



The Role of AI in Journalism: Perspectives from Media Professionals

Syeda Hina Zahra Kazmi¹ and Dr. Muhammad Ali^{2*}

¹MPhil Student, Communication and Media Studies Department, Fatima Jinnah Women University

^{2*}Assistant Professor, Communication and Media Studies Department, Fatima Jinnah Women University

E-mail: m.ali@fjwu.edu.pk*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71145/rjsp.v3i1.79>

Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in journalism is reshaping the media landscape globally, with Pakistani journalism being no exception. This study explores the perceptions of Pakistani journalists regarding AI, focusing on its perceived benefits, ethical implications, and challenges. Using a qualitative approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with journalists from Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. The findings reveal a spectrum of awareness levels, with digital media professionals demonstrating higher familiarity with AI tools than their counterparts in traditional media. Participants acknowledged the efficiency and accuracy offered by AI, particularly in automating repetitive tasks and enhancing audience engagement. However, concerns regarding misinformation, data privacy, job displacement, and transparency were prevalent. Ethical challenges, including biases in AI algorithms and accountability issues, were also highlighted. Despite these challenges, journalists expressed optimism about AI's potential, provided they receive adequate training and organizational support. This study underscores the need for ethical guidelines, targeted training programs, and collaboration between media and technology sectors to ensure responsible and effective AI adoption in journalism.

Keywords: AI, Journalism, Perspectives, Media Professionals

Introduction

In recent years artificial intelligence (AI) has grown and reshaped many industries and journalism is no exception. AI technologies have been integrated into newsrooms globally to improve efficiency, to improve accuracy, and to engage audiences. This integration is still very nascent in Pakistan, and there is opportunity and challenge both for media professionals in Pakistan. Knowing Pakistani journalists' view of AI and associated concerns on ethics, job security and the quality of news is imperative for its effective adoption (Noor, 2023). AI serves journalism to relieve humans of performing certain tasks related to news collecting, content making and content delivery. AI powered tools can take in huge amounts of data and extract trends; they could be formed to write news articles with little human interaction involved. But, with this automation, journalists could be freed of routine tasks, and focus on investigative reporting, and in depth analysis. Yet incorporating AI into journalism doesn't come without hurdles, especially in poor countries like Pakistan (Tehzeeb, 2022).

(Shah, 2020) have recently employed the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model to understand influences over the adoption of AI based applications in Pakistan's

journalism industry. The researchers learned that while AI can improve the efficiency and accuracy of news reporting, many journalists may not be able to harness its power in ways they might because they are not skilled enough to do so or are not trained to do so. Furthermore, we discuss privacy issues and risk credibility with the audiences, indicating the necessity for new complete training programs and ethical guidelines for AI in journalism (Aissani, 2023) .

Pakistani journalists pick up the ethical implications of AI for journalism as a real issue. AI generated content can both form misinformation or become a source of biases, making it a threat to journalistic integrity. The crossroads of impediments and opportunities which AI represents for Pakistani journalists are discussed by (Jamil, 2021) who insists on a human driven approach to AI, which preserves ethical values and builds public confidence in the journalism workforce. Journalists also live in constant fear of job displacement through automation. "The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism is surging in an unprecedented way in Pakistan, which is a grave threat to the livelihood of journalists, as well as landing a grave blow to the journalistic quality," the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) remarks. True responsible AI use should complement human journalism, adds the IFJ (Nelson, 2014).

As tough as these challenges can be, optimistic views on future of AI in Pakistani journalism exist. Through AI, we now have the opportunity to revolutionize how news is produced and distributed and provide news audiences more personalized and engaging content. However, AI tools can only fulfil their potential if journalists are equipped with the skills needed, and have access to the resources, to use them effectively. Empowering journalists to enable principled navigation of a rapidly changing media landscape requires training programs that build technical expertise and promote ethical AI use (Lefkovich, 2019)

The main conclusions are that integration of AI into Pakistan's journalism industry is a complex interplay of opportunities and challenges. AI can make news more efficient and revolutionize how news is made, but there are ethics, job security and technical expertise issues to be attended to. To develop such strategies, it's important for us to really understand how journalists perceive AI as we wouldn't want AI to replace journalism, but instead, be a tool to complement and enhance it (Khurshid, 2023).

Methodology

In this research we utilized a qualitative explorative approach to find out perceptions of journalists on artificial intelligence (AI) in Pakistan. Still, what the methodological framework would look like to capture the nuanced understanding of journalism intersects with AI was shaped to capture journalism and journalists' experience, attitude, and concern to AI's integration into journalism (Wenger, 2024). In this section we present the research design, sampling method, data collection procedures and analysis used in this study.

