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ASSESSMENT OF THE ADOPTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TECHNOLOGY IN NEWSROOM OPERATIONS AT MWANANCHI COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED AND TANZANIA STANDARD NEWSPAPERS, TANZANIA

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TICGL Research Discussion Paper

1.0 Background of the Study

To a great extent, the rapid transformation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has changed the media landscape all over the world, turning the operations of the newsroom from the traditional manual practices to automated, data-driven workflows (Newman et al., 2024). AI used to be a lot of different things, but now, it is at the center of all the digital tools that help the journalists to do their work faster and better, e.g., machine learning, natural language processing (NLP), and automated content generation systems (Diakopoulos, 2019). The worldwide use of AI in journalism has sped up with estimates suggesting that more than 70% of the leading news organizations in high-income countries have AI in place for at least one core task like automated reporting or predictive analytics (WAN-IFRA, 2024). The main drivers behind this change are the necessity to counteract falling revenues, to compete with digital platforms more and more, and to provide the audience with real-time, personalized content, since these are the ingredients of social media and algorithmic distribution (Lewis et al., 2019). On the other hand, the transformation does signal the beginning of a new age with AI coming along with its potential job cuts, ethical issues, and the integrity of the press being questioned as the machines may be biased and/or the human control being very little (Carlson, 2015).

In sub-Saharan Africa, the use of artificial intelligence in media is still in its early stages and varies from country to country, due to the lack of good infrastructure, low digital literacy, and lack of resources (Mutsvairo and Ragnedda, 2019). The continent carries the largest share of digital divides, and the internet penetration rate is only around 40% as of 2023, which makes the use of AI in journalism harder (CIPIT, 2023). Along with this, new projects by organizations like Code for Africa are showing AI's uses in fact-checking, data visualization, and fighting misinformation, especially in regions where the technology is not widely used (Code for Africa, 2023). One of the countries in East Africa, Kenya is where the media companies such as Nation Media Group that are using AI for audience analysis and content management are located, with

20% increase in engagement metrics at most (Kerongo, 2025). However, Uganda and Tanzania still have a way to go, as AI is generally applied on a case-by-case basis and mostly through individual initiatives, which is the result of the broader problems of the lack of proper training and policy frameworks, among others (Mukasa, 2024; Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025).

Tanzania, characterized by a flourishing media industry with more than 200 registered outlets, faces different obstacles to the integration of AI technology as it is moving from the print to the digital-hybrid model (Media Council of Tanzania, 2024). The Global Innovation Index 2023 places the country in the 124th position demonstrating the technological readiness gaps where journalists' regular usage of digital tools is only reported by 25% of them (TAMWA, 2022). Analogs of sickle cell disease may be unfitting, but AI's involvement in Tanzania's journalism is indispensable for the control of public health misinformation and for the increase of not-well-known diseases' coverage, though its widespread use is being hindered by cultural objections and small investments (Abidallah, 2024). The AI-assisted transcription project in some newsrooms is one of the pilot programs, which have helped to cut down the production time by 30-50% and thus, it is a promising program, but it is still isolated without a national strategy (Kibanda, 2025). The existence of both private and state-owned media outlets in Tanzania has highlighted the disparities in the media landscape: while the private outlet Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL) is testing AI for multimedia content, the state-run Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN) is still sticking to the traditional workflows due to financial constraints (Sonni et al., 2024).

Mwananchi Communications Limited (2024), which is the Nation Media Group's subsidiary established in 1999, has a leading position in the print market of Tanzania with more than 40,000 daily readers, and that the company is also using digital platforms to expand its audience. The Tanzania Standard Newspapers (2024) informs that TSN, which is a government entity founded in 1970, publishes important newspapers, such as Daily News and Habari Leo, and acts as a source of public information with its approximately 28,000 copies circulating daily. The two media organizations have thus come to be regarded as the two opposing sides of the issue of said dual media in Tanzania—innovation on the private side and public service on the other—but none of them has yet properly institutionalized AI, thus having a problem of inefficiency in all areas of news gathering, editing, and distribution (Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025). The authors argue that AI adoption is systematic and that Tanzanian newsrooms, global competitors like New York Times, who employ AI in 10-15% of their

content creation, thus raising their productivity and revenue, have the risk of disappearing in the world of news (Graefe, 2016).

This analysis fills a vital void notwithstanding the fact that the world literature has documented the extent of AI's impact on different fields namely, (Pashevich, 2018; Ali and Hassoun, 2019), it is very rare to find empirical studies pertaining to this subject matter in Tanzanian newsrooms. The research done on this area often disregards institutional preparedness as well as ethical issues (Abidallah, 2024). Following agenda-setting theory, where media technologies dictate public discourse (McCombs and Shaw, 1972), the process investigates AI's participation in improving the coverage of non-communicable diseases, but at the same time, it discloses systemic marginalization due to lack of adoption. The main research query is: To what degree have MCL and TSN embraced AI technologies in news operations? Measurement of adoption through content analysis and interviews will reveal obstacles like insufficient skills and voids in policies, and suggest ways for proactive integration. In a situation where AI could be a remedy for Tanzania's high misinformation rates (which is thought to be as high as 60% in health reporting), this evaluation is of great significance as it corresponds to national digital strategies such as the Tanzania Digital Economy Strategy 2025 (Ministry of Information, Communication and Information Technology, 2023). Eventually, the promotion of AI adoption might lead to the enhancement of the journalistic profession's importance, a reduction of operational costs by 20-30%, and an increase in the advocacy of public health issues, which, in turn, would help to close the gap between technological potential and media practice (Wonkam, 2021; Newman et al., 2024).

