



National College of Ireland

Project Submission Sheet

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Programme: Masters in marketing **Year:** 2024-2025

Module: Dissertation

Lecturer: Dr. Louise Maguire

Submission: 15-08-25

Due Date:

Project Title: Importance of Print Media in Marketing for a Brand

Word Count: 13377

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**National College of Ireland
MSc in Marketing – Full-time – MSCMRKD1
Research Methods (MAHRM) Base Page - SOB PG
Programmes
Dissertation
Importance of Print Media in Marketing for a Brand
Word Count: 13377
Akash Ajit Ayare – 23360917**

Abstract

This paper examines the importance of print media in marketing industry for a brand, with the growth in digital technology consumers' behavior's gradually increasing towards digital consumption, brands are focusing largely on digital campaigns while print media campaigns are ignored.

This research project was based on literature review and qualitative research approach through team's video call with 6 professionals from marketing background, they are working in advertising agencies and with specific brands and are connected to print media campaigns.

The research questions on which the study was conducted were how importance of print media campaigns differ for different brands, also how brands are adapting their recent marketing campaigns to stay competitive with the growth of digital media. Also, how print media is greatly useful for delivering complex messages and how print media works effectively for some brands.

The findings were analyzed based on themes emerged and mainly outcome from this study were that brands are still using print media for their campaigns by using creativity and innovative approaches, also few brands are integrating print with digital campaigns for better results and are looking at both as potential media channels.

Research's limitations and Further research opportunities possible were also identified.

Keywords: Print media, marketing campaigns, thematic analysis, media strategy, advertising, consumer behavior, digital campaigns.

Declaration

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

Research Students Declaration Form

(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Akash Ajit Ayare

Student Number: 23360917

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSc in Marketing

Title of Thesis: Importance of Print Media in Marketing for a Brand

Date: 15/08/2025

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Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my dissertation supervisor Dr. Louise Maguire, for her feedback, guidance, help, knowledge, suggestions and encouragement throughout my dissertation.

I am also very grateful to all my lecturers for insightful learnings and knowledge shared throughout the year. I would also like to thank all library staff in NCI and would also like to thank David Hurley for early guidance on the dissertation topic.

I really appreciate all my 6 interviewees for their time and insights through the interviews; their contribution is remarkable as it requires great effort and energy for the interviews. I'm thankful for their help and responses.

Importance of Print Media in Marketing for a Brand

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Even as digital media is expanding rapidly, print media still has a strong position around many parts of the world. In 2025, India stands out with 77% of people reading print materials, followed by Finland at 68%, and the United Kingdom at 58% (Statista Market Insights, 2025a). In the United States, the figure is lower, with 48% engaging with print, and books being the most used format at 29% (Statista, 2025b). Daily newspapers and magazines also remain popular in several countries. For example, 57% of respondents in India read newspapers, compared to 37% in Austria (Statista, 2025).

Global trends point toward a decline in print newspaper and magazine revenues, which are expected to fall to \$92.85 billion by 2030, with a negative annual growth rate of 3.05% and user penetration shrinking from 19.8% to 15.2%. Many consumers still value the credibility and familiarity that print helps to provide (Statista Market Insights, 2025).

1.2 Problem statement

Even though print media has been valued for its trustworthiness, strong sensory impact, and ability to build lasting brand awareness, many people question how effective it really is as digital platforms have become more popular. With the growth in technology, digital media can reach more people, offer personalized content, reach can be calculated and measured, and allow instant interaction due to its wide reach and accessibility. However, it also has problems, like making people feel overwhelmed, less brand recall and less trusting compared to print. This situation makes it hard for marketers to decide how to use both types of media in the best way (Eisend, 2025).

Although many studies have compared print and digital advertising, there is still not enough research on how print can work alongside digital tools and stay important in today's mixed media world. This thesis tries to fill this gap by looking at how print media still helps with brand marketing, how people's feelings and culture shape their views of it, and how print and digital can be combined to strengthen a brand's image.

1.3 Research Aim & Objectives

This study will aim to understand the importance of print media in marketing campaigns and how it influences brand recall and helps in building brand image. Previous research from Venkatraman et al., (2021) and Liu et al., (2023) helps in understanding the print media, however we will narrow down with how less efforts taken in print media for a brand lead to its failure in brand recall and how it plays vital role in brand building. We will study decision makers, their perception towards print media in current marketing campaigns and how does it influence them. We will also dive into design and communication of print media and how great designs in print media influence purchase decisions of consumers.

1.4 Contextual Framework

According to Venkatraman et al. (2021), with the boom in digital media, brands and marketers have forgotten the importance of print media and print collaterals. While digital media can help brands to gain more audiences, print media helps in better brand recall and has more influence over customers memory which eventually benefits the brand for sales. Brand recalls play a vital role in building a brand and print media works efficiently in leaving a mark over consumer mind laying a foundation for brand image.

Liu et al., (2023) further explain how brands nowadays focus particularly on digital campaigns, and they tend to provide less importance to print media as they feel with the growth of digital media, the key to brands' success depends on digital media, but that's not the complete truth. Print media has a great influence in building a brand image in a consumer's mind as print media being tangible adds a better advantage for brand recall.

Print media has long been a traditional tool for brand promotion; it offers a physical and lasting format that many consumers still trust. Unlike digital media, print advertisements are often seen as more credible and less intrusive, which helps in enhancing their ability to build long-term brand equity. According to Tilak et al. (2024), print media contributes significantly to consumer perception by delivering stable and consistent messaging. The tangible nature of newspapers and magazines allows consumers to engage with brand messages at their own pace and with less distractions, which supports deeper memory retention and brand recall.

Marketing communication has changed a lot in the digital age, but print media still holds a special place in shaping how people see brands. While digital platforms are everywhere and utilized by everyone today, research shows that the physical and trustworthy nature of print often still stands out, especially in some situations. For example, in the luxury fashion industry, brands like Chanel and Louis Vuitton still rely heavily on high-end print magazines such as Vogue to showcase their new collections. These glossy, well-curated design textures offer a sense of elegance, premium feel, and exclusivity that digital ads often struggle to match. The tactile experience of exploring through a premium magazine enhances the emotional appeal of the brand, which helps in strengthening its prestige in a way that aligns with its identity. (Eisend, 2025). This study looks at how print media is used in brand marketing and how traditional print ads are now working together with interactive technologies to create messages that persuade consumers. This topic is important because even though many people are moving online, print continues to have a strong psychological impact due to the way it appeals to our senses and the way our brains process it (Messaris, 1997).

Cook (2020) explains that all types of communication, whether online or offline, are part of complex systems where people must keep learning and adjusting as technology evolves. In marketing, this means print media doesn't just copy what we see online. Instead, it offers unique ways to connect with audiences and strengthen trust in a brand.

This thesis wants to help fill the gap in research by showing how visual persuasion, credibility, and interactive elements come together in modern print campaigns. These insights can help marketers see why print still matters in today's mixed media environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Credibility and Psychological Impact of Print Media

According to Veleva and Tsvetanova (2020) digital media makes brands an open book for competitors, the competitors can easily copy the campaign or communication used or create a better campaign instantly as they would learn from the mistakes of competitors. As digital media is based on time framework and popularity, brands tend to create campaigns in a hurry to beat the competitors and eventually end up in space where the communication doesn't fall as per the brand guidelines.

Wodak and Krzyzanowski (2008) explain that print media offers real practical advantages over other media, its advantage of tangibility helps to add brands recall effect on a consumer. People tend to remember the print media as they sub consciously leave a mark in reader's mind as they consume data at their own pace. People watch print ads subconsciously which increases their brand recall chances. Innovative print media can play a vital role in gaining public attention.

Kumar and Kumar (2017) state the importance of print, print medium was the first to be used for mass media for communicating the information. It can be very effective for reaching wider audiences and communication used in print media can be constant across multiple mediums unlike digital media communication. Print media makes a longer impact on the minds of customers with more in-depth analysis and communication they are exposed to helps in building better brand recognition.

Patil (2011), print media though has more longevity and tangibility effect, the time taken to reach wider audiences is very high as compared to digital media. Print media though leaves a great lasting impression on consumers mind it takes time for the communication to reach the audience, also there is no surety regarding the communication has reached the correct target audience. In print media, communication cannot be personalized it has to be generic so it can cater to wider audience. Tilak et al., (2024) argues that the influence of print media on marketing outcomes is not uniform and tends to vary depending on the nature of the brand and the type of product that is being promoted. Research suggests that while digital media provides real-time interaction and widespread reach, print media has a stronger role in strengthening brand identity and building consumer trust over time.

2.2 Time Sensitivity and Campaign Agility in Print vs Digital Media

(Kipphan, 2001) explains regarding the time and efforts taken for creation of print media is higher than digital media as it is important to take samples of print media advertisements before production in huge numbers. Time taken for a basic newspaper advertisement can be seen in figure 1 which explains advertisement handling, typesetting, page layout, image processing, print and deployment. Hence, print is less considered for short term and reactive marketing plans. Similarly, efforts and cost for other print media production is higher if compared to digital media as digital media is much cheaper and efforts for an ad campaign are less.

