

Innovation and Platform Integration Models for Competitive News Gathering, Production, and Distribution in the Tanzanias Mainstream Media.

by Jana Publication & Research

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ABSTRACT

In Tanzania, mainstream media struggles to keep pace with technological advancements, audience expectations, and market dynamics. This paper investigates the “missing link;” the absence of innovation and platform integration as a key barrier to media viability. It aims to answer: *How can Tanzanian media houses leverage innovation and digital platforms to remain relevant and competitive?*

Drawing on survey method (n = 174) and qualitative interviews (n = 18) across five major media houses in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the study explores how media houses are adapting to digital disruption and identifies key areas for innovation, including content diversification, audience engagement, and revenue restructuring. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on media sustainability in Sub-Saharan Africa and offer practical recommendations for media practitioners, policymakers, and scholars.

Keywords: Traditional media viability, digital disruption, strategic investment.

Introduction

According to a study by Magolanga (2022, digital platforms have profoundly transformed the traditional media landscape in Tanzania, especially in the scope of news gathering, production, and distribution. These platforms have introduced innovative tools and methodologies that have significantly enhanced the efficiency, reach, and interactivity of journalistic activities. However, many mainstream media houses face an existential challenge in the digital news age. While global media ecosystems rapidly adopt innovative technologies and integrate digital platforms to enhance content delivery and audience engagement, Tanzanian media houses lag behind. T

his paper explores the critical role of innovation and platform integration in revitalizing Tanzania's media landscape. It identifies structural gaps, evaluates current practices, and proposes a sustainable framework for digital transformation. Drawing on comparative case studies and theoretical models of media innovation, the study argues that without strategic investment in digital tools and collaborative innovation, Tanzania's mainstream media risks obsolescence.

Therefore, the present study reveals up-to-date comprehensive analysis of the impact of digital transformation in traditional media, highlighting challenges and proposing the potential model that provides opportunities particularly in gathering, producing, and distributing news in the mainstream media in Tanzania so to ensure legacy media maintain relevance (Sonnenberg and Brocke, 2012).

Contextual Background

Tanzania's media sector comprises state-owned and private outlets, with radio and television dominating traditional formats. Print media faces declining circulation, while digital platforms remain underutilized despite growing internet penetration. According to the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), internet penetration in the country reached over 50% by 2023, with mobile devices accounting for more than 90% of internet access. According to Christensen (2006), despite the fact that “most of the digital platforms are considered to be potential tools for news cores, yet traditional media are constrained with a combination of issues including shortage of resources and weak readiness to adopt digital

technologies in order to be competitive in the digital news market.” However, more than two decades after the adoption of digital platforms by media organisations, 28nd newsrooms, journalism in Tanzania is still struggling to cope with its implications (Media Council of Tanzania, 2019).

Mainstream media in Tanzania, such as *Mwananchi Communications*, *IPP Media*, and *Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation* have struggled to adapt to this new environment. Print circulation has declined, advertising revenues have dwindled, and younger audiences increasingly turn to digital platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube for news.

Digital Disruption and Global Trends

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).

According to Mkude & Wimmer, (2015) digital technologies have disrupted traditional journalism, by altering the way news producers used to process news. Tanzanians generally continue to experience the impacts of digital platforms in various potential ways. The use of Internet-powered mobile services allows people to access news at any time, and they can save it for future consumption. In news business, digital technologies have altered the way news is produced and delivered (Mosso, 2019). For instance, it is now possible for audience to access news easily and other individuals have been able to share news stories via different handy digital platforms.

Today, most mainstream media houses in Tanzania, as is the case in many areas of the world, are openly tested through the introduction of digital platforms that also have ventured into the news business (Samsor A., 2021). The digital impacts on mainstream media companies and the era of increased ICTs have created primarily two categories of journalists: there are those who practised during the socialist era, mainly between 1967 and 1985 and those who began doing so from the free market era in the 1990s.

Other scholars such as Chen & Qiu (2019) argue that the continuous practice of traditional news gathering, production, and distribution is prevalent in many media houses in Africa, particularly those which lack innovative and transformative will and power, and they are easily noticed when media channels compete for audiences and advertisements. In traditional ways, gathering and dissemination of news are usually a complex process and costly across. This is because customarily, news producers and reporters used to gather news often by travelling some distances with voice recorders or sophisticated cameras (Sherman, 2019).

So, in accordance with Sujit (2014), conventional media houses which have modified their news services and their news producers are more able now to timely gather and disseminate news; even by streaming unlimited news stories live on digital platforms. The problem is that some studies reveal that there is a wanton of bottlenecks to innovation in mainstream media houses in Tanzania, including the fact that reporters, editors and media managers lack innovation skills because they went to conventional journalism schools where digital innovation is not practically emphasised. Also, conservatives still run most of the media outlets, primarily TV and radio stations and are not ready for change (TMF 2021).

Internet penetration and mobile phone usage

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., 2023). According to the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), internet penetration in Tanzania reached 52% by 2024, with over 30 million mobile subscriptions. This digital expansion has enabled broader access to news but also intensified competition for attention. As Kokwijuka (2020) notes, "The shift to digital platforms has forced traditional media to rethink not only how they deliver news, but also how they define journalism itself."

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.

Statement of the Problem

According to Lenhardt et al. (2024), traditional media in Tanzania highly influences news, but they struggle to adapt digital transformation in news business models. Failure to fulfill the expected goal in the middle of digital news competition creates a gap on the way news is gathered, produced, and distributes for mainstream media houses (Sherman, 2019). Various scholars (Spurk & Katunzi, 2019) also have raised that despite the global shift toward digital-first journalism, mainstream media in Tanzania continues to rely heavily on traditional models of content production and distribution.

This has led to declining audience engagement, reduced competitiveness, and financial instability. While digital platforms and innovative technologies offer new opportunities for reach, interactivity, and monetization, Tanzanian media houses have yet to fully embrace or integrate these tools into their operations.

The absence of strategic innovation and platform integration represents a critical gap that threatens the viability and relevance of journalism in the country. Without targeted investment, capacity building, and collaborative innovation, Tanzania's mainstream media risks falling further behind in the digital age (Munoriyarwa & Moyo, 2023). Moreover, the absence of localized empirical studies on how digital platforms are reshaping newsroom workflows in Tanzania creates a critical gap in both academic literature and media policy discourse.

This study addresses that gap by examining how digital platforms disrupt traditional media workflows in Tanzania, using the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Technology Acceptance Model, and Disruptive Innovation Theory to analyze journalist adaptation, organizational readiness, and strategic responses. Without a clear understanding of these dynamics, Tanzanian media risk falling behind in a rapidly evolving digital ecosystem.

Literature review

(Abernathy, 2017) discussed that despite all the advantages of digital platforms making news services available online, there are still a lot of skepticisms with regard to mainstream media ensuring access and usage of the digital platforms' services.

This skepticism is underscored by TCRA (2018) as it argued that the benefits of digital platforms are in Tanzanian mainstream media is yet to be fully realized; and this is true especially in news business. Some researchers say that the need to develop fresh approaches to news operation with the broader social appeal to digital news has become to be even a more pressing requirement.

