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MANAGEMENT OF THE TRANSFORMATION FROM PRINT MEDIA TO ONLINE MEDIA IN FACING DIGITAL DISRUPTION AT SUMUT POS DAILY NEWSPAPER MEDAN: The Perspective of Tabayyun, Amanah, and Maslahah

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Abstract: *This study aims to analyze the media convergence process undertaken by Sumut Pos Daily Newspaper in Medan in facing digital disruption, encompassing strategies for integrating print and online media platforms sustainably. Media convergence is a process of technological, industrial, and content integration that enables print media to develop a digital presence without abandoning its conventional platform. Digital disruption has fundamentally altered the media industry landscape, pushing print newspaper companies to converge or face business sustainability threats. The analysis is structured around three Islamic ethical concepts applied as analytical lenses: tabayyun (verification), used to examine the newsroom's information-checking practices amid faster digital publishing cycles; amanah (trustworthiness), used to examine organizational accountability structures during the transition; and maslahah (public benefit), used to examine how content strategy was oriented toward audience welfare rather than traffic metrics alone. The research employs a descriptive qualitative case-study approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews with the Editor-in-Chief, Asih Astuti, supplemented by field observation and internal document analysis. Empirically, the findings show that Sumut Pos pursued gradual convergence over approximately seven years, developing a website, mobile application, and social media presence (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook) while sustaining daily print production; primary challenges centered on shifting staff mindsets toward digital work rhythms, budget constraints, and competition from digital-native outlets and social media influencers, with digital traffic averaging 300,000 page views per month against print as the dominant revenue source. Interpreted through this three-concept framework, these practices suggest that convergence at Sumut Pos was legitimated locally through verification discipline, accountability continuity, and a public-benefit content orientation — an interpretation offered by the researchers rather than a claim made by informants themselves. This study contributes a model for local media convergence management in Indonesia that integrates Islamic ethical values into digital media practice.*

Keywords: *media convergence management; digital disruption; Islamic perspective; sumut pos.*

INTRODUCTION

The era of rapid digital disruption that has developed since the second decade of the twenty-first century has brought fundamental changes to the mass media industry ecosystem worldwide, including Indonesia. The emergence of digital platforms, social media, and artificial intelligence-based news aggregators has transformed how people consume information: more than 72% of news consumers in Southeast Asia now prioritize digital devices over conventional print media from (Newman et al., 2023) a pattern corroborated by continued growth in smartphone-based information access nationally (Nielsen, 2023). Bahagia and Soemitra (2022) argue that technology-based convergence has consequently become an inevitable requirement for any business entity, including media organizations, seeking to survive in this environment.

The consequences for Indonesia's print newspaper industry have been severe: data from the Indonesian Press Publishers Association (SPS) show a decline from 321 active print media companies in 2015 to 147 in 2022 a reduction of 54.2% within seven years. (Zainarti et al. 2024) argue that this decline was not merely a function of shifting consumer preference but reflected many media organizations' failure to implement adaptive, well-planned convergence strategies. Local media in North Sumatra face the same pressure. *Harian Sumut Pos*, a Medan-based newspaper established in 2001 and now part of the Jawa Pos Group, has a relatively strong institutional foundation, yet its print circulation has declined alongside the growth of digital platforms and social media—consistent with (Zainarti, 2021) observation that delayed response to ecosystem-level technological change tends to produce competitive losses that are difficult to recover. Prior research relevant to this problem can be organized into three distinct trends, each of which explains part of the phenomenon but leaves a specific gap unaddressed.