Fig. 1.9-10
Global overview of the newspaper production process showing prepress in detail [1.9-7]

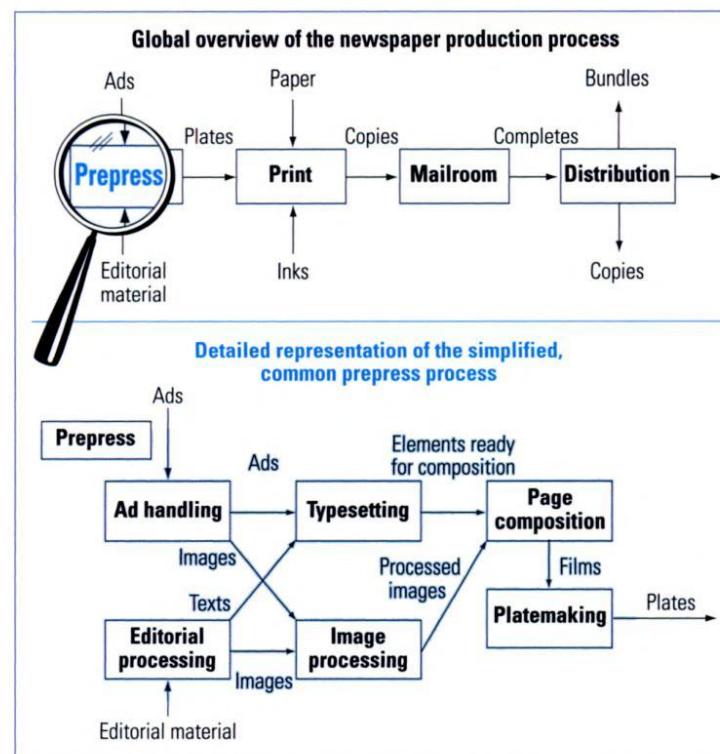


Figure1. Global overview of the newspaper production process showing prepress in detail
(Adapted from Kipphan, 2001, p. 193)

2.2 Changing Consumer Habits and Digital Adoption

Saxena (2019) examines the impact of digital media on the print media industry. Print Media has always been the most important part in advertising and marketing, but youths have created the shift from print media to digital media. They tend to believe information provided through digital media. Youths particularly want to consume data online, print media has not been able to gain much popularity among the youth. While Vailati et al. (2025) argues growing dominance of digital platforms has significantly impacted the consumption habits of newspaper readers, print media still maintains a notable role in certain brand strategies. He found that readers who frequently consume print newspapers associate the experience with comfort, routine, and trust especially when reading at home or in personal spaces. This emotional attachment creates a unique space for brands that value credibility and long-term recognition over speed. Unlike digital readers, who tend to view print as outdated, print readers often resist the idea that newspapers will stop being printed.

Muacevic and Adler (2024) explain the effectiveness of print media communications with help of usage of print media in public sectors, it is often seen that marketers use print media as an important section for communicating important information related to health in public sectors. The reason for this is people tend to believe information shared through print media and information consumed through print media is considered more to be registered in consumer's mind subconsciously. Print media can share multiple information to a wider audience hence it is used as a tool which can share important information. As we can see in Figure 1, print media is a potential tool for creating social awareness. *“Even in the current digital era, print media continues to play a robust role in generating awareness.”* Muacevic and Adler (2024) Page 2, Introduction and background.

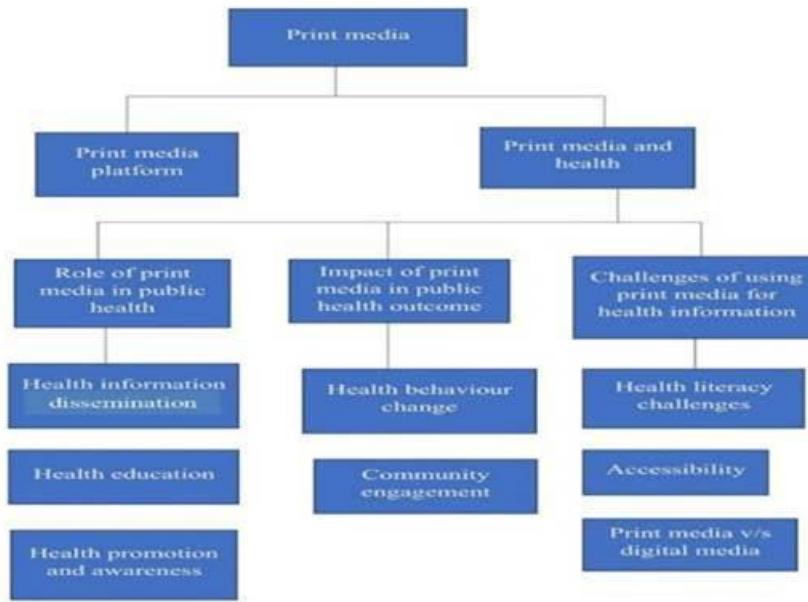


Figure 2. Summary of the study of print media. (Muacevic and Adler, 2024).

Nossek, Adoni, and Nimrod (2015) analyze that different print media vehicles serve distinct psychological and communicative functions. For example, newspaper reading supports a person's interpretive thinking, helping readers develop their perspectives and stay informed about local and global affairs. Entertainment and professional magazines function as community integrators and promote national values. Posters, on the other hand, are designed to capture attention quickly and spark curiosity in the reader's mind. Therefore, marketers must carefully choose the most appropriate print medium that aligns with their communication goals and the nature of their message.

Borde et al. (2024) agree to the above points. His analysis revealed that millennial consumers often associate print media with reliability and brand seriousness, suggesting that its impact varies depending on the product and marketing context. Also, the importance of print media differs from brand to brand and product to product, as its effectiveness is dependent by both audience behavior and the nature of communication.

People across various countries still tend to read via print mediums, print media often attracts readers as they build curiosity among consumers by great designs and innovative headlines. Print media has its own aura and personal touch effect on readers which builds a connection with the

consumer, and they feel connected to the brand. Consumers tend to praise print media advertisements more as compared to digital media advertisements. Borde et al. (2024)

2.3 Combining Print and Digital Strategies

Firmansyah et al. (2022) explores how the print media industry has adapted to survive in the digital era. Print media is a communication which has been dominating for years and decades. Print media is one of the mass media which can attract the audience's attention. Despite all these advantages print media industry has experienced a decline in recent years due to technological developments that have forced print media to switch to online formats. Print media single handedly cannot function for a brand because of youth moving towards digital age. Borde et al. (2024) disagrees with this and states, several studies have explored how traditional media formats like print continues to contribute to brand messaging in the digital environment. Few research shows that when print media is combined with digital strategies, print advertisements can enhance overall campaign performance by reinforcing key messages and appealing to consumers on a deeper and more tactile level.

Firmansyah et al. (2022), agrees to Borde et al. (2024) and states People's trust can be acquired through print media, still youth tend to read news and advertisements online and believe false advertising. Hence a brand must focus on its digital advertising as well as its print media. Brand must create a balance between both by using print media for building trust among customers and digital media for sharing creative advertising and to create buzz and reach the youth and wider audiences. While the print media will build trust and brand recall the digital media when exposed to them at the same time will create the brand recognition effect and will eventually lead to sales and will build a brand. People built brands but for a short term, brands fail to maintain the legacy due to disbalance in the print media and digital media, thus maintaining balance can help in building brands Firmansyah et al. (2022).

2.4 Evolving Reading Behaviors and Comprehension

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the global shift toward digital communication, which significantly influenced how people read and process media content. According to Fichnová et al. (2023), this transformation led to the introduction of new digital reading devices and platforms that offer interactive, multisensory experiences. Readers today engage not only with written words but also with visual and audio elements, altering how text is perceived and

understood. While digital formats offer easy convenience and access, they also add distractions such as hyperlinks and pop-ups which are disliked advertisements, which may reduce focus and comprehension.

In contrast, print texts often support a deeper, uninterrupted reading experience. As Mangen et al. (2013) explain, reading from paper is not just a visual process but also tactile, helping the brain to perceive text spatially. This tactile and spatial engagement can improve comprehension and memory, especially for content where understanding complex or important information is crucial. This suggests that for certain brands particularly those dealing with serious or high-involvement products, print media might offer a cognitive advantage, reinforcing the idea that the choice of media format should vary based on product type and target audience.

2.5 Trust, Emotional Connection, and Media Preferences

To compete with competitors, many print media companies are now embracing “media convergence,” blending their traditional print products with digital platforms (Saragih & Harahap, 2020). This strategy allows them to benefit from the strengths of both formats maintaining the trustworthiness of print while gaining speed and interactivity of online channels. Interestingly, studies also show that print and digital media do not have to compete; they can complement each other depending on the content. For example, newspapers are still effective in reaching urban professionals for local business advertisements, while digital media is better suited for quick campaign exposure or time-sensitive promotions. Furthermore, some experts believe that trust in print media can be a strong differentiator in a world increasingly filled with misinformation online. This reinforces the idea that print media is not obsolete; it still holds marketing value when used strategically by the right brands for the right products.