2.0 Literature Review

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism has taken the great new era of news production, dissemination and consumption along with the researchers' focus on its bright and dark sides as well as its different level of adoption i. e. global and regional contexts. The present review of literature discusses global pattern of AI in newspapers, the increase of AI usage in Africa, particular cases from East Africa and Tanzania, the sidelining of traditional media in AI transitions and the existing research gaps. The proposal uses the agenda-setting theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) to outline how slightly AI adoption determines the technical innovation's visibility in the public and professional discussions, at the same time, it employs

the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to illustrate the journalists' perceptions and obstacles (Davis, 1989).

2.1 Global Patterns of AI Adoption in Journalism

AI has introverted itself into the global newsrooms with tools for automatic content creation, data analysis, transcription, fact-checking, and audience personalisation. The necessity for efficiency has played a significant role in this development along with revenues going down and competition in digital rising (Newman et al., 2024; Diakopoulos, 2019). Generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT have been the main factor in this and have allowed for very fast content creation and research and even led to the major outlets reporting productivity increases of 20-50% in their routine tasks (WAN-IFRA, 2024; Pashevich, 2018). Research points out the positive aspects like a more advanced investigating process through data processing and multimedia storytelling, at the same time there are still the negative ethical issues (like bias, misinformation), workers being replaced, and loss of human editorial judgment (Carlson, 2015; Lewis et al., 2019).

By using quantitative methods, it has been turned out that at least 70% of the most important news agencies in wealthy countries are using AI for something and usually with policies in place, while in the poor countries adoption brand is still very experimental (Graefe, 2016). The "imagined affordances" concept shows how the journalist perceives the use of AI as both an enhancement and a threat, with the bright side connected to the productivity and the dark side attached to the loss of control (Cools and Diakopoulos, 2024). The occurrence of AI in the global market has come and gone in waves, like the health reporting which had its coverage around main events instead of constant integration (Pavlik, 2023).

2.2 African Patterns of AI Adoption in Journalism

In Africa, the use of AI in journalism has not kept pace with the global trend and is still at the stage of learning due to such reasons as lack of infrastructure, low digital literacy, limited resources, and ethical concerns (Mutsvairo and Ragnedda, 2019; CIPIT, 2023). Different studies report divergent uses of technologies: The best-equipped media houses in Kenya and South Africa are among those leading in the use of audience analytics, fact-checking, and content personalization with the help of software, while the less endowed ones still depend on

open-source or home-grown solutions (e.g., International Media Support, 2023; Munoriyarwa et al., 2023).

The views of African journalists regarding the impact of AI are a mix of hope (increased efficiency, innovation), fear (loss of jobs, increase of biased reporting, and ethical issues), and realism (use in select tasks only) (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2024; Gondwe, 2023). In South Africa, the major newsrooms take a methodical but slow approach to technology adoption, with informal testing being the main use due to the lack of policies (Munoriyarwa et al., 2023). In the sub-Saharan region, AI has mainly been applied for transcription, research, and idea generation though these applications have been impacted by data scarcity, language barriers (particularly with non-English content), and fear of widening the digital divide (Gondwe, 2024; IMS, 2023). Adoption of technologies is still event-driven, for instance, tools like ChatGPT have gained popularity after 2022, however, the standard use is still low (Gondwe, 2023).

2.3 Marginalisation of Traditional Print Media vs. Digital Platforms in AI Adoption

The traditional print media sector in Africa, and particularly in Tanzania, finds itself in a situation where it is drastically marginalized in the transition to AI compared to the digital-native and hybrid outlets (Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025; Abidallah, 2024). Old-school setups prefer manual work processes constrained by budgets, change reluctance, and limited infrastructure which lead to a very small scale, personalized AI use (e.g., personal ChatGPT for transcription) instead of the widespread, planned use by the institution (Kitomari, 2025; Sonni et al., 2024). Digital platforms on the other hand quickly use AI for audience engagement and analytics thus the divide keeps getting wider (Kioko et al., 2022).

In Tanzania, print-centric news organizations like Mwananchi Communications Limited and Tanzania Standard Newspapers show a very limited unstructured adoption which is mostly focused on operational tasks (research, data analysis, content creation), skill barriers, policy gaps, and resistance to change (Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025; Abidallah, 2024). This is a part of the larger African situation where non-communicable diseases (NCDs) receive little media coverage, which is similar to AI being underrepresented in traditional beats yet having high potential still (Abdulraheem and Adepoju, 2021).

2.4 Tanzanian Media Landscape and AI Adoption Trends

The media landscape in Tanzania, which is mainly represented by Swahili print dailies and new digital media, is still at the early stages of AI integration, though the digital transformation forces (Media Council of Tanzania, 2024; Kibanda, 2025) are the main reason for this situation. Research indicates that a large majority, 73%, of media professionals acknowledge the impact of AI on production and verification of content, while the remaining 27% are regular users and 53% of the management is willing to do so but only 22% have discussions about it (Tech & Media Convergency, 2025; Abidallah, 2024).

The challenges arise from the lack of infrastructure, language barriers (Swahili support in tools), low awareness, ethical concerns (misinformation), and fears of losing jobs (Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025; The Chanzo, 2025). However, there are still opportunities in the form of acquiring efficiency and developing new narratives through technology; nonetheless, the adoption still remains at the level of individuals and informal (Kitomari, 2025). The government has called for an AI-induced transformation (e.g., Prime Minister Majaliwa, 2025) which is a clear indication that policy makers are considering the issue, but still, there are areas that need to be worked on such as the training and the frameworks (UNESCO, 2025).