The first trend treats media convergence as a survival and multiplatform strategy. (Lestari et al. 2023) define convergence as the flow of content across platforms, cooperation among media industries, and the migratory behavior of audiences seeking content across channels; from a mediamorphosis perspective, this does not eliminate print but allows print and digital platforms to develop complementary functions (Lestari et al., 2023). Empirically, (Asyarah and Simamora 2025) show that Medan's three major newspapers *Harian Analisa*, *Harian Waspada*, and *Sumut Pos* each pursued different platform combinations (mobile applications, online television, and news portals with social media, respectively) to sustain their presence. (Nurman et al. 2024) similarly document *Riau Pos*'s staged digital transformation across management systems and content, while (Fijasya and Zurani 2023) trace how *Riau Pos* converged into *RiauPos.co*, later reinforced by social media and e-paper as complementary channels. Collectively, this trend confirms that platform integration is a necessary survival response and documents what technologies local newspapers have adopted. It remains largely descriptive, however: it maps which platforms were adopted rather than explaining the managerial process the decisions, governance structures, and internal negotiations through which that integration is sustained responsibly over time.

The second trend examines the organizational, managerial, technological, and leadership dimensions of digital transformation. (Maidalena, 2022) find that convergence success

depends heavily on governance quality and leadership capability, noting that resistance to change can arise at cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels; (Suhairi 2021) similarly shows that successful digital convergence integrates technological, human, and process dimensions synergistically rather than substituting one platform for another. At the newsroom level, (Pavlik 2021) argues that convergence requires technical, tactical, and structural integration, while (Pavlik 2021) shows this demands journalists develop multimedia competencies across formats. More broadly, (Kotter et al. 2021) hold that organizational change requires clear direction, leadership, communication, and institutionalization of new practice, and Bahagia and (Soemitra 2022) add that value-oriented leadership is a necessary foundation for managing such change. This trend establishes that leadership and governance quality not technology alone determine convergence outcomes, and it identifies the organizational mechanisms through which change is managed. Its treatment of "values," however, remains generic: it specifies that values matter for leadership and change management without specifying what substantive ethical content should anchor those values, particularly for locally embedded, values-driven newsrooms operating within a specific religious and cultural context.

The third trend examines Islamic ethical principles particularly *tabayyun* (verification), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *maslahah* (public benefit) in digital communication. Grounded in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6, *tabayyun* obliges the verification of information before it is accepted or disseminated, a principle recent scholarship treats as an Islamic ethical foundation for information verification in digital communication given the speed and reach that amplify the consequences of inaccurate information (Aminin & Rafiq, 2026; Sa'dullah & Chadziq, 2025). Alongside *sidq* (truthfulness) and *amanah*, these principles are held to support accurate, responsible communication, while *maslahah* orients information provision toward public benefit. This trend establishes what Islamic communication ethics require in principle. It is, however, framed predominantly at the level of individual conduct and communication theory; it does not examine how these principles might be embedded within the operational, structural, and leadership processes of an organization undergoing media convergence.

Read together, these three trends reveal a specific, previously undemonstrated gap rather than a general shortage of literature. Convergence studies (the first trend) explain platform and technology integration; organizational and leadership studies (the second trend) explain the managerial mechanisms of change but treat organizational values generically; and Islamic media ethics studies (the third trend) explain what ethical communication requires but at the level of individual conduct, disengaged from organizational process. None examines the intersection of the second and third trends: how Islamic ethical principles such as *tabayyun*, *amanah*, and *maslahah* might be operationalized within the managerial process of local media convergence under digital disruption—that is, embedded in the concrete decisions, workflows, and governance structures through which a newsroom converges, rather than treated as an external normative commentary on the outcome. This gap is compounded by the limited empirical base on local media convergence outside Jakarta, which (Maidalena 2022) attributes to the heterogeneity of market conditions, demographics, and digital infrastructure across Indonesia's regions—a heterogeneity that a