As per (Kalombe & Phiri, 2019), Online media has started to influence advertising trends, though not as drastically as expected. While some advertisers have moved to digital platforms for their wider reach. Interestingly, many readers still prefer to pay for print rather than digital content than can be accessed for free, which indicates that well-targeted, high-quality content regardless of format can retain value. Media companies are adopting digital tools like e-papers which are newsletters and mobile subscriptions but still face challenges such as low internet access and limited digital skills in certain regions. These mixed responses to digital change highlight that print media may continue to serve specific marketing goals, especially for trusted,

serious, or regionally focused messaging. As a result, the impact of digital media on print varies not only by geography but also by brand strategy and target audience, aligning with the hypothesis that print media's importance depends on brand and product type.

Despite the assumed benefits of digital formats, research's that compare print and digital texts has shared mixed results. In a study conducted with Slovak university students, Fichnová et al. (2023) found no significant difference in comprehension scores between digital and print formats. This contradicts with the earlier findings that favor print for better understanding (e.g., Mangen et al., 2013; Goodwin et al., 2019). One explanation may be that today's younger audiences, especially post-pandemic students, have adapted to both formats due to the rise of online learning and remote communication. Interestingly, even though digital comprehension slightly outperformed print in their study, the variation was too minor to be statistically meaningful. Furthermore, the researchers explored how text difficulty, as measured by the Björnsson Index, influenced comprehension. Again, no strong relationship was found, suggesting that short digital texts might not overwhelm working memory in the same way longer or more complex ones do. These results help to indicate that digital and print texts can be equally effective, depending on the reader's familiarity and context, which supports the hypothesis that the importance of print media varies across audiences, products, and purposes.

(Messaris, 1997), disagrees with Fichnová et al. (2023) and explains, print media has always been powerful because it helps people think more deeply about what they see and feel more connected to the message. Messaris (1997) further explains that printed images have a special quality called "visual truth," which means people see them as more real and trustworthy. Unlike digital ads, which many consumers view as temporary or even manipulative, print ads feel more credible because they are physical and lasting. This sense of authenticity makes print especially effective in areas where trust really matters, like luxury products and financial services.

(Eisend, 2025) adds further, print media also encourages more thoughtful reading. According to theories about how people process information, when someone looks at a printed message, they are more likely to take time to think it through carefully instead of just reacting to it quickly. (Eisend, 2010) explains, this deeper thinking helps people remember the brand, message, and form better opinions about the brand, which often leads to better recall and a higher chance of buying the product later. Recent research shows that the act of touching and holding printed

material also helps people remember the message, because it creates a kind of “haptic memory” linked to the sense of touch.

Ratminingsih & Budasi (2019), emphasized that both types of media print and digital both offer unique advantages in the teaching-learning process. Printed media is traditional, tangible, and often preferred for its simplicity and directness of message. It is still used widely in classrooms through storybooks, charts, and coursebooks. On the other hand, digital media integrates technology, allowing for visual and auditory enhancements that can increase interest and memory retention. In marketing, digital media might be more effective for products that benefit from multimedia presentation and target tech-savvy consumers. Meanwhile, print media could still be better for promoting products that require deep reading, attention to detail, or trust such as health products, insurance, or luxury brands. The effectiveness of both mediums is unique, and its success and usage depend on the nature of the message and the characteristics of the audience.

2.6 Print and Digital Media: Evolving Roles in Information Delivery

The debate about whether digital media will completely replace print media has been carried out for many years. Some scholars argue that the rise of the internet and social media has made printing newspapers and magazines less important, especially for young people which range below the age of 30. Many young readers prefer to get news through their phones or computers because it is faster, cheaper and easier. They like the fact that digital news can be accessed anytime and offer frequent and real time updates (Saxena, 2019).

At the same time, studies show that print media still holds a unique place in marketing and communication. For example, printed materials like newspapers, brochures, and flyers are often trusted more because they feel tangible and “real.” Udenze (2018) suggests that the physical form of print media gives a space of credibility that online content sometimes lacks to provide. This is partly due to strict rules processed in traditional journalism, where editors verify facts before publishing (Udenze, 2018). In contrast, social media platforms allow almost anyone to post information, which can lead to misinformation spreading quickly.

Even though print has advantages, researchers like Saxena (2019) note that readership levels for newspapers are declining. The shift has been driven by factors such as the ability to get instant news alerts, watch videos, and read comments from other users online. According to Saxena

(2019), around 90% of people surveyed preferred online media for news updates, while only 10% still relied mainly on print. This trend suggests that digital media has become the dominant source of information for most consumers.

However, other scholars emphasize that it's not a zero-sum game. Udenze (2018) argues that new media and traditional print can coexist in a converged system. He explains that while online channels offer speed, print media provides depth and authorized information. This combination means that many brands now use both digital and print formats to reach wider audiences. For example, companies may launch online ad campaigns to create awareness while sending printed brochures or catalogues to build trust and drive conversions among same audiences.

2.7 Cognitive Processing and Audience Engagement

Another key area of research focuses on how readers process information differently in print and digital contexts. Messaris (1997) suggests that visuals in print media have a special persuasive power because they seem more authentic and less manipulated. This idea is called "visual truth," and it helps explain why people often feel that printed advertisements are more credible and trustworthy than digital ones.

At the same time, Eisend (2010) discusses how dual-process theories of persuasion apply to media. When people read printed material, they tend to engage in deeper cognitive processing, thinking more carefully about the message. This can improve memory retention and lead to stronger attitudes toward a brand (Eisend, 2010). On the other hand, digital content often encourages quick scanning and superficial reading, which leads to less recall of advertisement. Yet, it also provides multimedia experiences like videos, interactive graphics, and hyperlinks that can engage different learning styles (Eisend, 2025).

Saxena (2019) found that many brands prefer online advertisements as they spark instant curiosity among consumers and it allows them to interact as well. For brands, interactivity can be a powerful way to build communities and encourage two-way communication. But it also requires marketers to be more transparent and responsive, as negative feedback spreads quickly online.

2.8 Digital Media's Impact on Marketing and Branding

In marketing, digital platforms offer several advantages that print cannot match. For example, digital ads can be highly targeted using data analytics and consumer profiles. Marketers can track user behavior, retarget ads, and measure performance in real time (Saxena, 2019). This level of personalization is very appealing to brands because it increases the chances of reaching the right audience with the right message at the right time. Also, if a digital campaign which isn't performing well can be paused easily unlike a print campaign which helps to prevent heavy losses.

Moreover, digital campaigns can be interactive, encouraging users to comment, share, or participate in promotions. These activities can increase engagement and make consumers feel involved with the brand. However, Eisend (2025) cautions that too much personalization can backfire if people feel their privacy is being invaded or if the messages seem insincere.

2.9 Media Convergence and the Hybrid Approach

Many researchers now argue that the most effective strategy is to combine print and digital media in integrated campaigns. Udenze (2018) explains that convergence allows brands to benefit from the strengths and advantages of both the formats. For example, a company might use social media to generate buzz about a product launch while sending printed invitations or catalogs to high-value customers. This approach helps to enhance reach with help of digital platforms alongside building trust with print.

Saxena (2019) also highlights that while digital media is growing, print has not disappeared. In fact, some brands have returned to print campaigns to stand out from the crowded and competitive digital space. As more companies invest in online ads, it becomes harder to capture attention. A well-designed print piece can create a memorable experience precisely because it is less common today.

Research shows that print and digital channels activate different parts of the brain, suggesting that using both can improve recall and engagement (Eisend, 2025). For example, printed materials encourage more focused attention and deeper cognitive processing, while digital media provides dynamic, interactive experiences.

2.10 The Shifting Landscape of Print and Digital Media

The media industry has been going through a phase of very rapid change. The spread of the internet and smartphones has made digital content more popular than ever before. At the same time, traditional print media like newspapers, posters and magazines have struggled to maintain their readership and advertising revenues (Barthelemy et al., 2011). Many experts have predicted that print media would soon disappear altogether. However, studies suggest that while print media has declined in some countries, it still holds value and is even growing.

Barthelemy and colleagues (2011) highlight how this decline narrative is mainly driven by Western countries such as the US, UK, and parts of Europe, where newspaper circulation has fallen by up to 30%. In contrast, many emerging markets, including countries in Africa and Asia, have seen print circulation rise. This suggests that the idea of a global “death of print” is too simplistic and does not consider important regional differences.

Firmansyah et al. (2022) also explore how print newspapers like *Pikiran Rakyat* in Indonesia have tried to survive by adapting their content strategies and launching digital versions of their papers. This shows that print organizations are not simply ignoring digital trends but are trying to integrate online approaches to print, but they also try to maintain their traditional style. In this way, print media has evolved rather than vanished.

One reason for print media’s survival is its strong cultural role and reputation for credibility (Firmansyah et al., 2022). Many readers believe printed newspapers as more reliable sources of information compared to online content, which is often associated with clickbait and misinformation (Marchi, 2012). This perception of trust remains one of most important advantages of print.

2.11 Audience Behaviour and Preferences

Generational and age differences are major factors in media consumption. Pew (2012) found that older generations are more likely to read printed newspapers, while younger people rely more on digital and mobile platforms. Marchi (2012) and Rampersad and Althiyabi (2020) have mentioned that younger audiences connect and believe in online news resources, such as influencers or bloggers. As digital news is quick and provides instant updates. Consumers want

updates in real time and prefer platforms that let them filter topics. While print newspapers offer curation and editorial judgment, many readers today want to choose what they see and when.