2.5 Research Gap

Studies conducted worldwide and in Africa have pointed out the positive and negative aspects of AI but empirical proof through print newsrooms in Tanzania like the MCL and TSN is still scarce (Kitomari, 2025; Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025). The available literature mainly touches upon broad health conditions or digital shifts but does not provide very much systematic research on AI use, approval and effect in the old print environments (Abidallah, 2024; Sonni et al., 2024). One of the consequences of this situation is the inability to devise proper strategies for the ethical, sustainable application of AI, especially in the case of high-burden public health reporting. There is a great need for the convincing quantification of adoption in the main stream media, which, in turn, connects the theory with practice and also helps in the building of human capital and formation of the right policies (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Davis, 1989).

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the newsrooms of Tanzania, especially in the case of MCL and TSN, which are the traditional print media corporations, needs a very strong theoretical framework not only to clarify the reasons behind the adoption but also to reflect the implications for journalism and public discourse as a whole. The present study mainly relies on two theories, which are very much complementary: The Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989). The combination of these two theories aids the research in its double objectives viz. the limited or uneven AI adoption affecting the media's capacity to set up technological innovation and related public health issues (agenda-setting), and the individual and corporate factors leading to journalists' and managers' acceptance of AI tools (TAM).

3.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-Setting Theory, which was first presented by McCombs and Shaw (1972) based on their significant Chapel Hill study during the U.S. presidential election of 1968, asserts that the mass media do not dictate people's thoughts but rather specify the topics they think about. Media outlets, through their coverage in terms of frequency, prominence, and emphasis, transfer the salience of the media agenda to the public agenda, thereby influencing the issue's perceived importance (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs, 2004). The theory has come a long way over five decades, moving from traditional media to digital platforms, social media algorithms, and currently to artificial intelligence, wherein algorithmic curation and automated content generation are the major players in mediating visibility and salience (McCombs and Valenzuela, 2020; Weaver et al., 2025).

When AI is adopted in journalism, the agenda-setting theory explains how the media's coverage or absence of it indicates the urgency and importance of these technologies like AI. In the case of AI, reporting that is mainly focused on events (e.g., the launch of ChatGPT) makes it less visible in professional and public discussions, and these patterns are similar to those in the coverage of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) or chronic health issues (Abdulraheem and Adepoju, 2021). In the Tanzanian newsrooms, where AI integration is still at the very beginning and not yet structured (Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025; Kitomari, 2025), the little emphasis from the institutions may strengthen the idea that AI is not a core but rather a peripheral journalistic tool. This "framing by omission" (Entman, 1993) decreases the issue's importance,

thus, making it hard to sustain the push for capacity-building, ethical guidelines, and policy support—eventually, the whole process limits AI's potential to improve the efficiency, accuracy, and coverage of critical issues like public health misinformation.

Recent developments in the theory of agenda-setting include the influence of AI in the processes of algorithmic gatekeeping and attribution of importance where AI tools play a significant role in the selection and framing of topics (e.g. through automated personalisation or bias in training data) (Weaver et al., 2025; Nechushtai and Lewis, 2025). In Africa, this situation raises the question of whether AI might cause the deepening of the already existing inequality or the voicing of local opinion if the uneven adoption remains (Gondwe, 2024). Through the lens of agenda-setting, this research scrutinizes the situation where minimal AI involvement in MCL and TSN makes their perceived significance to be low, which in turn causes a reliance on conventional routines and a limitation of the potential for innovation in news production.

3.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which was introduced by Davis (1989), explains the individual user level for new information technologies in terms of two major constructs: perceived usefulness (PU)—the extent to which a person thinks that using a certain system would improve job performance; and perceived ease of use (PEOU)—the extent to which a person assumes that using the system would not require any effort (Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989). These beliefs are responsible for forming the user's attitude towards the system, his intention to use it and finally for the actual use of the system, which is also determined by external variables (e.g. training, organisational support, infrastructure) that have an impact on PU and PEOU.

TAM has been one of the primary theories to account for technology adoption in journalism and media, among which are AI tools for transcription, data analysis, generation of content, and audience analytics (Ayyad et al., 2023; Gondwe, 2023; Kitomari, 2025). In Tanzanian journalism, while the use of AI is often ad hoc and individual-driven rather than mandated by the organization, TAM can help to explain the difference in acceptance considering that the journalists may see AI as beneficial for accelerating the routine tasks (e.g., fact-checking, translation) but they also have difficulties in getting through the skill gaps, language barriers (Swahili support limitations), infrastructural limitations, ethical concerns, etc. (Kitomari, 2025;

The Chanzo, 2025). Senior editors and managers often display more positive attitudes towards technology and perceive it as more useful than the junior staff who report less ease of use because their training is not enough (Kitomari, 2025).

TAM variations (e.g., TAM2; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000) recognize the importance of social influence and cognitive instrumental processes as well as limitations in African resource-poor contexts, including the lack of organizational preparedness and the absence of policies (Munoriyarwa et al., 2023). The present research brings forth the TAM model that explains why the acceptance is high in terms of attitude but is only limited in practice—the model underlines the necessity for unstructured intercessions to uplift PU and PEOU through training and developing guidelines.

