Architecture
Image Studies

Media Convergence in the Era of Digital Disruption: Visual News Strategies on Kabar Makassar's Social Media

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Abstract

The rapid development of digital technology has reshaped the media ecosystem and transformed patterns of news consumption. Local media organizations are therefore required to adapt through media convergence and visual content innovation. This study examines media convergence, visual news strategies, and audience engagement at Kabar Makassar as a case of local journalism in the era of digital disruption. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving editorial, multimedia, and social media teams. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings show that convergence at Kabar Makassar is realized through cross-divisional collaboration integrating editorial production, multimedia practices, and platform-based distribution. Visual strategies such as short videos, visual slides, and infographics enhance accessibility, interaction, and public responsiveness across TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts. The study concludes that local media sustainability depends on convergence, visual journalism, and participatory engagement.

Keywords: *Media Convergence, Content Visualization, Digital Journalism, Audience Engagement, Participatory Culture.*

Introduction

The rapid advancement of communication technology in the era of digital disruption has fundamentally reshaped the media ecosystem and transformed how the public produces, accesses, and engages with news content. Increasing internet penetration and the dominance of social media platforms have shifted audiences from passive consumers to active participants who select, modify, and redistribute information. Consequently, traditional power relations between media producers and audiences have become increasingly fluid, positioning audiences simultaneously as content recipients and content creators (Sutrisno, 2023). This transformation has altered the logic of news consumption, particularly as platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have emerged as primary sources of journalistic information for digital audiences (Ibrahim & Irawan, 2021).

In Indonesia, these changes are reinforced by the rapid growth of digital media use. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2023) indicate that more than 196 million Indonesians are connected to the internet, reflecting a nationwide shift toward digital information consumption. Meanwhile, GoodStats, (2024) reports that over 85 percent of Indonesians consume video content daily, with TikTok and Instagram dominating public attention. These patterns compel media organizations to adopt adaptive strategies that integrate editorial practices, digital technologies, and multi-platform content distribution. Failure to respond to this transformation risks marginalizing traditional media forms, particularly local media organizations that operate under limited economic and technological resources.

Within this context, media convergence has become a central strategy for journalistic survival and innovation. Jenkins, (2006) conceptualizes media convergence not merely as technological integration,

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but as a broader cultural and industrial transformation that connects production processes, participatory culture, and cross-platform content circulation. In the Indonesian media landscape, convergence practices are increasingly visible in both national and regional newsrooms, where short-form videos, digital infographics, and interactive storytelling are adopted as new modes of journalistic expression (Amal, 2022). At the same time, digital disruption reshapes newsroom structures, accelerates production workflows, and encourages experimentation with cross-platform communication strategies (Saptorini et al., 2022).

Previous studies indicate that convergence practices have begun to develop within local news organizations. Aminuddin & Hasfi, (2020) demonstrate how local print media integrate editorial and digital distribution systems to maintain relevance in the digital era. Mukti, (2023) further emphasizes that technological and content convergence serves as a key driver of communication transformation. However, existing research predominantly focuses on organizational or technological integration, paying limited attention to how convergence materializes in visual news production, particularly short-form videos and visual slides that dominate contemporary social media platforms.

This limitation is significant because local media play a crucial role in strengthening public information literacy and regional civic participation. Yet empirical research examining how local media operationalize convergence through visual news content especially on highly visual platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube Shorts remains scarce. Current literature often treats media convergence and visual communication strategies as separate analytical domains, leaving a gap in understanding their interrelationship within the local media ecosystem.

This study addresses this gap by analyzing how *Kabar Makassar*, a digital-first local media organization established in 2009, implements media convergence through visual news strategies on social media. As one of the most active regional newsrooms in Eastern Indonesia, *Kabar Makassar* has adopted short videos, visual slides, and infographic-based storytelling as part of its digital transformation. Nevertheless, this adaptation also presents challenges, including the need to strengthen human resources, develop sustainable digital business models, and maintain journalistic quality amid algorithm-driven production pressures.

