Does Print Still Matter? The Prothom Alo Case

Mohammad Ridhwanul Haq, Ph.D
Professor and Coordinator, Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Minhazur Rahman Shafin
Managing Partner, BCRC, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Md Ruhul Amin
Head of Digital Business Development, Prothom Alo (Mediastar Limited), Dhaka, Bangladesh

Abstract:
This paper examines whether a large Bangladeshi newspaper should manage print chiefly as a declining product or retain it as part of a hybrid news business. Using a bounded documentary case study of Prothom Alo, it separates reported circulation, print readership, title mentions in a cross-media survey, and international publisher revenue benchmarks. Publisher-reported summaries of the Kantar National Media Surveys put daily print readership at 6.6 million in 2018 and about 5.0 million in 2021. A 2025 survey commissioned by the Media Reform Commission found that 57.38% of newspaper respondents named Prothom Alo among up to three titles; this result cannot identify print-only readership or paid circulation. A 2026 WAN-IFRA survey reports that print supplied 43.6% of respondent publishers' revenue, but no comparable public revenue breakdown exists for Prothom Alo. The evidence supports a conditional strategy: test the print product, distribution and subscription economics while building direct digital relationships and independent audience measurement. It does not establish that print is currently the firm's most profitable channel.

Keywords:
Newspaper strategy, print readership, circulation measurement, hybrid publishing, Bangladesh, Prothom Alo.