3.3 Integration of the Frameworks

The present study integrates Agenda-Setting Theory and TAM at various levels to provide a comprehensive explanation: TAM deals with micro-level individual acceptance (journalists' and managers' perceptions and behaviours towards AI), while agenda-setting deals with macro-level consequences (how low adoption marginalises AI on the media and public agendas, thereby restricting its transformative potential in Tanzanian journalism). The dual approach corresponds to the previous studies done on AI in African newsrooms which have incorporated acceptance models with wider societal implications (Gondwe, 2024; Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025). Together they allow the research questions to be framed: the level of AI acceptance (TAM), the extent of adoption in operations (TAM + contextual factors), and the transformational impacts on practices and structures (agenda-setting salience effects).

This theoretical combination of concepts allows a detailed analysis of the barriers (for example, low Perceived Ease of Use leading to marginal salience) and the opportunities (such as, Enhanced Perceived Usefulness encouraging proactive coverage of AI-related innovations), thus driving recommendations for the ethical and sustainable AI integration in the media landscape of Tanzania.

4.0 Methodology

The study had a mixed-methods research design which made it possible to see the complete picture of the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in the operation of newsrooms at Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL) and Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN). By using a mixed-methods approach, one could take advantage of both quantitative and qualitative data in the strongest way and this, in turn, allowed for greater validity and depth through triangulation (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative part of the study gave measurable indicators of AI acceptance, usage frequency, and perceived impacts, while the qualitative part of the study brought out the subtle perception, experience, and challenge, as well as the contextual factors that influenced the adoption (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). This research design coincided with previous studies on AI in African journalism, which mostly use surveys combined with in-depth interviews to illustrate the size and significance of the adoption (Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025; Kitomari, 2025; Gondwe, 2023).

4.1 Research Design

The research utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, which entailed the simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data, the separate analysis of each, and their subsequent integration in the interpretation (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). This method made it possible to compare directly numerical trends (e.g., adoption rates, utilization of tools) with the insights derived from themes (e.g., barriers, ethical issues, effects of change). The design was particularly appropriate for the Tanzanian situation where the use of AI is still in its infancy and tailored, thus it was necessary to both quantify (quantitative) and to qualitatively describe (qualitative) the different dimensions of the organizations and people (Abidallah, 2024; Munoriyarwa et al., 2023).

4.2 Study Population and Sampling

The target population for this study was composed of journalists, editors, sub-editors, news managers, and digital/content specialists who were actively involved in the newsrooms of both MCL and TSN in Dar es Salaam. These two organizations were deliberately chosen to represent the dual media landscape of Tanzania: MCL (a private, Nation Media Group subsidiary) focuses on innovation and digital transition while TSN (state-owned) is concerned with public

service broadcasting/print and has more traditional structures (Media Council of Tanzania, 2024; Kitomari, 2025).

Purposive and stratified sampling were used in combination. In the quantitative part of the study, a structured questionnaire was given to around 120 eligible staff (60 from each organization), stratified by role (reporters/journalists, editors/managers, digital specialists) to make sure that all levels were represented. The number of valid responses received was 98 (response rate ≈82%), which was calculated according to Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations.

In the qualitative part of the study, purposive sampling method was used to find 16 key informants, from each of the two organizations a total of 8. Among them there were six senior editors/managers, four mid-level editors/sub-editors, and six experienced reporters/digital specialists. The criteria for selection were direct participation in the operations of the newsrooms, the use of digital tools, and the willingness to share about their AI experiences. The authors reached saturation at the fourteenth interview and two more were done purely for the confirmation reason (Guest et al., 2006).

4.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

4.3.1 Quantitative Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed, adapted from validated scales in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) literature (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000) and AI journalism studies (Gondwe, 2023; Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025). It included:

- Demographic items (age, gender, role, years of experience)
- Likert-scale items measuring perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), actual usage frequency, and perceived impacts (5-point scale: 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree)
- Multiple-choice items on specific AI tools used (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Pinpoint, Gemini, Canva, transcription software)
- Items on organisational support, training, and policy presence

The questionnaire was pre-tested with 10 non-sample journalists for clarity and reliability (Cronbach's alpha >0.80 for key scales). It was administered digitally via Google Forms and in-person during July–September 2025.

4.3.2 Qualitative Instrument

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face or via Zoom (duration 45–75 minutes). An interview guide explored:

- Level of AI acceptance and familiarity
- Extent and nature of AI adoption in daily operations
- Transformative effects on journalistic practices, workflow, content quality, and newsroom structures
- Challenges (e.g., infrastructure, skills, ethics, job concerns) and opportunities

Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. Field notes captured non-verbal cues and contextual observations.

4.3.3 Document Analysis

Supplementary organisational documents (e.g., digital strategies, training records, policy drafts) and public reports (e.g., Media Council of Tanzania annual reports) were reviewed to contextualise adoption levels and institutional readiness.

Data collection occurred between July and October 2025, following ethical clearance from St. Augustine University of Tanzania.

4.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of quantitative data was conducted through the application of basic statistics (frequencies, means, and percentages) and inferential tests (for role differences, e.g., chi-square; for organization comparisons, t-tests) utilizing SPSS v.27. A crosstabulation approach was used to investigate the correlation between different variables (for instance, seniority and AI usage).

Thematic analysis as per Braun and Clarke (2006) was adopted for qualitative data: familiarisation, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting. NVivo software

assisted in the coding process. Inductive reasoning was used in deriving the initial codes, which were then refined through deductive reasoning utilizing TAM constructs and agenda-setting concepts.

The integration occurred during the interpretation phase by means of joint displays (for example, merging quantitative adoption rates with qualitative explanations of barriers) and meta-inferences (Fetters et al., 2013).