The novelty of this research lies in its integration of media convergence theory Jenkins, (2006) with visual communication theory (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) , positioning convergence not only as an organizational transformation but also as a visual production strategy that shapes audience engagement. Unlike previous studies that examine convergence primarily at structural or conceptual levels, this research offers a platform-specific analysis of how visual news strategies contribute to audience interaction, credibility building, and participatory culture in local digital journalism.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine: (1) media convergence strategies applied by *Kabar Makassar* in the era of digital disruption; (2) the processes and forms of visual news content implemented across its social media platforms; and (3) how these strategies influence audience engagement and digital performance. Theoretically, this study contributes to digital journalism scholarship by linking convergence and visualization within the context of local media. Practically, the findings are expected to provide strategic insights for regional news organizations seeking to enhance sustainability and innovation amid intensifying digital competition.

Literature Review

Media Convergence in Local and National Media Contexts

Media convergence has been widely discussed as a strategic response to digital disruption within journalism. Jenkins, (2006) conceptualizes convergence as a cultural, technological, and industrial transformation that integrates production processes, multiplatform distribution, and participatory audience practices. In the context of journalism, convergence enables news organizations to repurpose content across platforms while restructuring newsroom workflows to accommodate digital demands.

Empirical studies in Indonesia demonstrate that convergence practices are increasingly adopted by both national and local media. Amal, (2022) documents how Serambi Indonesia implements convergence by integrating editorial production with digital platforms to maintain audience relevance. Similarly, Aminuddin & Hasfi, (2020) show that local newspapers such as Jateng Pos adopt convergence strategies by combining print journalism with online and social media distribution. Fadillah et al., (2022) further reveal that local media organizations like Pikiran Rakyat and AyoBandung.com apply convergence as an adaptive strategy to survive digital competition. These findings confirm that convergence has become a structural necessity rather than a strategic option for local journalism.

However, Astuti et al., (2025) argue that convergence also introduces tensions, particularly for print-based media transitioning into digital environments. Their postmodern analysis highlights how convergence reshapes journalistic identity and challenges traditional news values. Despite these insights, existing studies largely emphasize organizational and technological integration, offering limited examination of how convergence manifests in specific content forms, particularly visual news strategies on social media platforms.

Visual Journalism, News Visualization, and Digital Storytelling

The dominance of social media has intensified the role of visual communication in journalism. Freixa et al., (2021) argue that interaction and visualization constitute a central binomial in digital news media, where visual elements are no longer supplementary but fundamental to news consumption and user engagement. In highly visual platforms, news visualization becomes a narrative strategy that structures meaning, attention, and interaction.

Huang et al., (2023) demonstrate that visual storytelling significantly enhances audience engagement in digital journalism by increasing emotional connection and information recall. Similarly, Amal, (2022) and Mukti, (2023) note that short-form videos, infographics, and visual slides have become dominant formats in converged newsrooms, reflecting both platform logic and audience preferences. These developments align with the broader shift toward video-centered consumption patterns in Indonesia, where more than 85 percent of users consume video content daily (GoodStats, 2024).

Despite growing attention to visual journalism, most studies address visualization as a technical or aesthetic practice rather than as an outcome of media convergence. As a result, the relationship between organizational convergence and visual news production remains underexplored, particularly in the context of local digital media.

Audience Engagement and Participatory Media Culture

Digital platforms have transformed audience engagement from passive exposure into interactive participation. Dvir-Gvirsman, (2022) proposes a media repertoire approach to understanding news engagement on social media, emphasizing that audience interaction is shaped by platform affordances and content formats. Kim (2024) further highlights that audience engagement in the digital age involves multidimensional interactions, including emotional, behavioral, and social responses.

In local journalism contexts, participatory culture plays a critical role in sustaining community relevance. Pignard-Cheynel & Amigo, (2023) show that European local news media increasingly adopt audience-inclusion initiatives to rebuild trust and interaction. Shin & Miller, (2025) conceptualize audience engagement as a dynamic process involving continuous interaction between journalists and audiences. These perspectives suggest that engagement is not solely measured through metrics but also through perceived interaction and relational proximity.

