

News Business in Contemporary Framework: How digital platforms disrupt traditional media workflows in Tanzania.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how, if any, digital platforms have altered the way mainstream media used to run the news industry in Tanzania; and also sought to find out techniques that journalists use nowadays for news gathering, production, and dissemination. The study was carried out in five media companies in Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), IPP Media, Clouds Media Ltd, Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN), and Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL). The analyses were grounded on the Diffusion of Innovation Theory. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to get data from news reporters and editors respectively. A sample size of 182 respondents was selected to participate in this study through a multi-stage sampling technique that allowed identification of reporters and chief news editors as respondents. A questionnaire for news reporters was randomly distributed to gather quantitative data. News editors participated through one-on-one and phone-interviews in some areas. Quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16. The findings of this study demonstrate that mainstream media in Tanzania will likely continue to be vulnerable to digital platforms in the aspects of news gathering, production, and distribution, if current traditional news business models remain intact.

Introduction

The media landscape in Tanzania is now diverse and vibrant with 183 radio stations and 43 TV stations (Katunzi and Spurk, 2022). The print sector is the most diverse in East Africa. Katunzi and Spurk note that there are 229 newspapers and magazines in Tanzania Mainland, 78 percent being privately owned and the rest owned by the government and its institutions. In Zanzibar, there are 25 radio stations, 12 TV stations and two newspapers (Interview with TCRA officials). Apart from the growth of traditional media, the country is also witnessing growth in internet penetration which now stands at 37.60 percent (Madhusudhan, 2016).

The present study examines the transformative effects of digital platforms on the traditional operations of Tanzanian mainstream media. It specifically explores the techniques employed by journalists for news gathering, production, and dissemination in the contemporary digital era. Additionally, it investigates potential business models that can pave the way for competitive news operation among mainstream media in Tanzania. Tanzania is a country in East Africa with a population of about 60 million people and a diverse media landscape that includes both state-owned and private media outlets (Mabweazara et al., 2014). Tanzania has experienced rapid growth in internet penetration and mobile phone usage in recent years, creating new opportunities and challenges for the media industry (Moyo et al., 2018).

The integration of multimedia elements in news production has become more prevalent, with Tanzanian media houses increasingly adopting these tools to enhance their storytelling capabilities. According to the Media Council of Tanzania (2022), the integration of digital tools has enabled journalists to access a broader range of sources and provide real-time updates, thereby improving the overall quality and timeliness of news reporting. In terms of business models in the mainstream media, digital platforms and technological advancements have challenged traditional news and business models in relation to revenue generation. The Media Ownership Monitor (2024) highlights that traditional media outlet must navigate these challenges by adopting sustainable business models, such as digital subscriptions and sponsored content, to remain viable in the digital age.

However, many mainstream media houses face challenges in adapting to credible and fulfilling digital innovation opportunities, particularly within the news gathering, production and distribution systems. Recognizing these challenges, the present study, aimed to learn the impact of digital platforms among such subsector of the media sector. The results provide both opportunities and challenges for mainstream media in Tanzania. The present study is focusing on four primary value chains which include news gathering, production, and distribution, in identified media houses in Dar es Salaam.

Literature review

According to Sherman (2019), traditional media (especially radio) is still the most accessible medium in Africa, Tanzania included. However, the traditional initiatives in news gathering, producing, and distribution are based on unsustainable news business models (Kervenoael, Kasap, and Eryarsoy, (n.d.).

Traditional media outlets in Tanzania can now publish stories online and share them across multiple social media channels, ensuring wider reach and engagement. According to the Open University of Tanzania (2022), this shift has allowed Tanzanian newspapers, TV, and radio stations to reach audiences beyond their traditional geographic boundaries. A study by the University of Dar es Salaam (2022) found that Tanzanian media houses are increasingly adopting these multimedia tools to enhance their news production processes. The shift to digital has disrupted traditional revenue models. Advertising revenue, which was once a mainstay for print and broadcast media, has declined as advertisers move to digital platforms.

