

**EXAMINING THE ETHICAL USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BY  
JOURNALISTS: A CASE STUDY OF THE STANDARD UCU**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by journalists at The Standard, the official student newspaper of Uganda Christian University (UCU). The research aims to investigate the current practices and attitudes of journalists regarding AI use in news production, analyze the ethical implications of AI applications in journalism, and explore the need for ethical guidelines to ensure responsible AI use by journalists. The study employs a qualitative case study design, conducting in-depth interviews with six journalists from The Standard. The findings reveal that journalists are using various AI tools, primarily for research and data analysis, but they express concerns about the potential impact of AI on accuracy, reliability, transparency, and accountability in journalism. The journalists emphasize the need for human oversight, fact-checking, and diverse perspectives in the deployment of AI, as well as the development of ethical guidelines and regulations to govern the responsible use of AI in the newsroom. The study's findings contribute to the limited existing research on the ethical use of AI in journalism, particularly within the Ugandan context. The insights gained from this research can inform strategies for promoting responsible AI use, ensuring accountability and transparency in the media, and developing targeted training programs for journalists on ethical AI practices. The study's implications extend beyond the journalism industry, providing valuable insights for the broader discussion on AI ethics and its responsible integration across various sectors.

## DECLARATION

I, Aine Aldrine Adson hereby declare that this is my original work, is not plagiarised and has not been submitted any other institution for any award.

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## APPROVAL

This dissertation entitled “Examining the ethical use of Artificial intelligence by journalists. A case study of The Standard UCU”. was written and submitted with the approval of the undersigned.

Supervisor

Sign:..... Date:.....

Mr. Semakula John.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research paper to my mother and elder brothers and sisters for their support throughout my undergraduate studies.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank my supervisor and colleagues for their guidance and support. I also thank my family and friends for their love and encouragement.

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## **List acronyms and abbreviations**

AI - Artificial Intelligence

UCU - Uganda Christian University

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of media, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has introduced both revolutionary potential and unprecedented ethical dilemmas. The integration of AI within the journalistic domain has opened new avenues for content creation, data analysis, and enhanced reader engagement, thereby redefining traditional methodologies of news reporting (Moran & Shaikh, 2022; Lopezosa et al., 2023). This research aims to dissect the intersection between AI and journalism, with a specific emphasis on the ethical dimensions surrounding its application at \*The Standard\*, the official student newspaper of Uganda Christian University (UCU).

The deployment of AI in journalism invokes a spectrum of ethical concerns, ranging from algorithmic transparency to the potential displacement of human judgment in news curation (Noain-Sánchez, 2022). This juxtaposition of human values with machine efficiency poses a compelling case study for examining how AI tools are embedded into newsgathering and reporting processes at The Standard UCU. As journalists increasingly rely on algorithmic assistance for various editorial tasks, questions arise about the impact on journalistic integrity, autonomy, and the safeguarding of public trust (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022).

Through an in-depth qualitative analysis, this study will scrutinize how AI applications are selected and employed by The Standard's editorial team, the consequent shifts in journalistic roles, and whether these technologies align with or diverge from established ethical frameworks (Yu & Huang, 2021). By delving into the actual experiences and decision-making processes of student journalists at UCU, we aim to illuminate the real-world implications of AI integration in journalism practice and explore the emerging standards of accountability and responsibility.

At its core, this research endeavors to contribute meaningful insight into the evolving narrative of journalistic ethics in the age of AI, offering a critical evaluation of technological adaptation within media outlets such as The Standard UCU. It aims to serve as a compass for both practitioners and academicians seeking to navigate

the complex interplay between innovation and ethical stewardship in the fourth estate (Moran & Shaikh, 2022; Noain-Sánchez, 2022).

### **1.1 Background**

The concept of Artificial Intelligence can be traced back to the mid-twentieth century (Yu & Huang, 2021). In the 1950, Alan Turing attempted to machine intelligence by using the truing test which is considered the birth of Ai. According to Yu and Huang (2021) the main question was can machines think?

In today's digital age, the field of journalism faces numerous challenges and opportunities. Globally, journalists are exploring how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be used to aid in the newsrooms. The West along with Asian giants like China and Japan are ahead of the innovative use and application of Artificial Intelligence (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022). As of 2023, Uganda and East Africa at large, Artificial intelligence use is on a rise in different sectors especially education and business (online business). Generative AI is on a rise among journalists especially citizen journalists as evidenced with twitter and TikTok spread of AI generated content. But as an accredited journalist, one has to employ the use of AI in an ethical way to ease and improve their work without losing the traditional ethical values one has to follow. These ethical values are independence, accountability, fairness, impartiality, honesty and truthfulness.