Research Design

This study took a qualitative approach in order to enable an in depth exploration of journalists' perceptions and lived experiences using AI. As little Pakistani journalism literature on AI existed, the research was exploratory in its nature in an attempt to offer a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The main research method was semi structured interviews, which provided an opportunity to have open ended discussions to allow participants to provide comprehensive insights into their perceptions and experiences on AI.

Research Setting

The investigation was carried out in the three major cities of Pakistan: Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. The cities were picked as they are the media hubs and will have a sway of media activity

and majority of Pakistan's newsrooms and media institutions. The supply of media organizations in these cities projected a wide range of perspectives from print, electronic to digital journalism.

Sampling Method

Participants were purposively sampled to meet specific inclusion criteria. To make sure they had some exposure to the changing landscape of journalism, we selected journalists with more than three years of professional experience in print, electronic, or digital media. To achieve this, we have taken extra effort to include as many participants from different levels of journalism, including reporters, editors and content creators to ensure diverse representation of their views. Eight were from Karachi, 6 from Lahore and 6 from Islamabad. In total 20 participants were interviewed.

Data Collection

The study used semi-structured interviews in order to collect qualitative data. The study's research objectives and literature review were used to develop an interview guide. This guide used open ended questions to try and elicit in depth responses surrounding participants' awareness of AI, their experience in using AI tools, and their concerns around the implications of AI on journalism. Examples of interview questions included:

Q1: What is your understanding of AI and its applications in journalism?

Q2: Can you share your experiences with AI tools in your newsroom?"

Q3: What are your thoughts on the ethical implications of AI in journalism?"

Q4: How do you perceive the impact of AI on job roles and employment in journalism?"

The interviews were conducted in person or virtually based on the preferences of the participants and where they lived. The interviews lasted between 45–60 minutes each time, and were all recorded with the participants' consent. Notes based on their non-verbal cues and other contextual information were also taken.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted following every ethical guidelines. All participants were informed that the interviews were being carried in conjunction with a study and with their consent gave informed consent to be interviewed following permission being granted to withdraw at any stage. Participants were assigned pseudonyms and data stored securely, maintaining participant's anonymity and confidentiality. The study was approved by the ethical review board of the relevant research institution.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was collected through interview and was analyzed using thematic analysis. The tapes were transcribed verbatim and the transcripts were read and re read for accuracy. The patterns and themes were then identified from the manual coding. The analysis process involved the following steps:

The researcher immersed themselves within the data; reading and re-reading transcripts to take in a wealth of information. The dataset was then systematically coded for key phrases, ideas and statements. According to relevance to research questions, the codes were organized into potential themes. The themes identified were reviewed, and refined in order to ensure that the themes reflect the data and answer the questions asked by the study. These were defined and named so that they were clear and coherent. Some of the themes I observed were "how aware or understanding of AI are you," "what are the benefits of AI," and "what would be considered ethical and concerns about employment related to AI."

In efforts to enhance validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation was used by comparing responses across participants and consistency in the emerging themes. In addition, peer debriefing was done with colleagues to evaluate that I had reviewed all the analysis un-biased. Qualitative approach rich, detailed insights were provided but had some limitations as well. Due to small sample size, these findings cannot be generalized to the population of journalists in Pakistan as a whole. Furthermore, social desirability bias might have affected participants' willingness to discuss sensitive topics, including job insecurity.

This study provides detailed results regarding the views of journalists in Pakistan on the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in journalism. According to the interviews, the findings are categorized under thematic areas. Data is primarily presented in tables so that the themes are supported.

Awareness and Understanding of AI

The analysis revealed varying levels of awareness among journalists regarding AI and its applications in journalism. Table 1 summarizes the responses related to awareness.

Table 1: Awareness of AI among Journalists

Awareness Level	Percentage of Respondents	Comments
High awareness	35%	Knowledgeable about AI tools like ChatGPT, Ject.ai, and Pinpoint.
Moderate awareness	40%	Basic understanding of AI concepts but limited knowledge of tools.
Low awareness	25%	Unaware of AI's role and applications in journalism.

Journalists with higher awareness were primarily from digital media organizations, while those from traditional print media showed relatively lower awareness. This gap highlights the need for training programs to improve AI literacy in journalism.