Journalists are increasingly using digital tools for news gathering and dissemination, yet their adoption remains uneven and often superficial (Spurk & Katunzi, 2019). This partial integration reflects broader institutional inertia and a lack of strategic innovation, which threatens the sustainability and competitiveness of traditional media outlets.

The Tanzanian Media Ecosystem: Between Legacy and Innovation

Tanzania's media landscape is shaped by a complex interplay of historical legacy, regulatory frameworks, and technological adoption. Since the liberalization of media in the 1990s, the country has witnessed a proliferation of private outlets alongside state-owned institutions. Newspapers like *Mwananchi*, *The Citizen*, and *HabariLeo* have long been pillars of public discourse. However, their dominance is increasingly challenged by digital-native platforms such as *Jamii Forums*, *Millard Ayo*, and *Global Publishers*, which cater to mobile-first audiences.

Furthermore, the financial viability of media outlets is under threat due to declining advertising revenues and the rise of digital platforms. Studies have shown that media organizations must innovate and adapt to survive in the digital age.

Political Influence and Media Freedom

Digital disruption in Tanzania cannot be divorced from its political context. The government has historically exerted influence over media through licensing, content regulation, and ownership structures. The 2016 Media Services Act, for instance, introduced stringent controls over journalistic content, raising concerns about press freedom. While digital platforms offer alternative spaces for expression, they are also subject to surveillance and censorship.

Jamii Forums, often dubbed "Tanzania's Reddit," has faced repeated legal challenges for hosting whistleblower content and political debates. In 2017, its founders were charged under the Cybercrimes Act for failing to disclose user data. These incidents highlight the tension between digital openness and state control. As MCT's 2023 report warns, "The digital space is both a refuge and a battleground for journalistic freedom."

Audience Fragmentation and the Rise of Influencer Media

One of the most profound shifts in Tanzanian journalism is the fragmentation of audiences. Traditional media once enjoyed a captive readership, but today's consumers navigate a mosaic of platforms, influencers, and content formats. Influencers like Millard Ayo and Wema Sepetu command massive followings, often rivaling mainstream outlets in reach and engagement.

This shift has implications for journalistic authority. Audiences increasingly prioritize relatability and immediacy over institutional credibility. Ayo's platform, for example, blends entertainment, news, and lifestyle content, blurring the boundaries between journalism and infotainment. While this model attracts younger demographics, it raises questions about editorial standards and accountability.

Empirical Literature

Empirical studies on technology adoption have provided a prominent body of literature on various factors influencing the adoption of technology in mainstream media settings. For example, empirical evidence in Taiwan, by Kloet and Fai (2019) adopted technological context, environmental context and organisational context as critical factors affecting the decisions to adopt cloud computing technology in developing countries, specifically in Taiwan.

On the other hand, Christensen, (2006), in a study of antecedents of web services adoption, used a conceptual model which was grounded in technological, organisational and environmental contexts.

From a different perspective, Rossotto et al. (2019) proposed a model to represent adoption factors, which included performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social factor and facilitating conditions as factors for the adoption of technology in mainstream media organisations in the Malaysian food industry. These factors were also observed in the research project of Bolter & Grusin (2002), who found that the adoption and usage of information systems by the Bangladeshi MSM are strongly influenced by performance efficiency, effort efficiency, facilitating conditions, and moderately influenced by social influence.

Also Charles & Hudson (2020) their analysis of factors influencing the adoption of enterprise applications showed that technological, organisational and environmental factors are significant factors which influence MSM adoption of new business applications and platforms. Furthermore, (Kombo & Tromph, 2006) in e-business adoption among SMEs in Kenya, identified independent factors, which were technological characteristics, environmental characteristics and organisational characteristics which were used to predict the adoption of e-business.

Based on the above facts, the most cited factors are technological characteristics, organisational characteristics, environmental characteristics, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions.

Studies Conducted Outside Tanzania

According to Christensen (2006), despite the fact that "most of the digital platforms are considered to be potential tools for news cores, yet traditional media are constrained with a combination of issues including shortage of resources and weak readiness to adopt digital technologies in order to be competitive in the digital news market." However, more than two decades after the adoption of digital platforms by media organisations and newsrooms,

journalism in Tanzania is still struggling to cope with its implications (Media Council of Tanzania, 2019).

A study by Pradhan (2018), focused on how journalists use social media in India and the impact on structural, functional, and professional aspects of web journalism. It was established that mainstream media, such as TV and newspapers, was supposed to increase the scope of content generation and sharing in order to compete with social media.

Social media platforms were commended as an important tool for the audience and as useful tools for journalists (Pradhan, 2018). Abernathy (2017) states that “digital technologies have the power to disrupt traditional communications. With fewer resources, which enable them to successfully disrupt incumbents by leveraging information-based assets and following an exponential price-performance trajectory.

Parabhoiet al. (2017) and Sujit (2014) did a comparative analysis of digital journalism and traditional journalism in particular. In the digital journalism era includes blogging, was being practiced. The conclusion was that the news in the digital journalism era includes blogging, which was being practised through various digital platforms such as websites, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. The interactive features of digital platforms have transformed blog journalism into a forum whose primary function is the exchange of views.

Blogs, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and the like have become increasingly central to the dissemination of news. ‘Fast’ and ‘short’ being the dominant logic of the web platforms, quantity rather than quality gets more attention (Pradhan, 2018). According to Spurk & Katunzi (2019). Online journalism in Tanzania, for example, is practised through digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google, websites, and blogs. Some blogs, like Michuzi’s, have transformed traditional journalism in many ways. They have the power to enable media news producers, editors, and reporters to gather, process, and distribute news in a timely manner.

According to Nic et al., (2018), “Successful bloggers today require engaging consumers, both in person and via digital means, for effective integrated brand promotion. Meanwhile, many bloggers are struggling to modify services to be able to penetrate the online content market by providing news service that offers a wide variety of texts, pictures, video clips, and short documentaries on Internet-connected devices. In the middle of this demand, many blog sites across African countries are suffering from a lack of proper means to collect and disseminate news (Pradhan, 2018).

However, more than two decades after the adoption of digital platforms by media organisations and newsrooms, journalism in Africa is still struggling to cope with its implications (Media Council of Tanzania, 2019). For example, trending social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as platforms for collaborative consumption such as Airbnb and Uber, “are emerging as new power players that challenge older institutions and disrupt economic sectors such as journalism...” (Jeroen de Kloet, Poell, Guohua & Fai, 2019).

The challenge is that in the middle of getting accustomed to these new media and the way online content should be developed, produced, delivered, and consumed, new digital platforms keep disrupting the existing communications approaches (Perry, Dixon, Connery, & Sullivan, 2019).

Studies conducted in local context

The studies available in Tanzania indicate that the usage of digital platforms in Tanzania by mainstream media is unpredictable sometimes (Sherman, 2019). A study carried out by Mbilinyi, Tumbo, and Rwehumbiza (2010), states that the interactive features of digital platforms in Tanzania have created a forum whose primary function is the exchange of economic information. In their study titled, "*Economics of digital platforms for the agriculture sector in Tanzania*," they discovered that blogs, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook have become increasingly used for dissemination of information Tanzania. However, the study did not check the impacts of these digital platforms on news gathering, production, and distribution in traditional media.