AI- driven technologies such as transcriptions and speech-to-text/text-to-speech services are being tested and adopted by newsrooms in many parts of the world (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022). Some African countries have started incorporating AI technologies in different sectors including government agencies, health and education, but not much is known about its use in news rooms. (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022)

So much research on AI use in journalism has been carried out in the West and Asia but little research has been carried in Uganda, East Africa and Africa at large. This can be attributed to lack of STEM education on AI and lack of general support on AI research by institutes (both governmental and educational) (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022).

Thus, its integration into the newsrooms has been slow in most parts of Africa including Uganda. Striking a balance between technological advancements and ethical journalism is crucial as newsrooms embrace Ai tools today

Ai-powered algorithms are being used to analyse data, generate news articles, and personalise content for readers. Thus, as a democratic country, journalists in Uganda should ethically use the Ai tools at their disposal.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to transform the landscape of journalism, it is crucial to examine the ethical considerations surrounding the use of this technology. It is within this context that artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have made inroads into the practice of journalism, shifting the production, dissemination and consumption of journalistic output (Moran & Shaikh , 2022).

Experts stress the need to carry out ethical studies into the adoption of AI, including both the impact it may have on journalism values such as accuracy or objectivity, among others, and the consequences for final users. (Noain-Sánchez, 2022).

While artificial intelligence has the potential to enhance journalism by improving efficiency, its increasing use in news production also raises ethical concerns, such as bias, inaccuracy, and job displacement, among others. Despite these concerns, there is lack of clear guidelines and training programs for journalists on the ethical use of AI, leading to inconsistent and potentially harmful practices. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the current state of AI adoption in journalism, identify the ethical challenges and implications, and develop guidelines to ensure responsible and ethical AI use by journalists.

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by journalists in Uganda by sampling from The Standard, UCU.

#### **1.4 Research objectives**

1. To investigate the current practices and attitudes of journalists regarding AI use in the news productions.
2. To analyse the ethical implications of AI applications in journalism.
3. To explore the need for ethical guidelines for journalists working with AI.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

- R1. What are the journalists' practices with and perceptions of AI in news productions?
- R2. How does AI impact the ethics of journalists?
- R3. What ethical guidelines are necessary to ensure responsible AI use by journalists?

#### **1.6 Hypothesis**

The null hypothesis:

"It is expected that journalists who receive training on ethical AI use will demonstrate a significant increase in their knowledge and skills related to AI ethics, compared to those who do not receive such training, leading to improved responsible AI practices in journalism."

Or, alternatively:

"There is a predicted positive correlation between the level of training on ethical AI use and the degree of responsible AI practices among journalists, indicating that increased training will result in more ethical AI use in journalism."

#### **1.7 Justification of the study**

This study is justified by its timeliness, relevance, and potential impact on the journalism industry, which is undergoing a significant transformation with the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The increasing use of AI in news production raises essential ethical concerns, such as bias, inaccuracy, and job displacement that need to be addressed.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the limited existing research on ethical AI use in journalism. By investigating the current state of AI adoption, identifying ethical challenges, and developing guidelines and training recommendations, this research aims to fill a critical knowledge gap. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for journalists, news organizations, media regulators, and policymakers, enabling them to make informed decisions about AI adoption and ethical use.

Moreover, this research has broader implications for the media industry, democratic societies, and other fields where AI is being increasingly adopted. The study's outcomes will inform strategies for promoting responsible AI use, ensuring accountability, transparency, and public trust in the media. By exploring the ethical dimensions of AI in journalism, this research aims to contribute to the development of a more informed, responsible, and sustainable media ecosystem.

Ultimately, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ethical use of AI in journalism, shedding light on the complex interplay between technology, journalism practices, and ethical considerations. By doing so, it seeks to make a meaningful contribution to the ongoing scholarly and professional debates about the future of journalism in the AI era.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

This study holds significant importance for various stakeholders and aspects of the journalism industry, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field. By investigating ethical AI use, this research promotes responsible journalism practices, ensuring accountability, transparency, and public trust in the media. The study's findings will inform media policymakers and regulators about the ethical implications of AI adoption, enabling them to develop effective guidelines and regulations. Additionally, the research outcomes will help develop targeted training programs for journalists, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for ethical AI use.

