the strategies and coping mechanisms employed by Multimedia Journalists (MJs) in navigating digital deadlines and cross-platform demands, with a focus on how these pressures shape their professional practices in ensuring timely and accurate news delivery. Guided by Galtung and Ruge's (1965) News Value Theory, adapted to reflect digital complexities, this qualitative study employs interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 purposively MJs from four TV newsrooms in Malaysia. Data saturation was achieved, offering rich insights into their lived experiences. Findings reveal two key superordinate themes essential to MJs' effectiveness. The first, adaptive professionalism, encompasses cross-platform planning and proactive news engagement. The second theme, journalistic imperative, highlights their deep professional commitment, driven by intrinsic motivation, reputational stewardship against misinformation, and strict professional discipline. This study provides valuable insights for media organizations to better support MJs in balancing speed, accuracy, and ethical standards in Malaysia's rapidly evolving digital news landscape. Future research could further investigate newsroom interventions or conduct cross-cultural comparisons to expand understanding of these challenges.

Keywords: Multimedia journalist; digital journalism; cross-platform journalism; interpretative phenomenological analysis; newsroom

Introduction

The phenomenon of digital convergence has fundamentally reshaped journalistic practices, particularly within Malaysian television (TV) newsrooms (Esa, 2024). The traditional silos between broadcast, print, and digital platforms have dissolved, compelling journalists to transition into multimedia journalists (MJs) (Al-Zoubi et al., 2025). In this new role, they are tasked with producing, editing, and disseminating news content for cross-platform including television, websites, and social media often simultaneously (Gushevinalti & Suparman, 2024). This evolution, while creating unprecedented opportunities for storytelling, has also introduced significant challenges related to time pressure and workflow management.

This research systematically investigates the implications of these digital deadlines on the professional practices of MJs in Malaysia. Specifically, it explores the strategies and coping mechanisms journalists employ to navigate the dual pressures of time and a constantly shifting workflow. Past studies have highlighted the dynamic challenges confronting contemporary journalists, particularly in adapting to technological shifts and evolving public expectations (Shofiyannajah & Subechi Nurcahyo, 2023).

To address these research question, a qualitative study was conducted using in-depth interviews with 20 MJs from four mainstream Malaysian TV newsrooms. These newsrooms were selected for their prominence in the national media landscape and because their journalists have experienced a profound transition from traditional broadcast roles to multimedia roles in response to the demands of the digital environment. This shift has markedly expanded their responsibilities, requiring them to manage multiple roles, such as videographer, writer, and social media producer under stringent deadlines that test their endurance and efficiency (Esa et al., 2024).

Despite these formidable challenges, MJs consistently demonstrate a remarkable level of professional dedication. Their commitment is not merely a reaction to job demands but stems from a deep conviction in the societal value of their work (Hayes & O' Sullivan, 2024). As custodians of public information, they are steadfastly dedicated to ethical reporting while upholding the reputation of their respective media organizations (Salamon, 2024). Many MJs credit their journalism education and extensive field experience with cultivating the discipline necessary to navigate the often-chaotic nature of modern news production.

By analysing how MJs organize their workflow, plan coverage, and manage time pressure, this research provides critical insights into the shifting dynamics of contemporary newsroom operations. The objective is to underscores the enduring tension between the imperatives of speed and accuracy that defines digital journalism in Malaysia and illuminates the resilience of professionals who consistently strive against temporal constraints to keep the public informed.

Literature Review

The digital transformation of the news industry has reshaped journalistic practices in Malaysia, placing a unique set of pressures on multimedia journalists (MJs) (Esa et al., 2022). In this evolving landscape, MJs are no longer confined to single-platform reporting (Banjiwo, 2022). Instead, they are required to produce, edit, and disseminate news across a fragmented media ecosystem that includes television, websites, and social media (Himma & Ivask, 2024). This shift has created a demanding work environment defined by digital deadlines and significant workflow challenges, which are reflective of but also distinct from global trends (Arumugam & Sarmiti, 2024).