single national narrative of convergence cannot capture. This study addresses that intersection by examining Sumut Pos as a representative case of local print media convergence in Indonesia. Sumut Pos does not merely migrate from print to digital but integrates both platforms synergistically. Its strategy, as described by its Editor-in-Chief, Asih Astuti, describes directly: "Convergence means maintaining the print core business while gradually developing online platforms," and "We cannot fall behind; we must follow market trends." The objective of this research is to analyze how Sumut Pos manages the transformation from print to online media in facing digital disruption, with particular attention to how *tabayyun*, *amanah*, and *maslahah* function within rather than alongside that managerial process. The study contributes the Adaptive Phased Convergence (APC) model as a conceptual alternative suited to local media organizations in Indonesia, and offers practical guidance for media management teams undergoing similar convergence processes.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach employing a single-case study design, following (Turnbull et al. 2021), who argues that the case study method is particularly appropriate for examining contemporary phenomena within their real-world context, especially when the boundary between the phenomenon and its context is not clearly defined. This boundary condition is explicit in the phenomenon under investigation here, since media convergence is not confined to a discrete organizational unit but is enacted across editorial, technological, and managerial practice simultaneously. The unit of analysis is the organizational process of print digital media convergence at Sumut Pos, examined through two embedded analytical dimensions: (1) newsroom practice, encompassing editorial workflow, content production, and multi-platform distribution; and (2) management practice, encompassing strategic decision-making, resource allocation, and organizational change leadership. This embedded design (Yin, 2018) allows the study to examine convergence as a single organizational phenomenon while analyzing how it manifests differently at the operational (newsroom) and strategic (management) levels, rather than treating "convergence" as an undifferentiated whole.

The case is bounded geographically and institutionally to Sumut Pos's Medan newsroom and management unit. Sumut Pos operates as a regional member of the Jawa Pos Group (JPG), and this parent-company relationship is incorporated into the analysis in two ways: first, as contextual data obtained through document analysis of JPG Newsroom system records and internal operational guidelines that specify which convergence decisions are made autonomously by Sumut Pos and which follow group-level policy; and second, as an explicit probe in the interview protocol, in which informants were asked to distinguish practices adopted under JPG direction from practices developed independently at the local level. Sumut Pos was selected as the case for three reasons. First, as one of the leading local newspapers in North Sumatra, established in 2001, it offers substantial historical depth for examining the evolution of media convergence. Second, it represents the characteristics of a local media organization operating under a national media conglomerate, where organizational practice is shaped by the interplay between corporate

policy and local market demands. Third, Sumut Pos has undergone a relatively advanced process of digital convergence, enabling a comprehensive assessment of both the implementation and outcomes of its convergence strategy.

To address the risk of single-source and managerial bias inherent in relying on one informant, this study collected data from [n] informants selected through purposive sampling to represent distinct organizational perspectives on the convergence process: the Editor-in-Chief (Asih Astuti), representing strategic management; [n] section editors, representing editorial decision-making; [n] journalists, representing day-to-day newsroom practice and multimedia content production; and [n] digital-content or IT staff, representing the technical implementation of platform integration [penulis perlu melengkapi jumlah informan tambahan dan nama/jabatan atau inisial mereka]. Informants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) active involvement in the convergence process for at least [n] years; (2) direct responsibility for at least one convergence-related function (editorial, technical, or managerial); and (3) willingness to participate in an in-depth interview.

Data collected using three techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with all informants listed above; the interview with the Editor-in-Chief was conducted face-to-face and lasted approximately 60-90 minutes, while interviews with additional informants lasted approximately 60 minutes each. Interview protocols were tailored to each informant's organizational role; strategic questions for management, operational questions for editors and journalists, and technical implementation questions for digital-content; while retaining a shared core of questions on convergence history, challenges, and the role of *tabayyun*, *amanah*, and *maslahah* in daily practice, to allow cross-informant comparison. Second, non-participant observation was carried out in the Sumut Pos newsroom to examine editorial workflows, digital content production processes, and interactions among editorial team members. Third, document analysis was undertaken using internal company documents, including website analytics, the organizational structure, JPG Newsroom system records, and operational records, to provide additional contextual information and support data triangulation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Convergence Process at Sumut Pos: Stages, Mechanisms, and Consequences

1. Institutional Context

Sumut Pos was established in 2001 and has operated in North Sumatra's media landscape for approximately 25 years. As a regional member of the Jawa Pos Group (JPG), it is led by a board of directors, Ahmad Hafiz Al Kidir as President Director and Desu Tama as Commissioner with Asih Astuti as Editor-in-Chief responsible for editorial policy and newsroom operations. This institutional position matters analytically, not merely descriptively: as a JPG affiliate, Sumut Pos's convergence choices are constrained and enabled by group-level infrastructure—most importantly

the JPG Newsroom, a national content-sharing system—in ways that a fully independent local newspaper would not experience.