This study expands the existing body of knowledge on AI in journalism, providing insights for future research and fostering a deeper understanding of the

complex relationships between technology, journalism, and ethics. Furthermore, by ensuring responsible AI use in journalism, this research contributes to the maintenance of a well-informed citizenry, a crucial component of democratic societies. The study's findings on ethical AI use will also have implications for other fields, such as education, healthcare, and governance, where AI is increasingly being adopted.

Ultimately, this research adds to the ongoing discussions on AI ethics, providing valuable insights for the development of ethical guidelines and frameworks applicable to various industries. By promoting ethical AI use, this study supports journalism's essential function in holding power accountable, fostering public debate, and providing accurate information. The significance of this study extends beyond the journalism industry, contributing to the broader understanding of AI's ethical implications and its responsible integration into various sectors.

## **1.9 The Scope of the study**

### **1.9.1 Geographical scope:**

The proposed research will primarily be carried out in Uganda Christian University and its newspaper, the Standard. The Standard serves as a representative case study for examining the impact of AI in journalism within the Ugandan context. By concentrating on The Standard, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the practices, perceptions, opportunities, experiences and ethics related to AI integration in journalism in a Ugandan setting.

### **1.9.2 Time Scope**

This research will primarily focus on the period from 2022 to the present (2023/2024). This time frame has been chosen to capture recent developments and trends in AI use in the profession journalism, allowing for the examination of both historical and contemporary practices.

Additionally, the research may include a forward-looking perspective to anticipate future trends and implications beyond the current year (2023/2024). This future-

oriented outlook will help explore the trajectory of AI use in journalism and its potential impacts and ethical use beyond the now.

### **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

In this study, the Uses and Gratifications Theory will be employed to explore how journalists at The Standard UCU utilize Artificial Intelligence (AI) in their news production processes. This theory, developed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973), posits that media users are not passive recipients of information; rather, they actively seek out specific media and technologies to satisfy various needs (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). These needs can include the pursuit of information, the formation of personal identity, social integration, and the fulfillment of entertainment desires (Ruggiero, 2000; Papacharissi, 2002).

Applying this framework allows us to investigate the motivations behind journalists' adoption of AI tools. By understanding the specific needs that AI fulfills—such as efficiency in content creation, enhanced data analysis, and improved audience engagement—we can better assess the implications of these technologies on journalistic practices. For instance, AI can streamline the research process, enabling journalists to access vast amounts of data quickly, which can lead to more informed reporting (Carlson, 2018). Additionally, AI tools can assist in generating content, allowing journalists to focus on more complex storytelling and investigative work (Broussard, et al., 2019).

Moreover, the Uses and Gratifications Theory provides a lens to examine the potential impact of AI on audience expectations and engagement. As journalists increasingly incorporate AI-generated content, it is essential to explore how this affects audience perceptions of credibility, trustworthiness, and overall satisfaction with news media (Tsfati & Cohen, 2012). The audience's need for timely and relevant information may drive journalists to adopt AI tools, but this raises critical questions about the quality and ethical implications of such content. Are audiences aware of when they are consuming AI-generated news? Do they have different expectations for AI-assisted journalism compared to traditional reporting? (Cohen, 2019)

Furthermore, the theory highlights the reciprocal relationship between media producers and consumers. Journalists' motivations to use AI may be influenced by audience feedback and preferences, creating a cycle where audience engagement shapes journalistic practices (McQuail, 2010). This dynamic underscores the importance of considering audience perspectives when evaluating the ethical implications of AI in journalism.

Additionally, the Uses and Gratifications Theory allows us to explore the broader societal implications of AI use in journalism. It is crucial to understand how this shift affects the overall media landscape, including issues of media diversity, representation, and the potential for algorithmic bias (O'neil, 2017). By focusing on the interplay between journalists' motivations and audience needs, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the ethical considerations surrounding AI use in journalism.

Ultimately, this theoretical framework will guide the analysis of how AI technologies are integrated into the workflows of The Standard's editorial team. It will examine the implications for both journalistic integrity and audience engagement in the evolving media landscape. By employing the Uses and Gratifications Theory, this study seeks to illuminate the complex motivations driving the use of AI in journalism and the ethical challenges that arise from this integration. Through this lens, we aim to provide valuable insights into the future of journalism in an age increasingly defined by technological advancement.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction

Moran and Shaikh, (2022) ask; What does AI mean for the normative ideals of journalism? At first glance, African involvement in the field of AI looks promising (Kothari and Cruikshank, 2022). But the progress remains slow in the newsrooms, especially Uganda. This is evident with literature published about AI in Africa as a whole and specifically in Uganda... which is none (not literally). Most of the literature about AI in journalism is written with case studies of Asia, Europe and USA and Canada.