2.12 Blending Print and Digital Strategies

Media companies now have figured out that survival depends on combining the strengths of both print and digital formats. For example, *Pikiran Rakyat* introduced e-papers to reach digital audiences while keeping its print tradition alive (Firmansyah et al., 2022). Similarly, publishers in Europe and South America have adopted strategies like regional printing and launching digital collaterals to manage costs (Barthelemy et al., 2011).

This hybrid model brings challenges as online content demands constant updates, while print still carries high production costs. Borde et al. (2024) notes that print media continues to be effective for certain audiences, especially Millennials, when tailored to specific product categories.

Despite digital growth, print retains advantages in trust, physical presence, and emotional impact, making it useful for brands in sectors like luxury, finance, and healthcare. Hence, while integrating both digital and print in campaigns can be effective yet maintain consistency on both platforms for same campaign is difficult.

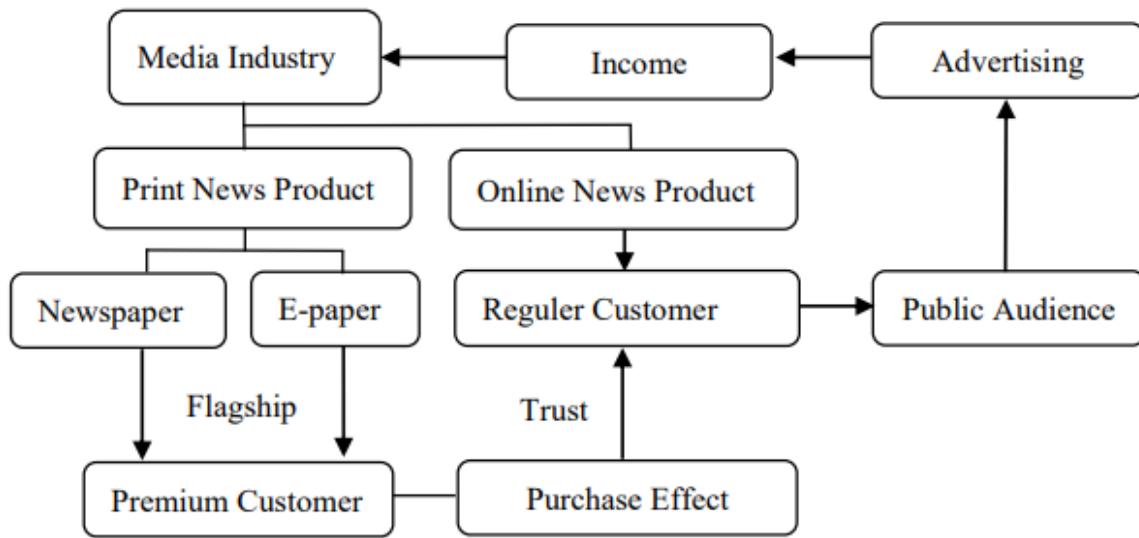


Figure 3. Print media flagship model. Firmansyah et al. (2022).

Figure 3 explains how media industry is integrating digital media with print to reach wider audiences and make campaigns more effective as both media hold different advantages.

Visually creative print ads such as those with striking headlines or unique layouts have been shown to stimulate curiosity and strengthen emotional connections between the brand and consumer. This is particularly valuable for premium or trust-based product categories such as luxury goods, health care, and education services, where perceived reliability can strongly influence purchase decisions. Therefore, the impact of print media appears to be particularly effective for certain brands and products that require a strong, lasting impression rather than just quick reach. (Tilak et al., 2024).

(Kipphan, 2001) agrees with the effectiveness of print media for emotional connection and brand recall, but on other hand he even emphasizes the efforts and time taken for a print ad. While blending print and digital campaigns marketers must take into consideration regarding the time taken for sample print ad in newspapers or billboards, while digital media advertisements are quicker and can be deployed at any given time this instance isn't the same for print media. Print media require more efficient planning and time. He even explains regarding the complex process for a print advertisement in a newspaper as per Figure 4.

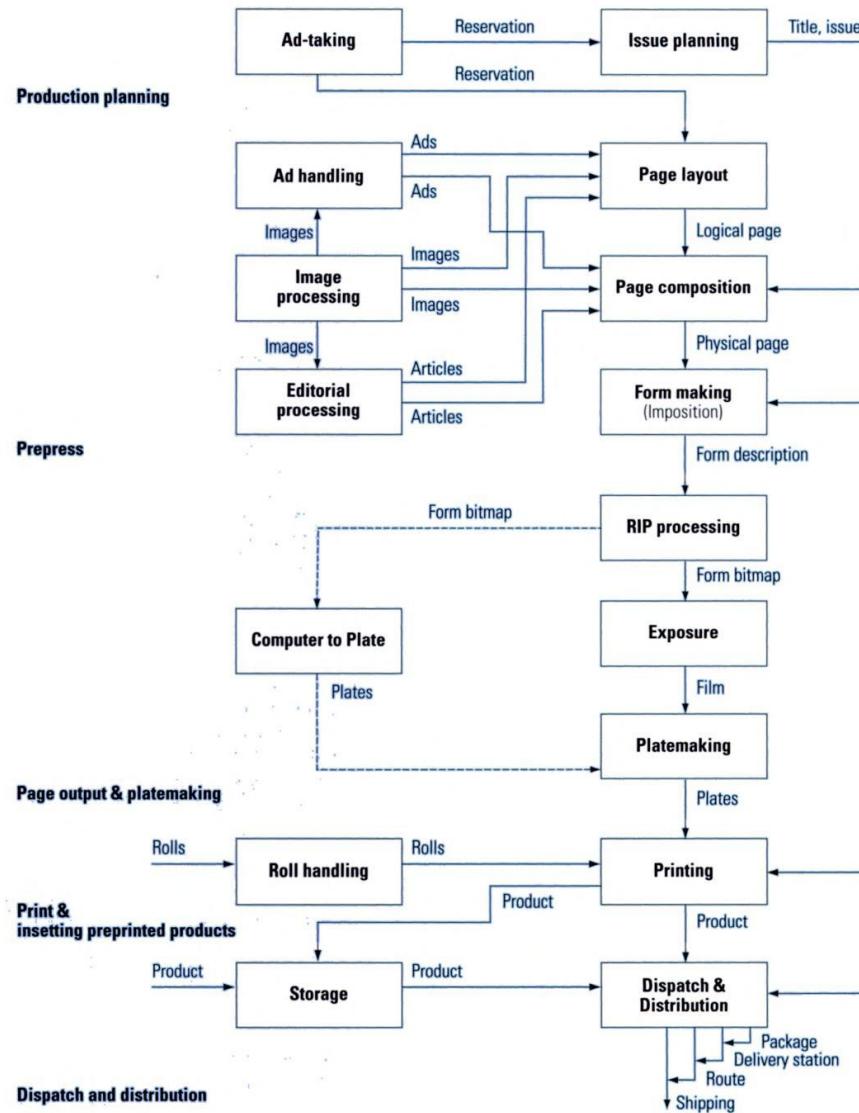


Fig. 1.9-11 Basic workflow model in newspaper production (IFRA)

Copyrighted material

Figure 4. Workflow in print media production (*Adapted from Kipphan, 2001, p. 194*)

3. Research Questions

3.1 Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to explore how print media continues to play a role in brand marketing in the digital age. While digital platforms are widespread and often prioritized, print media still holds few unique qualities that make it relevant for some brands and products. The research focuses on understanding how different brands use print media today, what influences their choice, and how they combine print with digital strategies for marketing campaigns. This study aims to investigate how and why print media is still evolving, what value it offers, and how it is being integrated with digital strategies to enhance brand outcomes.

This research also considers about perception of decision makers regarding print media in brand campaigns and how role of print media has evolved with time which has been underexplored in recent marketing literatures.

3.2 Research Questions

- How does the importance of print media vary across different brands and product categories?

Compared with digital media, print media has more to offer and has more advantages, as people tend to engage more deeply with print advertising than with digital advertising. And thus, print media helps in better brand recall as compared to digital media. People tend to remember print ads which help with brand recognition and brand recall as compared to digital media. Digital media though is helpful for gaining popularity quickly; people tend to forget the ads over a short period of time because of cluttered advertisements which cause less brand recall. (Venkatraman et al., [2021])

- How does having more detailed content in print media helps brands communicate their messages and achieve marketing goals?

Print media often helps in building better image of products as it provides more information about products and eventually helps in changing the response of consumers towards a positive intent. Great print media ads with creative designs and catchy headlines create curiosity and create a positive image of brands in consumers' mind (Liu et al., 2023).

- How are brands adapting their print media strategies to remain relevant amid growing digital competition?