This has forced media houses to explore alternative revenue streams, such as digital subscriptions and sponsored content. The rapid dissemination of information on digital platforms has led to the spread of misinformation. Traditional media outlets in Tanzania face the challenge of maintaining credibility while competing with unverified sources of news on social media. This issue is compounded by the lack of stringent regulations governing online content. The distribution of news has also been transformed by digital platforms. Traditional media outlets now use websites, social media, and mobile applications to reach a broader audience. Furthermore, digital platforms facilitate real-time updates and instant sharing, which enhances the timeliness

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The current study primarily draws on the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory by Everett Rogers (1962) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989). However, due to their limitations, the researcher has also incorporated the theory of Disruptive Innovation. The DOI theory, proposed by Everett Rogers, explains how innovations are adopted within a social system over time. It identifies key factors such as and relevance of news (Simonite, 2013).

The innovation itself, communication channels, time, and the social system that influence the adoption process. However, DOI primarily focuses on the gradual adoption of innovations and may not fully capture the rapid and transformative impact of disruptive innovations (Rogers, 2003). The Theory of Disruptive Innovation, introduced by Clayton Christensen, explains how smaller companies with fewer resources can successfully challenge established businesses. Disruptive innovations typically start by targeting overlooked segments of the market with simpler, more affordable solutions.

Over time, these innovations improve and move upmarket, eventually displacing established competitors (Christensen, 1997). This theory highlights the importance of understanding the dynamics of market disruption and the strategies that can be employed to navigate such changes. Theoretical perspectives and communication models integrating directly the use of digital platforms are slow to emerge in journalism and mass communication literature. The newness of interactive networked information media must be viewed as a contributing factor. In this study, three theories have been applied to explain the general use or effect of digital platforms. The foundation model for this study was the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

As the study sought to explore how digital platforms impact news gathering, production and distribution, then journalists' use of digital platforms or digital platforms in their daily routine was essential to be investigated. Furthermore, two other theories were reviewed before making a decision about which of those theories was relevant: The selected theory was applied to supplement the study's foundation model. Therefore, Diffusion Theory, which focuses on the introduction and spread of new technological innovations, was a helpful guide for understanding how digital platforms have evolved over the years.

Some researchers (Rossotto et al., 2019) have demonstrated the usefulness of DOI as it explains "how," "why," and "what" new thoughts and technology spread. Rogers (1995) explained that the process of Diffusion of Innovation resembles a mental process that an individual goes through before adopting or rejecting an innovation. The process involves four key factors: the innovation itself, communication channels, time, and the social system. Adoption of a new idea, behavior, or product (such as new digital platforms) does not happen simultaneously in a social system (or in the newsrooms either); rather, it is a process whereby some people are more apt to adopt the innovation than others.

The theory is applicable in this study because it seeks to identify how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses through a specific population or social system especially in the mainstream media context. The end result of this diffusion is that people, as

part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behavior, or product. Adoption means that a person does something differently than they had previously (e.g., purchase or use a new product, acquire and perform a new behavior, etc.). The key to adoption is that the person must perceive the idea, behavior, or product as new or innovative. It is through this perception that diffusion is possible.

Research methodology

The design of this research was Mixed Methods Designs (MMR). This method integrated the quantitative method in collecting data through surveys, and qualitative by using interviews to collect data through surveys and qualitative by using interviews with key informants. Thus, the present study used Concurrent Methods Design (Triangulation), allowing the researcher to combine quantitative and qualitative (QUAL+ QUAN) data. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research is an approach to data collection, analysis, and report writing referring to traditional quantitative research.

In order to collect input from respondents, this research used a survey and interview and a Qualitative method was used to answer objective number three, which wanted to gain opinions on the impacts of digital platforms on news business among mainstream media and propose a viable competitive model for future improvement. A mixed-methods research design involves qualitative and quantitative data collection in response to research questions (Creswell, 2013) to explore the impacts of digital platforms on mainstream media to minimising errors or limitations (Rosenstand *et al.*, 2018).