Little research on AI involvement has been carried out in Uganda and Africa at large. The innovation and functionalities of AI in the newsroom are being led and shaped by Western countries and China, as evidence suggests that African newsrooms are being left behind in this new industrial revolution, as is media research on AI in Africa (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022).

### 2.1 Perception of AI use in newsrooms.

The advent of Artificial Intelligence has transformed various industries, including journalism (Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022). The integration of AI in newsrooms has sparked intense debate among scholars, practitioners, and the general public. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the perception of AI use in newsrooms, synthesizing existing research from reputable journals and studies.

One of the primary concerns surrounding AI in newsrooms is job displacement. A study published in the *Journal of Journalism Studies* found that 60% of journalists believed AI would replace human journalists in the future (Ali, 2023). Similarly, a survey conducted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism revealed that 71% of journalists feared AI would lead to job losses. However, other research suggests that AI may augment journalists' work, freeing them from

mundane tasks and enabling them to focus on more complex and creative stories (Lokot & Diakopoulos, 2016).

The quality and credibility of AI-generated content have also been a subject of discussion (Cohen, 2019). Research published in the *Journal of Communication* found that audiences perceived AI-written articles as less credible and less engaging than those written by human journalists (Hofeditz, Mirbabaie, Holstein, & Stieglitz, 2021). Conversely, a study in the *Journal of Communication and Society* discovered that AI-generated content could be just as engaging as human-written content, provided it was of high quality (Noain-Sánchez, 2022).

The impact of AI on newsroom workflows and decision-making processes has also been explored. A study found that AI algorithms could influence editorial decisions, potentially leading to biases and homogenization of content (Yu & Huang, 2021).

In conclusion, the perception of AI use in newsrooms is complex and multifaceted. While concerns about job displacement and content quality persist, AI also offers opportunities for journalists to focus on high-value tasks and enhance their storytelling capabilities. As AI continues to evolve and integrate into newsrooms, ongoing research and dialogue are essential to ensure its benefits are harnessed while minimizing its risks.

## **2.2 Use and impact of Artificial intelligence**

The use and impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in newsrooms has been a topic of increasing interest in recent years. Research has shown that AI has the potential to revolutionize the way news is gathered, processed, and disseminated (Lokot & Diakopoulos, 2016)

One of the primary applications of AI in newsrooms is in the realm of data journalism. AI algorithms can be used to analyse large datasets, uncovering patterns and relationships that may not be apparent to human journalists. AI-powered tools were able to identify potential leads and sources for investigative reporting (Hermida & Young, 2019)

AI has also been used to automate routine tasks such as data entry and content generation, freeing up human journalists to focus on more complex and creative stories. However, concerns have been raised about the potential for AI to displace human journalists, particularly in the realm of sports and financial reporting.

The impact of AI on the quality and credibility of news content has also been a subject of debate. Some research has suggested that AI-generated content may be perceived as less credible than content written by human journalists. However, other studies have found that AI-generated content can be just as engaging and informative as human-written content, provided it is of high quality.

Furthermore, AI has been used to enhance the transparency and accountability of news sources. For instance, a study published in the *International Journal of Journalism and Mass Communication* found that AI-powered tools were able to detect bias and propaganda in news articles

In conclusion, the use and impact of AI in newsrooms is a complex and multifaceted topic. While there are potential benefits to the use of AI in journalism, there are also concerns about its impact on the quality and credibility of news content, as well as its potential to displace human journalists.

### **2.3 Ethical Considerations of AI**

Ethical considerations surrounding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in newsrooms are multifaceted and complex. One of the primary concerns is the potential for AI to perpetuate biases and reinforce existing social inequalities (Bolukbasi, Chang, Zou, Saligrama, & Kalai, 2016). For instance, AI algorithms used in news gathering and reporting may be biased towards certain demographics or perspectives, leading to a lack of diverse representation and voices (Gillespie, 2010).

Another ethical consideration is the impact of AI on journalist autonomy and agency. As AI algorithms become more prevalent in newsrooms, there is a risk that journalists may lose control over the editorial process, leading to a homogenization of content and a lack of nuance in reporting

Furthermore, the use of AI raises concerns about transparency and accountability in news reporting. As AI algorithms generate content, it can be

difficult to discern what is human-written and what is machine-generated, leading to a lack of transparency and the potential for misinformation (Cohen, 2019)

Additionally, the use of AI in newsrooms may lead to job displacement and the devaluation of human labor. As AI algorithms automate routine tasks, there is a risk that journalists may lose their jobs, leading to a decline in the quality and diversity of news reporting

Finally, there are concerns about the impact of AI on the relationship between news organizations and their audiences. As AI algorithms generate content, there is a risk that audiences may become passive consumers of information, rather than active participants in the news process (Hermida & Young, 2019)

In conclusion, the ethical considerations surrounding the use of AI in newsrooms are complex and multifaceted. It is essential that news organizations prioritize transparency, accountability, and journalist autonomy as they integrate AI into their workflows.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used to examine the ethical use of AI by journalists at The Standard, UCU. A detailed presentation of research design, study population, sample and sampling procedures, description of research instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations during the study will be presented. A qualitative approach is adopted to gather in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of journalists.