People tend to scan things around them and watching creative advertisements in form of print enhances the urge to change the mindset of consumers as people tend to remember better advertisements which eventually help in sales of a product or helps in brand recall. (Sorce & Dewitz 2007, pp. 36-37)

3.3 Research Objectives

To guide the investigation, the research sets out the following objectives:

- To identify how different types of brands and products engage with print media in comparison to digital platforms.
- To explore the advantages of print media in delivering complex or detailed brand messaging.
- To investigate how brands are adapting their print strategies with the growth in digital transformation and consumer changes.
- To contribute to academic and industry understanding of how print and digital media can co-exist in integrated marketing campaigns.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Following the literature review in Chapter 2, this chapter outlines the methodological considerations and choices that pathed the research process. A research methodology refers to the theory and principles behind the way research should be conducted (Saunders et al., 2019) and provides the overarching framework for designing the study.

To determine the most suitable research method, this study refers to Melnikovas (2018) **Research Onion** (Figure 4.1), which presents a structured approach to moving from wider philosophical assumptions to specific data collection techniques. The research onion was chosen because it encourages systematic reflection at every stage, and also makes sure about the methodological decisions are justified and aligned with the research questions.

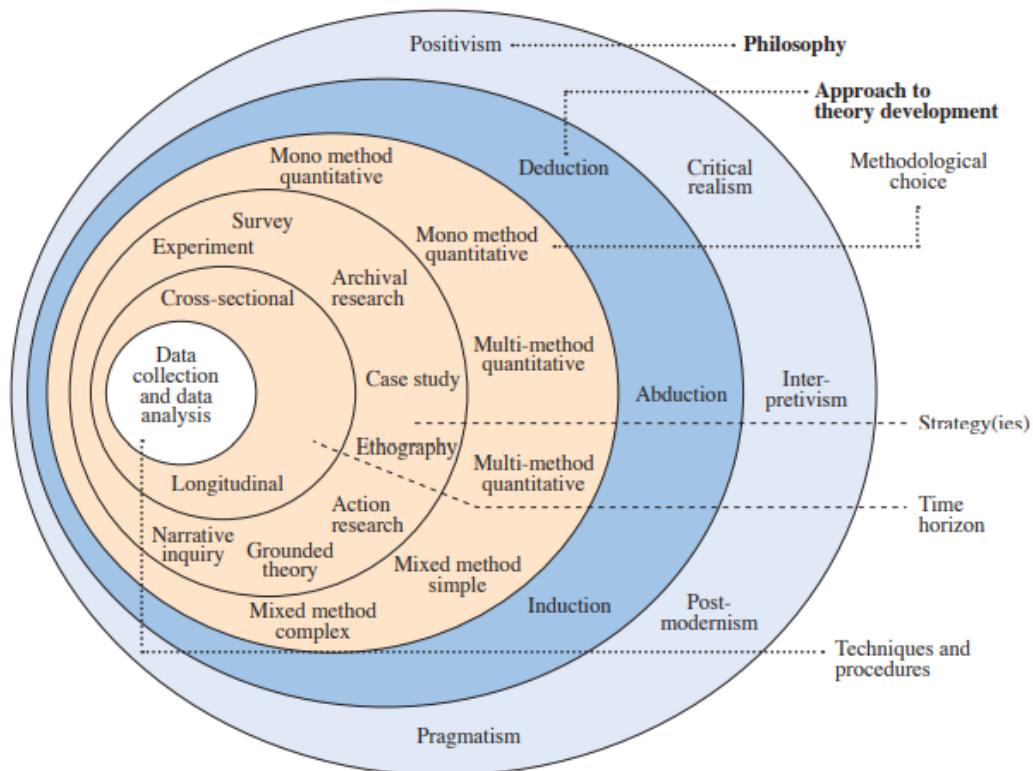


Figure 1. Research onion¹

Figure 5 – The Research Onion

Source: Adapted from Melnikovas (2018, p. 33)

This chapter will examine each layer of the research onion related to this study including research philosophy, approach, methodological choice, strategy, time horizon, and techniques and will also be considering alternative approaches. It will also discuss sampling methods, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, limitations, and ethical considerations.

4.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the assumptions and beliefs about the nature of reality and the development of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2019). The two key factors driving here are ontology which is assumptions about reality while other one is epistemology which is assumptions about how knowledge is created and shared (Bryman, 2016).

This study adopts an interpretivist philosophy. Interpretivism emphasises that reality is constructed socially while it is best understood by exploring the meanings people assign to their own personal experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This is appropriate because the study seeks to understand marketing professionals who are related to print media, and their role is related to brand communication, and their perspectives are shaped by individual experience, brand context, and market conditions.

Alternative philosophies were considered:

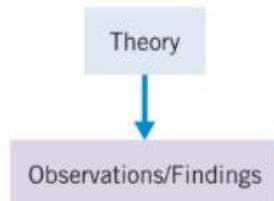
- **Positivism** could have been used to measure statistical trends in print media usage, but this would not have been able to provide the depth needed to understand the reasoning behind marketing choices.
- **Pragmatism** was also a possible choice, as it supports mixed-methods research, but the focus of this study was on rich, qualitative insight rather than quantitative opinions.

4.3 Research Approach

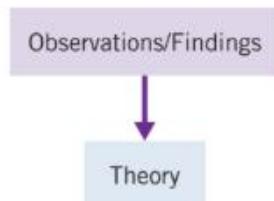
There are two main research approaches: **deductive** and **inductive** (Bryman, 2015). Deduction tests existing theories through hypothesis-driven research, while induction develops new theory from existing data. According to (Bryman et al., 2021), research strategy simply means a general approach towards conducting social research, quantitative research emphasizes quantity of collection of data and its analysis. It has a deductive approach which emphasis on testing of theories. While qualitative research emphasizes on words rather than quantity of data. It

emphasizes on inductive approach and focuses on creating theories, it allows individuals to interpret their social world. The below figure explains both deductive and inductive approach.

Deductive approach



Inductive approach



The process of deduction

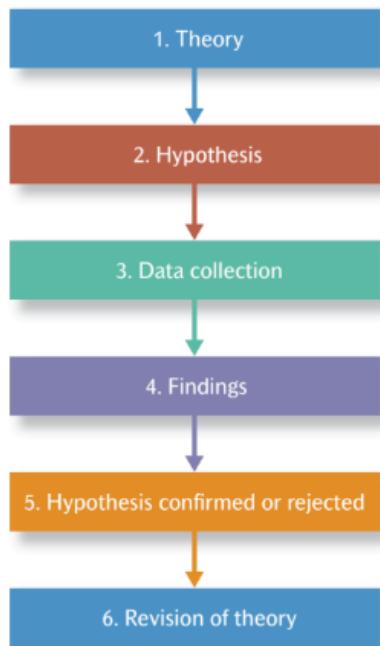


Figure 6. Process of deductive approach. *Source: Adapted from Bryman et al. (2021 p.20)*

This research uses an inductive approach because it aims to explore themes and views emerging from professional's personal experiences rather than test a predetermined theory. The inductive process allows flexibility, enabling insights to emerge naturally from the interviews.

A deductive approach was considered but rejected because there is limited previous research directly addressing how print and digital strategies interact in brand marketing. An inductive approach is more suited for covering the depth of brand recall, and new media strategy decisions.

4.4 Methodological Choice

Methodological choice refers to whether a study adopts qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research (Saunders et al., 2019). This study uses a qualitative method. The qualitative method allows for the exploration of new, complex, personal experiences and encourages participants to share their thoughts with their own words.

Other options considered:

- **Quantitative surveys** could have reached more respondents and allowed for statistical analysis, but they would likely limit the depth of responses and would lack the personal references and examples regarding each topic.
- **Mixed methods** could have combined qualitative depth with quantitative reach, but resource and time constraints made this impractical for the current project.

4.5 Research Strategy

The research strategy chosen is structured interviews, a common qualitative method that balances structure with flexibility (Kvale, 1996). Structured interviews allow the researcher to follow a prepared set of questions while also exploring topics that emerge naturally in conversation.

The choice of interviews is consistent with other marketing and media studies (e.g., McGivern, 2013; Bryman, 2016) and is particularly useful for understanding the reasoning behind media choices. Alternative strategies, such as focus groups, were considered but rejected due to the risk of groupthink and the need for individual perspectives on each topic.

4.6 Time Horizon

This study uses a **cross-sectional** time horizon, collecting data within a specific period rather than over multiple years. A longitudinal study could have explored how brand strategies evolve over time, but this was not feasible with the given time structure.

4.7 Sampling Method

The study uses non-probability purposive sampling (Saunders et al., 2019), selecting participants based on their relevant expertise in brand marketing or media agency. This approach ensures that all participants have direct experience with print media campaigns.



Figure 7. Sampling Method.

The sample consists of six marketing professionals from varied industries, including BFSI, customer service, technology and advertising agency. This diversity allowed for comparison across brand types and product categories. Participants were approached via professional networks and invited through personalised LinkedIn messages.

4.8 Data Collection

Data was collected through **video-call semi-structured interviews** lasting approximately 40 minutes each. All interviews were audio and video recorded with participant consent and transcribed for analysis. The interview guide was informed by the research questions and literature review, starting with general background questions before moving to brand-specific strategy discussions.

4.9 Data Analysis

A **thematic analysis** was used to identify patterns across the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved:

1. Familiarisation with data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. Participants received an information sheet outlining the purpose of the research, data handling, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any stage. Identities have been anonymised, and all data is stored on a password-protected device. No commercially sensitive information was disclosed.

