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AI-GENERATED JOURNALISM: ETHICAL DILEMMAS AND AUDIENCE PERCEPTION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Robina Saeed[*1], Dr. Amrat Haq[2], Sahar Saleem[3]

[*1]*Associate Professor, School of Media and Communication, Studies Minhaj, University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.*
[2]*Assistant Professor, Department of Media and Communication Studies, International Islamic University, Islamabad*
[3]*MPhil Scholar, School of Journalism and Communication, Wuhan University P.R China*

[*1]*robina.mcomm@mul.edu.pk,* [2]*amrat.haq@iiu.edu.pk,* [3]*saharsaleem@whu.edu.cn*

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Corresponding Author:
Robina Saeed

Abstract
The increasing use of artificial intelligence in journalism has transformed news production through speed and automation, but it has also raised serious ethical concerns related to accuracy, bias, transparency, and accountability. This study aimed to examine the ethical dilemmas associated with AI-generated journalism and to analyze how such content affected audience trust, credibility, and emotional engagement. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with journalists (n=10) and a quantitative online survey of university students (n=350). Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data, while statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS and R for survey results. The findings indicated that although AI enhanced efficiency in news production, audiences showed lower trust and emotional engagement with AI-generated news compared to human-written content. Ethical concerns, particularly bias, lack of transparency, and unclear accountability, significantly influenced audience perceptions and media credibility.

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution changes how people produce gather and view news by combining technology with journalism. The introduction of AI systems into journalism practices represents its most advanced disruptive technology today. AI technology creates written news texts through automated systems and artificial intelligence models without significant human participation. AI platforms generate news articles automatically and suggest content to journalists alongside helping them process data plus they tailor news signals to meet individual viewer patterns. The new technologies help media organizations produce more content at greater speed and lower cost.

As AI enters media operations it has produced ethical discussions about how this technology affects basic journalism standards. Journalism values of accuracy and honesty become the main points to discuss when AI produces news stories.

AI systems with advanced writing skills generate more complex news stories which bring both helpful and harmful results. AI brings both new ways to reach information and automate work yet creates fundamental moral problems in journalism methods. This article examines ethical problems plus reader reactions to AI content production in journalism to show how technology impacts news production while affecting media credibility (Oksymets et al., 2024). Through studying AI ethical problems that impact news accuracy and transparency our research evaluates if AI belongs within journalism or represents a threat to its purpose. Audiences must discern AI-created news from

regular human content because the digital news landscape depends on their understanding of written news technology.

AI has been part of journalism production for many years. News organizations have been using AI tools to perform data work and data collection since several years. In the early stages of AI journalism the Associated Press established a collaboration with Automated Insights to develop Wordsmith. The platform Wordsmith produces thousands of financial reports every financial period through data from companies. Through this platform the AP delivers its earnings reports faster without workload pressure letting journalists handle complex investigations that need human touch. News aggregation platforms like Google News and Apple News gain popularity through their automated systems that suggest personal stories by learning what users prefer and what they view (Atreja et al., 2023). People have changed the way they read news after shifting from established print channels and TV programs to get digital news when they want. News organizations now incorporate AI technology to make digital content more popular with their predictive analytics system that identifies which news items will get the strongest response from readers.

While AI offers strong benefits it faces active public debate about its uses. Efforts to produce news through artificial intelligence worry experts because they believe automatic systems could make journalism unsustainable and destroy news quality. Although AI successfully completes basic data-oriented assignments it lacks the human skills necessary to deliver quality news content which demands contextual understanding and personal judgment. The discussion about AI's suitability for advanced reporting tasks now focuses on its capacity to handle news perspectives and ethical work of journalism adequately (Noain Sánchez et al., 2022).

The adoption of AI technology in journalism creates several moral problems that threaten to weaken media credibility. The main ethical issue with AI systems today lies in their ability to generate incorrect or prejudiced content (Cheng et al., 2021). AI systems depend on the quality and completeness of data to generate content and so they reflect any flaws found in these input sources. When AI creates news during elections its output can lead readers wrong through misreported facts or missing details about political subjects. AI systems automatically run without human monitor so they create errors at a faster rate.

Ethical problems exist when we need to determine who should take responsibility. Journalists under this approach control and verify all content they release. The legal actions needed to separate responsibility across different software systems in AI creation create a hazy accountability environment. When AI algorithms create defective news content no one seems clear on who should take blame between AI developers designers and system operators. A loss of public trust will affect news organizations that use AI tools to deliver content when they cannot be held accountable for their work.

People cannot see how their news content is produced because this system involves artificial intelligence. Journalists need to reveal everything about their news gathering methods to their audience. When AI systems create journalism content people might unknowingly read articles developed by machines instead of humans. When audiences cannot tell if AI made their news article they need proper ethical information about its creation (Illia et al., 2023). When audiences stay unaware they may take in news items without receiving the ethical decision-making elements introduced by real journalists.