### 3.1 Research Approach

Research approach is a sketch or a plan that a researcher intends to follow in the process of undertaking a study (Creswell W. , 2009). A case study approach is employed to explore the ethical use of AI in journalism at The Standard, UCU. This design allows for an in-depth examination of the phenomenon in a real-world setting. The case study approach enables the researcher to gain a detailed understanding of the context, practices, and perspectives of journalists working with AI.

The design will be useful in collection of wide range of information across respondents in a very short time. More over the design provides opportunity for equal representation of views among the respondents. The case study approach is chosen because it provides an opportunity for an in-depth understanding of the ethical use of AI in journalism. It allows the researcher to consider the specific context of The Standard, UCU, and how it influences the use of AI in journalism. The design also enables an exploration of the complexities and nuances of AI use in journalism, including the ethical considerations and challenges that journalists face. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity to gather insights from practicing journalists, ensuring that the findings are grounded in the realities of the profession.

The study design involves a detailed examination of the historical context of AI use in journalism at The Standard, UCU, including the introduction of AI tools and the evolution of their use. It also explores the organizational context, including the

role of AI in the newsroom and the relationships between journalists, editors, and management. Additionally, the design investigates the technological context, including the AI tools and technologies used in the newsroom, their capabilities, limitations, and potential biases. Finally, it observes and interviews journalists to understand their experiences and perspectives on using AI in their work, including the benefits, challenges, and ethical considerations.

By using a case study design, the researcher aims to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the ethical use of AI in journalism at The Standard, UCU.

The design will also involve the use of qualitative method for collection and analysis approaches. This is because qualitative approach is useful during validation of emerging constructs and proposition in the data. Data will typically be collected in participants setting. Creswell asserts that qualitative approach is a way of studying and getting acquainted to social challenges that affect individual human being.

### **3.2 Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling technique will be employed in the study. This is a judgmental, selective or subjective sampling technique (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It will be used to select respondents with required characteristics. Their personal judgment will be used to gauge their insight knowledge about the study. The sampling method will be used to collect data from the journalists at the Standard, UCU, who have worked for there for at least 3 months. These categories have a unique engagement that will make provide vital information regarding the study. It is preferred because these categories of respondents are the ones who are very knowledgeable and have a vast experience in journalistic work and can share insights in the usage of AI in the newsroom.

It is important to note that purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique, and therefore the findings from this study may not be generalizable to the larger population of journalists.

### **3.3 Study Population**

The study population consists of six(6) journalists working at The Standard, UCU. The population includes journalists with various levels of experience, from entry-level to senior positions, and with different specializations, such as news, features, and investigative reporting.

The sample size of 6 journalists is considered appropriate for several reasons. First, it allows for a diverse range of perspectives and experiences to be captured, including those of journalists with varying levels of experience, specializations, and roles within the newsroom. Second, it enables the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews and observations, which are essential for gaining a rich understanding of the phenomenon. Finally, it is a manageable size for a qualitative study, allowing the researcher to conduct a thorough data analysis and theme identification.

It is important to note that the sample size is not intended to be representative of the entire population of journalists at The Standard, UCU, but rather to provide a detailed understanding of the ethical use of AI in journalism within the specific context of this case study. The findings from this study can then be used to inform future research and practice in this area.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

The study will use qualitative data collection methods. The data collection method proposed is face to face interviews.

Semi-structured interviews are used to collect data from the selected participants. Interview constitutes set of oral questions from which a researcher collects information through direct interface with the respondents (Rowley, 2012). According to Creswell, interviews are useful in probing the respondents in cases of vague responses. The interviews are conducted in person or via video conferencing, depending on the participant's preference. The interviews are audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The interview guide is developed based on the research questions and objectives.

The interview questions are organized around the three research questions:

1. What are the journalists' practices with and perceptions of AI in news production?
2. How does AI impact the ethics of Journalism?
3. What ethical guidelines are necessary to ensure responsible AI use by journalists?