In addition, Okana and Teaching (2017) studied the influence of online journalism on news reach in Tanzania. The study concluded that using technology in news gathering, production, and distribution to reach many people was as important as the news' credibility issue. Digital platforms for news businesses were considered important for mainstream media (Okana & Teaching, 2017). The study also commended the usage of digital platforms which allow news to be accessible to internet users.

A study by Spurk and Katunzi (2019), among other things, discovered that "apart from the growth of traditional media, the country is witnessing a paradigm shift in the internet space; increased penetration from 17% in 2012 to 45% in 2017" (p. 45). However, the results also reveal that although traditional media were more willing to spend money on online news, there was a lack of competence and intimidation from the online regulations.

Related to the previous point, media owners and managers do not invest money in ensuring their journalists are equipped with sufficient technology to be digitally innovative. It reported that the leading problems journalists identified in using online resources unclouded dishonest among some online news sites containing unreliable information, or fake news. Web-related problems, based on the technology itself, were not perceived to be as severe. This has further broadened the need for online journalists to be more proactive rather than creative in using these opportunities (Media Council of Tanzania, 2019).

According to Rwehumbiza (2010), the interactive features of digital platforms in Tanzania have created a forum whose primary function is to exchange of economic information. In their study, *Economics of digital platforms for the agriculture sector in Tanzania* analyse digital platforms, YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook have become increasingly used disseminating information.

These findings are in line with Muvaka (2015) who argued that the mushrooming growth of online news sites serves has expanded the scope of content generation and sharing. Muvaka's work called *Assessing The Impact of The Digital Migration Process on Media Consumers: A Case Of Television In Kenya* argues that the Internet-based platforms have emerged as essential news platforms for the public. On the other hand, Li and Suh, (2015), argues that news on social media [blogs] platforms suffers from a relative lack of professional gatekeepers to monitor the generation and dissemination of content (Scheinbaum, 2015).

Knowledge Gap

While digital media continues to reshape journalistic practices globally, existing scholarship remains disproportionately focused on Western contexts, leaving significant gaps in understanding its impact within Sub-Saharan Africa. Gondwe (2021) highlights the limited adoption and perception of data-driven journalism in Zambia and Tanzania, underscoring the

need for localized inquiry into digital transitions. Similarly, Mabweazara and Mare (2020) emphasize the emergence of participatory journalism across African newsrooms, where audience engagement via social media and comment platforms is redefining editorial norms Taylor & Francis eBooks, Reference Works and Collections.

Yet, few studies systematically integrate audience perspectives with newsroom practices, resulting in a fragmented view of media transformation. This study aims to bridge these gaps by examining the interplay between digital media, journalistic routines, and audience participation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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.

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).

Theory of Disruptive Innovation

Disruptive Innovation provides a dynamic perspective on technological change, emphasizing the importance of market disruption and the potential for new entrants to reshape industries. According to Kirui (2017) a technological discontinuity is an innovation producing a critical advance in the price-performance frontier of an industry and significant change in the form of products or processes.

Disruptive Innovation theory explains how smaller companies with fewer resources can successfully challenge established businesses by targeting overlooked segments of the market and offering simpler, more affordable solutions. New technological products are usually introduced into emerging markets, where they can mature and improve in a protected competitive environment.

The first adopters of disruptive innovation soon they realise that investing in disruptive technology is not a financially rational decision. Although disruptive innovations do not necessarily improve to surpass the performance of the prior technology, the performance of a

disruptive innovation improves over time and becomes good enough to be used in a given tier of the market (Christensen, 2006).

According to this theory, it is not the technology that disrupts an established firm's operations, but the fact that the innovation phases out the business strategies of an old technology. Thus, this explains why an innovation can be disruptive for specific firms and sustaining for others. Dimmick et al. (2009), argue that a new medium survives, grows, competes and prospers by providing gratification to consumers, thus providing new solutions to old or contemporary needs. A new medium will compete with established media for consumer satisfaction, time and advertising revenue.

If the competition exists, the consequence for the older media consists of exclusion or replacement, wherein the new medium takes over some of the roles played by the older medium.

Sherman (2019) argues that firms that are faster in adopting innovation tend to be more successful. According to Nyutho (2015), in-house production companies consist of large vertically integrated companies, while independent productions are generated by independent producers who create their own concepts, write them, and pitch them to a financier. Once they win the finance, they have the creative license to produce the film the way they want. The camera has evolved from clunky handy cams and analogue camcorders to the latest HD Divicams capable of utilising up to 8K technology.

Script writing has evolved into the development of script apps like wattpad. Compared to DVDs, digital files are much easier to create at the same time less expensive. Internet penetration in Kenya is growing at a faster rate and is anticipated to grow even more rapidly with the recent introduction of the 4G Network by Safaricom, which allows for faster uploads and downloads. Online VoDs have created niche markets for local video productions. Local producers upload links to their video production online in Facebook and YouTube to market their work (Mtebe and Raphael, 2018).

According to Moshe (2012), media time squeezing is linked to the innovation of a digital TV, digital remote control and the digital video recorder, where privatization of media schedules transits from synchronic to asynchronous media consumption. Time shifting involves recording programs for later playback in the process it destabilizes the relationship between advertiser, broadcaster, and the viewer separating the scheduled time from the viewing time. This disrupts the relationship between advertisers and broadcasters as commercials are most likely to be skipped on the eventual viewing of the recorded program by the viewer (Spurk & Katunzi, 2019).

According to Nduhura (2013, p. 90) posits that new information technologies have spread globally at an unprecedented pace over the past two decades. Consequently, large areas of the world and segments of the population have become disconnected from the new technological system. Locally, staff layoffs in broadcast houses, including those in production departments, have been attributed to media organizations embracing digital-first business models, transforming themselves into modern 21st-century digital content companies (Daily Nation, June 30th, 2016). According to Bolter and Grusin (1999, p. 295), traditional media is striving to survive and reaffirm its place in a highly competitive digital media environment.

The disruption in the broadcasting scene is also evident in the convergence of various digital platforms, which is interactive in nature. For instance, content aired on television is simultaneously streamed live on the TV station's website, making it accessible to online audiences, including Kenyans in the diaspora. Producers can now showcase their content globally, provided there is affordable and reliable internet access. Kenya has invested heavily in broadband infrastructure, attracting over-the-top (OTT) international firms such as Netflix and Showmax to offer video streaming services. The interactive features offered by OTT providers empower the consumer to control their viewing as opposed to waiting for a particular time to watch their favorite shows.

Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was originated by David in 1989 (Chuttur, 2009). One of the key assumptions of TAM is based on the fact that the use of any technology is dependent on the user's attitude towards a particular technology. In this regard, it is expected that the acceptance or rejection of a technology is based on the user's attitude. The model considers perceived usefulness and ease of use as major determinants of attitude. Concerning perceived usefulness, the intention of using the system depends on how the users perceive the usefulness of that system in their working environment. Given the perceived ease of use, the users of a system can be able to use a particular system if the system is promising and thus, no difficulties may arise in using it. Figure 1: illustrates more:

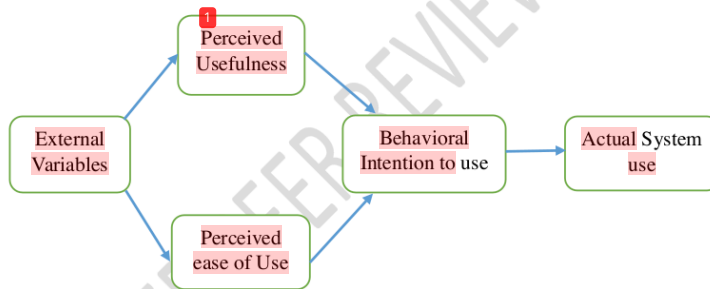


Figure 1: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Source: Adopted from Davis (1989)

TAM puts forward two essential determinants of attitude: perceived usefulness and ease of use. Regarding perceived usefulness, using a system depends on users' perception of its importance in their working performance. On the other hand, given perceived ease of use, the users will use the system if they recognise that less effort would be employed to perform their journalistic work, such as gathering, producing, and disseminating the news.

Regarding the current study, perceived usefulness and ease of use tend to influence attitudes towards the actual use of digital platforms in newsrooms of mainstream media in Tanzania. The attitude can either be positive or negative.

If the user attitude is negative, the journalists can see the DP as useless and difficult to use, so they tend not to use it. On the other hand, if the users, namely, the news producers and reporters attitudes are positive, they may use DP because they perceive that it is useful and

easy to use for their work; that is, it has the potential to increase performance while expanding less effort in doing their work. The TAM key assumptions, variables and their context were applicable to this study to assess the impacts of DP on news gathering, producing, and distributing among mainstream media houses in Tanzania.

In this study, the perceived usefulness and ease of use tend to influence attitudes towards using DP systems. The TAM key assumptions, variables and their context are applicable in this study as they assist in examining the news producers' access and use of DP services. The theory and model provide a framework from which the weaknesses of either the two are supplemented by the other.

For instance, the model has remained silent on the concept of awareness of services and has been addressed by the Diffusion of Innovation theory (DOI). The theory and model form a basis for the established specific objectives underpinning the study and, thus, the conceptual framework and the research methods.

Integrating the Theory of Disruptive Innovation

While the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory provides valuable insights into the adoption process, it does not fully account for the disruptive nature of certain innovations. Disruptive innovations often create new markets and value networks, eventually displacing established market-leading firms, products, and alliances. This is where Theory of Disruptive Innovation, developed by Clayton Christensen, becomes relevant. The present study provides a more holistic understanding of the adoption and impact of digital platforms in the news industry through integrating these theories.

DOI offers a framework for understanding the diffusion process and the factors influencing adoption, while Disruptive Innovation provides insights into the transformative potential of new technologies and the strategies for managing market disruption. For instance, in the newsrooms, digital platforms have disrupted traditional media by offering more accessible and interactive content. By applying both theories, we can better understand how digital platforms are adopted by consumers and how they disrupt existing market structures (Bolter and Grusin, 1999).

Understanding the integration of these theories has practical implications for media organizations. Through recognizing the potential for disruptive innovations, media firms can develop strategies to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing digital landscape. This includes investing in new technologies, fostering a culture of innovation, and continuously monitoring market trends to anticipate and respond to disruptive changes (Nduhura, 2013).

Table 1: Summary of the selected theories

Name of the Theory	Implication of this study
Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIT)	Impacts of MSM news work are influenced by DP technological attributes which include relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, trialability and observability.
Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)	The news business in MSM is impacted by three aspects technology context, organisational context and environmental context.

The conceptual framework for this study comprises the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Diffusion of Innovation theory (DOI). Key variables from TAM include access

and use, while awareness came from DOI

In the context of the identified theories in this study, however, these theories are complementary to each other in relation to this study. For example, the theory of Diffusion of Innovation was identified by the researcher as the main theory for the study, accompanied by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was formed from the Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Key variables from DOI include awareness, while variables from TAM are represented by access and use, as presented in Figure 1 below.

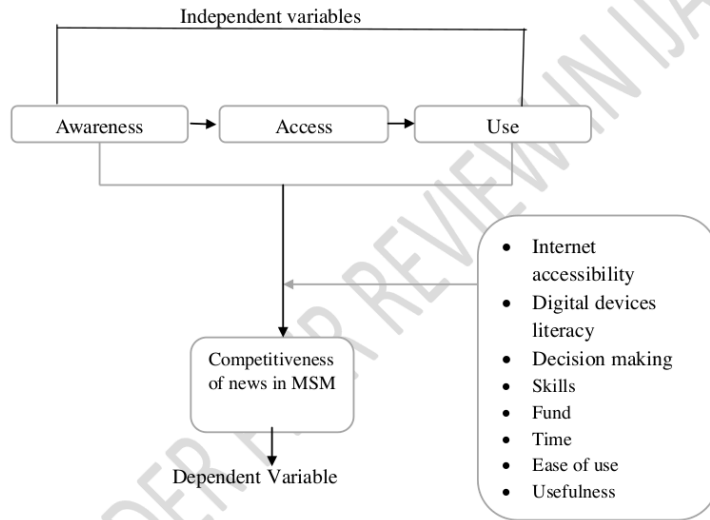


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

As illustrated in Figure 2: above, the conceptual model shows three independent variables examined by this study: awareness access and use and effective digital platforms services as dependent variables. However, this study did not ignore the fact that there are intervening factors that may positively or negatively affect mainstream media access and use of Digital platforms (DP). These factors include internet availability, Computer literacy, and availability and possession of the devices used in news gathering, producing, and distributing. The key assumption of the study was that mainstream media in Tanzania are aware of DP services. Thus, they can access and use them, as described in Rogers's model of Diffusion of innovation (DOI), that access and eventually use of innovation is determined by awareness.

Similarly, Davis (1989), in his TAM model, proposes that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use may influence an individual to use a particular technology. The conceptual framework, therefore, provides the description of the study by exploring the extent to which MSM are aware of DP services and accessibility and use of the same.

Through the selected theories, it is important to set clear and simple expectations about the present study, which basically explores chiefly how the mainstream media houses in Tanzania adopt digital platforms and positioning themselves to deliver the news audience value in ways that are efficient, convenient and easy to access. The platform provides opportunities for news to offer audiences a wide variety of TV shows, movies, texts, and story-based photos.

Research methodology

This research employs a qualitative case study approach, focusing on three major Tanzanian media houses: *Mwananchi Communications Ltd*, *IPP Media*, and *Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC)*. 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.

Research Design

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,

558 producing, and distributing news in their respective mainstream media houses. Data was
559 obtained through a structured questionnaire. The qualitative method used in this study was an
560 interview of news editors categorised as Key Informants (KIs).

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

22 565 Study Area

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

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

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

2 584 Study Population

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

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

595 Sampling Framework

596 This study's sampling frame consisted of news reporters and their associate editors. Sample size
597 and sampling procedure reflect the research objectives and kinds of data collected in both
598 quantitative and qualitative phases. The sampling frame under this study focused on
599 newsrooms from a list of mainstream media in Dar es Salaam. These selected were: Tanzania
600 Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), IPP Media, Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL),
601 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.

2

Sample Size

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Charles, Ehiarekhan, 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)

22

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.

2

Table 1: Chart for determining Sample size from a given Population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: "N" is population size

"S" is sample size.