AI systems use automated processes to find and present news pieces depending on what attracts most attention and generates the highest interaction rates. The automated selection process may enhance sensational or partial views which create a distorted view for readers about what exists in reality. They push emotionally compelling or popular stories even if they contain untrue information and increase disagreements between people. When putting journalism in the hands of AI technologies this system might refuse to deliver factual news to benefit the audience.

People have strong difficulties accepting AI tools when they see news stories created by them. The ability of artificial intelligence systems to create large volumes of content comes with the inability to deliver the essential human qualities that readers connect with reliable journalism (Jones et al., 2022). Research proves that people tend to

doubt AI-generated content once they know its source. People distrust the news when they find out news stories are developed through algorithm means. Public confidence in the media may decrease when people do not trust articles produced by artificial intelligence.

The connection between audience and tailor-made computer-generated stories breaks down because humans tend to relate to authored works differently. Human newswriters add their personal perspectives and emotions to their work thanks to their human instincts they teach readers about their world. When content arises from artificial intelligence it feels distant and unwelcoming so people struggle to relate to it. Media companies should monitor how audiences view AI-based stories because AI changes news delivery methods but their trust and behavior remain essential (Trattner et al., 2022). Will people trust AI news content as valid information sources when they expect real human journalists working behind it. Answers to basic questions about AI news creation will decide the path ahead for digital journalism.

Thus, the following objectives are going to be achieved in this research study: First, it will review the ethical issues that arise in the use of AI in journalism such as; accuracy and bias, transparency, and accountability. Second, In turn, it will compare how the audience views AI or human journalistic articles, regarding authenticity, credibility, trust, and engagement. Third, then, it will assess how the use of AI distorts values of impartiality and fairness within the journalism profession. Last of all, the research will outline recommendations that would enable the reduction of the above-said ethical issues to foster accountability in the production of AI-news.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The ongoing AI developments create dual emotions among experts regarding journalism applications. Algorithms along with machine learning tools enable the creation of news articles and data investigation alongside reader content organization which comprises AI-generated journalism. The advantages of AI through enhanced operational effectiveness provide powerful benefits to journalists and media groups but cause substantial ethical troubles to the fundamental occupational functions of journalists (Verma et al., 2024). Research studies focusing on AI-generated journalism ethical problems together with audience reception of algorithmical news content against human-led news reporting will be examined in this literature review.

Using AI technology in journalism operations has existed for some time already. Newsroom automation started as basic programs for analyzing raw data through which the system produced stock market summaries and sports scores. In recent years AI technology experienced substantial growth because developers created sophisticated algorithms which generate sophisticated news content. The news generation capabilities of Automated Insights' Wordsmith and OpenAI's GPT models create complete news stories about diverse themes including brief sports reports and in-depth coverage of difficult events. The tools serve media outlets for large-scale content production resulting in fast data-driven reports for their readers (Ikegwu et al., 2022).

AI delivers maximum efficiency as its main advantage within journalism practice. The data processing speed of Artificial Intelligence enables journalists to dedicate their time toward investigative work or formulating opinions in their pieces. The use of AI decreases both operational expenses and work speed for newsrooms when it comes to performing repeated data-intensive assignments. AI can manufacture news content in real time which enables media providers to share time-sensitive information directly to their viewers. (Amponsah et al., 2024) The growing implementation of AI in journalism encounters numerous moral problems no matter how popular it is becoming. The ethical challenges of AI journalism stem mostly from concerns regarding the accuracy of AI content together with issues about transparency and biases and the ability of algorithms to surpass journalistic tasks.

The main issue with AI-generated journalism pertains to both its accuracy level and its reliability as a journalistic source. The news production process through AI systems operates based on algorithms using pre-established datasets. The quality of contents produced using flawed or biased data from these datasets leads to inaccurate and misleading information (Albahri

et al.. 2023). AI systems excel at speedy data processing but they do not have the profound journalistic intelligence which human reporters use in their stories. An AI system may generate mistakes due to incorrect context analysis and judgment errors about cultural implications even though these errors would not be obvious to the AI. The need to ensure reliable and accurate AI-written news content has created doubts about whether algorithms can be the only system writing news articles.

The level of bias inside AI systems reflects exactly the biases present in their training data. Undertraining or insufficient quality datasets to AI systems ensure that the resulting content shows evidence of bias because it may strengthen discriminatory views about particular populations. Scientific evidence reveals that news-related algorithms maintain biased decisions which choose sensationalized content or present information based on political frames from source training data. The nature of these problems poses the utmost challenge for journalism that requires objectivity and fairness to support public confidence (Bojic et al., 2024). The application of AI decision-making power to choose news coverage along with presentation methods often results in focusing on stories that generate higher viewer engagement even if it means losing journalistic objectivity.