However, existing research often treats audience engagement separately from media convergence and visual journalism. Few studies empirically investigate how visual news strategies within converged newsrooms contribute to participatory culture, especially in local media environments where resource limitations shape content production decisions.

Digital Disruption, Organizational Adaptation, and Newsroom Practices

Digital disruption has accelerated newsroom transformation by reshaping workflows, production speed, and content distribution. Saptorini et al., (2022) illustrate how disrupted material settings during the COVID-19 pandemic compelled Indonesian broadcasters to reorganize production practices and adopt digital tools. Mukti, (2023)) similarly emphasizes that convergence in technology and content drives communication transformation in the digital era.

Studies on digital transformation outside journalism also offer relevant insights. Mergel et al., (2019) and Battisti et al., (2022) highlight that digital transformation requires organizational flexibility, technological support, and cultural adaptation. These findings resonate with newsroom convergence practices, where collaboration between editorial, multimedia, and social media teams becomes essential.

Methodology

This study uses a quantitative explanatory approach to analyze the influence of overconfidence and financial literacy on crypto investment decisions, with investment interest and mental budgeting as sequential mediators. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for testing the causal relationship between psychological variables and financial behavior in the context of high-risk assets. This study employs a qualitative research approach using a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how *Kabar Makassar* implements media convergence and visual news strategies in response to the dynamics of digital disruption. A qualitative approach is appropriate because this research seeks to explore meanings, interpretations, and newsroom practices as they occur within a natural organizational context rather than to measure variables quantitatively. As Creswell, (2018) argues, qualitative research enables researchers to understand how social actors construct meaning through everyday practices and interactions.

Research Design and Research Site

The research adopts a case study method, following Yin, (2014), which allows for a holistic and contextual examination of a bounded social unit. In this study, the "case" is the newsroom of *Kabar Makassar*, a local digital media organization undergoing continuous adaptation to platform-based journalism and visual content production. This design is particularly suitable for examining media convergence as a process involving organizational structures, production workflows, and editorial decision-making within a specific institutional setting.

The research was conducted at the *Kabar Makassar* newsroom in Makassar, South Sulawesi. This organization was selected because it is among the most active local media outlets in Eastern Indonesia that consistently adopts convergence practices and produces visual news content across multiple social media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook.

Research Participants

The research participants consisted of newsroom leaders, digital editors, journalists, multimedia personnel, and social media managers who are directly involved in editorial planning, visual content production, and cross-platform distribution. These participants represent managerial, editorial, and technical dimensions of newsroom convergence and were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles and relevance to the research objectives.

Research Focus

The focus of this study encompasses three interconnected aspects:

- Media convergence strategies implemented by *Kabar Makassar* in adapting to changes in the contemporary media ecosystem.

- Forms and processes of visual news production on social media as manifestations of convergence practices within the newsroom.

- Newsroom actors' perceptions of visual news strategies in relation to audience engagement, understood as interaction and responsiveness on digital platforms rather than as quantitative performance measurement.

These aspects are examined within the broader context of digital disruption, including platform logics, shifting audience preferences, and the increasing dominance of short-form, visually driven journalism.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three primary techniques:

- In-depth interviews with key newsroom personnel to explore experiences, strategic considerations, and interpretations related to media convergence and visual storytelling.

- Participant observation within the newsroom to examine production routines, inter-divisional coordination, and platform-specific content adaptation.

- Documentation, including social media posts, online news articles, internal editorial guidelines, and visual content archives.

Samples of visual news content from TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts were analyzed to identify recurring patterns of presentation, visual composition, and editorial strategy.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of three iterative stages:

- Data reduction, involving selecting, coding, and categorizing interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary materials.

- Data display, through thematic narratives and analytical matrices to identify patterns of convergence practices and visual news strategies.

- Conclusion drawing and verification, conducted through interpretive analysis by relating empirical findings to media convergence theory and visual communication scholarship.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing perspectives from newsroom leaders, journalists, multimedia staff, and social media managers. Method triangulation involved integrating data from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was also employed by sharing interview summaries with selected informants to confirm interpretive accuracy.