A central characteristic of this transformation in Malaysia is the adoption of a social media-first workflow. News stories often break on platforms like Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) before being fully developed for traditional media (Esa, 2024). This practice, while aimed at maximizing audience reach and immediacy, has introduced considerable tension into Malaysian newsrooms. For instance, Mustaffa et al. (2017) found that MJs are often expected to manage the entire news production process from gathering information in the field to publishing on multiple platforms, under extremely tight deadlines. This pressure is further compounded by a generational divide, where senior journalists, accustomed to traditional broadcast routines, may struggle to adapt to the real-time demands of social media, unlike their younger counterparts who are digital natives (Taibi & Na, 2020).

The shift toward a social media-first workflow has become a defining characteristic of journalism in Malaysia. This operational change is not without internal challenges. As Esa (2020) highlighted, a notable generational divide exists in Malaysian newsrooms, where senior journalists, accustomed to traditional broadcast cycles, often struggle to adapt to the real-time demands of social media. Conversely, younger, digitally native MJs are more comfortable with this fast-paced, multi-platform environment. Furthermore, this workflow is intensified by shifting audience preferences. Modern consumers increasingly rely on social media platforms for news, prioritizing immediacy and content shared by peers over traditional media outlets (Araujo & van der Meer, 2020). Consequently, MJs in Malaysia are pressured to prioritize social media publishing to maintain audience relevance and engagement. However, this need for speed introduces a critical risk to

journalistic integrity. In addition to the generational divides and workflow shifts, the multi-platform demands of digital journalism introduce another layer of complexity for Malaysian multimedia journalists (MJs). This high-speed, multi-platform workflow, which often begins with a "social media-first" approach, requires exceptional multitasking abilities and rapid editorial judgment.

Altay et al. (2024) identifies various forms of false and misleading content, from fabricated stories to manipulated visuals, which thrive in a fast-paced digital environment. The pressure to meet digital deadlines in Malaysia can lead to a compromise in the essential verification process, increasing the risk of publishing inaccurate or unverified information. This is a particularly critical challenge in a diverse society where the spread of false information can quickly escalate and threaten social harmony (Andika et al., 2025).

Moreover, this study adopts Galtung and Ruge (1965) News Value Theory to examine the time pressure and workflow challenges faced by Multimedia Journalists (MJs) in Malaysia's digital newsrooms. The theory identifies key news values which are threshold, frequency, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, and composition, which have traditionally guided news selection and production. Among these, values such as frequency and unexpectedness remain highly relevant, particularly in the current digital era where speed and immediacy dominate newsroom routines.

However, Galtung & Ruge's (1965) framework was developed in the context of traditional media and does not fully reflect the complexities of digital-first journalism. Today, MJs often follow a social media-first workflow, publishing news first on platforms such as Twitter or Facebook, followed by news portals, television, and occasionally print newspapers. To address this gap, the study incorporates Ittefaq (2018) updated perspective on News Value Theory, which recognizes additional pressures such as virality, interactivity, and algorithmic visibility in digital journalism. By integrating these perspectives, the study provides a more comprehensive framework to explore how MJs navigate digital deadlines and manage workflow challenges across multiple platforms.

Methodology

This qualitative study employed an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) to explore the lived experiences of multimedia journalists (MJs) regarding digital deadlines and workflow challenges. This methodological choice is particularly suited for understanding the subjective meanings participants ascribe to their experiences, aligning with the study's objective to delve into the 'how' and 'what' of their professional lives (Castle et al., 2022).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and a purposive sampling strategy was utilized to select 20 MJs from four Malaysian broadcast media organizations: Astro AWANI, Media Prima Berhad, BernamaTV, and Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM). These organizations were chosen due to their leading role in Malaysia's mainstream media ecosystem and their pivotal engagement in cross-platform digital news production. Participants varied in professional experience, ranging from junior reporters to senior broadcast journalists and editors, ensuring a diverse representation of newsroom roles and newsroom experiences. Demographic information such as years of experience, department, and job roles was recorded to enhance contextual understanding of participant backgrounds. Recruitment continued until data saturation was reached, defined as the point at which no new themes or insights emerged from subsequent interviews, ensuring the depth and completeness of findings (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

The interpretative phase of the IPA analysis involved a meticulous and iterative process of data exploration (Bayer, 2024), as conceptually illustrated in Figure 1. NVivo 12 software was employed to assist in organizing and coding the data systematically. A three-level coding strategy was applied: (1) initial open coding to identify relevant units of meaning, (2) axial coding to refine connections among emergent ideas, and (3) selective coding to synthesize core themes. Verbatim quotes were extracted to support interpretations and summarized into thematic tables. An independent rater cross-checked coded data to enhance validity and reliability (Srivastava et al., 2024).