Perceived Benefits of AI

Participants acknowledged several benefits of AI in journalism, focusing on efficiency, accuracy, and enhanced storytelling. The main perceived benefits are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Perceived Benefits of AI in Journalism

Benefit	Frequency Mentioned	Examples Cited
Automation of repetitive tasks	16	Transcription, data sorting, and summarization.
Enhanced storytelling	12	Personalized content creation using AI algorithms.
Increased accuracy and speed	15	Faster fact-checking and data analysis.
Audience engagement	10	Use of AI-driven tools for targeted content delivery.

Journalists noted that AI could free up their time for investigative reporting and creative tasks, allowing them to focus on quality journalism.

Ethical Concerns

Ethical considerations emerged as a significant concern among journalists. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the major ethical issues identified.

Table 3: Ethical Concerns Related to AI

Ethical Concern	Percentage of Respondents	Comments
Misinformation and bias	65%	Risk of AI algorithms perpetuating biases in news generation.
Data privacy and security	50%	Concerns about misuse of sensitive data by AI systems.
Accountability	45%	Challenges in determining responsibility for AI-generated errors.
Transparency	40%	Lack of clarity about AI's role in content creation.

Many participants stressed the importance of ethical guidelines to mitigate these concerns and ensure responsible use of AI in journalism.

Job Security and Employment Impact

Concerns about job security due to automation were frequently mentioned. Table 4 summarizes the findings related to the perceived impact of AI on employment.

Table 4: Perceived Impact of AI on Employment

Perception	Frequency Mentioned	Examples Cited
Job displacement	14	Fear of automation replacing traditional journalistic roles.
Creation of new opportunities	8	Demand for AI-skilled journalists and data analysts.
Minimal impact	4	Belief that AI will only supplement human efforts.

Participants expressed a mix of apprehension and optimism, with some viewing AI as a threat to traditional roles and others recognizing the potential for new job opportunities in AI-related fields.

Readiness for AI Adoption

The readiness of journalists to adopt AI tools varied, influenced by factors such as organizational support and access to resources. Table 5 presents an overview of readiness levels.

Table 5: Readiness for AI Adoption

Readiness Level	Percentage of Respondents	Comments
High readiness	30%	Journalists with prior experience using AI tools.
Moderate readiness	45%	Willing but require training and organizational support.
Low readiness	25%	Lack of confidence or interest in AI adoption.

Journalists emphasized the need for comprehensive training programs and organizational investment to enhance readiness for AI integration.

Discussion

This study finds that how Pakistani journalists perceive the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in their profession is nuanced. Results paint a spectrum of attitudes about AI: ranging (optimistically) from the potential for it to bring people together to (more cynically) fearing its

negative ethical implications and impact on jobs. They represent different levels of awareness, resources access and organizational support, which also represent broader challenges of the adoption of AI in developing countries (Aderibigle, 2023).

An important insight from this research is that journalists are unevenly aware about AI. Some were highly aware of AI tools and very familiar with how they worked, particularly the electronic mass media participants, whereas the others, especially the traditional print media participants, had hardly any familiarity with AI and their applications. In the meantime this is the gap that needs targeted training programs to enhance the current human journalist's use of AI so that the power of both can be used to enhance storytelling (Ramachandrank, 2024). This would not only give them more skills to be technical but also raise concerns about the potential displacement of their jobs alleviated; for they shall have adapted to the changing roles of media in the media landscape. What participants perceived as the benefits of AI matches current global trends in journalism. Widely acknowledged as a major advantage, automation of repetitive tasks, such as transcription and data analysis, enabled all participants to focus on transformational activities. Using these tools, journalists have greater freedom to spend more time practicing investigation and creative storytelling, which means better news production. AI's potential to help deliver personalized content to increase the audience engagement was also seen as a good triumph. The transformational power of these benefits, however, is dependent on journalists' ability to incorporate AI meaningfully into their workflow (Shah M. H., 2024), which has yet to be adequately solved for due to a lack of training and infrastructure.

Dominant theme emerged around ethical concerns (misinformation, bias and transparency of AI generated content). AI algorithms have the potential of reinforcing racism, sexism and other biases, and even making it difficult to detect news lies. In a context like Pakistan where media credibility has already been put under the scanner, this is particularly worrying. Media organizations have to develop ethical norms along with transparency in the use of AI to overcome some of these challenges (Matu, 2020). They also stressed the importance of determining accountability mechanisms for errors in AI generated content in order to sustain the public trust in journalism. The second main concern was around job security, with journalists fearing that they were going to be displaced by automation. Some participants believed that AI poses a threat to the traditional roles; however, others acknowledged the opportunities to be created in data analysis, as well as in the development of AI tools (Akhand, 2024). This is indicative of the wider debate regarding the future of work in our automated age. To be a tool that complements instead of replaces, AI requires labelling of journalistic roles and creating a learning culture that lasts.