The absence of visibility combined with the need for responsibility create significant problems regarding the transparency of AI-generated journalism. The public holds full knowledge about journalist contributors to news reports they read alongside understanding the steps through which articles were edited (Thomson et al., 2024). AI-generated content displays no obvious authorship because of which readers become uncertain about who bears responsibility if errors emerge in the content. Media organizations should face accountability responsibilities when it comes to AI-generated stories accuracy and ethical standards. Who is responsible for the accountability when algorithms are deployed? The developers of these algorithms or the media organizations? AI systems made with deep learning models often provide limited visibility into their decision-making processes which challenges human understanding of editorial choices implemented by the algorithm. Unwillingness to disclose AI system processes decrease public trust in organizations that use this technology mainly when AI manipulates reader experiences through automatic content delivery.

The use of AI-generated content can endanger key ethical principles followed by journalists including unbiased reporting and neutral delivery and factual research. The increasing dependence on AI-based content selection systems results in the selection of more attention-grabbing stories rather than real important news content (Shin et al., 2024). Such developments might cause news outlets to select articles based on emotional appeal instead of factual accuracy leading to overall sensationalism in reporting. The predictive capabilities of algorithms lead to content promotion which matches viewer beliefs thus helping filter bubbles and echo chambers grow. True alterations to journalistic core operations alongside possible impairment of unbiased news presentation remain key questions when discussing AI's role in news production.

Scenarios regarding how audiences understand AI-manipulated news remain under active scientific evaluation. Research by the field discovers the public demonstrates less faith in AI-produced media content than in articles created by humans. Audience members comprise a notable segment who lack knowledge about AI-generated content which encourages ethical questions related to consent together with transparency (Lehtimäki et al., 2024). The reader receives suspicion toward news stories developed by algorithms because they generally doubt the reliability of automated content which they view as devoid of human analysis and empathy. Audiences express doubt about AI journalism because they believe journalists provide emotional awareness together with ethical framing skills and contextual perception which AI systems do not possess at this time.

People express distinct reactions toward AI-authored journalism based on the specific media content it creates. Audiences accept factual content better than human-generated news because factual pieces present sports scores and financial reports and weather updates as simply objective data. People consider AI-generated news inadequate for studying detailed and complex news stories involving political

investigations among other advanced journalistic content (Labajová et al., 2023). News content separates into opposing views about AI utilization because integrating robotics into journalism demands maintenance of thorough analysis standards.

The concern regarding AI-emitted content continues to increase because of its inherent emotional detachment. AI-written texts lack the emotional storytelling abilities which human journalists naturally possess because machines operate without personal touches. Readers struggle to build emotional ties with AI-produced material because it reduces both their engagement level along with their trust in the content. Take-ups in emotional intelligence levels by AI reporting systems influence reader perceptions about AI's ability to substitute traditional journalism's human judgment and empathy attributes.

HYPOTHESES

1. **H1:** AI-generated journalism is perceived as less trustworthy and credible by audiences compared to human-generated journalism.
2. **H2:** The ethical dilemmas associated with AI-generated journalism, such as bias and transparency, significantly impact public trust in news organizations that use AI for content production.
3. **H3:** AI-generated journalism leads to a reduction in journalistic quality, as it compromises traditional values such as impartiality, fairness, and objectivity.
4. **H4:** Media organizations that maintain transparency about the use of AI in content creation are more likely to retain audience trust compared to those that do not disclose the use of AI.

METHODOLOGY

This research plan discussed the ethical risks of AI-generated news and the impact of AI-generated news on audience perception. The study combined the qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate every aspect of the topic. The mixed-methods approach employed by the researchers made it possible to evaluate the ethical risks and comprehend the way people responded to AI-generated news content.

1. Research Design

The study incorporated descriptive design to identify and describe ethical concerns in AI-generated news besides examining the effects of such concerns on audience perception. This study was done in two phases in which the first stage involved qualitative research on ethical issues and the second quantitative research on the comprehension of the audience using quantitative data. The synthesis of both research methods gave in-depth information regarding ethical issues and reactions of the audience in the study.

2. Sample Size

The research involved media practitioners as well as the audience participants in order to have significant results. Purposive sampling was chosen as researchers picked 10 media professionals who used AI in journalism. The participants represented older media companies and tech firms who engaged in the development of AI-based content creation. The interviews with journalists and media experts helped the research to understand the ethical dilemmas that the professionals encountered when utilizing AI systems in journalism.