Analysis revealed strong thematic consistency across participants, suggesting shared challenges and coping strategies regardless of demographic or professional differences. Quality assurance adhered to four IPA quality indicators proposed by Nizza et al. (2021), supported by audit trails, member checking, expert

consultation, and triangulationdata (Wan Zainodin et al., 2022). The inclusion of illustrative excerpts further strengthened transparency and interpretative credibility.
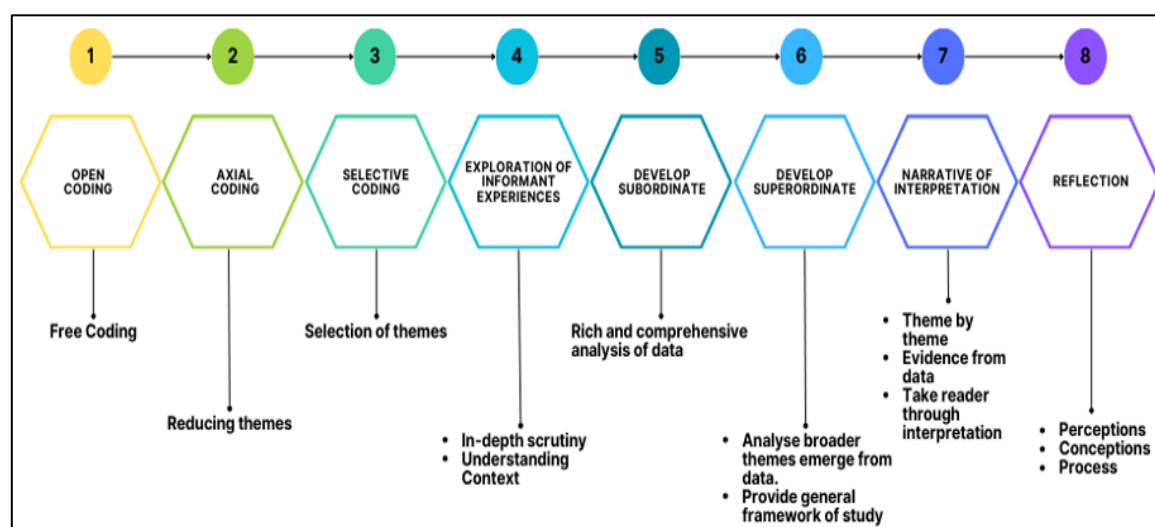

Figure 1. IPA process chart

The Findings and Discussion

The role of MJs has undergone profound transformation in recent years, driven by the evolving demands of contemporary journalism. This transformation has seen MJs evolve into versatile professional's adept at adapting to and managing a diverse range of responsibilities across various media platforms (Ganzabal Learreta et al., 2023). In the context of this study, these platforms include not only traditional broadcast channels, such as television and radio, but also the dynamic digital landscape, encompassing social media and websites. This adaptability is critical for navigating the complexities of modern news production. The findings deliberated two (2) superordinate themes and five (5) subordinate themes as in Table 1.

Table 1. Strategies and coping mechanisms to manage time pressure and digital workflow demands.

Superordinate Themes	Subordinate Themes
Adaptive Professionalism	Cross-Platform Planning
	Proactive News Engagement
Journalistic Imperative	Intrinsic Drive and Purpose
	Reputational Stewardship
	Professional Discipline

1. Adaptive Professionalism

This study reveals a significant shift in the professional practices of multimedia journalists (MJs), who have transitioned from specialised reporters to versatile content creators. This evolution is a direct response to the demands of a multi-platform media environment, which requires content to be published across both traditional and digital channels.

To effectively navigate this complex landscape, MJs have adopted a strategy of adaptive professionalism. This approach is characterized by meticulous planning and foresight, enabling them to produce content that is tailored for diverse audiences and platforms. For instance, a single-story idea is strategically developed to resonate with television viewers, website readers, and social media followers. This proactive planning is crucial for optimizing workflow, reducing last-minute stress, and ensuring the continued quality and integrity of their journalistic work (Kim, 2023).