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970, p. 607-610)

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. Keeping in mind that the COVID-19 pandemic could not allow all respondents to be contacted in person, and others could not return the questionnaires, the researcher set the sample size to 182, which was found to be accessible for providing the required information.

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 160 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 183 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.

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.

12

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 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, Analysis and Discussions

Respondents Distribution by Gender

Table 1: Respondents distribution by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	96	55.2
Female	78	44.8
Total	174	100.0

Source: Field Data (April, 2021)

12

In this study, the gender of the respondents consisted of both male and female journalists working in the newsrooms of selected mainstream media houses in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. They were relevant sources of information in answering the three investigated areas of news work, namely, news gathering, production, and distribution, as summarised in Table 4.1 above. According to the findings, the data from Table 4.2 shows that out of 174 journalists who completed the questionnaire, 96 (55.2%) were male and 78 (44.8%) were female. This indicates a relatively balanced gender distribution, although there is a slight male predominance.

To discuss this further, the gender distribution in this study reflects broader trends in the journalism industry, where men often outnumber women, albeit by a smaller margin in recent years. This balance is crucial as it suggests a move towards gender parity in the newsroom, which can lead to more diverse perspectives in news coverage and production. Another study according to Chen & Qiu (2019) Women are still not well represented in media houses' leadership positions. It is worth noting that during the 2021/22 financial year, the government intended to establish a media professional board and a media council, which will be

responsible for registering journalists and arbitrating disputes. There will also be a government journalist training fund to support quality journalism.

Various studies show that journalism in Tanzania and other African countries has been male-dominated for many decades (Nic, Levy, & Nielsen, 2018). The current study also revealed a similar picture, as shown in (Table 4.2); and many reasons contribute to this trend, including cultural, geographical, religious, and political backgrounds.

According to the Women's Media Center 2022 Report (WMC, 2022), examples of male-dominated professions include journalism, electricians, computer network architects, and mechanical engineers. According to that study, male journalists make up 63% of bylines in print, Internet, and wire news media worldwide.

Studies have found that although the number of women working in the media has been increasing globally, the top positions (producers, executives, chief editors and publishers) are still very male dominated (Abernathy, 2017). This disparity is particularly evident in Africa, Tanzania included where cultural impediments to women fulfilling the role of journalist remain, for example, travelling away from home, evening work and covering issues such as politics and sports, which are considered to fall within the masculine domain (Abernathy, 2017).

A balanced gender distribution can enhance the diversity of perspectives in news reporting. Female journalists may bring different viewpoints and experiences, enrich the content and making it more representative of the audience. Studies have shown that gender can influence the adoption and use of digital technologies. For instance, women may face more barriers to digital adoption due to socio-cultural factors, but they also show high adaptability and proficiency when given equal opportunities (Hargittai & Shafer, 2006). In the context of journalism, this means that female journalists might adopt digital tools differently, potentially leading to innovative approaches in news gathering and dissemination.

According to opinions from qualitative methods, the level of participation and influence of female journalists in the adaptation of new technologies, especially in mainstream media houses also has implications for news gathering, production, and distribution. A recent research examined intersecting factors between media house innovations and their influence on news related to climate change among rural communities in Tanzania indicated that media houses that have innovations in delivering news had more women journalists who influence and lead informed discussions through social media methods.

It is important to set clear and simple expectations about the present study, which basically explores chiefly how the mainstream media houses in Tanzania adopt digital platforms and position themselves to deliver news audience value in ways that are efficient, convenient, and easy to access. The platform provides opportunities for news to offer the audience a wide variety of TV shows, movies, texts, and story-based photos. One of the newspaper editors said during the interview that:

How mainstream media manage to compete and guarantee news access to all audiences, especially those who spend time online, will make traditional media organisations credible. Therefore, this trend has prompted my media company to change the way we do news business by slowly shifting to the internet through various platforms. This means that those who do not have visibility to the internet will have a

harder time regarding survival in the middle of digital platforms (Newspaper Editor, 15 March 2021).

Table 3: Distribution by Roles and Core Responsibilities

Role & Responsibilities	F	%
Photojournalism	10	5.7
News reporting	118	67.8
Camera experts	25	14.4
Multimedia	21	12.0
Total	174	100.0

Source: Field Data (April, 2021).

These findings further indicate that many areas of journalism specialisation were involved during research work. However, it was interesting to find out that in the mainstream media, there are many journalists who work as multimedia. This is a positive sign for the subsector of the media to transform into a better model of news gathering, producing, and distribution. The importance of profiling the age of respondents has been evidenced by Mfumbusa & Mataba (2007) as a useful item in research when they studied the impact of age on using communication technologies.

In this study, Table 4.4 below shows the distribution of the age of the respondents. Among 174 journalists who completed the questionnaire, 17 (9.9%) were aged between 20 and 25, 23(13.2%) were between 25 and 35. Additionally, 54 (31.0%) of the respondents were aged between 35 and 40. It is important to note that this age group typically consists of journalists who are expected to be active in innovation, making it unusual to find a mix of these relatively balanced age groups of respondents working in newsrooms.

In addition, 44 (25.3%) were aged between 41-50 years and 36 (20.7%) their age was above 51. The majority of the respondents (54%) were at the age of 31 to 40 years old. According to a survey by TMF (2021), most news editors in mainstream media houses work in a deprived working environment, and poor pay, which resulted in some of them failing to cope with pressures from increased digital platform challenges in the country and beyond.

Such studies have discussed key factors which cause some mainstream media houses fail to do news business in the digital era, including the shortage of strong journalists trained for digital journalism and the lack of editors with modern approaches and skills related to news gathering, production, and distribution.

Evidence suggests that most mainstream media houses (MMH) engagement occurs within formal government initiatives rather than attempting to influence from outside and that audiences are not at all used to making demands on their media channels.

Despite the fact that there is an increasing number of digital platforms which have ventured into online news in Tanzania, the public continue trusting more news on mainstream media, and this can be a unique opportunity for mainstream media houses in Tanzania if they can blend with digital platforms their ways of news gathering, producing, and distributing. Some studies show that although many mainstream media houses have retained some trust among the public, but they are not infallible to the current digital impacts.

Competitive News Business Model in Mainstream Media

The findings reveal that digital platforms have significantly impacted news operations in mainstream media houses in Dar es Salaam. A majority of respondents (73.3%) indicated that news is still predominantly produced using traditional techniques. However, 32.8% of respondents believed that digital platforms complement their news work rather than compete with it.

Concerns were raised about the reluctance of media owners to invest in compatible digital equipment, with 78% of Key Informants (KIs) highlighting the lack of funds and strategic investment in digital news business. The present study aimed at exploring potential and improved model for the disruption in the mainstream media companies in Tanzania. This present study tried to answer this question the third objective, which aimed to explore and recommend the improved model to replace the disrupted traditional news model in the mainstream media companies in Tanzania.

The traditional pre-digital business model in news media was based to a large extent on vertical integration between production and distribution. A newspaper would have journalists who collect the news and write articles. This printing press produces newspapers and a distribution network to get the printed paper to the consumer.

Radio and TV news production and distribution (broadcasting) were also vertically integrated and delivered in a bundled package of news items and possibly advertising. In the pre-digital era, news media revenue consisted mainly of print sales and subscriptions, advertising and classified ads.