5. Findings and Analysis

This chapter explains what was learned from the six interviews that were carried out between 19th July to 3rd Aug. These interviews were carried out with marketing professionals from advertising agencies and brand managers who are working in print industry. The goal was to understand how print media is used today in brand marketing and how it fits in with digital platforms. The findings are grouped into themes based on the research questions discussed in Chapter 3. The views and opinions of respondents is presented with raw data with using quotes to support the findings.

To protect the privacy of the participants, they are named Interviewee 1 to Interviewee 6 and below is a grid to provide information related to their job designation and industry.

Sr. No.	Industry	Job Title
1	Advertising Agency	Assistant marketing manager
2	Advertising Agency	Copy Lead Manager
3	BFSI Brand	Head of Print Media
4	Publication Brand	Marketing officer
5	Advertising Agency	Senior Account Executive
6	Consultancy Brand	Assistant Brand Manager

5.1 Theme 1: How Brands Use Print Media (Related to RQ1)

5.1.1 Advertising Agency Perspective

The first theme that emerged was How brands are using print media for day-to-day marketing campaigns. From the agency side, interviewees mentioned said that brands are now using print media more selectively, depending on what kind of message they want to send, and which target audience they are targeting. Interviewee 2 shared that companies in the financial sector often use printed brochures or flyers to explain complex products and information and also mentioned

“We use print mostly when we want to be taken seriously. It's not for every campaign, but for credibility, nothing beats it.”

While interviewee 1 also agrees to this and states

“Print plays a big role in sectors like BFSI, luxury, hospitality, and education, often for trustworthiness and credibility.”

While interviewees from agency side agreed that print works well for brands in BFSI, luxury and hospitality sectors and brands use print when they want to be taken seriously as print works more efficiently for building trust and credibility.

5.1.2 Brand Managers Perspective

Interviewees from brand side while had a different view on how brands are using print media, they mentioned print works for brands and companies like investing companies, real estate and automobile industries. They believed brands use print for the experience it provides. Print has tangible experience, and it provides premium feel, so it works well for collaterals like brochures, reports and kits.

Interviewee 6 mentioned that brands in luxury and hospitality often prefer high-quality printed materials like magazines and banners to build a strong brand image and to showcase exclusivity and mentioned,

“We use print more for trust-building, like investor brochures, reports, or onboarding kits.”

Interviewee 3 also pointed out that real estate companies sometimes rely too much on celebrity pictures or flashy designs in print while often forget to clearly explain the benefits and amenities of their projects.

“For luxury, real estate, and healthcare, print remains a go-to because of the tangible, premium feel.”

While interviewee 4 believes print can be an effective tool for showcasing luxury for some brands which are luxury based and want to showcase their luxury feel with merchandise,

“Automotive brands use glossy catalogs at dealerships to create a “take-home” brand experience.”

5.1.3 Analysis

Overall, every interviewee saw print as a channel that still carries special meaning, used mainly in situations where trust, a premium image, and a physical connection matter most. Agency participants talked more about trust and credibility that print builds while brand-side participants focused on how print adds premium feel to the campaign and how it enhances consumer's experience.

From the interviews, it was clear that brands no longer use print as a default channel for every campaign, instead, they choose it for specific times where they want to make a statement.

Participants often described print as a medium that adds weight and credibility to a message. For example, some brands bring out print campaigns when announcing major milestones, launching flagship products, or sharing information with investors. The feeling was that print carries a certain seriousness that digital alone doesn't always achieve.

Several interviewees gave industry-specific examples. Luxury brands, for instance, often create highly visual, minimalistic print ads in glossy magazines to convey their brand exclusivity. Financial institutions were also mentioned for their use of print in trusted national publications during significant events, which can help to build stability and reliability. Overall, the interviews suggest that while digital channels dominate for speed and reach, print remains a deliberate choice for building a lasting and credible brand image.

5.2 Theme 2: Situations Where Print Creates a Stronger Impact (Related to RQ1)

5.2.1 Advertising Agency Perspective

Interviewees 1 and 5 felt that printed brochures help explain financial offerings better than digital mediums and print helps to create a relation with the consumers and it stays in mind of consumers for a long time creating better brand recall. Interviewee 1 added that printed materials such as menus and posters in hotels and restaurants create a better customer experience. This shows that print still has value in specific areas and mentions,

“Print is like a slow burn, it doesn’t shout, but it stays longer in the mind.”

This reflects the agency perspective that print can leave a deeper and more lasting impression, even if it does not create immediate buzz like digital campaigns.

Interviewee 2 noted that for certain cultural or seasonal events, print feels more “official” and carries weight in a way social posts do not and mentions,

“When a festival ad is in the morning paper, it feels like the brand is part of the celebration.”

Thus, interviewees from agency believe that print helps in creating a relation with consumers and helps in building connections with consumers.

5.2.2 Brand Managers Perspective

Interviewees from brand side believed that print works in situations where digital presence cannot reach for example rural areas.

Interviewee 3 explains how some companies use print for reaching audience in rural areas of India, these areas often lack network facilities and print medium is very effective in such areas. Audiences in these areas tend to trust print media advertising effectively, so brands who are targeting this audiences to sell their products often consider print as an essential marketing tool.

“For NGO campaigns, especially those focused on awareness like sanitation or health, print helped us reach people in rural areas where WhatsApp or Instagram ads wouldn't work.”

While Interviewee 4 mentions in premium food products advertisements photography make the print ads appeal richer and urge consumers to buy the food products,

“Print helps premium food and beverage brands stand out; the photography looks richer.”

One example given was that premium food brands can benefit from the richer, more textured look of photography in print, which can make products appear more desirable for consumers. Real estate marketing was another example here, printed brochures and catalogues let buyers review complex details and floor plans at their own pace, often keeping them as reference material which aligns with the research question 2. Similarly, in the education sector, physical prospectuses still play an important role in decision-making for both students and parents.

5.2.3 Analysis

Thus, on one side where interviewees from agency believed that print works for building a connection with consumers and works well for engaging with consumers. While Interviewees from brand side believed it works for products from FMCG sectors as print enhances the product with premium image and they also believed print works very well in rural areas because of lack of connectivity.

5.3 Theme 3: Print vs Digital – Different Strengths (Related to RQ1 and RQ2)

This theme emerged as interviewees highlighted various advantages of print and digital campaigns and made a comparison of both, they even mentioned how both campaigns work, and each have separate advantages.

5.3.1 Advertising Agency Perspective

Interviewee 2 spoke about how printed materials can be more memorable because they involve touch and feel. Interviewee 1 said that receiving something printed at home feels more personal and helps people remember the brand better while from a brand perspective they also mentioned about print being more formal way of communicating and spoke

“Digital is great for engagement and reach, but print is still more respected for official communication.”

While interview 5 feels that even though it is print is more respected and helps in building trust yet analyzing print ad results is very difficult as getting feedback about the print campaign usually takes longer as compared to digital, they also mention

“We get instant feedback from digital campaigns, but with print, we’re playing the long game.”

Interviewees from agency background felt that brands use print media for official statements announcement. Also, they mentioned digital campaigns provide instant feedback and can be improvised efficiently.

5.3.2 Brand Managers Perspective

Interviewee 3 reflected on how each medium serves a different purpose, digital has great speed and reach is unrestricted, also its results can be analyzed immediately. While on other hand, print adds credibility that digital doesn't offer and mentioned,

“Digital is unbeatable for speed and reach; you can launch a campaign in a day and see results immediately. But print brings depth and credibility that digital can’t match.”

Interviewee 4 described how these differences shape their media planning and explains in print message if consumed by reader in his own space and at his own pace & convenience with provide better attention to message and comments,

“With print, you know the message is going to be consumed without the distractions you get online, no pop-ups, no endless scrolling. That makes it better for messages that need full attention.”

Interviewee 6 highlighted how digital and print can complement each other and explains how brands are using both strategies for a campaign so each advantage could be utilized, also as print is useful for building connections and digital is better for sales hence, brands are integrating both strategies in campaigns for better results.

“We’ve done campaigns where print built the emotional connection, and then digital closed the sale. You can’t always rely on one channel, they work best when they’re designed to feed into each other.”

5.3.3 Analysis

A recurring point in the interviews was that agency and brand interviewees both agreed, print and digital each have their own advantages, and neither can completely replace each other. Digital media was seen as fast, cost-effective, and ideal for campaigns that need to reach people quickly or be updated often. Print, on the other hand, was viewed as better for holding attention, building credibility, and leaving a long-lasting impression.

Participants felt that people read print differently and without the distractions of pop-ups or endless scrolling. This made it especially valuable when a brand wanted to share detailed or complex information. Digital, however, was considered essential for driving quick awareness, delivering interactive features, or tracking results.

Brands are integrating both print and digital strategies in a campaign for better results as both have unique advantages and using both helps in maintaining consistency in brand communications and design throughout the campaign.

5.4 Theme 4: Creative Print Campaigns (Related to RQ3)

This theme emerged as interviewees mentioned about creativity that is emerging in print media advertisements, while they also mentioned about the new strategies being used to build engagement through print media.