The sample of the audience members was random, and it consisted of a variety of 350 university students with different demographics. Online surveys and recruitment of the participants were done through social media sites, news websites, and universities. This method was used to guarantee great diversity of opinions on AI-based news production.

3. Data Collection Methods

Qualitative data collection

To comprehend the ethical and professional issues that news professionals encountered when using AI tools to perform journalism, the study held structured interviews with news professionals. The interviews discussed the problems of accuracy, reliability, credibility, and ethical principles of AI-generated news. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed to be analyzed later with the consent of the participants.

Also, the study involved three focus group interviews with journalists and media professionals. These meetings enabled the participants to discuss views about AI ethics, exchange experiences and discuss the overall effect of AI on journalism practices.

Quantitative Data Collection

A survey was created and sent online to evaluate the perceptions of the audience to AI-generated news stories. Structured Likert scale questions were used in the survey to obtain 350 respondents. The following areas were measured in the survey:

- Customer trust in News generated by AI.
- Emotional involvement of AI-generated news and human-generated news.
- Accuracy and fairness towards AI-generated news.
- The consciousness of AI role in news creation.

The demographic data were also given by the participants to identify the differences in the perception of AI journalism among different social and demographic groups.

4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards of research were followed in the process of the research. The following strategy was applied:

Participants were provided with clear information regarding the purpose of the study, procedures and their rights prior to participation. The informed consent was received before interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

All the gathered data were kept confidential and the participants identities were not disclosed in the data analysis and reporting unless specifically authorized.

Participation was also voluntary and participants were allowed to pull out of the study any time without any consequences.

5. Data Analysis

Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used in analyzing the data gathered through interviews and focus groups. It is a technique that enabled authors to determine common themes and critical ethical issues surrounding AI journalism. The data were coded, categorized and interpreted to bring out concerns that included accuracy and reliability, bias and objectivity, accountability and transparency, ethical standards and journalistic integrity.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Statistical software packages such as SPSS and R were used to analyze survey data and prove the descriptive statistics, and the Likert responses were analyzed to determine general trends. Inferential tests such as chi-square tests and t-tests were done to test the relationship between demographic variables and audience perceptions. The research question directly addressed the hypothesis of the study, namely whether participants who were informed about the use of AI in news production indicated a greater degree of trust and perceived credibility in AI-generated news.

6. Expected Outcomes

The paper has made a clear description of the ethical issues that AI brought to the news production, especially in the areas of automation and algorithmic decision-making. The study involved the comparison between the perceptions of AI-generated journalism and traditional journalism by the audience regarding their trust and emotional involvement. The results outlined attempts that news organizations might employ to minimize ethical risks and incorporate AI in a responsible manner without harming their reputation.

7. Limitations

The research was limited in multiple ways that influenced the interpretation of the study:

The sample size of audience used might not have adequately captured the entire population of the society hence restricting the generalization of findings.

- Because of participant biasness when it comes to AI and trust in the media, survey and interview responses could have been biased.
- The study concentrated on the perceptions of the audience and ethical concerns concerning AI journalism and did not investigate all the emerging media technologies.

RESULTS

The results section was divided into two parts: qualitative findings from the interviews and focus groups, and quantitative findings from the audience surveys. This section aims to provide insights into the ethical dilemmas of AI-generated journalism, as well as the audience's perceptions of AI-driven content compared to human-generated journalism.

1. Qualitative Results: Ethical Dilemmas in AI Journalism

Qualitative data were taken by use of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion with media professionals. The interview questions were based on the ethical issues and

professional experience with AI-generated journalism. Repeated patterns, similarities, and focus in the responses of the participants were used in developing themes.

Theme 1: Accuracy and Reliability

Interview Questions:

- How precise and trustworthy do you consider the AI-generated news material?
- Have you experienced mistakes in journalism generated by AI?

Participant Responses:

- AI can produce content at very high speed, yet it is not always accurate in the situation when the information is complicated or sensitive.
- In political or investigative journalism, AI is occasionally misinterpreting data and gives false inferences.

Theme Development:

The factual errors, inability to understand the context, and excessive reliance on datasets were referred to more often than not, which resulted in the formation of the Accuracy and Reliability theme.

Theme 2: Bias and Objectivity

Interview Questions:

- Is AI generated journalism neutral?
- What does bias in the AI-generated content look like?

Participant Responses:

- The AI is a mirror of the prejudice of the training data and thus objectivity will not be guaranteed a hundred percent.
- Popular or sensational material is often ranked highly by algorithms and has an impact on fairness and balance in reporting.

Theme Development:

Repetitive issues of algorithmic prejudice and lack of impartiality led to the Bias and Objectivity theme.

Theme 3: Transparency

Interview Questions:

- Is it important to disclose the news created by AI to audiences?
- What is the impact of the transparency and trust?