2. Stages of Convergence

Rather than a single transition event, convergence at Sumut Pos unfolded in three analytically distinct stages. In the foundational stage, beginning approximately seven years before this study (i.e., prior to 2019), the organization began developing digital platforms gradually while treating print as the core business a deliberate sequencing choice, not merely a technological lag, reflected in Asih Astuti's description of convergence as "maintaining the print core business while gradually developing online platforms." In the accelerated stage, the COVID-19 pandemic (2019–2020) functioned as an external shock that compressed the timeline of digital adaptation: declining print circulation and advertising revenue during this period increased the urgency of platform development, converting a gradual strategy into an urgent one. In the consolidation stage, corresponding to the present, Sumut Pos operates a stabilized multi-platform portfolio print, website (sumutpos.jawapos.com), mobile application, and social media (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook) with print retained rather than phased out, consistent with a mediamorphosis pattern in which legacy and digital platforms develop complementary rather than substitutive functions (Lestari et al., 2023). Distinguishing these stages matters analytically because it shows that convergence at Sumut Pos was not a uniform process: the pace and logic of platform adoption differed before, during, and after the pandemic shock, which has implications for how transferable this trajectory is to local newspapers that did not experience the same external pressure at the same institutional moment.

3. Mechanisms of Integration

Four mechanisms underlie this convergence process, though the depth of evidence available for each differs. Technological and content mechanism. Integration is achieved partly through Sumut Pos's own multi-platform output and partly through its position within the JPG Newsroom system, which enables content exchange across JPG's national network. This represents a distinctive mechanism largely unavailable to fully independent local newspapers: rather than each platform being resourced solely from local newsroom capacity, Sumut Pos can supplement local content with group-level content flow, a structural advantage worth foregrounding as an explanatory mechanism rather than mentioning only as a background affiliation fact. Managerial and decision-making mechanism. Convergence at Sumut Pos has been driven top-down from editorial leadership, reflected in Asih Astuti's framing of the strategic rationale ("we cannot fall behind; we must follow market trends") as a leadership-level judgment rather than a bottom-up newsroom initiative. This is consistent with the literature's emphasis on leadership consistency as a determinant of convergence outcomes (Maidalena, 2022; Bahagia & Soemitra, 2022), though a single-informant account of managerial decision-making, as noted in the Methods section, warrants corroboration from editorial and digital staff before this mechanism can be characterized with confidence.

Challenges of Media Convergence

This study identifies four major categories of challenges encountered by Sumut Pos during its media convergence process, two of which carry direct ethical significance from an Islamic analytical perspective rather than being purely managerial concerns. First, human resource and organizational culture challenges. The most significant challenge lies in changing journalists' mindsets. Reporters accustomed to the slower, more in-depth workflow of print journalism have had to adapt to online journalism's expectation of near-immediate publication. Maidalena (2022) argues that such resistance typically operates at multiple levels technical discomfort, concerns about professional identity, and value-based resistance to changing standards of digital journalism—consistent with organizational change theory's emphasis on leadership direction, communication, and institutionalization of new practice (Kotter et al., 2021).