Quantitative methods

Quantitative methods focused on gathering numerical data from reporters or journalists in the identified mainstream media under this study. Furthermore, it allowed the conceptualization of reality in terms of variables and relationships between them (Powell, Hyde, & Punch, 2014). The main instrument used in collecting primary data in the quantitative phase was a structured questionnaire, which enabled the researcher to transform the raw data obtained into usable statistics through SPSS software. Data collection was obtained by using a structured questionnaire, which helped to describe attitudes, opinions, and practices, which were used to answer objectives one and two of this study.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods provided the researcher with individual-level opinions and understanding of journalists about the impacts of digital platforms in the role of gathering, producing, and distributing news in their respective mainstream media houses. Data was obtained through a structured questionnaire. The qualitative method used in this study was an interview of news editors categorised as Key Informants (KIs).

Data from the interviews helped with understanding the factors behind respondents' perception about the impacts of digital platforms on news gathering, production, and distribution of news. The qualitative part enabled the study to capture in-depth information and a better understanding of the research issue from Key Informants (KI).

Study Area

The study was set and conducted in Dar es Salaam region, Tanzania. Media ownership is highly concentrated in this city, including private and government-owned media. For example, according to government statistics, in terms of mainstream media landscaping in Tanzania, newspapers and magazines collectively make up a total of 254, radio stations 186, and 44 Television and online content service providers.

However, almost 80% of the giant mainstream media houses operate from Dar es Salaam, a commercial city with more than five million people (Census, 2022). It is in this city where you can find mainstream media like IPP Media, Clouds Group Media (CGM), Tanzanian Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), Uhuru Publications Limited (UPL) Azam Media Group and other relatively major players. It is the capital of the co-extensive Dar es Salaam Region, one of Tanzania's digital journalists who work in mainstream media. Around 25% of Tanzanians use online or digital platforms, and most of them are found in Dar es Salaam where the Internet is far faster and reliable compared to any other area of the country.

Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram are the most popular digital media platforms (Rossotto, et al.,2019). Therefore, it was relevant to conduct this study in this area where sources of data were obtained. Many qualified news reporters, editors, and producers work in Dar es Salaam. Therefore, the researcher was able to collect relevant data from the target population in order to ensure the objectives of the study.

Study Population

Population refers to the complete set of events, people, or things that a researcher is interested in and from which any sample is taken (Kombo & Tromph, 2006). For this study, the targeted population was all journalists working in major mainstream media in Dar es Salaam. The targeted population was 370, according to the approximated data from Media Council of Tanzania (2019). They work as news reporters and editors in traditional media categories (print, radio, and TV).

This target group becomes a unit of analysis for this study, picked from a list of selected mainstream media channels in the study area. The researcher then picked three newsrooms from each traditional media category of the identified media houses as a representation unit; hence nine (9) media houses were selected to participate in this study.

Sampling Framework

This study's sampling frame consisted of news reporters and their associate editors. Sample size and sampling procedure reflect the research objectives and kinds of data collected in both quantitative and qualitative phases. The sampling frame under this study focused on newsrooms from a list of mainstream media in Dar es Salaam. These selected were: Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), IPP Media, Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL), Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN), Clouds Media Group (CMG), and Uhuru Publication Limited (UPL). The first sampling frame was the list of reporters; the second was the list of News editors from the representative media.

This study employed two sampling techniques: stratified random and purposive sampling. The sampling frame was a list of journalists from registered mainstream media houses

(Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), IPP Media, Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL), Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN), and Clouds Media Group (CMG).

Sampling procedure

This study used a mixed sampling technique to ensure the generalisation of the findings for all registered mainstream news outlets in Tanzania. These included stratified random and purposive sampling techniques. These techniques were used in the sampling procedure to select the respondents for this study. A multistage sampling technique was applied to ensure the generalisation of the findings for all categories of mainstream media in Tanzania. The first part was to identify media houses with respect to their classifications. The second stage employed simple random sampling to select three media outlets from each class or category of the mainstream media subsector: radio, newspapers, and TV. The researcher ensured the availability of a fair representation from each of these categories or classes. After identifying the medium, the next stage involved simple random sampling where journalists from the selected media houses completed the questionnaire. The stratified sampling facilitated the procedure picking the sample.

They were TBC, IPP Media, Clouds Media, TSN, and MCL. Then, from these media houses, the researcher obtained data from the news of three (3) radio stations to research, namely, Radio One, Clouds FM, and TBC Taifa, representing the category of radio as one of the mainstream media categories. Then, a list of three (3) TV outlets was identified, and these were ITV, Clouds TV, and TBC1.