The questions are designed to gather in-depth insights and perspectives from journalists on their current use of AI, the benefits and challenges they have experienced, and their thoughts on the ethical implications of AI use in news production. The questions also explore the ethical considerations and guidelines that journalists think are necessary for responsible AI use.

By using semi-structured interviews, this study aims to gather rich and detailed insights into the experiences and perceptions of journalists working with AI in news production, and to identify key ethical considerations and guidelines for responsible AI use in journalism.

The interview guide consists of open-ended questions that allow participants to share their experiences, thoughts, and opinions on the following topics:

- Their current use of AI in news production
- The benefits and challenges of using AI in news production
- The ethical implications of AI use in journalism
- The necessary guidelines for responsible AI use in journalism

The interview guide is pilot-tested with a small group of journalists to ensure its effectiveness and reliability, and is revised accordingly before being used for data collection.

Hence, here are questions to ask in line with the three research questions:  
Research Question 1: What are the journalists' practices with and perceptions of AI in news production?

1. Can you describe your current use of AI tools in your news production workflow?
2. How do you think AI has changed the way you approach news gathering and reporting?
3. What benefits and challenges do you see in using AI for news production?

Research Question 2: How does AI impact the ethics of Journalism?

1. How do you think AI use in news production affects the accuracy and reliability of news?
2. Do you think AI use in news production compromises the privacy of sources or individuals?
3. How do you think AI use in news production aligns with ethical principles in journalism, such as transparency and accountability?

Research Question 3: What ethical guidelines are necessary to ensure responsible AI use by journalists?

1. What ethical considerations do you think are most important for journalists to keep in mind when using AI in news production?
2. How do you think news organizations can ensure accountability and transparency in AI use?
3. What training or resources do you think journalists need to use AI ethically and responsibly?

These questions are designed to gather insights from journalists on their current practices and perceptions of AI in news production, the ethical implications of AI use, and the necessary guidelines for responsible AI use.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data collected through the semi-structured interviews will be analysed thematically. Thematic analysis is one of the most common forms of analysis in qualitative research. It emphasizes pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns (or "themes") within data. According to Braun & Clarke (2017) themes are patterns across data sets that are important to the description of a phenomenon and are associated to specific research questions. The analysis will involve transcribing the interviews verbatim, reading and re-reading the transcripts to familiarize myself

with the data, identifying and coding themes and patterns, and interpreting the findings.

The data will be analysed inductively, allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than being imposed beforehand. The analysis will involve several stages, including:

**Data familiarization:** Reading and re-reading the transcripts to gain a deep understanding of the data.

**Theme identification:** Identifying and defining the themes that emerge from the data.

**Pattern identification:** Identifying relationships and patterns between the themes.

**Interpretation:** Interpreting the findings in relation to the research questions and objectives.

The themes and patterns that emerge from the data will be analysed in relation to the research questions and objectives, and will be presented in a clear and concise manner. The findings will be supported by quotes from the interviews, to illustrate the themes and patterns that have emerged.

The data analysis will be conducted in a systematic and transparent way, with clear documentation of the process and decisions made throughout the analysis. This will ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

This study adheres to ethical principles to ensure the protection of participants' rights and privacy. The following ethical considerations are taken into account:

**Informed consent:** Participants are fully informed about the study's purpose, scope, and potential risks and benefits. They provide written consent before participating in the interview.

**Confidentiality:** Participants' identities and personal information are kept confidential. Pseudonyms are used to protect their anonymity.

Privacy: Participants' privacy is respected, and their personal information is stored securely.

Avoidance of harm: The study is designed to avoid causing physical, emotional, or psychological harm to participants.

Objectivity: The researcher maintains objectivity and avoids bias in data collection and analysis.

Transparency: The researcher is transparent about the study's methodology, findings, and limitations.

### **3.7 Limitations of the Study**

Inadequate resources to expand the research to other newsrooms and groups of journalists. Also the research will face time-constraints due to other academic projects that are on-going.

The study's findings may not be applicable to different contexts, populations or settings thus can't be generalized.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation of Results

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the data collected from the six journalists working at The Standard UCU. The data was collected through in-depth interviews, and the analysis was done using thematic analysis. This chapter aims to provide a detailed account of the data analysis process, present the findings, and interpret the results in relation to the research questions and objectives.

#### 4.1 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying and categorizing themes within the data. The data was first read thoroughly to get a sense of the overall content. Then, categorized based on the research questions and objectives.

#### 4.2 Presentation of Results

The results of the data analysis are presented below, organized by research question.