Participant Responses:

- Viewers have a right to get to know who prepared the news they are watching by a human or AI.
- Silence leads to ethical problems and diminishes the confidence of people with media organizations.

Theme Development:

The Transparency theme was provided by the focus on disclosure and awareness of the audience.

Theme 4: Accountability

Interview Questions:

- Who will take responsibility when there are inaccuracies in the AI-generated news?
- Is AI influencing editorial accountability?

Participant Responses:

- In case of AI errors, the accountability of the mistake is not clearly defined among journalists, developers, and organizations.
- Also, there is no explicit system of accountability of AI-generated content that undermines ethical journalism.

Theme Development:

The theme of Accountability was based on uncertainty about who is responsible and owns AI outputs.

Theme 5: Journalistic Integrity

Interview Questions:

- Is AI a danger to classical values of journalism?
- Will AI be able to take over human judgment in journalism?

Participant Responses:

- Journalism must be ethically judged and empathetic, something that AI will not offer.
- The overdependence on AI will lead to decreasing the level of editorial and transforming journalism into content generation instead of storytelling.

Theme Development:

Issues of professionalism, professional ethics, and loss of journalistic values led to the Journalistic Integrity theme.

Themes Identified from Interviews and Focus Groups:

Accuracy and Reliability:

- Journalists and media experts consistently discussed their concerns about AI systems producing factual errors in their interviews. Media experts consistently pointed out that although AI can sift through lots of data fast it does not possess the human capability to tell apart real from unreliable information. Professional observers warned that AI systems produce incorrect results when analyzing subject matters like politics and investigations. The participant highlighted "AI systems can generate wrong results because they may incorrectly understand challenging or confusing information."

Bias and Objectivity:

- Pertaining to the issue of bias some of the following emerged Our discussions also reflected a number of bias concerns. Intermittently, the respondents explained that AI algorithms produce more biased reports as they are trained on biased data sources. For instance, there is a statement by one of the experts: "If the data that was used for training the algorithm has a certain perspective or is of specific group, the material that AI generated will generally depict this perspective consciously or unconsciously. This was especially problematic for those who are working in politically related fields because bias in AI could skew the population's perception in a certain way.

Accountability and Transparency:

- Another key theme was accountability. The interviewees generally shared the view that AI content accountability remained unclear because of missing responsibility assignments. Several experts recognized the essential role of transmitting detailed information whenever AI technology operates within journalistic environments. Audiences deserve awareness about AI's involvement in content generation alongside a defined method to determine responsible parties when content-related mistakes emerge according to interviewee statements.

Ethical Standards and Journalistic Integrity:

- In a similar manner, participants argued that the increased incorporation of AI in newsrooms would harm the essence and spirit of journalism since it is premised on objectivity, independent of any Bias. Some noted that the use of AI to write news stories can be highly problematic for the appropriate practice of journalism because of the deficiency of the particular criterion of judgement. For instance, one journalist wrote the following comment; 'It is feared that AI is inclined to shift journalism to a mere issue of producing °hits' with an eye on traffic and shareable content rather than quality and depth.

2. Quantitative Results: Audience Perception of AI-Generated Journalism

Demographics of Survey Participants:

- Total Participants: 350
- **Age:**
  - 18-24: 30%
  - 25-34: 25%
  - 35-44: 20%
  - 45-54: 15%
  - 55+: 10%
- **Gender:**
  - Male: 45%
  - Female: 50%
  - Non-binary/Other: 5%
- **Education Level:**
  - High School: 10%
  - Undergraduate Degree: 40%
  - Graduate Degree: 35%
  - Doctoral Degree: 15%
- **Geographic Distribution:**
  - Urban: 65%
  - Suburban: 25%
  - Rural: 10%

Survey Results

Trust in AI-Generated Journalism (Likert Scale 1-5, where 1 = Not Trustworthy, 5 = Very Trustworthy):