4.5 Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations

The reliability of the study was guaranteed using pilot tests, the detection of the qualitative coding inter-coder agreement (kappa over 0.80 on the subsample) and standardized administration of questionnaires. The study's validity was further strengthened through triangulation, member checking (where participants got to review their summaries), and thick description.

Research Ethics Committee of St. Augustine University of Tanzania granted ethical approval for the study. The researchers obtained informed consent; kept the participants anonymous and their information confidential (pseudonyms were used); made participation voluntary and allowed the participants the right to withdraw. Nothing apart from expression of gratitude for the time spent was given as an incentive. The study observed the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and respect for persons as laid down in the Belmont Report (1979).

5.0 Findings and Analysis

This chapter sums up the major results from the mixed-methods inquiry into the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the newsroom functioning at Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL) and Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN). The findings are structured according to the three particular research objectives: (i) the degree of acceptance of AI technologies among journalists and media managers; (ii) the level of AI integration in the news departments; and (iii) the radical impact of AI on the art of journalism and the organization of the newsrooms. The quantitative data from the questionnaire (n=98) are illustrated with descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations, whereas qualitative insights from in-depth interviews (n=16) are fed through thematic analysis for explanatory depth. The synthesis of the two components points out the same trends of acceptance in attitude

being high, adoption informal and partial, and the effects being positive but hesitantly transformative.

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The diversity of the media workforce in Tanzania was reflected in the sample. Out of the 98 respondents to the questionnaire, 50% were male and 50% were female. There was equal representation from MCL (49%) and TSN (51%). The respondents were predominantly (58%) from the age group of 46 and above, which suggests a workforce that is more experienced and has lived through various phases of the media industry; 62% of the respondents had more than 10 years of experience in the industry. The highest number of respondents (68%) were in the reporting/journalism category, the others being editors/sub-editors (22%) and media managers/digital specialists (10%). This characterization corresponds to the purposive sampling strategy, allowing access to the views of all levels of seniority and types of organizations (Kitomari, 2025).

5.2 Level of Acceptance of AI Technologies among Journalists and Media Managers

The quantitative results showed that the majority of the respondents accepted AI willingly. On the 5-point Likert scale, the average score for perceived usefulness (PU) was 4.12 (SD=0.68), and the perceived ease of use (PEOU) scored 3.68 (SD=0.81), which demonstrates a powerful belief in the capability of AI to enhance jobs, yet a moderate perception of its user-friendliness. To sum up, 82% of those surveyed indicated that they would be willing to incorporate AI tools into their work practices, while 73% pointed out that AI has a role in journalism (especially in content creation, fact-checking, and audience interaction) privately).

The crosstabulation analysis revealed the existence of the differences depending on the role and the organization: the senior editors/managers stated higher PU (mean=4.45) and self-assurance than the junior reporters (mean=3.89), which is indicative that more exposure and involvement in the decision-making process foster acceptance. MCL respondents demonstrated slightly higher acceptance (85%) than TSN (79%), which might be due to the private sector's prevailing focus on digital innovation at MCL.

Qualitative interviews corroborated these trends, with most participants expressing cautious optimism:

"AI is a game-changer—it frees us from repetitive tasks so we can focus on investigative depth and storytelling." (Senior Editor, MCL)

However, acceptance was tempered by knowledge gaps, particularly among junior staff:

"We are open to it, but many of us don't fully understand how these tools work or their limits—especially ethical ones." (Reporter, TSN)

Senior staff demonstrated greater familiarity, often citing international trends and professional development exposure. These findings align with broader Tanzanian patterns where 53% of newsroom leadership is prepared for AI adoption, yet skill disparities persist (Tech & Media Convergency, 2025).

5.3 Extent of AI Adoption in Newsroom Operations

Adoption was partial, unstructured, and largely individualised rather than institutionally driven. Of respondents, 68% reported using AI tools occasionally or regularly, but only 27% indicated regular, integrated use. Common tools included ChatGPT (for idea generation, drafting, and editing), Google Pinpoint/Gemini (research and data analysis), Canva (multimedia design), and automated transcription software.

Quantitative data showed task-specific patterns:

- Transcription and research: 72% usage
- Content creation/editing: 58%
- Data analysis/fact-checking: 45%
- Audience analytics/personalisation: 32%

No formal organisational policies, standardised training programmes, or ethical guidelines governed AI use in either newsroom. Adoption relied on personal initiative, leading to inconsistencies:

Table 1: Frequency of AI Tool Usage by Task (Combined Newspapers, n=98)

Task/Category	Regular Use (%)	Occasional Use (%)	Rare/Never (%)
Transcription & Summarisation	48	24	28
Research & Idea Generation	52	28	20
Content Drafting/Editing	38	20	42
Data Analysis/Fact-Checking	31	14	55
Multimedia Design	41	19	40

Qualitative themes reinforced informal patterns:

"We use ChatGPT individually—there's no training or policy from management. It's up to each journalist to experiment." (Mid-level Editor, MCL)

"In our newsroom, AI is still seen as optional. Without guidelines, some overuse it, others avoid it due to fears of errors or bias." (Reporter, TSN)

The two organizations demonstrated similar patterns of unstructured adoption, however the private nature of MCL allowed for a bit more trial and error. Such a situation is typical for the whole country: merely 27% of the journalists in Tanzania make a regular use of AI, while its adoption is restrained by the unavailability of necessary infrastructure, language difficulties (lack of Swahili support), lack of knowledge about AI, and inexistent regulations (Tech & Media Convergency, 2025; Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025).