Moreover, MJs have also developed a heightened situational awareness and keen news judgment to identify potential stories in a hyperconnected world. They are constantly scanning for newsworthy events and possess the ability to recognize compelling narratives even in unexpected settings. This proactive engagement is crucial for capturing unfolding events and ensuring timely reporting (Feng, 2024). Ultimately, this adaptive

professionalism which characterized by strategic planning and acute news judgment, is central to the MJs' ability to navigate the challenges of the digital news environment and shape contemporary journalistic practices.

The findings reveal that multimedia journalists (MJs) in Malaysia have developed a form of adaptive professionalism to navigate the complexities of digital deadlines and multi-platform demands. This superordinate theme of adaptive professionalism is underpinned by two key subordinate themes: cross-platform planning and proactive news engagement.

Cross-Platform Planning

Malaysian multimedia journalists (MJs) have developed a form of adaptive professionalism, fundamentally altering their workflow through meticulous Cross-Platform Planning. MJs integrate long-standing news values such as frequency and timeliness with digital expectations for immediacy and multi-platform tailoring (Galtung & Ruge, 1965; Ittefaq, 2018). Their workflow reveals a strategic approach to content repurposing: one story is conceptualised for television, social media, and news portals simultaneously which is a practice in recent convergence studies (Wold, 2023). MJs have moved beyond simply reporting the news to becoming highly skilled at crafting narratives that are specifically designed for different audiences and media channels.

The interviews show a significant paradigm shift from the role of a traditional broadcast journalist (BJ), who focused solely on television, to the modern MJ. Informants consistently highlighted the increased workload and the necessity of being a "digital-first" professional. One MJ described this transformation, stating,

> *"Our main duty is reporting the news, but now we focus more on social media. The shift to mobile journalism increased our responsibilities slightly. We must be digital-first, then move to TV, tweeting updates and sometimes doing live broadcasts on social media."*
>
> (MJ2, Media Prima Berhad)

The workload intensification described by MJs echoes broader concerns about digital labour and newsroom acceleration. This sentiment underscores how the primary point of news dissemination has moved online, forcing journalists to adapt their entire process. Another informant admitting that the constant demands can be overwhelming:

> *"We handle live Facebook broadcasts, social media updates, photos, and videos on-site. It can be overwhelming, especially for big stories. We feel guilty if we can't assist the office, as it's our duty."*
>
> (MJ13, Astro AWANI)

Despite the added burdens, the majority of MJs view these changes as a positive evolution of their profession. The need to be multiskilled and adaptable has made them more equipped to meet the diverse needs of contemporary audiences (Kusumawati, 2023). The ability to multitask has emerged as a critical survival skill. As one MJ articulated:

> *"They gather news, read it, report live, and manage social media. It's challenging but necessary. Resilience and quick thinking are essential for excelling in TV and social media."*
>
> (MJ16, RTM)

These accounts highlight how *frequency* and *threshold* in the digital age are amplified by real-time pressures—news must be published immediately to maintain relevance within algorithmic cycles. Yet, rather than perceiving this shift solely as a burden, many MJs frame it as a productive expansion of professional skills. As MJ18 noted:

"Times are changing, and reporters' tasks are increasing in a good way, enhancing our skills. We have to multitask, which is beneficial if we switch to a new job at another agency ."

(MJ18, BERNAMA TV)

This suggests that the adaptability required in the current media landscape offers MJs greater career versatility. While the methods of news delivery have diversified, MJs are keenly aware that their fundamental duty remains unchanged. One informant provided a broader perspective, emphasizing the balance between new technology and core journalistic principles.

"Today's journalism is different from a decade ago with evolving technology. We face new challenges and must adapt. The workload has increased, but our core duty remains: reporting the truth."

(MJ9, Media Prima Berhad)

This perspective highlights that the adaptability required of MJs is not merely about embracing new technology but also about balancing technological adeptness with traditional journalistic ethics.The findings indicate that Malaysian MJs have proactively embraced a multi-platform approach, where meticulous planning and multitasking are paramount. This transformation has not only made them more resilient and efficient but has also enriched their professional roles. Their ability to navigate the complexities of cross-platform delivery while upholding their core responsibility to report the truth is a testament to their dedication in a rapidly evolving digital world.