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process by obtaining informed consent, ensuring participant confidentiality, and using the collected data solely for academic purposes.

Result and Discussion

1. Media Convergence Strategies at *Kabar Makassar*

The findings indicate that media convergence at *Kabar Makassar* is primarily implemented through cross-divisional collaboration among the editorial, multimedia, and social media teams. Convergence is perceived by newsroom leaders as a strategic response to digital disruption and shifting patterns of news consumption. As stated by the CEO of *Kabar Makassar*, convergence is understood as an integrative approach that connects multiple platforms within a unified business and editorial framework:

"Media convergence unifies various platforms into a single business concept that is expected to increase media revenue." (CEO, 2025)

In practice, convergence at *Kabar Makassar* is reflected in the integration of editorial news production with visual content creation and platform-based distribution. News selection and verification remain the responsibility of the editorial team, while the multimedia division translates news narratives into visual formats such as short videos, visual slides, and infographics. The social media team then adapts and distributes this content according to platform-specific characteristics, ensuring wider reach and audience interaction across Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and the official website.

This collaborative workflow highlights that convergence is not merely a technical integration of platforms, but an organizational practice that reshapes newsroom routines. As one informant explained:

"We really work together between the editorial team, social media, and multimedia. The goal is to ensure that the content is not only engaging, but also informative and aligned with the needs of today's digital audiences." (Human Resources Manager, 2025)

Another informant emphasized that convergence requires clearly defined yet interdependent roles across divisions:

"The visual content produced must have a clear objective, and each divisioneditorial, multimedia, and social media has its own role in achieving that goal. Everyone works toward a shared purpose: reaching a larger audience and increasing engagement." (Multimedia Manager, 2025)

These findings demonstrate that *Kabar Makassar* has adopted media convergence as a strategic and institutional transformation, characterized by integrated workflows and shared editorial objectives. This supports Jenkins, (2006) argument that convergence is not simply about technological change, but about cultural and organizational shifts that redefine how media content is produced and circulated.

The convergence practices observed in *Kabar Makassar* are consistent with previous studies on local media adaptation in Indonesia. Fadillah et al., (2022) show that local media such as Pikiran Rakyat and Ayo Bandung.com rely on flexible and collaborative work models to sustain their presence in the digital environment. Similarly, Firdausi & Ulfa, (2022) emphasize that the success of media convergence depends on organizational readiness in managing human resources and technological infrastructure. In the case of *Kabar Makassar*, effective coordination between editorial and multimedia teams enables rapid and consistent content production across multiple platforms without undermining journalistic standards.

Astuti et al., (2025) further argue that successful convergence at the local level requires not only technological integration but also shifts in organizational culture and editorial orientation toward digital audience behavior. The findings of this study reinforce this perspective by showing that convergence at *Kabar Makassar* reflects both structural and cultural adaptation. Through integrated workflows and cross-platform strategies, the newsroom strengthens its competitiveness while maintaining its role as a local information provider.

Practically, the implementation of media convergence at *Kabar Makassar* illustrates that local media organizations can evolve into adaptive digital entities without losing their local identity. The convergence strategy adopted by *Kabar Makassar* serves as a potential model for other regional news organizations seeking to integrate editorial production, visual storytelling, and multi-platform distribution in order to remain relevant amid intensifying digital competition.

2. Implementation of News Content Visualization on Social-Media

The findings show that visual news strategies have become a central component of *Kabar Makassar*'s digital journalism practices. Visual content produced by the multimedia team is not limited to publication on the official website but is systematically distributed across multiple social media platforms, particularly Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts. This indicates that visual production is embedded within the newsroom's convergence strategy rather than functioning merely as a supplementary promotional activity. As one informant explained:

"The content uploaded is not only for *Kabar Makassar Petang*, but also shared on social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube." (Human Resources Manager, 2025)

Visual news production at *Kabar Makassar* begins with the selection of news topics considered relevant and timely, followed by the adaptation of narratives into formats suitable for short-form visual storytelling. Multimedia staff emphasized that visual production prioritizes clarity, narrative flow, and speed of information delivery in response to audience preferences for concise and easily digestible content:

"People now prefer short videos that go straight to the point. So we make visuals that are fast, concise, yet still informative." (Multimedia Staff, 2025)

These practices reflect a shift toward visual-first journalism, where meaning is constructed through the combination of text, images, motion, and timing. In this context, visual elements are not treated as decorative additions but as integral components of journalistic storytelling. This finding resonates with visual communication theory, which views multimodality as a key mechanism for meaning-making in digital media environments (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

The implementation of visual strategies is further shaped by platform-specific characteristics. Informants noted that differences in audience behavior and platform affordances influence visual style, pacing, and duration. Content designed for TikTok and Instagram Reels tends to emphasize speed, simplicity, and immediate engagement, while YouTube Shorts allows slightly longer and more explanatory formats. As stated by the Managing Director:

"TikTok and Reels content is different from YouTube Shorts. On TikTok, we keep it fast and light, but on YouTube it can be deeper and longer." (Managing Director, 2025)

This adaptive approach illustrates how *Kabar Makassar* negotiates between journalistic values and platform logic. While algorithmic systems encourage brevity and visual attraction, newsroom actors remain attentive to maintaining informational accuracy and relevance. Visual news strategies thus function as a negotiated practice, balancing professional norms with the technical and cultural demands of social media platforms.

In terms of audience engagement, newsroom actors perceive visual news content as more effective in generating interaction compared to text-based formats. Engagement is primarily understood through qualitative indicators such as audience comments, sharing behavior, and perceived visibility, rather than through detailed quantitative metrics. As one social media staff member noted:

"Design and posting rhythm matter a lot. If the visuals are monotonous, the audience gets bored. But with consistent and varied content, they remember *Kabar Makassar* more quickly." (Social Media Staff, 2025)

This perception aligns with studies that conceptualize audience engagement as a relational and processual phenomenon shaped by content form and platform interaction (Freixa et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2023) Visual storytelling, particularly in short-form video formats, enhances narrative accessibility and encourages participatory responses, contributing to stronger audience-media proximity in digital spaces.

Previous research supports these findings. Huang et al., (2023) demonstrate that visual storytelling increases emotional resonance and engagement in digital journalism, while Freixa et al., (2021) argue that visualization and interaction form a foundational binomial in contemporary news media. Similarly, Fadillah et al., (2022) show that media convergence in local news organizations fosters innovation in visual content production as a response to online audience behavior. In the case of *Kabar Makassar*, visual news strategies can be understood as a continuation of convergence processes moving from organizational integration toward audience-oriented content innovation.

Overall, the findings indicate that visual news strategies at *Kabar Makassar* represent more than a stylistic transformation of news presentation. They reflect an evolving culture of digital journalism in which visual power operates as a strategic tool for capturing attention, facilitating understanding, and fostering participatory engagement. By embedding visualization within converged newsroom practices, *Kabar Makassar* strengthens its capacity to remain relevant and competitive within platform-driven media ecosystems while sustaining its role as a local information provider.

3. The Impact of Visual News Strategies on Audience Engagement

The findings indicate that visual news strategies play a significant role in shaping audience engagement across *Kabar Makassar*'s social media platforms. Newsroom actors consistently perceive visual content particularly short-form videos as more effective in attracting attention and encouraging interaction compared to text-based news posts. Engagement is understood not merely as numerical indicators, but as patterns of audience responsiveness, including commenting, sharing, and continued interest in local issues.