Participants differed in their readiness to adopt AI, which was determined by the organizational support as well as the availability of resources. Digital media journalists had higher readiness levels as compared to print media. The gap between multi-billion dollar value in global funding and current deployment of this technology is tangible, and illustrates the need for increased organizational investment in the AI infrastructure and training required to realize the full value of this technology. Without reconciliation of support, how AI will find space in journalism will not only further widen the existing inequality within the industry but worsen it.

Finally, this research emphasizes the transformative nature of AI in journalism, and the challenges that must be addressed for responsible and successful adoption of AI are discussed. Media organizations can use AI's benefits while reducing its risks by training their journalists on specific tools, setting ethical guidelines and encouraging cooperation of technologists with journalists. These are important steps as Pakistan's media landscape faces complex innovation of its own that

requires thoughtful consideration of the interplay between ethics, employment and innovation (Hussain, 2022).

Conclusion

This study provides an in depth understanding of the Pakistani journalists' perceptions of AI's integration into journalism. The findings highlight a dual narrative: AI holds the promise of revolutionizing journalism through efficiency, personalization, and innovation but this comes at the cost of significant ethical and practical issues. AI was viewed by journalists as something that would help them automate repetitive work and enhance storytelling to allow them to focus more on investigative reporting and creative efforts. Nevertheless, fears over job displacement, misinformation propagated by AI, and biases in machine generated content demand a more careful and aware consideration of AI use.

The study calls for important investment in training and education to overcome skill gaps in journalists. Additionally, organizational investment in AI infrastructure and resources are required to enable readiness and confidence in adopting AI tools. Guidelines and policies will need to be clear and in place to address ethical issues, especially those of transparency, accountability and data privacy. To that end, future collaboration between journalists, technologists and policymakers is critical if AI is to be used to compliment, not undermine, journalistic integrity (Goyanes, 2025). If Pakistani media industry tackles these challenges and harnesses the potential of AI responsibly, we can help Pakistani media industry ride through this wave of technological transformation. Such work lays the groundwork for additional research and policymaking efforts that incorporate AI into journalism using ethics as a touchstone of innovation and support for new roles of journalists in the digital age.

References

- Aderibigle, A. O. (2023). AI in developing countries bridging the gap between potential and implementation. *Computer Science and IT Research Journal*.
- Aissani, R. (2023). AI Tools in media and journalism: Roles and Concerns. *Journal of Social Sciences*.
- Akhand, S. (2024). Exploring AI tools types, applications, challenges and future trends. *Educational Administration Theory and Practice journal*.
- Goyanes, M. (2025). AI in journalism :A Systematic literature review of global trends and ethical concerns. *Journals of IT and Computer*.
- Hussain, F. (2022). Pakistani media landscape and academic relevancy exploring educational qualification of journalists. *Journal of Tianjin University Science and Technology*.
- Jamil, S. (2021). Artificial Intelligence and Journalistic practice the crossroads of obstacles and opportunities for the Pakistani journalist. *Journalism Practice*.
- Khurshid, A. (2023). AI and Journalism in Pakistan an investigation of journalists attitudes and adoption. *Journal of Peace ,Development and Communication* .
- Lefkowich, M. (2019). Empowerment Journalism. *Journalism Studies*.
- Matu, S. T. (2020). Ethics in Artificial Intelligence. *International Journal of User System*.

- Nelson, W. (2014). An examination of the international federation of agricultural journalist .
Journal of Applied Communications.
- Noor, R. (2023). Use of AI in Pakistani Journalism Navigating Challenges and future paths in TV newsrooms. *Journal of Asian Development Studies.*
- Ramachandrank. (2024). Developing AI powered training programs for employee upskilling and reskilling. *Journal of informatics education.*
- Shah, M. H. (2024). Explaining Journalist Interns Concerns using AI Technology in media workspace in pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Life and social sciences.*
- Shah, S. N. (2020). Framework for teachers acceptance of information and communication in Pakistan;Application of the extended UTAUT model. *Journal of Public Affairs, 2090.*
- Tehzeeb, N. (2022). Understanding Social and Ethical Implications of Artificial Intelligence. *Pakistan Journal of social research.*
- Wenger, D. H. (2024). AI and the impact on journalism education. *Journaism and mass communication.*