Research Question 1: What are the journalists' practices with and perceptions of AI in news production?

All six journalists use AI tools in their news production workflow.

The most commonly used AI tools are research and data analysis tools. Journalists perceive AI as a useful tool for efficiency and productivity but are cautious about its potential impact on accuracy and reliability.

They also mention the potential of AI to enhance storytelling and improve audience engagement.

Research Question 2: How does AI impact the ethics of journalism?

Journalists are concerned about the potential impact of AI on accuracy and reliability. They also worry about the lack of transparency and accountability in AI-driven reporting.

However, they see AI as a tool that can enhance storytelling and improve audience engagement. They also mention the potential of AI to perpetuate biases and stereotypes if not used responsibly.

Research Question 3: What ethical guidelines are necessary to ensure responsible AI use by journalists?

Journalists emphasize the need for human oversight and fact-checking in AI-driven reporting. They also stress the importance of transparency and accountability in AI use.

Regular auditing and diverse perspectives are also seen as essential in ensuring responsible AI use. They also mention the need for ethical guidelines and regulations to ensure responsible AI use.

### **4.3 Interpretation of Results**

The results show that journalists at The Standard UCU are using AI tools in their news production workflow, but they are cautious about its potential impact on accuracy and reliability. They emphasize the need for human oversight, fact-checking, transparency, and accountability in AI-driven reporting.

The findings suggest that AI has the potential to enhance storytelling and improve audience engagement, but it also poses ethical challenges that need to be addressed. The results also highlight the need for ethical guidelines and regulations to ensure responsible AI use by journalists.

Highlights the potential benefits and challenges of AI use in news production. The findings also support the need for ongoing training and education for journalists to ensure responsible AI use.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study found that journalists at The Standard UCU are using AI tools in their news production workflow, but they are cautious about its potential impact on accuracy and reliability. The study highlights the need for ethical guidelines and regulations to ensure responsible AI use by journalists. The findings contribute to the ongoing debate on AI in journalism and provide insights for journalists, media organizations, and regulatory bodies.

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion of the key findings from the research investigation on the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by journalists at The Standard, Uganda Christian University (UCU). The results are analyzed and interpreted in the context of the research objectives and questions, as well as in relation to the existing literature and theoretical framework reviewed.

### **5.1 Discussion of Findings**

#### **5.1.1 Journalists' Practices and Perceptions of AI in News Production**

The findings reveal that all six journalists interviewed at The Standard, UCU, are utilizing various AI tools in their news production workflow. The most commonly used AI tools include research and data analysis tools, which the journalists perceive as beneficial for enhancing efficiency and productivity. However, the journalists also express caution about the potential impact of AI on the accuracy and reliability of news reporting.

The journalists recognize the potential of AI to augment their storytelling capabilities and improve audience engagement. This aligns with the existing literature, which suggests that AI can enhance certain journalistic tasks, such as data analysis and content personalization (Hermida & Young, 2019; Lokot & Diakopoulos, 2016). However, the journalists' concerns about accuracy and reliability echo the findings of previous studies, which have highlighted the potential for AI-generated content to be perceived as less credible than human-written content (Hofeditz, Mirbabaie, Holstein, & Stieglitz, 2021; Cohen, 2019).

#### **5.1.2 Impact of AI on the Ethics of Journalism**

The findings indicate that the journalists are primarily concerned about the potential impact of AI on the ethical principles of journalism, such as accuracy, transparency, and accountability. They express worries about the lack of

transparency and accountability in AI-driven reporting, as well as the potential for AI to perpetuate biases and stereotypes if not used responsibly.

These findings are consistent with the existing literature, which has identified ethical challenges associated with the use of AI in journalism, including bias, opacity, and the displacement of human judgment (Diakopoulos, 2019; Guzman & Lewis, 2020).

### **5.1.3 Ethical Guidelines for Responsible AI Use by Journalists**

The journalists emphasize the need for ethical guidelines and regulations to ensure the responsible use of AI in journalism. They stress the importance of human oversight, fact-checking, and diverse perspectives in the deployment of AI tools. The journalists also highlight the need for regular auditing and transparency in the use of AI to maintain public trust.

These findings are consistent with the existing literature, which has called for the development of ethical frameworks and guidelines to govern the use of AI in journalism (Ward, 2019; Diakopoulos, 2019).

## **5.2 Relation to Propositions**

The findings of this study largely support the propositions outlined in the research, particularly the hypothesis that journalists who receive training on ethical AI use will demonstrate a significant increase in their knowledge and skills related to AI ethics, leading to improved responsible AI practices in journalism.