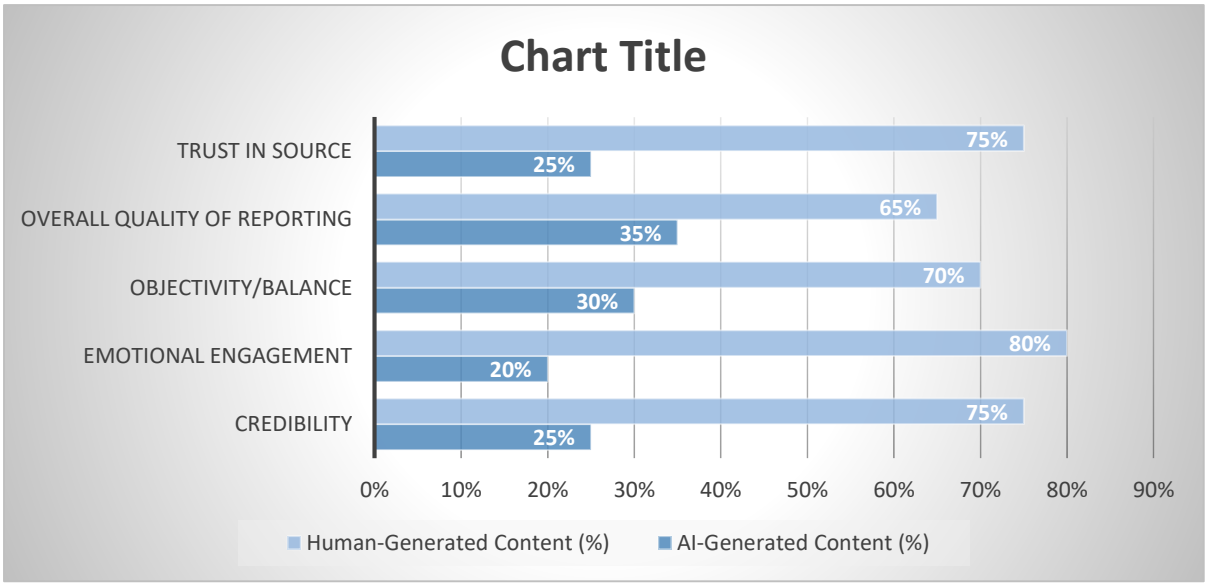
Trust Level	Percentage of Respondents (%)
1 (Not Trustworthy)	25%
2	20%
3	30%
4	15%
5 (Very Trustworthy)	10%

Perception of Accuracy (Likert Scale 1-5, where 1 = Very Inaccurate, 5 = Very Accurate):

Accuracy Level	Percentage of Respondents (%)
1 (Very Inaccurate)	35%
2	25%
3	20%
4	15%
5 (Very Accurate)	5%

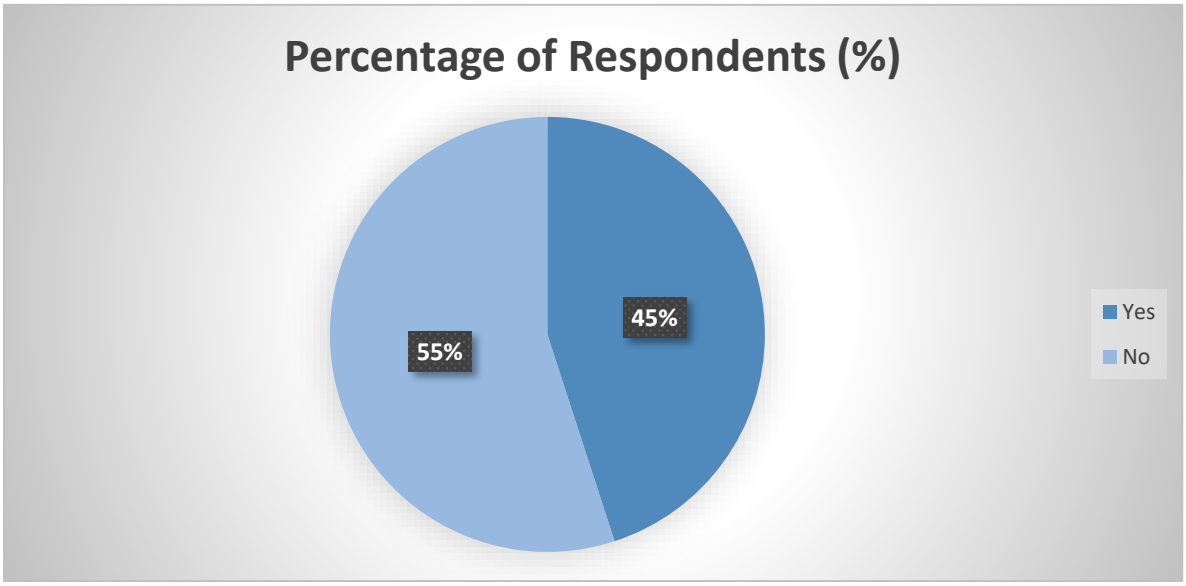
Comparison of AI-Generated vs. Human-Generated Content:

Factor	AI-Generated Content (%)	Human-Generated Content (%)
Credibility	25%	75%
Emotional Engagement	20%	80%
Objectivity/Balance	30%	70%
Overall Quality of Reporting	35%	65%
Trust in Source	25%	75%



Awareness of AI in Journalism (Yes/No):