Broadcasted news could sometimes benefit from government subsidies, and pay TV subscription revenue. The arrival of digital technology and the internet completely changed that. The distribution cost was dramatically reduced to virtually zero as the internet eliminated the need to print and transport printed paper to the consumer. The newsroom remained the only fixed cost in news production. However, new forms of online production emerged that could further reduce that fixed cost.

This lowered entry costs into the news market on the supply side and facilitated entry for many more newcomers, from edited online-only newspapers to bloggers. For example, *Mwananchi* newspaper follows this model to some extent. With lower fixed costs and zero distribution costs, news producers could produce for crucial market segments online. Some studies argue that it may have facilitated market entry for more extreme views and opinions catering to niche market audiences.

Results from this study revealed that digital platforms have both negative and positive impacts on news gathering, production, and distribution in the mainstream media in Tanzania. As a result, some of these traditional media have tried to cope with the change by altering the way they do news business. However, the rate or the level of, adapting and coping with the phenomenon is still low due to several factors. These include poor working environment, lack of adequate tools or equipment, lack of support from authorities, inadequate support from management, especially, the owners of the media, and most young reporters feel that they lack motivation from their immediate editors.

Other factors include the changing behaviours of the audience in the way they access, consume, and share news, inadequate skills in using modern digital platforms and rigidity of some senior journalists, “this is how we have been doing it in this way over the years.” This study focused on the impact of digital platforms on news gathering, production, and distribution among mainstream media houses in Tanzania.

Digital Platforms Function in News Reporting

A large proportion of the journalists, 57(32.8%), pointed out that most of the news covered was current affairs, followed by featured stories which was 31 (17.8%), and news bulletins, which 26 (14.9%).

Daily news and Nipashe newspapers have websites to post and share news stories, but they do not update their news timely, and it may take a day without posting news. Also, as shown below, they lack multimedia skills to include text, photos, videos, and graphics to make their news visually attractive. In addition, of all news stories covered among the mainstream media under this research, 19(10.9%) were linked to analysis, 18(10.3%) were breaking news, 12(6.9%) were sports news, and 11(6.3%) were business news.

The majority of respondents pointed out that most of the news covered was current affairs. Multimedia stories, according to some responses from the interviews, demonstrate that normally are very interactive compared to news stories that are distributed through one channel.

It will be great when journalists can incorporate the new digital platforms in our news business, especially by creating a story that audiences can access easily. Interactivity is an important feature in our modern news work that allows us to engage with the audience and seek their input and feedback (Editor, Mwananchi newspaper, 12 March 2021).

The above thoughts are in line with some research such as (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018) whose study demonstrates that, at present, people have found that mobile phones also play an important role because they can have access to simple TV news and information shared via digital platforms. However, despite Internet instability and expensive bundles from telecommunication companies, the functionality of the handsets is growing rapidly, which allows even reception of radio broadcasts in rural areas (Scheinbaum, 2015).

These findings are in agreement with other studies. For example, research carried out by DW Akademie (2020) on media viability in Tanzania shows that media houses in Tanzania require technologies and related resources to produce and distribute news stories. Available literature shows that these resources are inadequate and expensive for most news media organisations, especially in the broadcast sector where most operations require quality and modern equipment, which is costly.

Also, in another study MCT (2019b), which studied the state of broadcasting in Tanzania, found that most media houses lack the funds to invest in technology and are reliant on outdated or basic equipment that cannot deliver quality content. Community radios are the most affected; most operate with fairly limited and outdated tools.

These findings resemble the present study, which learned that other media houses like Uhuru FM had outdated radio equipment and hardly applied digital platforms for news purposes.

Also, they lack trained journalists and technicians for digital issues. One of the editors said during interviews:

Our media owners are somehow reluctant to train their staff. They invest the bare minimum in staff development and focus more on maximising their profits by limiting their capital and human resource investments (Male Newspaper Editor, 20 March 2021).

Another study looked at all forms of digital and non-digital communication used by Mtwara, Mbeya, and Kigoma communities. The findings showed that traditional media are mostly used in Tanzania access and share news and issues that affect people. That study was carried out by the University of Dar es Salaam's Data Lab (dLab, 2020) in those regions and employed a mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative methods to local media houses and community members, including the youth, parents and students.

Digital expertise

To effectively manage the media in today's evolving digital world, media workers such as journalists require digital technology expertise, skills and knowledge that allow them to optimise content discovery, packaging, distribution, and marketing. The MCT (2019b) report shows that many journalists from print, broadcasting or new media platforms lack most of the requisite expertise. According to the report, poor expertise among print media journalists is the reason why they have failed to maximise the use of technology in improving the quality of their content, as well as in adopting online marketing strategies.

However, the MCT (2019b) report also acknowledges notable developments in some media houses that have adopted online and digital approaches in addition to the traditional news-gathering approaches. The report further indicates that media houses are still struggling to adjust to the many digital demands, such as integrating their newsrooms to maximise the potential of convergence, coming up with good online content and launching apps that target niche markets with unique content and developing new products for different consumers.

Within the broadcasting sector, the lack of skilled personnel is a major challenge as most of the existing personnel cannot use sophisticated and expensive digital equipment that require high technical skills to handle.

Mwananchi Digital use a service called e-gazeti for distributing soft copies of its papers. MCL as a company is a useful reference to show the different kinds of innovation that can occur within an organisation namely product, process, position and paradigm innovation. Innovation implies introducing something new into the socioeconomic system. Media innovation can include changes in several aspects of the media landscape – from developing new media platforms to new business models and ways of producing media texts.

MCL has largely been a traditional media house relying on sales and advertisement to generate revenue. However, the government austerity measures announced about five years ago when the late President John Magufuli came into power were a major blow to the private sector. Businesses reported losses of up to 40% due to measures implemented by the government. Newspapers like Mwananchi, which relied on predictable annual advertisements from the government and its various agencies, suffered massive losses.

The tough economic condition has pushed Mwananchi to innovate in order to compensate for the decline in revenue. While efforts to go digital started as far back as 2012, they have been accelerated in the last few years. Mwananchi now offers an SMS breaking news service, a YouTube TV channel, event hosting (with sponsors), and a courier service on top of the traditional advertising business model. They still only get 5% of revenue from digital media, and they are still exploring ways to effectively increase revenue from digital channels.

On top of introducing new products and services in the market on innovation, Mwananchi has also reorganised its newsroom to orient itself towards the digital space, a process innovation. The following figure captures how MCL is beginning to reposition itself in content production so it becomes a multimedia company.