One social media staff member explained that visual content often functions as an entry point for audiences to seek more comprehensive information:

"After they watch the content on social media, many of them come to our website to read the full story." (Social Media Staff, 2025)

From the newsroom perspective, engagement is influenced not only by visual appeal but also by content relevance and consistency. As noted by the Managing Director:

"People respond more quickly if the content is current and relevant. We've learned that upload speed and consistency also affect interaction levels." (Managing Director, 2025)

Multimedia staff further emphasized that visual strength such as the use of footage, graphics, and motion text plays a crucial role in retaining audience attention:

"If the visuals are strong, people stop scrolling and watch until the end." (Multimedia Staff, 2025)

These observations suggest that visual news strategies contribute to engagement by interrupting habitual scrolling behavior and inviting audiences to spend more time with news content. In addition, newsroom actors noted that certain content categories, particularly local social issues, crime, and public policy, tend to generate more discussion and public response:

"The most interactive content is usually something close to the community local social issues or government policies." (Social Media Staff, 2025)

The findings also reveal that engagement varies across platforms. TikTok is perceived as effective for reaching new audiences, while Instagram facilitates more sustained interaction and community-

oriented discussion. This differentiation highlights how engagement is shaped by platform affordances and audience expectations rather than by a uniform metric.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with the concept of participatory culture, where audiences actively interpret, respond to, and circulate news content (Jenkins, 2006). Visual storytelling enhances this process by lowering cognitive barriers and increasing emotional resonance ((Huang et al., 2023). Rather than functioning as passive consumers, audiences engage with visual news as participants in meaning-making processes.

This interpretation is further supported by Dvir-Gvirsman, (2022) media repertoire approach, which emphasizes that engagement is shaped by users' social motivations and platform habits. Kim, (2024) similarly argues that engagement should be understood as a form of social interaction that strengthens emotional ties between media organizations and their audiences. In local journalism contexts, such interaction contributes to trust-building and community relevance.

Studies by Fadillah et al., (2022) and Pignard-Cheynel & Amigo, (2023) reinforce the idea that successful local media in the digital era rely on horizontal relationships with audiences, characterized by dialogue and responsiveness. The findings of this study suggest that *Kabar Makassar*'s visual news strategies facilitate such relationships by creating accessible entry points for discussion and public participation around local issues.

Overall, the impact of visual news strategies at *Kabar Makassar* extends beyond increased interaction on social media platforms. Visual content functions as a connective mechanism between the newsroom and its audience, fostering engagement as both a strategic indicator of content relevance and a reflection of meaningful public involvement in local digital journalism.

4. General Reflections and Theoretical Implications

This study This study provides broader reflections on how local media navigate digital disruption through the interrelated dynamics of media convergence, visual innovation, and audience participation. Rather than operating as isolated strategies, these dimensions function together as an integrated digital journalism ecosystem shaped by platform-oriented practices and evolving audience behavior. The findings suggest that convergence in local media should be understood not only as a technical or managerial response to digital change, but as a continuous process of institutional adaptation embedded in everyday newsroom practices.

Theoretically, this study extends existing research on media convergence in Indonesian local media (Fadillah et al., 2022; Firdausi & Ulfa, 2022) by demonstrating that convergence operates as a form of digital institutionalization, reshaping organizational structures, professional roles, and editorial decision-making. Convergence emerges not merely from technological necessity, but from the need to align journalistic production with platform environments and participatory communication logics.

In addition, the findings reinforce and contextualize visual journalism scholarship by showing how visual storytelling functions as a strategic form of journalistic practice rather than a purely aesthetic innovation. Consistent with Huang et al., (2023), visual news strategies enhance audience engagement by increasing accessibility and emotional resonance. However, this study contributes a localized perspective by illustrating how visual storytelling in regional media serves not only to attract attention, but also to strengthen social proximity and community relevance within local public spheres.

Importantly, this research highlights audience engagement as a relational and processual phenomenon. Engagement is not treated solely as a performance metric, but as a manifestation of participatory culture in which audiences actively respond to, interpret, and circulate news content (Jenkins, 2006). This perspective underscores the role of local media as facilitators of public interaction rather than as one-directional information providers.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative interpretation of visually driven media convergence within Indonesian local journalism. It demonstrates that digital success is not determined by technological innovation alone, but by the ability of media organizations to embed participatory values, negotiate platform logics, and sustain meaningful relationships with their audiences. By situating convergence, visualization, and engagement within a single analytical framework, this study contributes to a more holistic understanding of local media transformation in the digital age.