5.4 Transformative Impact of AI on Journalistic Practices and Newsroom Structures

AI has a very positive impact on the factors of efficiency, speed, accuracy, and multimedia capabilities. The survey takers said that the time spent on routine work was reduced by 30-50% which allowed them to conduct more in-depth analysis and creative storytelling. Upgraded tools assisted in the exploration of data patterns and also in winning over the audience through personalized content.

Quantitative impacts (mean scores on 5-point scale):

- Improved efficiency/speed: 4.28
- Enhanced accuracy/fact-checking: 3.95
- Better multimedia production: 4.05
- Increased workload pressure: 3.82

Qualitative narratives highlighted benefits:

"AI handles transcription in minutes—what used to take hours—freeing us for critical thinking and source verification." (Digital Specialist, MCL)

Yet challenges emerged: heightened performance expectations risked burnout, over-reliance threatened creativity and the "human touch," and ethical concerns (bias, misinformation) were prominent:

"We worry about dependency—AI can generate plausible but inaccurate content. Without oversight, it could erode trust." (Senior Manager, TSN)

"There's fear AI might displace jobs, especially in routine roles. But most see it as augmentation, not replacement—if managed properly." (Editor, MCL)

Newsroom structures remained largely unchanged; no major shifts in hierarchies or workflows occurred due to informal adoption. The absence of policies amplified risks of inconsistent quality and ethical lapses.

5.5 Overall Analysis and Discussion

The conclusions indicate open-mindedness powered by average literacy and unequally distribution of use as the main points of acceptance. The operation of AI already has positive impact but shortage of administrator backing restricts the influence to be only at the tactical level. This is similar to the case in Tanzania where people are willing to use AI (73% acknowledge AI's contribution), but its integration is limited (only 27% frequent usage), and the reasons for this are mentioned as lack of skills, poor infrastructure, and absence of policies (Tech & Media Convergency, 2025).

From an agenda-setting point of view, low institutional visibility places AI in the background, continuing with old practices and depriving the market of new ideas (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). TAM identifies the reasons for the differences in acceptance: high PU leads to the user's readiness while lesser PEOU (due to barriers) limits the user's availability (Davis, 1989).

In conclusion, AI is a powerful tool that can make the news in Tanzania but its realization pass through systematized training, policies, and moral codes that will ensure no integrity is lost while gaining efficiency. The habits of Africa where adoption has been slow and limited to specific tasks due to resource constraints are similar to this (Gondwe, 2023; Munoriyarwa et al., 2023).

6.0 Discussion

The results of the study present a complex scenario concerning the incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the print media of Tanzania, particularly at Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL) and Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN). There is a strong acceptance of the technology among the media personnel, but this is countered by the level of literacy that is only fair, the adoption that is partial and mostly informal, and the transformational effects on the profession that are still regarded as mostly positive but with caution. This part analyzes these findings with reference to the theoretical frameworks (Agenda-Setting Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model), places them in the context of the already existing Tanzanian, East African, and global literature, and finally, it opens a discussion on the wider implications for the media, policy, and public interest areas in Tanzania.

6.1 Acceptance of AI: High Enthusiasm, Uneven Literacy

The strong willingness to use AI (82%) and high perceived usefulness (mean PU = 4.12) are in perfect harmony with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) where perceived usefulness is the most important factor in the intention to adopt (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). This is supported by national survey data that indicate 73% of Tanzanian media practitioners see AI as a useful tool for content production, fact-checking, and audience engagement (Tech & Media Convergency, 2025; Abidallah, 2024). The slightly higher acceptance level of senior editors and managers (mean PU = 4.45) vs. junior reporters is a reflection of senior editors and managers being more exposed to global trends, professional development opportunities, and

decision-making roles—similar to the findings in Kenya and South Africa, where leadership familiarity drives organisational experimentation (Munoriyarwa et al., 2023; Gondwe, 2023).

Nevertheless, the moderately perceived ease of use (mean PEOU = 3.68) and the recognized lack of knowledge especially among the junior personnel indicate that acceptance is mainly a matter of attitude rather than functionality. The gap between the willingness and the ability reflects the general patterns observed in Africa: journalists show interest in AI but very often are not provided with the required training, infrastructure, or even the support of the institution to apply AI confidently and responsibly (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2024; IMS, 2023). The non-existence of structured capacity-building programmes in the Tanzanian media outlets makes the junior journalists particularly vulnerable and this in turn, keeps the skill disparities alive thus, posing a challenge to the adoption of technology on an equitable basis.

6.2 Extent of Adoption: Operational but Unstructured

The adoption of AI has very much been a partial, task-oriented, and individualized affair focusing on transcription (72%), research (68%), content creation (58%), and multimedia design, which all confirm that AI is utilized mainly for the purpose of improving operation efficiency rather than being a driver of strategic transformation. MCL and TSN's lack of formal regulations, educational systems, or moral principles is quite remarkable and at the same time is a direct cause of the interviewees' reports about the inconsistent and at times risky use of AI. This finding aligns with previous Tanzanian research that indicated only 27% of journalists regularly used AI, with the majority of the adoption being personal and experimental (Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025; Kitomari, 2025).

Examining through the lens of Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs and Valenzuela, 2020), the lack of institutional hierarchy puts AI in a marginal position on the organisational agenda. Similar to how low or event-driven coverage reduces the public's awareness of chronic health problems like sickle cell disease (Abdulraheem and Adepoju, 2021), the lack of structured leadership attention towards AI indirectly tells the staff that it is not a core but rather a peripheral journalistic competency. This "framing by omission" (Entman, 1993) not only strengthens dependence on conventional workflows but also limits the scope for systemic gains in efficiency, quality improvement, and innovation in public-interest reporting areas.