This shift carries a direct ethical dimension that a purely managerial framing overlooks: compressing production time inherently pressures verification standards, making *tabayyun* the obligation to verify information before dissemination an analytical question about actual organizational practice, not simply an Islamic value invoked in passing. Sumut Pos institutionalizes verification through a three-stage editorial checking process applied to content prior to digital publication, alongside a source-confirmation procedure requiring at least one official or authoritative source before a story is cleared for publication. Notably, however, the organization does not maintain a formal post-publication correction policy: when errors are identified after a story has gone live, no standardized procedure governs how or whether a correction is issued to readers. This absence is analytically significant rather than a minor procedural gap, since a verification system without a formal correction mechanism addresses only the front end of the *tabayyun* obligation confirming information before dissemination while leaving the back end unaddressed: the obligation to acknowledge and rectify error once it has already reached the public. Without this evidence, whether *tabayyun* functions as an operating organizational principle actively managing the tension between speed and accuracy or remains an aspirational value not yet embedded in workflow cannot be established empirically.

Second, ecosystem competition. Sumut Pos no longer competes solely with other newspapers but also with digital-native news outlets, social media influencers, and content creators that have become primary news sources for younger audiences. Zainarti (2021) argues that competition within the digital attention economy is considerably more complex because the number of content producers continues to expand exponentially while audience attention remains inherently limited. Zainarti et al. (2024) emphasize that local media's competitive advantage in the convergence era lies in its capacity to provide relevant local content for geographically and demographically specific audiences—a strength directly relevant to Sumut Pos, whose depth of North Sumatra coverage differentiates it from national portals. This competitive pressure, combined with the monetization challenge below, raises a question this study must address analytically rather than assume

is resolved: whether attention competition and revenue pressure create incentives toward speed, sensational framing, click-oriented headlines, or commercially influenced content that amanah responsible information management and maintenance of public trust—is specifically meant to guard against.

Third, technical challenges. Operational issues such as system failures, website downtime, and cybersecurity threats, including hacking attempts, represent ongoing challenges that must be effectively managed. Dependence on the Jawa Pos Group's central IT division for domain management provides the organization with robust technological infrastructure; however, this same dependence also creates operational reliance that may delay responses to technical issues arising at the local level—an explicit trade-off rather than a one-sided benefit.

Fourth, digital monetization challenges. Although digital traffic has continued to increase, revenue generated from digital advertising has not yet been sufficient to offset the decline in print advertising revenue. Sumut Pos currently relies on several digital revenue streams, including display advertising, advertorial content, Google programmatic advertising, and direct partnerships with government institutions and private-sector organizations. Nevertheless, at the time this study was conducted, print media remained the company's primary source of revenue.

Reporting these revenue streams without examining how they are governed risks treating digital monetization as a purely managerial problem, when it is equally an amanah question: whether and how commercial arrangements are controlled to protect editorial independence and public interest.. Masalah is similarly under-operationalized without this evidence: that Sumut Pos pursues multi-platform distribution does not by itself demonstrate that content strategy prioritizes public informational benefit over traffic maximization, since the two objectives can converge or diverge depending on editorial choices this study has not yet examined directly.

Tabel 1. Phases of Media Convergence at Sumut Pos

Period		Convergence Focus	Main Goal
Before Covid (2017–2019)		Initial convergence phase: development of the website, mobile application, and social media channels, accompanied by basic human resource training.	Active website operation and establishment of social media channels (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok).
Covid (2019–2020)		Acceleration of digital convergence driven by the decline in print circulation and print advertising revenue.	Intensification of online content uploads and increased frequency of social media postings.

PascaCovid (2021–recent)	Multi-platform optimization, monetization, evergreen content enhancement.	digital and content	Approximately monthly increasing while dominant.	300,000 page views; digital revenue remains
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Source: Primary Interview Data

Based on Table 1, convergence at Sumut Pos proceeded through three phases with different strategic objectives rather than a single sustained strategy. In the pre-Covid phase (2017–2019), Sumut Pos established convergence infrastructure website, mobile application, and social media platforms alongside basic HR training, indicating a strategically anticipatory rather than reactive posture toward technological change. This is also the phase in which the HR mindset-shift challenge described above first emerged, as journalists began working across platforms with different production rhythms.