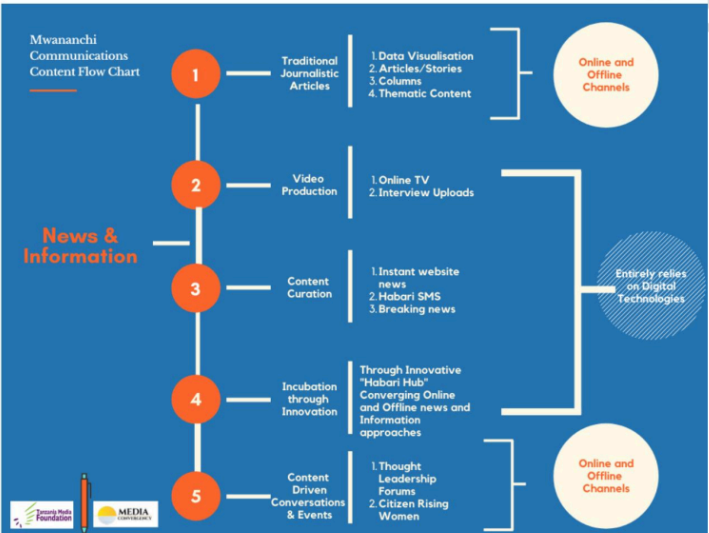


Figure 2: Mwananchi content flow chart: (Source: TMF)

Applied innovations

The chart above shows what kind of changes has been implemented within the organisation. Beyond the legacy media content, number one in the chart, there is Mwananchi Digital, number two, which consists mainly of an online TV with content such as interviews with special guests. Mwananchi has done well in social media outlets. These include platforms of YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram, while Instagram is the most effective online outlet and Mwananchi Digital is a dependable outlet for interviews on a variety of information with a current subscription of almost seven hundred thousand.

We thank TMF for all the very helpful news business insights and financial input which helped us radically change our news gathering, production, and distribution. A

971 *lot is happening locally concerning digital news, and colleges in traditional media*
972 *houses must adapt. When we editors conversed with our management to initiate some*
973 *online news content projects, they were very excited about this potential involvement*
974 *of digital news and some potential opportunities offshoots (Male Newspaper Editor,*
975 *19 May, 2021).*

976 *We also discussed increasing local news, but with a few visits around Tanzania, it is*
977 *the digital tools that will be used to gather news from remote areas without*
978 *unnecessarily sending a news reporter onsite. It has proved to be a better plan this*
979 *first time to experience the news research and recording of sources being done*
980 *through mobile phones or WhatsApp, and we learned about issues such as facing food*
981 *security in rural areas where before it was hard for us to reach timely (Male*
982 *Newspaper Editor, 9 March, 2021).*

983 So, other mainstream media can learn more about the use of digital platforms for researching
984 news, interviewing sources, editing videos or texts, and discovering how news business is
985 being done in the digital era and its implications. This will help journalists to determine some
986 applicable digital platforms for them and current editorial news plans. If some mainstream
987 media are only going to continue posting news on blogs or remain rigid with traditional
988 models of news production and distribution, it is likely they will likely do the same as in an
989 opportunity cost, to apply the economic term. To fly up in competitive news models,
990 mainstream media owners must create some room in their budget to invest in the digital news
991 market.

992 Some mainstream media houses such as MCL have shown potential opportunities which
993 available have a great demand in backing offline news stories; and funding more of this kind
994 of efforts on the media owners' side is paramount along with other avenues of potential
995 funding. The present study shows that the general opinion about digital platforms among
996 news journalists, particularly editors and reporters, is that almost everyone is impressed and
997 excited about the work of digital platforms in news gathering, producing, and distributing.
998 Moreover, some of them can see a potential role again in disseminating news stories via
999 digital platforms.

1000 Concerning MCL, the present study found that the Company also implements content
1001 duration, which includes text alerts to subscribers called Habari SMS, which was established
1002 in 2013. It is an Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) based service that costs a
1003 daily fee of a hundred Tanzanian shillings. (TZS 100/-) which provides access to around
1004 three to seven daily text messages to all sorts of mobile devices, whether online or offline. A
1005 more recent addition is HabariHub, which was established in 2019. It works and serves as
1006 Mwananchi's innovative centre, and it works with other stakeholders to promote digital
1007 innovation. The hub aims to accelerate the success of digital media innovators in Tanzania by
1008 providing access to a business network, technical knowledge platforms and funds.

1009 *I often liken digital platforms to a pen and notebook from those days when traditional*
1010 *journalists had to have them everywhere in search of news. I remember my fun times*
1011 *together with some old colleagues on several visits to search for news. Sometimes it*
1012 *was too late for us to know the potential story it is not even related to what we usually*
1013 *intended to cover. This is because we have handy communication tools like mobile*
1014 *phones and social media. I think it is worth it for us t traditional journalists to use our*

1015 extensive contacts, political savvy entrepreneurial skills and willingness to try new
1016 things as digital journalism platforms influence news (Male TV Editor, 19 May,
1017 2021).

1018 A study in line with the present one was carried out in Kenya. That study sought to
1019 investigate the extent to which digital journalism platforms influence news access in Kenyan
1020 universities. The study employed descriptive research design. The target population of the
1021 study was 63,817. Random sampling was used to sample 381 respondents from the four
1022 universities that were sampled. Data was collected using a questionnaire. The data gathered
1023 was analysed using descriptive statistics using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)
1024 Version 17.0. It found that online journalism practised through digital platforms such as
1025 Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo, Google, websites, and blogs has transformed traditional
1026 journalism by enabling media practitioners to propagate news in real-time to their audiences.
1027 Frequencies and percentages were used for analysis.

1028 The findings on the use of Facebook as an online news platform were that 6 % very often use
1029 it, the majority 79% of respondents often uses it, 4.5% indicated that they rarely access news
1030 through Facebook, and 5% said that they very rarely use it. In comparison, 5.5% said they
1031 never use Facebook for news access. It is therefore adduced that the majority of students and
1032 staff members use Facebook to access online news. Students were the majority of users of
1033 Facebook compared to staff members. Facebook is by far the biggest online journalism
1034 platform internet users use to access news. Largely, Facebook users, just like many other
1035 social media users, are most likely to access online news by chance as they chat or scroll
1036 through their social media sites.

1037 The study established that digital journalism platforms are, to a larger extent accessible to
1038 Internet users for news purposes. The study recommends that media practitioners should
1039 conceptualise their audiences and adopt digital journalism platforms that are accessible and
1040 interest them. Media houses and the government need to develop internet infrastructure and
1041 formulate ethical frameworks and policies to guide online journalism practice in Kenya. The
1042 study also recommended the review of online journalism curricula in learning institutions to
1043 make it more current and in line with online journalism digital developments.

1044 Mwananchi has a dedicated digital Data-Driven story desk that produces content for the other
1045 outlets. The Millennium Challenge Corporation's Impact Overview report recognised the
1046 company as having pioneered a Health Data Desk. The data desks convert complex data into
1047 easily digestible Information for their consumers, hence increasing citizens' interest in being
1048 knowledgeable. The model for corrections was found to have challenges, as described above.
1049 These challenges are required to be resolved. It was indicated that there is a problem network.
1050 Therefore, there is a need to ensure that they have a reliable network to ensure work
1051 efficiency and timely service delivery. Quoting one of the respondents, the following remark
1052 was made:

1053 *Network problems are one of the major problems, and for that reason, these media*
1054 *sometimes do not work well (Male Newspaper Editor, 29 May, 2021).*

1055 The process of training staff is important for new technology. Quoting one of the
1056 respondents, the following remark was made:

1057 *Since staff are not skilled in technology, educating them is inevitable. For that reason,*
1058 *social media, social networks, and other platforms can be used to acquire the*
1059 *required knowledge (Male TV Editor, 19 May 2021).*

1060 It was learned that the number of staff to be equipped with information are few who can
1061 provide continuous update news. Thus, the number of staff who is committed should be
1062 increased and developed. From quoting one of the respondents, the following remark was
1063 made:

1064 *The country is so big, and our staff is few. We need as many staff as possible to cover*
1065 *the entire country. These staff should be trained with modern technology (Male*
1066 *Newspaper editor, 16 March, 2021).*

1067 In addition, the budget required to cover the whole process is few. These media are given a
1068 budget that is not convenient for their operation. Much effort is needed to boost the budget.