Proactive News Engagement

The findings indicate that multimedia journalists (MJs) in Malaysia have developed a heightened sense of proactive news engagement to meet the demands of a dynamic digital landscape. This approach involves a refined ability to perceive and respond to real-time news environments, leading to a profound shift in their workflow and responsibilities (Panagiotou et al., 2022).

In an interconnected world where anything can become newsworthy, MJs have honed their news judgment to identify potential stories in unexpected settings. This heightened situational awareness is critical for capturing unfolding events and ensuring no significant development goes unreported. The interviews reveal that MJs now act as their own cameramen and photographers, constantly looking for content that can be leveraged across platforms. One MJ noted this shift during a Prime Minister's assignment:

"We're more alert during the Prime Minister's assignments, capturing videos and photos to ensure we don't miss any stories. This lets us quickly tweet updates. In the past, we focused solely on his speech, but now we're as busy as the cameraman."

(MJ10, BERNAMA TV)

"During the Prime Minister's speech, I share captivating parts on TikTok, often reaching the 'For You Page' (FYP). I prefer TikTok for its high engagement. Mainstream media must follow trends and educate the public."

(MJ14, Astro AWANI)

These quotes demonstrate a shift from conventional news gathering toward hybridised content production, where journalists merge the criteria of traditional newsworthiness with platform algorithmic logic, particularly TikTok's preference for short, visually catchy content. This further exemplifies Ittefaq's (2018) emphasis on virality and interactivity as contemporary determinants of news value. Proactive engagement also includes crowdsourcing and audience-driven content refinement:

"On digital platforms, lighter content is preferred. For TV news, we focus on essential facts. If something viral happens, we include it online. We must stay alert and creative, being vigilant from the moment we arrive."

(MJ5, RTM)

This agility allows them to create compelling multimedia content that resonates with online audiences. Proactive news engagement also extends to direct interaction with the audience (Arisanty et al., 2020). Social media provides MJs with a two-way communication channel that facilitates not only news dissemination but also real-time feedback. MJs use this engagement to gain a pulse on public sentiment and even to crowd-source information articulated by an informants:

> *"As multimedia journalists, our workload increased. We handle multiple tasks and must stay alert and creative. Social media provides valuable information for our stories and lets us interact with followers to understand their preferences."*
>
> (MJ17, Media Prima Berhad)

> *"Two-way communication lets us crowd-source information. Ordinary people often have valuable insights. Social media's comment and reply functions make it easier to get the information we need."*
>
> (MJ19, Astro AWANI)

The findings also reveal a blurring of the lines between work and personal life due to the constant demands of the 24/7 news cycle. MJs feel a profound sense of commitment, often monitoring news sources even during their time off to ensure they don't miss a breaking story. This was exemplified by an MJ's account of a flood:

> *"Even after official work, we stay alert. During the Shah Alam flood, I monitored Fire and Police WhatsApp groups to ensure we didn't miss important news. This shows our passion and commitment in a 24-hour news environment."*
>
> (MJ1, BERNAMA TV)

The findings demonstrate that proactive news engagement is a core component of the modern MJ's skill set. This entails a heightened situational awareness for capturing diverse content, a creative approach to platform-specific storytelling, and a deep, continuous commitment to a 24/7 news cycle.

2. Journalistic Imperative

Despite the challenges of media convergence, Malaysian multimedia journalists (MJs) demonstrate a strong journalistic imperative, an unwavering blend of enthusiasm and professionalism, that drives them to excel in their roles. This imperative is anchored in three key drivers: Intrinsic Drive and Purpose, Reputational Stewardship, and Professional Discipline. MJs view their work not merely as a job but as a commitment to the public sphere (Banjiwo, 2022). Their enthusiasm is fuelled by a deep-rooted passion for journalism as a profession, which empowers them to navigate long hours, evolving technologies, and quick shifts in consumer behaviour (Kalogeropoulos et al., 2024).