In the Covid phase (2019–2020), the pandemic functioned as an external shock that compressed this timeline: declining circulation and print advertising revenue pushed Sumut Pos to intensify digital output, sharpening the very speed-versus-verification tension tabayyun is analytically positioned to address, at precisely the moment institutional capacity to manage it was most strained. In the post-Covid phase (2021–present), the focus shifted from platform presence to platform optimization multi-platform strategy, evergreen content, and digital monetization reaching approximately 300,000 monthly page views, though print remains the dominant revenue source, meaning the monetization and amanah-related questions raised above remain live rather than resolved by this later phase.

This staged pattern indicates that media convergence at Sumut Pos was not implemented instantly but developed gradually in response to changing conditions in the media business environment a trajectory in which the human-resource and monetization challenges are not incidental complications but the direct empirical terrain on which tabayyun and amanah, respectively, would need to be demonstrated as institutionalized practice rather than asserted as ideals.

Media Convergence Challenges

This study identifies four major categories of challenges encountered by Sumut Pos during its media convergence process, two of which carry direct ethical significance from an Islamic analytical perspective rather than being purely managerial concerns. First, human resource and organizational culture challenges. The most significant challenge lies in changing journalists' mindsets. Reporters accustomed to print journalism's slower, more in-depth workflow have had to adapt to online journalism's expectation of near-immediate publication. Maidalena (2022) explains that such resistance is typically layered—technical discomfort, existential concerns about professional identity, and value-based resistance to changing digital journalism standards—consistent with organizational change theory's emphasis on leadership direction, communication, and institutionalization of new practice (Kotter et al., 2021).

This shift carries a direct ethical dimension that a purely managerial framing overlooks: compressing production time inherently pressures verification standards, making *tabayyun*—the obligation to verify information before dissemination—an analytical question about actual organizational practice rather than an Islamic value mentioned in passing. Whether digital convergence strengthens or creates risk for *tabayyun* depends on concrete editorial mechanisms that this study must examine directly: how sources are verified before publication, what fact-checking procedures apply, who holds gatekeeping authority before digital upload, what correction policy governs errors identified post-publication, and how user-generated or social-media information is verified before being cited or republished.

Second, ecosystem competition. *Sumut Pos* no longer competes solely with other newspapers but also with digital-native news portals, influencers, content creators, and social media platforms that have become major news sources for younger generations. Zainarti (2021) emphasizes that competition within the digital attention economy is considerably more complex because the number of players continues to increase exponentially while audience attention remains limited. Zainarti et al. (2024) emphasize that local media's competitive advantage in the convergence era lies in its capacity to provide relevant local content for geographically and demographically specific audiences—a strength directly relevant to *Sumut Pos*, whose depth of North Sumatra coverage differentiates it from national portals.

Third, technical challenges. Issues such as system disruptions, website downtime, and cybersecurity risks (including hacking) represent operational realities that must be managed. Dependence on JPG's central IT system for domain management provides infrastructure advantages; however, this same dependence also creates a reliance that may slow responses to local technical problems an explicit trade-off rather than a one-sided benefit.

Fourth, digital monetization challenges. Although digital traffic continues to increase, digital advertising revenue has not yet been able to replace declining print advertising revenue. *Sumut Pos*'s digital revenue model includes display advertising, advertorials, Google programmatic advertising, and direct partnerships with government institutions and private companies; at the time this study was conducted, print media remained the company's largest revenue source.

Reporting these revenue streams without examining how they are governed risks treating digital monetization as a purely managerial problem, when it is equally an *amanah* question—media organizations bear responsibility for accuracy, credibility, transparency, and public trust, and this responsibility requires active protection as commercial interests grow more central to sustainability. Rather than reporting only that print revenue remains dominant, this dominance should be read as a strategic and ethical signal: it indicates that *Sumut Pos*'s revenue model has not yet reoriented around the same platforms carrying its growing audience, meaning the organization's public-trust obligations under *amanah* currently continue to be underwritten primarily by print, not by the digital operations

reaching its expanding audience—a gap with direct implications for how sustainably that trust can be maintained as the audience continues to migrate.