Finally, the researcher identified three (3) newsrooms of newspapers: Daily News, Mwananchi newspapers, and Nipashe newspapers. Therefore, this procedure successfully obtained all mainstream media categories or classes: radio, print, and TV. In addition, these media outlets were deliberately selected because they hold the biggest share in Tanzania's media industry in terms of investment and coverage and employ a larger number of journalists compared to the rest. All of them are headquartered in Dar es Salaam, with bureaus located in upcountry regions as well.

Stratified Random Sampling

A stratified random sampling involves dividing the entire population into homogeneous groups called strata (plural for stratum). A random sample from each stratum was taken in a number proportional to the stratum's size when compared to the population. Stratified random sampling was used to select mainstream journalists and respondents who filled out the questionnaire. This technique was exploited based on its benefits that it could improve representativeness by decreasing the sampling error which could occur when doing the homogeneous strata from a population.

This technique usually produces smaller samples with fewer sampling errors than the sample obtained from a heterogeneous population. This technique facilitates selecting a representative individual who was selected randomly for this study. The strata formulated in this study are TBC media, IPP media, Clouds media, and MCL.

Sample Size

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Charles, Ehiarekhian, Hudson, & Oboh, 2020). The sample size for this study was determined based on standard charts of determining sample size, adopted from Krejcie and Morgan (1970 page No?), as shown in Table. 3.1.

$$\text{SIZE} = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

X^2 = table value of Chi-Square @ $d.f. = 1$ for desired confidence level

.10 = 2.71 .05 = 3.84 .01 = 6.64 .001 = 10.83

N = population size

P = population proportion (assumed to be .50)

d = degree of accuracy (expressed as a proportion)

Therefore, the sample size of this study was 182 respondents. The sample size from the population strictly targeted journalists from the selected mainstream media for this study. The responses from this identified sample size were vital to make relevant conclusions for this study about digital platforms for news production, dissemination, and consumption.

Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling involved 18 key informants for interviews, whereby two (2) news chief editors from each media outlet were selected in this study as a representative sample. Purposive sampling was used to select 18 Key Informants (KI) for interviews in this study as a representative sample to investigate the impact of digital platforms on news gathering, production, and distribution in mainstream media houses in Dar es Salaam.

Data Collection Methods

In this study, the questionnaires, interview methods and reviewing of various publications were used to collect primary and secondary data. Issues included in the questionnaire were such as preferences of digital platforms and news coverage options, practices towards sharing news via digital platforms, and their effectiveness.

Primary Data

Primary data is information gathered directly from the respondents. In this study, data was collected through a questionnaire and an in-depth interview. In this method, respondents in the study area were assessed on the use of the digital platform.

Secondary Data

The documentary review was used to collect secondary data. The collection and analysis of published documents from internal sources, which included reports, records, the Internet and other documents, were useful for this study.

Questionnaire Method

The questionnaires with both close-ended and open-ended questions were circulated to 182 respondents at five (5) registered mainstream media houses identified for this study. A structured and self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The use of a self-administered questionnaire helped to cover a large number of respondents in a short period of time. Therefore, among those 182 distributed questionnaires, 174 were filled out and collected for data analysis, and 18 respondents were interviewed.

Interview Method

Eighteen (18) respondents were sampled as key informant interviewees. From a qualitative perspective, interviews under guiding questions were done with news editors in a purposeful sampling. The researchers intentionally selected participants who had experience with the central research problem, or who had a key role in the present study. According to (Creswell, 2003: 2009) qualitative data analysis does not occur in a linear fashion rather it is considered to be a circular process where the data analysis concurrently takes place during and after the data collection stage in order to produce a coherent interpretation out of the collected data (Abernathy, P. M. (2017)). Semi-structured interview guide was used to conduct face to face interview with key informants. This method was suitable because of its flexibility. It allows for in-depth questions thus makes the researcher elaborate on issues when required to do so with respondents.