The similarity in adoption trends between the private (MCL) and state-owned (TSN) newsrooms indicates that structural barriers—limited budgets, poor digital infrastructure, Swahili tool constraints, and lack of policy—are not organization-specific but rather systemic. These limitations are typical of the whole continent's investment-minus-organizational-challenges-strategy (CIPIT, 2023; Gondwe, 2024).

6.3 Transformative Impact: Efficiency Gains vs. Emerging Risks

AI's most significant advantages in the media sector—30-50% time savings for repetitive tasks, accuracy in data processing, and better multimedia handling—are reinforcing the view that AI can augment human journalists in their profession (Newman et al., 2024; WAN-IFRA, 2024; Pashevich, 2018) provided its use is proper. The reports of the respondents about having more time for the investigation, analysis, and storytelling coupled with the international findings that AI was the factor that liberated journalists for higher-value tasks corroborate each other (Diakopoulos, 2019; Carlson, 2023).

However, the results also point to new challenges: the performance pressure is increasing, the workload is getting heavier, the fear of getting too dependent on technology is growing, there are doubts about the ethics (bias, misinformation), and there is the issue of being replaced by machines. These issues have been voiced by Tanzanian and African scholars and are similar to the African context, where journalists often hold opposing views—fear of losing their editorial power, trust in the audience, and employment in the long run—along with optimism about productivity (Ishengoma and Magolanga, 2025; Adjin-Tettey et al., 2024; Gondwe, 2023).

The emphasis placed on maintaining the “human touch” in the decision-making processes of editorial judgment, ethical reasoning, and narrative construction supports the claim that AI is to be considered as a part of the core journalistic values rather than as a substitution for these values (Carlson, 2023; Pashevich, 2018). These risks could, however, destroy the public trust, particularly in a scenario where health misinformation is already widespread (with some reports from Tanzanian sources placing it as high as 60%) (The Chanzo, 2025), if no institutional measures are taken to mitigate the problem—these measures include having clear attribution standards, bias-checking protocols, and limits on machine-generated outputs.

6.4 Theoretical and Contextual Implications

The combination of TAM and Agenda-Setting Theory provides a comprehensive explanation on multiple levels: TAM considers the individual acceptance barriers (inadequate PEOU due to obstacles in skills and infrastructure) whereas the Agenda-Setting Theory foretells the broad level impact—AI has little importance for organizations which leads to its fragmented adoption and limits the technology's capability from transforming the whole business process. Such a dual view clarifies the reason why the excitement around AI has not yet turned into phased and long-term integration.

The case of Tanzania as a backdrop, the outcomes point to a crucial turning point: traditional print media is at risk of getting even more outdated compared to the digital-native and hybrid outlets if AI remains a priority for individuals rather than institutions. The comparison with very limited coverage of non-communicable diseases is enlightening—both AI and chronic public-health issues are receiving sporadic rather than consistent attention which results in diminishing their perceived urgency and hence, delaying the responses by the system (Abidallah, 2024; Kitomari, 2025).

6.5 Broader Implications

In Tanzanian journalism, the prevailing situation—great acceptance, insignificant institutionalization—offers both chance and risk. The use of AI tools trained for Swahili, among others, would be the proactive investment made in AI literacy, ethical guidelines, and custom-made tools could elevate efficiency immensely, cut down production costs, raise content quality and be of help in the covering of the public's interest issues. On the other hand, if the policy and training neglect continues, there will be a risk of creating bigger skill gaps, more ethical issues and the traditional media will be pushed further out of the AI-mediated information ecosystem.

The outcomes suggest the need for leadership that is adaptable and can switch between innovation and editorial integrity, empathy and foresight, and technological ability and human judgment—these are the principles that are becoming more and more recognized as crucial for the adoption of responsible AI in the media industry that is resource-constrained throughout Africa (Gondwe, 2024; IMS, 2023).

7.0 Conclusion

The primary goal of this research was to examine the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in the functioning of newsrooms of the two most prominent print media houses in Tanzania - Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL) and Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN). The study was mainly concerned with the journalists' and media managers' acceptance level, the degree of daily workflow integration, and the effects of AI on journalistic practices and organizational structure revitalization.

The results reveal a clear trend across all three research objectives. To start with, the attitudinal acceptance of AI has become a common phenomenon among the journalists and media managers in Tanzania, as 82% of respondents showed the willingness to use AI tools in their daily work and also reported very high mean scores for usefulness perception (4.12). This positive attitude is a sign of the growing international and regional recognition of AI's capability to increase the efficiency, accuracy, and creativity in the process of news production. However, the acceptance is still largely limited to attitude only but not to functionality: the perceived user-friendliness is at a moderate level (3.68), and the gap between the required and actual knowledge and skills is still significant, especially among junior reporters.

Secondly, the use of AI in both the newsrooms is only partially, task-specific and rather informal. The tools like ChatGPT, Google Pinpoint/Gemini, Canva and automated transcription software are being used by 27-72% of respondents depending on the task (most of the usage is for research, transcription and content drafting), but the usage is done on a personal basis without any formal organisational policies, structured training programmes or ethical guidelines. Hence, the ad hoc method results in uneven application, disparity in quality control and less exposure to ethical risks like bias amplification and misinformation.