5.4.1 Advertising Agency Perspective

Interviewees from agency mentioned about evolution in print industry and how brands are integrating new technology in print which enhances creativity in advertisements,

Interviewee 5 explains how brands should be smart in using print media, the space and media channel play an important role in campaigns and selecting the correct space for example an appropriate hoarding location as per brand target audience can enhance the advertisement results.

“Print isn’t dying; it’s evolving. You just have to be smart about where and how you use it.”

Interviewee 1 shared that sometimes a bold creative in print can get people talking for weeks. They recalled an example where a startup used a completely blank page with only a tiny QR code. The simplicity and mystery of it made people curious and kept the campaign in conversations long after it ran, thus with integrating technology in print campaigns explains how print media is evolving with the digital growth and integrating technology works better for print and mentioned

“Sometimes a bold creative in print gets people talking for weeks, like when a startup used a completely blank page except for a tiny QR code.”

5.4.2 Brand Managers Perspective

Interviewees from brand side believed that innovative print ideas which helps to engage people have worked very well for them, apart from QR codes innovative strategies are used by brands like coffee smell being infused in newspaper to enhance the coffee advertisements leaves a mark in reader's mind as usually print enhances 2 senses of human which are sight and touch but in this case 3 senses were enhanced which are sight, touch and smell which eventually builds in building connection with brand.

Interviewee 3 talked about how they enjoy seeing brands use augmented reality in print ads. By scanning the ad with a phone, it comes alive on screen, turning a static page into an interactive experience. They felt it was a perfect bridge between offline and online worlds and mentions

"I love when brands use augmented reality with print, you scan it and it comes alive on your phone. It's a perfect bridge between offline and online."

Interviewee 6 explained that creative print is all about making people pause and pay attention. They described an ad that changed color when exposed to sunlight something so unexpected that it stuck in people's minds and mentions,

"Creative print is about making people pause. If they see something unexpected, like a page that changes colour in sunlight, they remember it."

5.4.3 Analysis

Interviewees from agency as well as brands believed creativity in print advertising helps to capture attention and make campaigns memorable. Participants shared examples of brands doing things differently such as running a completely blank page with only a small QR code, printing pages that reveal hidden colours in sunlight, or adding augmented reality features like a QR so that a page comes alive when scanned with a phone, a brand added coffee odour to newspaper ad to engage better with consumers.

The feeling was that when print surprises people, it makes them pause, and that moment of curiosity helps the message stick. These ideas were often paired with a digital element, giving readers an easy next step if they wanted to learn more.

5.5 Theme 5: Common Problems with Print Use (Related to RQ2 and RQ3)

This theme emerged as interviewees mentioned few issues that brands as well as agencies are facing while using print media in their campaign's.

5.5.1 Advertising Agency Perspective

Interviewees from agencies mentioned about few issues related to print such time spent for creating advertisements in offices and executing print campaigns on field as print advertisements need to have sample printed out for reference of quality of paper and look and feel. Also, sometimes as colour seen on screen while a design is made is different from the colour when the advertisement is printed because when an advertisement is made its made on digital platform which uses RGB colour code and when an advertisement is printed the printer uses CMYK which make a difference in colours, hence a sample print is must before print campaign goes live. Also, sample print of advertisement is being taken to understand the size of collaterals like brochure and poster to ensure the size is accurate and as per requirements.

Interviewee 1 mentioned that many print ads forget to include a clear call to action for the reader also, sometimes print ads become too expensive for national campaigns as the quantity of collaterals to be calculated is difficult and executing a campaign at such huge level becomes expensive and hard to track and mentions,

“Print can get expensive really quickly, especially for national campaigns, it’s not always easy to justify the spend.”

Interviewee 2 also agrees with print being expensive and also adds that a single mistake can cost a fortune for the brand as making changes once an advertisement is printed and distributed is difficult hence one spelling or grammar error can raise questions on brand integrity. While if any brand guideline is missed and if a brand needs to revisit the advertisement can lead to heavy loss of funds and while explaining this they mention,

“Mistakes are costly, if there’s a typo or outdated info, you can’t just fix it like a website banner.”

5.5.2 Brand Managers Perspective

Brand managers raised two main problems, First, some print ads try to say too much which makes it cluttered, which can overwhelm readers. Second, brands which combine print and digital mediums for campaigns often just reuse digital content for print without changing the layout or message to suit the format. To maintain consistency brands often use same content and layout for print as well as digital mediums. Interviewee 4 mentioned that

“What works online doesn’t always work in print, a proper print ad needs its own design and message.”

This means brands should not maintain same content and formats for both digital and print mediums, different design and content approach must be taken into considerations for each medium as each layout needs separate communication.

Interviewee 4 points out about the time frame required for a print ad, sometimes the trends may shift till the time a print ad is being designed and executed and mentions,

“In fast-moving industries, print can feel slow. By the time your ad is out, trends may have shifted.”

5.5.3 Analysis

While interviewees from agency and brand saw many benefits to print, they all also mentioned about its challenges. One of the biggest issues mentioned was poor integration with digital

campaigns, the time and cost required for print ads. Also, print ads often lack the time frame for a trend. In some cases, print ads felt disconnected from the rest of the brand's messaging, missing the opportunity to guide the audience toward further engagement.

Another difficulty was measurement. Unlike digital channels, print doesn't easily provide data on how many people engaged with the content, which makes it harder to justify budgets. Practical factors like longer production times and higher costs for quality materials were also mentioned as barriers especially for campaigns that need to react quickly to market trends.

5.6 Summary of Findings

Based on these interviews, it's clear that print media still has a role to play especially in areas where trust, detail, or a strong physical presence matter. But it's not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Print works well when:

- Products need to be explained clearly, like in finance
- The brand wants to feel premium or high-end
- The message is aimed at local audiences, such as in hospitality or real estate

At the same time, digital media offers clear advantages like fast delivery, cost effective, wider reach, and better tracking. Most participants agreed that print and digital should be used together, depending on the brand's goals.

These themes are directly linked to the research questions in Chapter 3. They help show where print media fits in today's marketing world, how it supports brand messaging, and how it can work alongside digital strategies. The findings don't suggest that one media type is better than the other instead, they highlight the importance of choosing the right tool for the right task.

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This research aimed to understand the current role of print media in brand marketing in a world where digital channels are dominating with growth in technology. The literature review presented that while digital has changed but still how brands communicate, print still has certain strengths. These include trust, better brand recall, tangibility, and deeper engagement in the audience. It also highlighted how changes in consumer habits and the rise of digital tools have pushed many brands to rethink the way they use print.

The study focused on three main questions:

1. How does the importance of print media vary across different brands and product categories?
2. Does the detailed and physical nature of print help brands communicate their messages and achieve marketing goals?
3. How are brands adapting their print strategies in response to digital competition?

The discussion here is organized around the five themes that came out of the findings:

1. How brands use print media
2. Situations where print has strong impact
3. The different strengths of print and digital
4. Creative uses of print
5. Common problems in using print

Each theme is discussed in relation to what the participants shared and what earlier research has shown. After looking at each theme, the chapter brings the findings together to answer the research questions and highlight what this means for brands and marketers.

6.2 Theme 1: How Brands Use Print Media (Related to RQ1)

The findings showed that most brands now use print media in a very targeted way and for specific products. Participants talked about using it mainly when they want to be seen as

credible, serious, or premium. Examples included investor brochures, corporate reports, and official announcements. These uses fit with research from the literature review that found print often carries more weight in terms of trust and credibility as compared to digital.

Luxury brands were also mentioned as strong users of print. The high-quality visuals and tactile feel of premium magazines or brochures help these brands to showcase exclusivity and attention to detail. This connects with earlier research that described print as a medium that can give a brand a sense of heritage and prestige (Kipphan, 2001).

Interestingly, some newer brands are using print in a completely different way which is a creative way and approach. They use it to surprise people who are used to seeing ads only on their phones or laptops. One participant gave an example of a startup using a nearly blank newspaper page with just a QR code. This kind of creativity shows that print can be both traditional and innovative, depending on how it is used.

Overall, this theme suggests that print is no longer used for everything. Instead, brands choose it for moments when they need to make a strong impression, either by reinforcing their image or by doing something unexpected to stand out.

6.3 Theme 2: Situations Where Print Creates a Stronger Impact (Related to RQ1)

The research showed that print is particularly effective for few situations, many participants said it works well for premium goods like luxury watches, high-end cars, or gourmet food products. The details and high-quality glossy feel of print visuals make these products look more appealing, which is something digital sometimes cannot match.

Healthcare was another area where print remains important. Brochures, posters in clinics, and printed information sheets help deliver detailed and reliable information to patients. This supports findings in the literature review where print was described as being valued in contexts where accuracy and clarity are vital.

Education also came up often. Prospectuses, course brochures, and printed learning materials still play a role in shaping how people view a school or university. These materials are often kept and re-read, which helps reinforce the message over time.

The pattern here is that print works best when products or services need to be explained in detail, and when complex information is to be provided to consumers and when information is associated with trust and seriousness.