It also assists the researcher in supplementing other information and thus increasing validity. Since interviews are time-consuming and can have biases, to minimise these weaknesses, the interviewer conducted interviews in the identified mainstream media of this study. So, in this category, a total of nine (18) respondents were interviewed.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis was performed using descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis under the SPSS tool. Descriptive data analysis was done to profile and describe the respondents' characteristics, where frequencies and graphs served as tools to profile the nature of respondents and their behaviour intentions in general, while correlation and regression served on the association of variables. Qualitative data analysis was done using the narrative data analysis technique, which served as a tool to elaborate and explain findings from the quantitative phase.

Ethical Considerations

In the course of collecting data, all ethics were observed, including obtaining consent from participants, permission from all potential sources and authorities, and keeping confidentiality of the participation in the study. As Wimmer and Dominick (2006) suggest, all precautions were taken to avoid potential harm to subjects (in this case, journalists).

A set of ten rules posited by Cook (1976) in Wimmer and Dominick (2006) guided relations between the researcher and journalists. The rules ensured subjects' consent, avoided coercion, shunned lying about the nature of the research, maintained subjects' self-respect, prevented mental or physical stress, respected privacy and exercised fairness and respect. This was

achieved by carefully designing the survey questions to ensure that they could not cause harm to the subjects.

Findings and Discussions

The findings reveal that digital platforms have varied impacts on news operations of mainstream media in Tanzania, including loss of audience, advertisers, and some young skilled journalists moving on to work in digital platforms. Results demonstrate that 127(73.3%) of respondents revealed that news is mostly still produced in the old techniques of traditional media; and 57(32.8%) of respondents believed digital platforms compliment their news work, rather than competing it; but they demonstrated concerns that their media owners were reluctant to invest in compatible equipment for digital news.

Familiarity with Digital Platforms among Journalists

The specific objective of this question was to find out journalists' general awareness or familiarity with digital platforms (DP) and how they use them. Familiarity with DP was an important aspect in assessing and explaining the respondents' performance against the use of DP in the discussion. The assumption was that the personal familiarity of journalists with DP carries the power to influence or determine their decisions to use DP. This point was measured by using indicators such as slightly familiar, not at all familiar, moderately familiar, extremely familiar, and somewhat familiar, as detailed in (Table 1) below.

Table 1: Familiarity with Digital Platform for Journalistic

Category	Frequency	Percent
Not at all familiar	6	3.4
Slightly familiar	36	20.7
Somewhat familiar	86	49.4
Moderate familiar	38	21.8
Extremely familiar	8	4.6
Total	174	100.0

Source: Field Data (2021)

The largest number of all respondents, 86 (49.4%), from the quantitative data, irrespective of their experience and type of media outlets, indicated to pose a fair level of awareness related to digital platforms for news business. First and foremost, in the context of the present study, digital platform functions involve researching news ideas, filtering insights and data, interactivity with sources and audiences, and ability to distribute news stories to a wider range of audiences faster than traditional approaches can do.

The data revealing that 49.4% of journalists are somewhat familiar with digital platforms, while 21.8% are moderately familiar, and 4.6% are extremely familiar. This level of familiarity suggests that digital platforms are becoming integral to journalistic practices in Tanzania. However, 24.1% of journalists are either slightly familiar or not at all familiar with digital platforms, indicating a need for further investments among journalists, including training and in-house mentoring support.

Addressing the gaps in familiarity with digital tools and overcoming challenges related to revenue and misinformation are crucial for maximising the benefits of digital platforms in the Tanzanian media landscape. In accordance to the current study, while many journalists are believed to have a fair familiarity or awareness of digital platforms for news issues, the number does not mean that mainstream media have digital capacity at that highest number through journalists who claim to have an understanding of digital platforms. On the other hand, larger proportions of news editors who had worked with digital platforms in news production and distribution have demonstrated to have had a very favourable view of their work, but a surprisingly small proportion of respondents in this aspect indicated they have a moderate level of familiarity.

Furthermore, only 8 (4.6%) of all 174 respondents from the quantitative findings, rated themselves at the level of extreme familiarity with digital platforms. Only a small fraction of respondents, 6 (3.4%), claimed they were not familiar with digital platforms. These findings bring about concerns if the mainstream media want in fact to transform in the context of news business. Table 4.9 below shows the levels of awareness of respondents on digital platforms and their impact on their role in gathering, producing, and distributing news.