This intrinsic drive serves as a moral compass, guiding their adherence to core journalistic principles of accuracy, impartiality, and clarity. They see themselves as custodians of the public's right to know, a sense of duty that motivates them to adapt and innovate in their roles. In an age of rampant misinformation, MJs are acutely aware of their role as gatekeepers of reliable and authenticated news (Han, 2024). As long-standing participants in Malaysia's mainstream media landscape, they understand the value of their accrued reputation capital.

Preserving this reputation is seen as a social responsibility, and their commitment to upholding public trust underpins their enthusiasm for embracing the challenges of their evolving roles. The study also highlights professional discipline as a key factor. MJs continuously enhance their skills, ensuring their reporting meets the high standards expected of mainstream journalism. This diligence, sustained by passion and commitment, allows them to not just cope with but thrive in the age of media convergence.

Intrinsic Drive and Purpose

The findings reveal that Malaysian multimedia journalists (MJs) are driven by a powerful intrinsic drive and purpose, which allows them to effectively navigate the complexities of their profession. This commitment is not a mere professional obligation; it is an ethical imperative that underpins their resilience and adaptability.

MJs view their roles as a profound commitment to the public sphere. They are guided by an unwavering allegiance to core journalistic principles, such as accuracy, impartiality, and clarity (Lopezosa et al., 2023). This sense of duty serves as a moral compass, steering them through the challenges of cross-media reporting and inspiring them to continually improve their skills. One MJ articulated this sentiment by saying:

> *"I see new challenges as career growth opportunities. This transformation has made me a more versatile and empathetic journalist. As part of mainstream media, we are the people's voice, reporting and addressing public issues."*
>
> (MJ12, Astro AWANI)

This perspective highlights how they see themselves as custodians of the public's right to information, a role that amplifies their drive to adapt and innovate. Moreover, this intrinsic drive is also the key to MJs' technological adaptability. The study found that their commitment to informing the public pushes them to master new tools and platforms. They have quickly acclimated to using smartphones and video-conferencing tools like Zoom and Google Meet for reporting, as one MJ noted:

> *"We now use smartphones and tools like Zoom, Skype, and Google Meet for live reports and reactions. These platforms are essential, especially during the pandemic, replacing field interviews. We've adapted quickly to these digital tools."*
>
> (MJ6, BERNAMA TV)

This adaptability is not a forced reaction but a proactive measure to ensure they remain efficient and reliable sources of information in an ever-connected world. Furthermore, this drive motivates MJs to proactively engage with emerging social media trends. They actively research and understand what resonates with different demographics on platforms like TikTok and Facebook, not just to stay current, but to better inform the public. An MJ shared:

> *"Using social media taught me each platform's traits. TikTok has quick interactions, and Facebook has the highest engagement rate in Malaysia. My boss often asks me to find TikTok content or track viral stories for the younger demographic."*
>
> (MJ4, Media Prima Berhad)

This proactive approach demonstrates their commitment to staying ahead of the curve, ensuring that news is not only accurate but also timely and relevant to a diverse audience.

Reputational Stewardship

Malaysian multimedia journalists (MJs) are highly aware that their actions, both professional and personal, directly impact the credibility of their organization and their own standing. This awareness compels them to uphold high standards, particularly in a landscape rife with misinformation. MJs operate under intense pressure to minimize errors while delivering content instantly across multiple platforms, including live television and social media (Esa, 2024). They understand that a single mistake can quickly damage both their personal and their organization's reputation. As one MJ articulated:

> *"As mainstream media, we must protect our reputation. We're often live on TV and digital platforms, so readiness is crucial. We must minimize errors as our duties include social media, field reporting, and story creation."*
>
> (MJ3, RTM)

This vigilance underscores a deep-seated commitment to maintaining credibility in the face of demanding digital deadlines. The reputation of the journalist is inextricably linked to the news organization, making their vigilance a professional imperative.

The MJs in this study are also aware that public scrutiny extends beyond their professional roles to their personal lives. They recognize that their conduct on social media, even in a personal capacity, can reflect on their professional standing. One journalist noted:

"Being well-known as TV3 journalists has pros and cons. It helps with recognition from agencies and authorities but also brings criticism and scrutiny. This status teaches us discipline and the importance of maintaining good behavior."