5. Challenges and Tensions in Visual News Convergence

Despite the strategic advantages of visual news convergence, the findings also reveal several structural and professional tensions faced by *Kabar Makassar*. Newsroom actors acknowledged that platform-oriented visual production often accelerates production cycles and increases workload, requiring journalists to perform multiple roles simultaneously. This condition reflects broader concerns in digital journalism regarding labor intensification and the sustainability of multi-skilled newsroom practices.

In addition, while visual content enhances accessibility and audience interaction, informants noted that high engagement does not always translate into deeper public understanding. Short-form visual formats may encourage rapid consumption and emotional response, but they also risk oversimplifying complex issues. These tensions illustrate that visual convergence is not a neutral or frictionless process, but one that requires continuous negotiation between speed, visibility, and journalistic responsibility within local media contexts.

Conclusion

This study discussed that cryptocurrency investment behavior is driven by the combined influence of cognitive factors, behavioral biases, and internal budgeting processes. Overconfidence emerged as the strongest predictor of both investment interest and investment decisions, confirming that psychological miscalibration plays a central role in speculative participation in digital assets. Financial literacy also significantly contributes to investment decisions, yet its effects are more rational and structured, and it does not fully counteract emotional or bias-driven tendencies.

This study concludes that media convergence at *Kabar Makassar* operates as an integrated organizational and editorial strategy that enables local media to adapt to the dynamics of digital disruption. Convergence is realized through cross-divisional collaboration among editorial, multimedia, and social media teams, transforming newsroom workflows into a more coordinated and platform-oriented system of news production and distribution. Rather than functioning as a purely technological adjustment, convergence at *Kabar Makassar* represents an institutional adaptation that reshapes journalistic practices in response to changing patterns of digital news consumption.

The findings further demonstrate that visual news strategies constitute a central expression of this convergence process. Through the systematic use of short-form videos, visual slides, and platform-specific storytelling, *Kabar Makassar* integrates visual journalism into its everyday newsroom practices. Visual storytelling enhances the accessibility and immediacy of news content, allowing local issues to be communicated more effectively within fast-paced and visually saturated digital environments. In this sense, content visualization functions not merely as a stylistic innovation, but as a strategic journalistic practice aligned with platform logics and audience preferences.

Moreover, audience engagement emerges as a relational and participatory process rather than a purely quantitative outcome. Visual news content facilitates interaction, discussion, and public responsiveness, reflecting a shift from one-way information delivery toward participatory communication in local digital journalism. Audiences are positioned not only as recipients of news, but as active participants who contribute to the circulation and interpretation of meaning within social media spaces.

Overall, this study highlights that the sustainability of local media in the era of digital disruption depends on the interplay between media convergence, visual innovation, and participatory audience engagement. By embedding visual strategies within converged newsroom practices, *Kabar Makassar* demonstrates how local media can maintain relevance, strengthen social proximity with their audiences, and reinforce their role within digitally networked public spheres. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how visually driven media convergence shapes contemporary local journalism in Indonesia.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study offers several important theoretical contributions to the field of media studies and digital journalism. First, it reinforces media convergence theory by demonstrating that convergence in local journalism operates not merely as a technological integration but as an organizational and institutional process involving cross-divisional collaboration, editorial coordination, and platform-oriented workflows. This finding supports and extends existing scholarship that conceptualizes convergence as a socio-organizational transformation rather than a purely technical phenomenon.

Second, the study contributes to visual journalism and media representation studies by positioning visual news strategies as a core mechanism through which convergence is enacted in everyday newsroom practices. The findings show that visual storytelling through short form videos, visual slides, and platform-specific formats functions as a strategic journalistic practice aligned with platform logics and audience expectations, rather than as a supplementary or aesthetic enhancement. This extends visual communication theory by highlighting the centrality of visualization in contemporary, platform-driven news ecosystems.

Third, this research advances discussions on audience engagement by conceptualizing engagement as a relational and participatory process embedded in social media interactions. Rather than treating engagement solely as a quantitative metric (such as likes, views, or shares), the study emphasizes engagement as a communicative relationship involving interaction, responsiveness, and meaning-making between news producers and audiences. This perspective contributes to participatory media theory by illustrating how local digital journalism fosters dialogic public communication within networked media environments.