1069 As the media industry fights to stay on top, the need to investigate alternative business
1070 models and evaluate emerging technologies becomes increasingly self-evident. Media
1071 companies seeking to innovate in these disruptive surroundings must pay close attention to
1072 emerging innovation areas and the startups driving this disruptive digitalisation. 50% of all
1073 spending in media [worldwide] will be dedicated to digital affairs by 2019, a clear indicator
1074 that digitalisation is the single most important innovation area actively shaping the media
1075 industry” (TMF Report, 2021).

1076 The demand is based on the statistics that explain that little has been studied regarding the
1077 impacts of digital platforms on news operations within Tanzania’s mainstream media
1078 (Dearing, & Cox, 2018). At the same time, studies show that in some areas of the world,
1079 especially Africa, where Tanzania is found, there is a lack of appreciation across some
1080 mainstream media, which traditionally have been operating in structures that promote
1081 gatekeeping processes that may act as barriers or drivers of improved news business within
1082 online sites. While it is impossible to accurately predict the future of news business in all
1083 media channels, one thing remains noticeable: a return to past patterns is unlikely (Emanuel,
1084 2013). The reluctant media companies to technological changes expire or lose power and
1085 prominence as the key media channels for news production and distribution (Sæbø, 2017).

1086 In East Africa, radio as part of mainstream media is becoming an increasingly crowded
1087 marketplace for digital platforms and devices, which vary in classifications across devices
1088 according to their uses and capabilities (Muvaka, 2015). While TV is migrating from
1089 analogue to digital, the radio seems to be getting space and penetration in digital devices (DW
1090 Akademie). On top of that, innovative mobile technology is transforming lives – fuelling an
1091 insatiable demand for news content. This exciting trend calls for mainstream media like
1092 newspapers to be more creative, dynamic and progressive to deliver cutting-edge news
1093 content across all platforms (Emanuel, 2013).

1094 In Tanzania, where the present study is carried out, approximately six million of the citizens
1095 access services on mobile devices (Mtebe & Raphael, 2018). Proportionally, most of the
1096 users are members of chat groups and other online platforms which facilitate access and
1097 sharing of news instantly (Nduhura, 2013). At the same time, those technologies have
1098 brought challenges to many mainstream media houses, which are just about surviving

1099 economically. Most of them, generally, have poor infrastructure in terms of studio, recording
1100 and publishing equipment (Spurk & Katunzi, 2019). Such studies suggest good journalistic
1101 skill levels needed to adopt digital platforms opportunities appear to vary. However, even at
1102 the higher range, there is a strong need to develop or reinforce basic skills in interviewing,
1103 writing, news selection and creatively to know how best to distribute packaged news.

1104 Specifically, the study sought to establish the best competitive model for mainstream media
1105 journalism to practice in the country. To ascertain whether local journalists use new
1106 technologies as an effective tool for improving their newsgathering, producing, and
1107 production as part of the research objectives: (a) to assess how digital platforms have altered
1108 the way mainstream media gather and produce news stories in Tanzania, (b) to examine the
1109 techniques that mainstream media use to compete with the digital platforms in the
1110 distribution of news stories in Tanzania, (c) to explore and recommend improved model for
1111 the disrupted news business in the mainstream media companies in Tanzania

1112 **Techniques for News Gathering, Production, and Dissemination**

1113 According to Nic et al., (2018), the move to disseminated news content via digital platforms
1114 and aggregators has been halted or is even starting to reverse, while subscriptions are
1115 increasing in a number of countries. Meanwhile, notions of trust and quality are being
1116 incorporated into the algorithms of some digital platforms as they respond to political and
1117 consumer demands to fix the reliability of the information in their systems. Some scholars
1118 state that digital trend has prompted the on-going question about whether to regulate or not to
1119 regulate these new disruptive digital platforms (ITU, 2017; Black and Bryant, 1995).

1120 At the same time, scholars of mass media recommend that media organisations have to shape
1121 their editorial policies to fit in and invest on new media platforms respectively for their
1122 survival regardless of governments' monitoring or regulation (Mosso L., 2019; Jeroen de
1123 Kloet, Thomas Poell, Zeng Guohua & Chow Yiu Fai, 2019). According to Media Council of
1124 Tanzania (2019) the vacuum stays in the factors that influence bloggers to use certain digital
1125 platforms, and less has been studied about the same in Tanzania. According to Abernathy
1126 (2017), in order to make meaningful national news coverage, bloggers have to modify the
1127 way they gather and disseminate news. This demands online journalists to adapt and use
1128 appropriate digital platforms in gathering and disseminating it (Christensen, 2006; Nwanze,
1129 2003; Harvey, 1999).

1130 The reluctance of media owners to invest in digital equipment and training emerged as a
1131 significant barrier to digital transformation. Financial constraints and a lack of understanding
1132 of the potential benefits of digital tools were identified as key challenges. Additionally, the
1133 digital divide, particularly in rural areas, hampers the ability of media houses to reach a
1134 broader audience and fully leverage digital platforms.

1135 **Improved Business Model**

1136 The proposed business model focuses on diversification of revenue streams, embracing
1137 digital transformation, fostering partnerships, engaging with the community, and leveraging
1138 data-driven decision making.

1139 **Implementation Steps**

1. **Diversify Revenue Streams:** Explore alternative sources of income such as subscriptions, events, branded content, and membership programs.
2. **Invest in Technology and Training:** Provide training programs for journalists and invest in affordable digital tools.
3. **Foster Partnerships:** Collaborate with technology companies, international organizations, and other media outlets for financial and technical support.
4. **Engage Audiences:** Develop strategies to build and maintain audience loyalty through community engagement and public interest journalism.
5. **Leverage Data Analytics:** Use audience analytics and content performance metrics to inform content strategy and improve engagement.

64

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.

Through 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. Government and private sector support is essential. Policies should incentivize digital innovation, reduce data costs, and protect press freedom. Investment in broadband infrastructure and media-tech incubators can catalyze transformation.

Conclusion

Scholars such as Pavlik (2013) and Küng (2015) argue that digital convergence necessitates a rethinking of journalistic practices, business models, and audience relationships. Mutsvairo and Ragnedda (2019) highlight that the Tanzanian media industry stands at a crossroads. While digital disruption poses significant challenges, it also offers unprecedented opportunities for innovation and growth. This study has shown that mainstream media are beginning to adapt, but their efforts remain fragmented and insufficient. The proposed Innovation and Platform Integration Model provide a strategic roadmap for navigating the digital transition.

Through embracing content innovation, platform integration, audience engagement, and revenue diversification, Tanzanian media can reclaim their relevance and sustainability in the digital age. Future research should explore the applicability of the IPIM in rural and community media contexts, as well as its potential for fostering media pluralism and democratic participation.

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