



RESEARCH ARTICLE

BRIDGING THE GAP: INNOVATION AND PLATFORM INTEGRATION FOR COMPETITIVE NEWS GATHERING, PRODUCTION, AND DISTRIBUTION IN TANZANIA'S LEGACY MEDIA

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Abstract

The current study Therefore the study explores how Tanzanian media harness disruptive technologies to maintain competitiveness. It specifically sought to establish the best competitive model for mainstream media journalism to practice in the country. The lack of platform integration and innovation can be a barrier to media viability. Through surveys (n=174) and qualitative interviews (n=18) with key media houses in Dar es Salaam, the research highlights opportunities for innovation, including content diversification and revenue restructuring. The findings advance the discourse on media sustainability in Sub-Saharan Africa, providing practical recommendations for media practitioners and policymakers to navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing digital landscape.

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Introduction:-

Prior to digital migration in Tanzania, mainstream broadcasters were notably selective in curating local news content for their audiences. Digital platforms have significantly transformed Tanzania's media landscape, improving news gathering, production, and distribution (Magolanga, 2022). Despite these advancements, many mainstream media outlets struggle to keep pace, falling behind the global adoption of innovative technologies (Christensen, 2006).

To cultivate a more innovative media environment, it is crucial to streamline these legal and regulatory processes. Simplifying licensing procedures and reducing associated financial burdens can encourage media houses to adopt innovative approaches. Through fostering a supportive environment, Tanzania can enhance its media diversity and adaptability in the digital era (Mosso, 2019). This paper examines the essential role of innovation and platform integration, proposing a sustainable framework for digital transformation. Utilizing 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. The study provides an up-to-date, comprehensive analysis of digital transformation's impact on traditional media. It highlights challenges and proposes a potential model that offers opportunities in news gathering, production, and distribution, ensuring that legacy media maintain relevance (Sonnenberg and Brocke, 2012).

Background to the Study:-

Mainstream media in Tanzania, while historically strong, are now struggling to maintain their influence due to digital disruption. The study aims to assess the impact of digital platforms on news gathering, production, and distribution. 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 (TMF, 2023). 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), the evolution of digital technology has profoundly impacted media industries globally, compelling traditional media to adapt to new realities. In Tanzania, this transformation is evident as media outlets confront the challenges of integrating digital platforms to align with changing audience demands and competitive pressures. Traditional media models, reliant on established content delivery and revenue frameworks, are increasingly disrupted by digital innovations that offer enhanced interactivity and accessibility (Spurk & Katunzi, 2019).

Digital Platforms and Functions in News Reporting:-

Digital platforms can provide a mix of specified functions that online journalists can use as functioning tools for different journalistic purposes, such as collecting and sharing news with a range of audiences, getting consumer feedback, and as a facts-checking mechanism (Mkude & Wimmer, 2015). As a result, some bloggers sometimes find themselves at a crossroads in the process of identifying and choosing proper digital platforms for news chores. Disruptive innovation, a concept popularized by Clayton Christensen, offers a framework for understanding these shifts. It suggests that new entrants can redefine industries by introducing accessible and cost-effective alternatives that eventually reach or exceed existing standards. In Tanzania's media sector, digital platforms serve as these disruptive agents, prompting traditional media to reconsider their strategic direction. Disruptive innovation, a concept popularized by Clayton Christensen, offers a framework for understanding these shifts. It suggests that new entrants can redefine industries by introducing accessible and cost-effective alternatives that eventually reach or exceed existing standards.

In Tanzania's media sector, digital platforms serve as these disruptive agents, prompting traditional media to reconsider their strategic direction (ITU, 2017). Yet, numerous barriers impede the adoption of these innovations, including limited infrastructure, financial hurdles, and insufficient digital skills. These challenges restrict Tanzanian media's capacity to remain competitive in a digital-centric environment (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 (TMF, 2023).

Statement of the Problem:-

While digital media continues to reshape journalistic practices globally, there is a significant lack of research focused on its impact within Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Tanzania. According to the Media Council of Tanzania (2022), the integration of digital tools can enable journalists to access a broader range of sources and provide real-time updates, thereby improving the overall quality and timeliness of news reporting. However, most existing studies concentrate on Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how digital transformation affects traditional media operations in Tanzania, especially in areas of competitive models for news gathering, production, and distribution. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining potential competitive news models to help traditional media adapt and adapt in the digital platforms and identifying strategies for successful adaptation and sustainability

Literature Review:-

According to Mkude & Wimmer, (2015) Tanzanians generally continue to experience the impacts of digital platforms in various potential ways, but 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 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: An Overview:-

Tanzania's media landscape has evolved significantly due to historical influences, regulatory changes, and technological advancements. Since media liberalization in the 1990s, private outlets have flourished alongside state-owned institutions, creating a dynamic media environment. As of the latest data, Tanzania hosts 183 radio stations and 43 television stations, reflecting a vibrant media sector. In the mainland, there are 229 newspapers and magazines, with 78% privately owned. Zanzibar contributes with 25 radio stations, 12 TV stations, and two newspapers. The rise in internet penetration, currently at 37.60%, further enriches the media landscape, enabling a shift towards digital platforms. Traditional newspapers such as Mwananchi, The Citizen, and habarileo remain influential in public discourse. However, their dominance faces challenges from digital-native platforms like Jamii Forums, Millard Ayo, and Global Publishers, which appeal to mobile-first audiences. The financial sustainability of media outlets is increasingly under pressure due to declining advertising revenues and the digital transition. Media organizations must innovate and adapt to survive in the digital age, underscoring the necessity for strategic digital

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

According to the Media Council of Tanzania (2022), 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. This shift has implications for journalistic authority. Audiences increasingly prioritize relatability and immediacy over institutional credibility. While this model attracts younger demographics, it raises questions about editorial standards and accountability (Nduhura, 2013). 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). 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. .