(MJ7, Media Prima Berhad)

This sense of public scrutiny instills a strong need for discipline and careful behavior, as the line between personal and professional identities has become increasingly blurred. For MJs, ethical conduct is paramount to reputation management. In an era of "fake news," they view their role as purveyors of reliable information as more critical than ever. Adhering to journalistic ethics is not just a professional obligation but a vital way to fortify their reputation against the spread of misinformation. Two MJs highlighted this, stating:

"As a journalist, my duty extends beyond information. It's about promoting core values, critical thinking, and combating fake news. Our writing shapes the political landscape. In the digital age, we help create responsible journalists."

(MJ20, RTM)

"Journalistic ethics, to me, means the responsibility to convey accuracy, truth, and timeliness. Many unqualified reporters on social media lack this responsibility, but we must uphold our reputation and good name by ensuring accurate reporting."

(MJ8, Astro AWANI)

This dedication to ethical reporting is a key pillar of their professional identity and a core strategy for maintaining trust in a saturated media environment.

Professional Discipline

The transition from traditional broadcast journalism to a multimedia role requires more than just technical skill; it demands a significant shift in mindset and workflow (Salawu et al., 2022). MJs highlighted that discipline is the key to managing this transformation and ensuring they remain effective. One MJ stated;

"Commitment and discipline are crucial for success. Habits form when we consistently follow the same steps. Whether it's adapting to changing roles or any task, discipline is essential for making it work."

(MJ15, BERNAMA TV)

This shows that discipline is a practical tool for building consistent work habits, which are necessary for handling increased responsibilities. Another MJ described how discipline helps them manage the entire news production process:

"Discipline is key. With early press releases and event schedules, we can construct news stories while waiting on assignments. With experience, we know the workflow. Despite increased work and technology changes, following the right flow ensures smooth operations."

(MJ11, RTM)

This proactive approach prevents chaos and ensures a smooth, efficient process.In the fast-paced, technology-driven news environment, MJs recognize that a disciplined approach to planning is a matter of

professional survival. They must prioritize accuracy over the viral spread of a story, which requires careful and organized work. One informant noted,

> *"With fast-moving technology and new platforms, we must ensure accuracy, not just chase viral stories. As journalists, it's our responsibility. This has made me more organized and disciplined. To avoid being frantic, plan well."*

(MJ7, Media Prima Berhad)

> *"Discipline is crucial and makes me a good planner. I draft my work daily to avoid rushes. On-site, I focus on capturing important visuals and record everything first, deciding how to process the news later."*

(MJ14, Astro AWANI)

This method of methodical preparation and strategic execution allows them to maintain high standards of journalism, even under the pressure of digital deadlines. In essence, professional discipline is not merely an optional trait but a fundamental requirement for MJs. It enables them to adapt to new work practices, manage time effectively, and maintain the integrity of their reporting in a rapidly evolving professional landscape.

Conclusion

This study offers critical insights into the experiences of Malaysian multimedia journalists (MJs) navigating accelerated digital news cycles. Rather than being passive recipients of external pressures, MJs demonstrate a form of adaptive professionalism, driven by strong journalistic values, intrinsic motivation, reputational responsibility, and disciplined work ethics. Their resilience is evident in their ability to manage cross-platform content production, strategically plan workflows, and stay responsive to real-time developments and audience interactions. Despite increasingly compressed deadlines, MJs maintain a commitment to accuracy and ethical practice, underscoring the enduring relevance of core journalistic principles in a digital-first media landscape. These findings affirm that the ability of Malaysian MJs to balance speed with credibility is grounded in deeply held professional beliefs about journalism's societal role.

The study contributes to academic discourse on digital journalism and offers practical guidance for news organizations. Media institutions should prioritize supportive newsroom cultures that enhance professional autonomy, mental well-being, and continuous digital skills development. Structured training and resource support can strengthen journalists' capacity to navigate rapid workflows without compromising quality. Future research could adopt quantitative methods to broaden generalizability and examine long-term psychological implications of perpetual connectivity and blurred work-life boundaries. Further exploration of newsroom leadership and organizational culture may illuminate how institutional structures mediate stress and productivity. Comparative studies across Southeast Asia would also provide a regional perspective on how MJs adapt to similar technological and cultural pressures, enriching global understandings of digital news work.

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