The findings of this study further demonstrate that mainstream media in Tanzania will likely continue to be vulnerable to digital platforms in the aspects of news gathering, production, and distribution, if current traditional news business models remain intact. Drawing evidence from global research, it seems even advertisers are moving fast towards online or digital advertisement, as the following extract shows:

As the media industry fights to stay on top, the need to investigate alternative business models and evaluate emerging technologies becomes increasingly self-evident. Media companies seeking to innovate in these disruptive surroundings must pay close attention to emerging innovation areas and the startups driving this disruptive digitalisation. 50% of all spending in media [worldwide] will be dedicated to digital affairs by 2019, a clear indicator that digitalisation is the single most important innovation area actively shaping the media industry” (TMF Research Report, 2021).

This conclusion was backed by 78% of the Key Informants (KI) who revealed that coping with digital platforms was yet a paradox to them, given that they lack funds and the will from media owners to invest in digital news business strategically.

The present study found that while traditional techniques are still prevalent, there is a gradual shift towards incorporating digital tools in news gathering, production, and dissemination. Journalists are increasingly using social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook to gather real-time information and eyewitness accounts. Mobile journalism (MoJo) has also gained traction, allowing journalists to capture and report news using smartphones. In terms of production, multimedia storytelling techniques are being adopted, albeit slowly. Media organizations are beginning to integrate videos, podcasts, and interactive graphics into their content to make it more engaging. However, this transition requires substantial investment in

technology and training, which many media houses are hesitant to undertake due to financial constraints.

For news dissemination, digital platforms such as websites and social media channels are becoming more prominent. Despite this, the study found that traditional distribution methods, such as print and broadcast, still dominate. This dual approach reflects the ongoing struggle to balance traditional practices with the demands of the digital era. Challenges in adopting digital platforms, the findings reveal that reluctance of media owners to invest in digital equipment and training emerged as a significant barrier to digital transformation. This reluctance is often rooted in financial constraints and a lack of understanding of the potential benefits of digital tools. The study revealed that 78% of Key Informants (KIs) expressed concerns about the paradox of coping with digital platforms without adequate investment. They highlighted the need for strategic investment in digital infrastructure to remain competitive.

Another challenge is the digital divide, particularly in rural areas where internet access is limited. This divide hampers the ability of media houses to reach a broader audience and fully leverage digital platforms. Additionally, issues such as low levels of digital literacy and high costs of internet-enabled devices further exacerbate the problem. Digital platforms have the potential to revolutionise news operations by providing new avenues for content distribution and audience engagement. However, the findings indicate that mainstream media in Tanzania has been slow to adopt these platforms fully. The reluctance to invest in digital tools and the persistence of traditional practices are significant barriers to digital transformation.

The findings of this study demonstrate that digital platforms have varied impacts on the news operations of mainstream media in Tanzania. While there are significant challenges, such as the loss of audience and advertisers, and the reluctance to invest in digital tools, there are also opportunities for innovation and growth. By adopting a strategic approach to digital transformation, diversifying revenue streams, and fostering partnerships, mainstream media in Tanzania can overcome these challenges and achieve sustainability in the digital era.

The findings from the current study and some other reviewed studies have confirmed the fact that the impact of digital platforms is noticeable mainly in the progress of gathering hard news, production of gathered material for news stories, and as well as the distribution aspect. The how and extent to which mainstream media compete and cope with digital news coverage is yet a paradox, although paradox. However, relying on the interview conducted with news editors and the surveyed data in the identified mainstream media show that a raft of them face some pressing challenges associated with the force of digital platforms in Tanzania and beyond, from economic costs to changing journalistic working culture, ideation of news stories, production, dissemination and consumption.

In the perspective of the present study, other literature reviews argue that, Tanzanian newspapers have adapted the digital era by establishing online presences and utilizing social media to reach their audiences. However, they face significant challenges, including revenue generation and combating misinformation. The shift to digital has disrupted traditional revenue models, forcing newspapers to explore alternative sources of income such as digital

subscriptions and online advertising (Miller, 2020). Additionally, the prevalence of misinformation on digital platforms requires newspapers to invest in fact-checking and verification processes to maintain credibility (Nguyen, 2019).