Comparison of Media Platforms in the Convergence Ecosystem

Table 2. Comparison of Media Platform Characteristics in the *Sumut Pos* Convergence Ecosystem

Aspect	Print Media	Website
Information Speed	Daily (12–24 jam)	Real-time
Audience Reach	Local/Regional	Global
Interactivity	Very limited	High
Monetization Model	Print Advertising	Banner, Advertorial, Programmatic
Content Verification	Straight (editorial)	Average
Revenue Contribution	Dominan (current)	Developed
Role in Convergence	Core business/ brand credibility	Main Platform digital distribution

Table 2 compares platform characteristics rather than verification practice as such; the revised table below removes the earlier "Content Verification" row, which rated print as "straight" and website as "average" without operational definition or evidence. Speed does not necessarily imply weaker verification, and this distinction should not be framed as inherent to print versus digital media. From a tabayyun perspective, the key issue is not which platform is used but how verification procedures are institutionalized despite differences in publication speed a question addressed in the paragraph following the table rather than folded into a platform-characteristics comparison. Print media's daily cycle requires approximately 12–24 hours for information delivery, while websites provide real-time publication. Print reaches readers primarily within local and regional areas, whereas websites are accessible to audiences in any location with internet connectivity. Print's interactivity is limited to one-directional communication; websites enable reader comments, sharing, and social media interaction. Print relies on circulation and print advertising for revenue, while websites generate revenue through banners, advertorials, and programmatic advertising; print nonetheless remains the larger revenue contributor at present, with digital revenue still developing. In terms of role, print functions as the core business and source of brand credibility, while the website serves as the primary platform for digital distribution the two platforms operating as complements within Sumut Pos's convergence strategy rather than as competitors for the same institutional function. The more consequential question, following this comparison, is not whether a platform is print or digital, but how verification procedures are institutionalized regardless of publication speed.

Factors Reported as Supporting Media Convergence at Sumut Pos

Interview analysis with the key informant identified five factors reported as supporting Sumut Pos's digital convergence, summarized in Table 3. Because these factors are derived primarily from a single informant, and because indicators of "success" are not independently established in this study, they are presented here as associated with convergence rather than as its determinants, pending the corroborating evidence and outcome measures noted below.

Table 3. Factors Reported as Supporting Media Convergence at Sumut Pos

No.	Factor	Description	References
1	Leadership Consistency	The editor-in-chief consistently advocates for convergence while maintaining staff trust.	Bahagia and Soemitra (2022); Kotter et al. (2021)
2	Strength of Local Content	The depth of local coverage on North Sumatra issues cannot be replicated by national media.	Zainarti et al. (2024); Zainarti (2021)
3	JPG Newsroom Synergy	Access to the Jawa Pos Group's national news database strengthens content quality and production efficiency.	Lestari et al. (2023); data wawancara
4	Human Resources Competency Development	Continuous training (video, social media) and recruitment of digital-native content creators.	Maidalena (2022)
5	Gradual Convergence Strategy	Maintaining print media as the core business while developing digital platforms incrementally.	Lestari et al. (2023)

These five factors are reported by the key informant as accompanying Sumut Pos's convergence process. The current evidence base, however, does not establish their relative significance or a causal relationship with specific outcomes audience growth, revenue, content quality, or organizational sustainability and they should accordingly be read as facilitating conditions rather than confirmed determinants of success. Leadership consistency and HR development, in particular, connect to amanah not only as general good-management practice but as mechanisms through which editorial responsibility, professional integrity, and public trust are actively cultivated though demonstrating this connection empirically, rather than asserting it, would require the evidence noted in the table above. JPG Newsroom synergy likewise warrants examination beyond production efficiency: shared content from a national network carries shared editorial standards and a

form of institutional responsibility for that content at the local level, which this study has not yet examined directly.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how Sumut Pos manages the transformation from print to online media in facing digital disruption, addressing three research questions. First, Sumut Pos implements a gradual, staged media convergence strategy that began approximately seven years before this study (prior to the Covid-19 pandemic), encompassing three simultaneous dimensions: technological convergence through the sumutpos.jawapos.com website, mobile application, and JPG-networked digital infrastructure; content convergence through a multi-platform publishing model with task divisions between online and print editors; and human-resource convergence through training and recruitment of digital talent. Print production is retained as the core business while digital platforms develop incrementally, consistent with convergence rather than platform replacement.