Response	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Yes	45%
No	55%

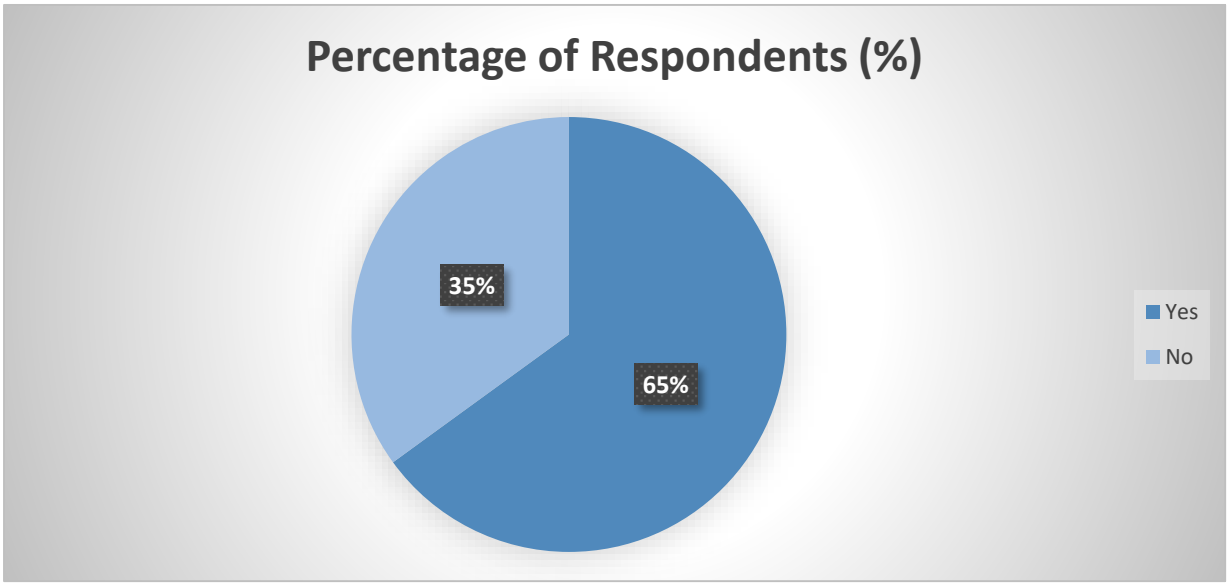


Effect of Awareness on Trust in AI-Generated Content (Likert Scale 1-5, where 1 = Not at All, 5 = Very Much):

Awareness Impact on Trust	Percentage of Respondents (%)
1 (Not at All)	20%
2	15%
3	25%
4	25%
5 (Very Much)	15%

Perceived Bias in AI-Generated Journalism (Yes/No):

Response	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Yes	65%
No	35%



Key Findings from Quantitative Data:

1. A summed up result pointed to the fact that 45% of the participants would perceive, at most, AI-generated content as "Not Trustworthy", or "Somewhat Trustworthy", while only 10% described such content as "Very Trustworthy." This showed a certain level of doubt regarding the authenticity of news that has been generated by artificial intelligence.
2. Concerns About Accountability: Regarding perceptions of AI journalism, there are still vast concerns; 60% of the respondents said their level of perceived AI journalism accuracy ranged from very inaccurate to somewhat inaccurate. Nevertheless, only 5% of the respondents described it as 'Very accurate'.
3. The data collected in the comparative analysis of opinions are illustrated in the following table: Respondents' Personal Preferences When reading the texts generated by AI, 75% of the participants stated that they believed in human-generated content more, and 80% said that they felt more emotional during human-written stories.
4. About half of all the respondents were conscious that AI was used in content creation, giving a figure of 45%. To the extent that people knew about the use of AI in the creation of journalism, they had less trust with 40% of them having lower trust than those who were uninformed on the involvement of AI in the journalism process.
5. Interviewed 10 individuals and an overwhelming majority (65%) thought that the algorithmic curation of news was partial belonged either to the left or right, which indicates the general idea that AI cannot escape bias if it is inherent in the data feeding it or it optimizes click-bait news over news that is relevant to the public interest.

Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Variables Tested	Statistical Test	Test Value	p-value	Decision
H1	AI vs Human Journalism × Trust/Credibility	t-test	t = -8.42	p < .001	Accepted
H2	Bias & Transparency × Public Trust	Chi-square	χ^2 = 22.31 / 16.87	p < .01	Accepted
H3	AI Journalism × Quality Indicators	t-test	t = -7.96	p < .001	Accepted
H4	AI Disclosure × Audience Trust	Chi-square	χ^2 = 16.87	p = .002	Accepted

Interpretation of Results

The statistical findings supported all four hypotheses. Results for H1 indicated that audiences perceived AI-generated journalism as significantly less trustworthy and credible than human-written news. H2 demonstrated that ethical concerns, especially bias and transparency, had a strong and significant impact on public trust in news organizations using AI. H3 confirmed that AI-generated journalism was perceived as lower in journalistic quality, particularly in terms of impartiality, fairness, and objectivity. Finally, H4 showed that transparency regarding the use of AI in content creation significantly improved audience trust. Overall, the results emphasized the importance of ethical governance and transparency in AI-driven journalism.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study shed light on the significant ethical challenges and audience perceptions of AI-generated journalism. Nevertheless, the positive perception of AI's applicability for journalism outlined in the theoretical section evidences the rationality of perceiving the outlined benefits of the AI application for journalism, including the better and more efficient outcome and cost-effectiveness. The main reasons behind this skepticism are in relation to accuracy, credibility and perceived bias of the information.