Practical and Managerial Implications

From a practical perspective, the findings provide several implications for local media organizations operating in the era of digital disruption. First, newsroom managers should prioritize organizational integration and cross-functional collaboration between editorial, multimedia, and social media teams to ensure effective convergence practices. Media convergence requires coordinated workflows and shared strategic objectives rather than fragmented, platform-specific operations.

Second, the study highlights the importance of investing in visual journalism competencies. Journalists and media practitioners need continuous training in visual storytelling, short-form video production, and platform-adaptive content design to remain relevant within visually saturated digital environments. Visual strategies should be embedded into editorial planning processes rather than treated as secondary outputs.

Third, the findings suggest that audience engagement strategies should move beyond performance metrics toward fostering meaningful interaction and public participation. Local media can strengthen audience proximity by encouraging dialogue, responding to audience feedback, and integrating public voices into visual news narratives, thereby reinforcing their role within digitally networked public spheres.

Finally, for media policymakers and journalism educators, this study underscores the need to incorporate media convergence, visual literacy, and platform-based journalism into professional development programs and journalism curricula. Strengthening these competencies is essential for enhancing the sustainability and democratic function of local media amid ongoing digital disruption.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research adopts a qualitative single-case study design, focusing exclusively on *Kabar Makassar*. While this approach enables an in-depth and contextual understanding of media convergence and visual news strategies, it limits the generalizability of the findings to other local or national media organizations with different organizational structures, resources, and audience characteristics.

Second, the study relies primarily on qualitative data obtained through interviews, observation, and documentation. Although methodological triangulation was employed to enhance credibility, the findings are shaped by the interpretations of newsroom actors and the researcher. As such, the analysis may be influenced by subjective perspectives and cannot be understood as statistically representative of broader trends in digital journalism.

Third, the research examines audience engagement from the perspective of newsroom practices and perceptions, rather than through direct audience analysis or quantitative engagement metrics. Consequently, the study does not measure audience responses empirically, such as reach, interaction rates, or sentiment analysis, which could provide complementary insights into the effectiveness of visual news strategies.

Fourth, the study is situated within the Indonesian local media context, where cultural norms, media regulations, and patterns of digital platform use differ from those in other countries. These contextual factors may affect the transferability of the findings to different socio-cultural and regulatory environments.

Finally, the scope of the analysis is limited to media convergence and visual news strategies, excluding other potentially relevant dimensions such as newsroom economics, ownership structures, advertising algorithms, or platform governance mechanisms. Future research could integrate these factors to develop a more comprehensive understanding of local media sustainability in the digital era.

Suggestions

Future research should extend this study by examining media convergence and visual news strategies across multiple local and national media organizations to enable comparative analysis and enhance the generalizability of findings. Comparative studies could reveal how differences in organizational scale, ownership structures, and newsroom resources influence convergence practices and visual journalism strategies.

Longitudinal research designs are also recommended to capture changes in newsroom convergence practices and visual storytelling strategies over time, particularly in response to evolving platform algorithms, audience preferences, and technological innovations. Such approaches would provide deeper insights into how media organizations continuously adapt to the dynamics of digital disruption.

Future studies should incorporate direct audience analysis by combining qualitative newsroom perspectives with quantitative engagement metrics, audience surveys, or digital analytics. This mixed-methods approach would allow researchers to examine how visual news strategies are actually received, interpreted, and evaluated by audiences, thereby strengthening the empirical assessment of audience engagement.

In addition, further research could explore platform-specific dynamics by analyzing how visual journalism strategies differ across social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and emerging digital spaces. Attention to algorithmic visibility, platform governance, and content moderation policies would enrich understanding of how platform logics shape newsroom decision-making.

Finally, future research may integrate broader structural and political–economic dimensions, including newsroom labor conditions, monetization models, platform dependency, and regulatory frameworks, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of local media sustainability in the era of digital disruption.

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