6.4 Theme 3: Print vs Digital – Different Strengths (Related to RQ1 and RQ2)

A clear point from the findings is that print and digital have different strengths, and brands often use them together rather than seeing them as competitors. Print offers physical presence, longer shelf life, and stronger recall for some audiences. Digital is faster, more flexible, and easier to measure and hence integrating them provides brands with multiple benefits which they individually cannot provide.

One important insight was that when both formats are used together, the impact can be stronger. For example, a print ad can create awareness and trust, while a follow-up digital campaign can drive immediate action.

This supports the idea that the two formats work best as complementary tools rather than as rivals.

6.5 Theme 4: Creative Print Campaigns (Related to RQ3)

Creativity came up as a strong factor in making print media effective. Several participants shared examples of unusual print campaigns that grabbed people's attention. These included pages that changed colour in sunlight, minimalistic designs with hidden messages, and the use of augmented reality where scanning a page with a phone unlocked interactive content. These examples highlighted them as different form of advertisements and hence they grabbed attention which also helped in building image of brand.

These examples show that print can still surprise audiences, even in a world full of digital distractions. The takeaway is that creativity can turn print from a traditional medium into something fresh and memorable.

6.6 Theme 5: Common Problems with Print Use (Related to RQ2 and RQ3)

Despite its strengths, participants pointed out several challenges with using print. These included high costs, longer lead times, and difficulty in tracking exact results compared to digital. Some

also mentioned that brands sometimes use print without tailoring the message or design to the format, leading to weak impact.

Another issue was over-reliance on digital thinking when designing for print. For example, reusing layouts meant for online ads often results in print pieces that fail to use space, typography, and texture effectively.

Also, these issues can be resolved if brands use print media with effective planning and research.

6.7 Synthesis Across Themes

Looking across all themes, it is clear that print media still plays an important but selective role in brand marketing. It works best when used for specific purposes, such as building credibility, supporting premium positioning, or delivering complex information. Digital, meanwhile, is better for speed, reach, and interactivity. The combination of the two can be powerful, but only if each is used for what it does best.

6.8 Addressing the Research Questions

- **RQ1: How does the importance of print media vary across different brands and product categories?**

The findings showed that the role of print media is not the same for every brand or sector. Luxury, premium, and trust-heavy industries like finance, healthcare, education, and high-end retail continue to use print in significant ways. For these sectors, print supports credibility, conveys quality, and offers a tangible connection which digital often lacks to provide. In contrast, fast-moving consumer brands or those heavily targeting younger people, use digital media for their campaigns.

- **RQ2: Does the detailed and physical nature of print help brands communicate their messages and achieve marketing goals?**

Participants agreed that print holds' ability to carry detailed and complex messages, particularly for complex services and offers, legal or financial documents, or educational materials. Its physical nature encourages slower reading and better recall. However, its impact depends on how well the content is designed for print.

- **RQ3: How are brands adapting their print media strategies to remain relevant amid growing digital competition?**

The study found that many brands now use print selectively and in combination with digital, creating integrated campaigns. Creative uses of print, such as augmented reality, minimalistic high-impact designs, and QR codes, are helping it stand out. Brands are also choosing print for key credibility moments such as premium product launches while relying on digital for quick-response campaigns. This hybrid approach shows adaptation rather than replacement, aligning with the idea that print and digital can complement each other.

6.9 Limitations and Interpretation Boundaries

While this study offers useful insights into how brands use print media in the digital age, a few limitations should be recognised. First, the research was based on six interviews with marketing professionals with background of advertising agencies and professionals from brand side. This gave depth and personal perspective but limits how far the findings can be generalised across all industries or regions.

Second, the participants were selected based on their experience in brand marketing and knowledge of print media, which means the results reflect a professional viewpoint rather than consumer perceptions. Including consumer insights might have provided a fuller picture of how print media is utilized.

Third, the study focused on brands already using print in some capacity. It is possible that brands which have abandoned print entirely might have offered different reasons and perspectives that are not represented here.

Finally, as with most qualitative studies, the findings are shaped by the specific experiences and contexts of the participants. The aim was to explore meaning and interpretation, these insights are therefore most useful for guiding further research and informing strategic thinking, rather than serving as universal rules.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore relevance of print media in brand marketing within an increasingly digital environment. While digital channels dominate many aspects of modern communication, this research sets out to examine whether print media still holds value for brands, how it is being used, and in what ways it can work alongside digital formats.

Three main research questions guided the investigation:

- How does the importance of print media vary across different brands and product categories?
- Does the detailed and physical nature of print media help brands communicate their messages and achieve marketing goals?
- How are brands adapting their print media strategies to remain relevant amid growing digital competition?

Through six in-depth interviews with marketing professionals, the study revealed several key insights. First, brands still see print media as an effective tool for building trust, credibility, and emotional connection, especially in sectors such as luxury, automotive, education, and healthcare. Second, print appears to work best in few product categories where depth of information, tactile engagement, and quality presentation matter. Third, the combination of print and digital is increasingly seen to maximize impact of print delivering trust and memorability, digital adding speed and reach. Finally, there are clear challenges, including high costs, longer production times, and difficulties in measuring return on investment.

These findings align with previous academic and industry research, which has long recognized results that media choice must align with both brand goals and audience preferences. A comprehensive literature review highlighted the importance of selecting the right channel for the right purpose if brands wish to connect effectively with their target audiences.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are offered for brands and marketing professionals:

1. Use Print Media Strategically

- Incorporate print for campaigns where credibility, trust, and quality are essential.
- Focus on product categories where visual quality adds value, such as luxury goods, premium beverages, real estate, education, and healthcare.

2. Integrate Print with Digital

- Use print to drive audiences towards digital platforms, for example through QR codes, augmented reality features.
- Maintain consistent messaging and design across print and digital formats to strengthen brand identity.

3. Invest in Creative Approaches

- Stand out by using unique design elements, unusual formats, or sensory features (e.g., texture, color-changing ink).
- Consider innovative crossovers such as interactive print that links to online experiences.

4. Avoid Common Issues

- Avoid generic or rushed designs that fail to capture attention.
- Ensure distribution is well targeted to reach the intended audience.
- Proper planning as print takes longer to produce, so plan well in advance.

7.3 Future Research

While this study offers useful insights, it is based on a small sample of marketing professionals.

Future research could explore:

- Larger-scale studies comparing consumer perceptions of print and digital advertising.
- Quantitative analysis of campaign performance data for hybrid print-digital campaigns.
- Cross-cultural studies to see how perceptions differ across countries and demographics.
- Longitudinal research to track how the role of print media evolves over the next decade.

7.4 Self-Reflection

Completing this research has been both challenging while at the same time it has also been rewarding. At the start of the project, I had a strong interest in how print media fits into modern marketing, but I underestimated the depth and complexity of the topic. The process of designing the research, conducting interviews, and analysing qualitative data has given me a much clearer understanding of how professional perspectives can differ based on industry, product category, and personal experiences.

One of the biggest lessons learned was the importance of flexibility. While I began with a clear interview guide, I found that allowing participants to speak freely often led to the most valuable insights. Another key learning was new strategies of brand like integrating digital formats in print mediums which enhance the print advertisements.

Time management was a recurring challenge, particularly balancing interview scheduling with analysis and writing. Conducting the interviews via video calls worked well in terms of access and convenience, but it required extra effort to build connection and understand body language and encourage detailed answers without in-person interaction.

Overall, this research process has strengthened my skills in qualitative analysis, academic writing, and critical thinking. It has also reinforced my belief that effective marketing requires both strategic thinking and an openness to adapt based on insights. If I were to undertake a similar project in the future, I would look to expand the sample size and include consumer perspectives alongside industry viewpoints to gain a more balanced picture.

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10. Appendix

10.1 Interview guide

RQ1: How does the importance of print media vary across different brands and product categories?

- **Q1** – To start off, could you tell me a little about your role and experience in marketing or communications? (*context-building for brand perspective*)
- **Q2** – In your experience, how do different brands use print media to communicate their values and stand out in their industries?
- **Q3** – Which product categories do you feel print media plays an important role compared to digital media?
- **Q6** – What perceptions or attitudes about print media have you noticed among marketing teams or decision-makers?

RQ2: Does the detailed and physical nature of print media contribute to brand communication and marketing goals?

- **Q4** – Are there any advantages that print media offer brands when it comes to sharing detailed or complex information? And if so, could you explain them?
- **Q7** – How do you think print media contributes to long-term brand recognition and loyalty compared to digital formats?

RQ3: How are brands adapting their print media strategies to remain relevant amid growing digital competition?

- **Q5** – Can you share any examples of how brands have adapted their print media strategies in response to digital competition? What did they do differently?
- **Q8** – Have you observed any common mistakes brands make when integrating print media into their campaigns? What do you think they could improve?
- **Q9** – Is there anything else you'd like to share about how brands are using print media today?

10.2 Sample Interview Data

3:46
- Yeah.

Thanks. So let's get to the next question, which which product categories do you feel print media plays an important role compared to digital media?

3:55
- Yeah. So I think luxury, real estate, automotive and education, these are a few and BSFI, these are a few sectors in which print media holds a very important value and they give a sense of credibility and attention to detail and digital lacks. Here, because print media plays a very major role in these particular sectors.

4:22
- So like it plays an important role only in few sectors.