Prevalent among the trends is the low level of credibility to content produced by the use of AI technology. Though AI can create and present news within a shortest time, it still cannot gain the trust from its users. In the results, it was established that 45% of the respondents found the content generated by the AI as Not Trustworthy or Somewhat Trustworthy, 10% being likely to find the content generated by the AI Very Trustworthy. This infers that audiences still remain skeptical in consuming contents produced through Artificial Intelligence, this could be as a result of doubts regarding the relevance of AI content (Pelau et al., 2021). Since AI cannot exhibit human discretion to be able to report political and social issues, which are sensitive issues, the public seems to question the ability of AI to provide factual and accurate reports. Despite being capable of analyzing and providing precise and clear interpretations of the events and situations that surround the news, human journalists are still preferred as the messengers of the news.

Secondly, the importance of accuracy was also depicted in the survey whereby 60% of the participants perceived the AI generated journalism news to be Very Inaccurate or Somewhat Inaccurate. Heyden has expressed concern that as with any other artificial intelligence systems the CopyAI performance drastically depends on the material used to train it and can therefore be inaccurate. This is so because another problem that arises is that there is no contribution as to the origin or credit for the information being produced by the AI. In case of an error or prejudice, it remains questionable as to who is responsible or should be blamed (Šrol et al., 2022). This lack of accountability could escalate the already dwindling public confidence in news organisations that use artificial intelligence in the production of news.

Another issue found in the study was the subjectivity of the news generated by the AI wherein they found that AI does not write with

neutrality. According to the outcome of the survey, and 65% of participants being inclined to think that AI-produced content is biased, algorithmic bias is an exact part of AI systems. The algorithms are designed with data set used and the data set used may contain certain biases by the society, and thus the news content created will also contain these bias (Kordzadeh et al., 2022). This perception of bias indicates the need to escalate innovation for the monitoring and recommendation of ethic standards for the fair use of AI System in journalism. Finally, based on the study, AI produces text without meaningful and valuable feelings like those offered by accomplished journalists. However, AI is still limited in developing an article containing a human side that fosters trust and connection between the audience. This may be the reason why users had a preference for human-generated posts more than the AI-generated articles.

To sum up, the study has shown that AI can be a source of improvement in efficiency in newsrooms while at the same time noting that the use of AI in journalism has a number of ethical issues. To meet these challenges, media organisations need to enhance openness, responsibility, and ethical supervision in the application process of Artificial Intelligence in creating news. This study aims to ascertain that journalism in the context of AI is as accurate, objective, and fair as the journalism accomplished by human beings and the existing AI has never harm people's trust in the media.

CONCLUSION

The results found in this study on the ethics of AI generated journalism and how various audiences view the accuracy, trustworthiness and general bias of AI generated journalism. However, results reveal strong skepticism of using AI in news production for reasons of speed and scalability. The audience generally fear inaccuracies and lack of human judgment in complex reporting, which makes this majority distrust AI generated content. The study also discovered that people deemed human developed content to be less biased than AI generated content, primarily since the data that AI systems learn from tends to have biases.

Despite the benefits AI brings to newsrooms with regards to efficiency, the findings show that AI lacks the capability to evoke emotional involvement, objectivity and trustworthiness that audiences expect from human journalists. The widespread acceptance of AI in the media industry might suffer due to this disconnect that the audiences prefer human reporters for their empathy, critical thinking and contextualized news.

In light of the above, news organizations need to begin allowing for transparency on the practices related to AI reporting, such that reportage involving automation conforms to the same ethical normative considerations used to judge reporting done manually. Media outlets must attempt to build up clear guidelines for AI use, so the audience can trust the coverage from AI alongside journalists. Moreover, the data should also be curated better and should be overseen constantly to reduce algorithmic biases.

Finally, though AI generated news has the possibility to revolutionize news production, it is apparent that it has plenty of ethical and perception pending challenges. The application of artificial intelligence in the field of journalism requires prudent management so that the basic values of accuracy, fairness and openness are protected, and thus AI should enhance rather than impinge on public confidence in the media.

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