Challenges and Opportunities for Mainstream Media

Table 2: Challenges in the Use of Digital Platforms (N =18)

Challenges in DP Use	Responses	
	Frequency	Percent
Lack of skills	9	50
Lack of technical support	6	33
Lack of Internet connectivity	2	11
Unreliable power supply	1	5

Source: Field Data (March, 2021)

The present study's findings demonstrate that digital transformation of traditional media in Tanzania presents both opportunities and challenges. While digital platforms have enhanced news gathering, production, and distribution, they also require journalists to continuously update their skills and adapt to new technologies. Addressing the gaps in familiarity with digital tools and overcoming challenges related to revenue and misinformation are crucial for maximizing the benefits of digital platforms in the Tanzanian media landscape.

According to Garcia (2021), journalists in mainstream media are now expected to be proficient in various digital tools and platforms, enabling them to gather, produce, and distribute news more effectively. This has led to the emergence of new journalistic roles such as social media managers and multimedia journalists. The digital transformation has also emphasized the importance of continuous learning and adaptation in the journalistic profession.

In Tanzania, the growth of digital innovations and the availability of less expensive Smartphone devices has triggered many people across the country to access news on digital platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Blogs (Media Council of Tanzania, 2019). Out of 23 million internet users in Tanzania, 96 percent accessed services on mobile devices (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018). Proportionally, most users are members of chat groups such as WhatsApp, which they use to get news and information (Mosso, 2019).

This has further broadened the need for online journalists to be more proactive and credible (Media Council of Tanzania, 2019). According to Rosenstaet at al. (2018) digital platforms vary in definition according to their uses and capabilities. For example, while some media practitioners still arguing about the relevance of WhatsApp to be considered a digital platform for news purposes, a recent Reuters Institute Digital News Report has tracked the growing importance of WhatsApp and other messaging platforms, particularly in developing countries (Chen & Qiu, 2019). According to the same report, around 120 million people use WhatsApp in Brazil alone. This generalises that WhatsApp has become another key network for news sharing, in addition to the existing prominent platforms.

In the context of this study, digital platforms' functions involved researching news ideas, filtering insights, connecting with sources, editing news, and having the ability to share news stories with a wider range of audiences fast (Nic et al., 2018). Thus, this study continues to analyse and discuss the impacts of content-based digital platforms on mainstream media houses in Tanzania. According to Goode (2005) "Content-based digital platforms refer to a technology whose application significantly affects the way the journalism industry functions (Christensen, 2006). According to Christensen, (2006), apart from crucial stages in adopting innovation, three critical questions are identified in their theory: "how", "why", and for "what" reasons innovation can be diffused by the users. At the same time, one of the news editors interviewed said:

People seem to like and follow our news bulletins through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and the news producers know little about how to run these platforms better. At some point, we were fined by TCRA because we allowed an audience to post unethical views (Male TV News Editor, 22 March 2021).

Empirical studies show that digital platforms play multiple roles in the news business. One of the important functions of such technologies is enabling journalists to gather news electronically. According to Kloet et al. (2019) Digital platforms help news reporting by enabling the reporter and editors to keep up with the pace of numerous events that happen locally and globally. For example, journalists can get clear sound, pictures, and video clips of varied news stories.

Also, news producers can use digital platforms or technologies even to transmit or post news live from the location where news stories are happening at that certain time. Electronic or digital news-gathering, producing, and distribution purposely make the usage of digital platforms' video and audio technologies by news producers the modern way of ensuring media companies gather and distribute news immediately, instead of using the old ways of analogue film cameras, for example. The term was coined during the rise of videotape technology in the 1970s.

Conclusion

Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by mainstream media in Tanzania as they navigate the digital landscape. The study established that digital platform had contributed a great deal to mainstream media's news business, with particular aspects of gathering, producing and distributing news stories. Furthermore, this study revealed that digital platforms have negative and positive impacts on news gathering, production, and distribution in the mainstream media in Tanzania.

The current study's findings were somewhat in agreement with Picard (2011) and Hanson (2005), whose arguments instituted that the continued paradigm shifts in digital platforms over the past two decades have led governments around the world, Tanzania included, to shape their traditional models related to news gathering, producing, and dissemination.