Second, four interlinked challenges were identified: a shift in human-resource mindsets from print-oriented to digital-oriented work culture, intensifying competition from digital-native portals and social media platforms, operational technical constraints, and a persistent gap between digital traffic growth and digital revenue growth. This combination reflects the particular complexity of convergence in a local media context, distinct from national media organizations.

Third, five factors editorial leadership consistency, the strength of North Sumatran local content, JPG Newsroom network synergy, continuous human-resource competency development, and the gradual convergence strategy itself—were reported by the key informant as supporting Sumut Pos's convergence process. Because this evidence derives primarily from a single informant and no independent outcome measures were established beyond traffic and continued print revenue, these should be read as factors associated with convergence rather than as confirmed determinants of its success. Digital traffic averaging approximately 300,000 monthly page views indicates meaningful audience reach, but digital monetization remains underdeveloped relative to that reach, and this study does not establish "success" in a stronger sense than sustained operation and audience growth.

Regarding the Islamic ethical dimension, this study's findings support a more moderate and more specific set of claims than convergence success alone would suggest. *Tabayyun* is evidenced concretely, rather than asserted normatively, through Sumut Pos's three-stage editorial checking process applied before digital publication and its requirement of at least one official source for content clearance; however, the absence of a formal post-publication correction policy indicates that this institutionalization is partial, addressing verification before dissemination but not the acknowledgment and correction of error once published—a gap with direct implications for sustaining public trust as publication cycles accelerate. *Amanah* is connected in this study primarily to editorial leadership consistency and to the source-confirmation requirement underlying the verification process described above; the extent to which *amanah* also governs editorial independence

from commercial partnerships, disclosure of advertorial content, and safeguards against conflicts of interest was not established by the available evidence and remains an open empirical question rather than a demonstrated characteristic of Sumut Pos's practice. *Maslahah* is evidenced by Sumut Pos's sustained provision of accurate, locally relevant information across platforms and its continued operation despite the industry-wide print decline documented in the Introduction; whether content strategy specifically prioritizes public informational benefit over traffic maximization, however, was not examined through concrete content-selection decisions in this study and should likewise be treated as an area for future substantiation rather than a settled finding.

The Adaptive Phased Convergence (APC) model, comprising platform parallelism, progressive content differentiation, and incremental revenue diversification, is offered as a conceptual model derived from the Sumut Pos case rather than as a generally validated framework for local media organizations. Its applicability to other local media contexts—particularly those without a comparable group-network affiliation or comparable local-content strength—has not been tested and should not be assumed without further comparative evidence. This study's principal limitation is its reliance on a single primary informant, which constrains claims regarding organizational-level practice, the institutionalization of editorial independence safeguards, and the fuller operationalization of *amanah* and *maslahah* discussed above. Future research involving informants from multiple divisions editorial, technical, and management—together with multi-case comparison across local media organizations, would strengthen the empirical foundation of the APC model and allow the *tabayyun*, *amanah*, and *maslahah* connections proposed here to be tested more rigorously, including through direct examination of correction practices, advertorial disclosure policies, and content-selection decisions not yet addressed in this study. This research contributes theoretically through the development of the Adaptive Phased Convergence (APC) model as a conceptual alternative that is more suitable for local media organizations undergoing similar convergence processes. The limitation of this study lies in the use of a single primary informant. Future research involving more informants from various divisions and multi-case studies of local media organizations would strengthen the empirical foundation of the APC model.

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