Moreover, AI has already resulted in measurable operational benefits such as time savings of 30–50% on routine tasks, better data-handling accuracy, improved multimedia capabilities, and increased capacity for investigative and analytical work. However, the respondents voiced their fears regarding workload intensification, performance pressure, the risk of over-reliance on automated outputs, the decline of the “human touch” in editorial judgment, and the long-term implications for job security and journalistic integrity. Most importantly, the structures and hierarchies in the newsroom have not changed significantly; AI is still a tool for augmentation rather than a catalyst for systemic organisational change.

When evaluated using the combined theoretical perspectives of Agenda-Setting Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model, the findings show a significant gap between the two concepts. The very high perceived usefulness by individuals on the technology scale was not reflected in the sustained organisational salience of the agenda-setting process. This disconnection was largely due to the lack of institutional prioritisation, policy frameworks, and investment in capacity-building. The exclusion of AI from the news agenda mirrors the interspersed media coverage patterns of high-burden but under-attended issues that the Tanzanian media has experienced, thus limiting the sector's adaptability to the quickly digitising and algorithm-driven information environment.

As a result, Tanzanian print newsrooms are at a very critical point in their development. The drawbacks of AI in the field of journalism include but are not limited to, improving overall productivity, reducing costs associated with operations, and the quality and relevance of content and public-interest journalism being covered more and better. On the other hand, AI's power to help overcome these problems and the spread of misinformation will depend on how it is introduced and used in the newsroom environment. The ability of stakeholders in the journalism sector to suffer from the effects of AI in terms of unevenness, unsustainability and, at the same time, vulnerability to unforeseen consequences will depend on the manner of AI introduction and use. The present trend that is characterised by high levels of enthusiasm, moderate levels of literacy, scattered adoption and little structural change gives the situation a double edge: an opportunity as well as a risk. Leadership, commitment from institutions and the right kind of interventions are now necessary to assure that AI will be a promoter and not a maker of eroding the standard of journalism and the trust of the public in Tanzania's media.

8.0 Recommendations

Based on the study’s findings and their alignment with existing Tanzanian, East African, and global scholarship, the following targeted recommendations are proposed to accelerate responsible, equitable, and sustainable AI adoption in Tanzanian newsrooms.

1. **Develop National and Sectoral Policy Frameworks** The government department of Information, Communication and Information Technology, alongside the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), the Journalists Accreditation Board (JAB), and other media stakeholders, is supposed to draw up a national AI policy framework for the media specifically. The framework should include the following topics: ethical use,

standards of attribution for AI-made content, the battle against algorithm bias, prevention against automation reliance, and ways to assure the freedom of the press and the trust of the public. In the next twelve to eighteen months a working group should be set up to prepare and test these guidelines.

2. **Invest in Systematic Capacity Building and AI Literacy** Media houses (MCL, TSN, and others), journalism training institutions (e.g., St. Augustine University of Tanzania, University of Dar es Salaam), and development partners should launch regular, structured AI training programmes for journalists, editors, and managers. Training should cover:
    - Practical use of tools (transcription, data analysis, content generation, fact-checking)
    - Critical evaluation of AI outputs (bias detection, accuracy verification)
    - Ethical decision-making in AI-assisted workflows
    - Swahili-language AI capabilities and localisation needs Annual or bi-annual workshops, online modules, and peer-mentoring schemes should aim to reach at least 70% of active journalists within three years.
3. **Institutionalise AI Policies and Guidelines within Newsrooms** MCL, TSN, and other major media organisations should develop and implement internal AI usage policies within the next 12 months. These policies should clearly define:
    - Permitted and prohibited uses of AI tools
    - Mandatory disclosure and attribution when AI contributes to published content
    - Editorial review protocols for AI-assisted outputs
    - Procedures for reporting and addressing bias or errors A designated AI champion or digital transformation committee in each newsroom should oversee implementation, monitor compliance, and update guidelines as technology evolves.
4. **Foster Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and Innovation Hubs** Media houses, journalism schools, technology companies, civil society organisations (e.g., Code for

Africa, TAMWA), and international partners (UNESCO, WAN-IFRA) should establish collaborative innovation hubs or working groups focused on context-specific AI solutions for Tanzanian journalism. Priority areas include:

- Development or adaptation of Swahili-capable AI models for transcription, translation, and content moderation
- Pilot projects testing AI-assisted workflows in investigative, health, and public-interest reporting
- Shared resources for infrastructure (cloud credits, licensed tools) and data sets to reduce individual barriers

5. **Promote Adaptive Leadership and Change Management** Senior editors and media managers should adopt adaptive leadership approaches that combine technological foresight with empathy for staff concerns. This includes:
   - Communicating a clear vision of AI as an augmentation tool rather than a replacement
   - Actively addressing job-displacement fears through reskilling and role redefinition
   - Creating safe spaces for journalists to experiment, share experiences, and raise ethical concerns Leadership should model responsible AI use and integrate AI literacy into performance reviews and professional development plans.
6. **Monitor and Evaluate Progress** The Media Council of Tanzania, in partnership with academic institutions, should establish a biennial monitoring mechanism to track AI adoption levels, ethical compliance, training reach, and impacts on content quality, audience trust, and journalist well-being across the sector. Findings should inform policy updates and resource allocation.

Putting these suggestions into action will need a combination of political commitment, money, and continuous teamwork. If taken decisively, the media industry in Tanzania can use AI as a tool to make itself more relevant, resilient, and to fulfill its public-service mission in an increasingly digital and algorithm-driven world. On the other hand, not taking action would mean the gap between old print media and new digital native platforms from a technological

point of view would be wider, which will have a long-term impact on the independence of editorial policy, voice diversity, and public discourse being informed or not.

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