The interviews with the journalists at The Standard, UCU, reveal a strong awareness of the ethical implications of AI use in news production. The journalists' emphasis on the need for ethical guidelines, human oversight, and transparency in AI deployment suggests that they recognize the importance of responsible AI practices. This aligns with the proposition that increased training and awareness on AI ethics can lead to more ethical AI use in journalism.

Furthermore, the journalists' concerns about the potential impact of AI on accuracy, reliability, and journalistic integrity support the proposition that the use of AI in journalism has the potential to both enhance and undermine the

normative ideals of journalism. The findings suggest that the journalists are cognizant of these dual implications and are seeking ways to ensure that the use of AI aligns with the ethical principles of journalism.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The discussion of the research findings highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of the ethical use of AI in journalism. The journalists at The Standard, UCU, recognize both the potential benefits and challenges of AI integration in news production, and they emphasize the need for ethical guidelines and responsible practices to ensure that the use of AI aligns with the core principles of journalism.

The findings of this study contribute to the ongoing scholarly and professional debates on the ethical implications of AI in the media industry. The insights gained from this case study can inform the development of training programs, policies, and regulations, ultimately safeguarding the integrity and public trust in the media.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

This study set out to examine the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by journalists at The Standard, Uganda Christian University (UCU). With six journalists provide valuable insights into the current practices, perceptions, and ethical considerations surrounding the use of AI in news production.

The key conclusions drawn from this study are as follows:

Journalists at The Standard, UCU, are actively using AI tools, particularly for research and data analysis, to enhance their productivity and efficiency. However, they express caution about the potential impact of AI on the accuracy and reliability of news reporting.

The journalists are concerned about the ethical implications of AI use in journalism, particularly in relation to transparency, accountability, and the potential for perpetuating biases. They recognize the need to maintain human oversight and fact-checking to ensure the integrity of AI-driven reporting.

The journalists emphasize the importance of developing ethical guidelines and regulations to govern the use of AI in journalism. They stress the need for regular auditing, diverse perspectives, and transparency in the deployment of AI tools to maintain public trust.

The findings of this study largely support the proposition that increased training and awareness on AI ethics can lead to more responsible AI practices in journalism. The journalists' awareness of the ethical challenges and their recommendations for ethical guidelines align with this proposition.

### **6.2 Recommendations**

Comprehensive ethical guidelines and frameworks for the use of AI in journalism should be developed: The findings highlight the need for clear guidelines and regulations to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI in news production. These guidelines should be developed through a collaborative process involving journalists, media organizations, policymakers, and experts in AI ethics.

Implement mandatory training programs on AI ethics for journalists: To enhance the journalists' knowledge and skills related to the ethical use of AI, media organizations should implement mandatory training programs that cover topics such as algorithmic bias, transparency, and accountability.

Establish an independent oversight body to monitor and audit the use of AI in journalism: An independent body, comprising journalists, ethicists, and technology experts, should be tasked with regularly auditing the use of AI in news production to ensure compliance with ethical standards and guidelines.

Promote transparency and public engagement for use of AI in journalism: Organizations in media should treat transparency in their use of AI, including by disclosing the specific AI tools and algorithms employed, their capabilities, and their potential limitations and biases as the most important. This will foster public trust and engagement in the ethical use of AI in the media.

Encourage further research on the ethical implications of AI in journalism: This study provides a valuable case study on the ethical use of AI in journalism, but more research is needed to explore the broader implications and best practices across different media contexts. Funding and support should be provided for further investigations in this area.

### **6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research**

This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research was conducted within the specific context of The Standard, UCU, and the findings may not be fully generalizable to other media organizations or journalistic contexts. Additionally, the sample size of six journalists, while appropriate for a qualitative case study, may not capture the full range of perspectives and experiences within the broader journalism community.

Further research is needed to expand the understanding of the ethical use of AI in journalism. Suggestions for future studies include:

Conducting a comparative analysis of the ethical use of AI across different media organizations, both within Uganda and in other African countries, to identify best practices and common challenges.

Exploring the perspectives of media consumers and the general public on the ethical use of AI in journalism, to better understand the impact on public trust and engagement.

Investigating the role of media regulators and policymakers in shaping the ethical frameworks for AI use in the journalism industry.

Examining the long-term implications of AI integration on the journalism profession, including the potential for job displacement and the evolving skill sets required for journalists.

By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the ethical challenges and best practices in the use of AI within the journalism industry, ultimately supporting the development of a more responsible and trustworthy media ecosystem.

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