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:-**Theory of Disruptive Innovation:-**

The Theory of Disruptive Innovation, developed by Clayton Christensen, serves as the guiding framework for this study. This theory emphasizes the dynamic nature of technological change, highlighting how new entrants can reshape industries by targeting overlooked market segments with simpler, more affordable solutions. It explains how these innovations gradually improve to meet industry standards, eventually disrupting established market leaders (Christensen, 2006). Disruptive Innovation is particularly relevant in understanding the transformation within

Tanzania's media landscape. As digital platforms emerge, they offer more accessible and interactive content, challenging traditional media operations. This theory provides insights into how media firms can adapt by recognizing the potential of disruptive technologies, investing in new tools, and fostering a culture of innovation.

Supporting Theories:-

While the primary focus is on Disruptive Innovation, other theories provide valuable context. The Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory, for instance, offers a framework for understanding the adoption process and influencing factors. It highlights the role of awareness in adopting new technologies, which is crucial for media organizations aiming to integrate digital platforms effectively (Nic, Levy, & Nielsen, 2018). Similarly, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) emphasizes perceived usefulness and ease of use as determinants of technology adoption. This model is useful for examining how journalists perceive digital platforms and their willingness to integrate these tools into their workflows.

Integrating Theories:-

Through integrating these theories, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of digital platform adoption and its disruptive impact on traditional media. Disruptive Innovation provides the overarching narrative, while DOI and TAM offer additional insights into adoption dynamics and user perception (TCRA, 2018; Mtebe & Raphael, 2018).

Conceptual Framework:-

The conceptual framework combines these theories to explore how mainstream media in Tanzania can adopt digital platforms to enhance competitiveness. It examines key variables such as awareness, access, and use of digital platforms, considering factors like internet availability and digital literacy. This framework supports the study's objective to understand how Tanzanian media houses can leverage disruptive innovations to deliver valuable content efficiently and effectively. By aligning with these theoretical perspectives, the study aims to provide practical strategies for media organizations navigating the evolving digital landscape.

Research Methodology:-

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain comprehensive insights into the impact of digital platforms on mainstream media in Tanzania. The research focuses on three major media houses: Mwananchi Communications Ltd, IPP Media, and Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC).

Research Design:-

A Mixed Methods Design (MMR) was utilized, integrating quantitative data through surveys and qualitative data via interviews with key informants. This concurrent triangulation approach allows for a balanced analysis, combining strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 2009).

Study Area and Population:-**Justification for Selecting Tanzania as a Case Study:-**

Conducted in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the study focuses on a city with a high concentration of media ownership, both private and government-owned. Tanzania is a compelling case study for examining digital transformation in the media sector due to its unique policy environment and rapid digital growth. The country's regulatory framework presents both challenges and opportunities for media innovation. Previous studies (TCRA, 2018; Mtebe & Raphael, 2018) demonstrate that policies governing media operations and digital content regulation have significant implications for how media houses integrate new technologies. Additionally, Tanzania's digital growth rate, characterized by increasing internet penetration and mobile phone usage, positions it as an emerging market ripe for digital innovation. This combination of policy dynamics and digital expansion provides a rich context for exploring how traditional media can adapt to technological disruptions.

Critical Comparison of Previous Findings:-

A review of prior studies reveals varying perspectives on digital transformation in the media sector. While some research highlights the obstacles presented by regulatory environments and financial constraints, others emphasize the untapped potential of digital platforms to enhance media reach and engagement. This study critically examines these contrasting viewpoints, focusing on how disruptive innovation can serve as a catalyst for change. So, it seeks to identify effective strategies for overcoming barriers and leveraging opportunities in Tanzania's media landscape.

Recent Sources on African Digital Journalism Transformation:-

To provide a current perspective on digital journalism in Africa, recent studies have been incorporated. For instance, research by Moyo et al. (2021) explores the role of mobile journalism in enhancing news accessibility, while Gondwe (2022) examines the impact of social media on audience engagement. These sources offer valuable insights into the ongoing transformation of journalism practices across the continent, highlighting innovative approaches and emerging trends that inform this study's analysis.

Sampling Framework:-

A multistage sampling technique was applied, involving stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different media categories. Nine media houses were selected, encompassing radio, television, and print. The sample size was set at 182 respondents to capture a broad spectrum of insights, accounting for potential limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Collection Methods:-

Data was gathered through structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaires included both closed and open-ended questions, distributed to 182 respondents. Interviews with 18 key informants provided qualitative insights into the strategic and operational challenges of digital integration.

Data Analysis:-

Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS for descriptive, correlation, and regression analysis, providing insights into respondents' characteristics and behaviors. Qualitative data was analyzed through narrative techniques, enriching the understanding of quantitative findings.

Ethical Considerations:-

Ethical standards were rigorously upheld, with informed consent obtained from all participants. Confidentiality was maintained, and all research activities were conducted with respect to participants' rights and wellbeing (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

Summary of the research Process:-

The above logical framework shows the link between the data to be collected and the conclusion to be drawn. It involves studying proportions that provide the direction to the data collected and the unit of analysis. In conclusion, this study aimed to investigate how digital platforms have transformed the operations of news in mainstream media in Tanzania

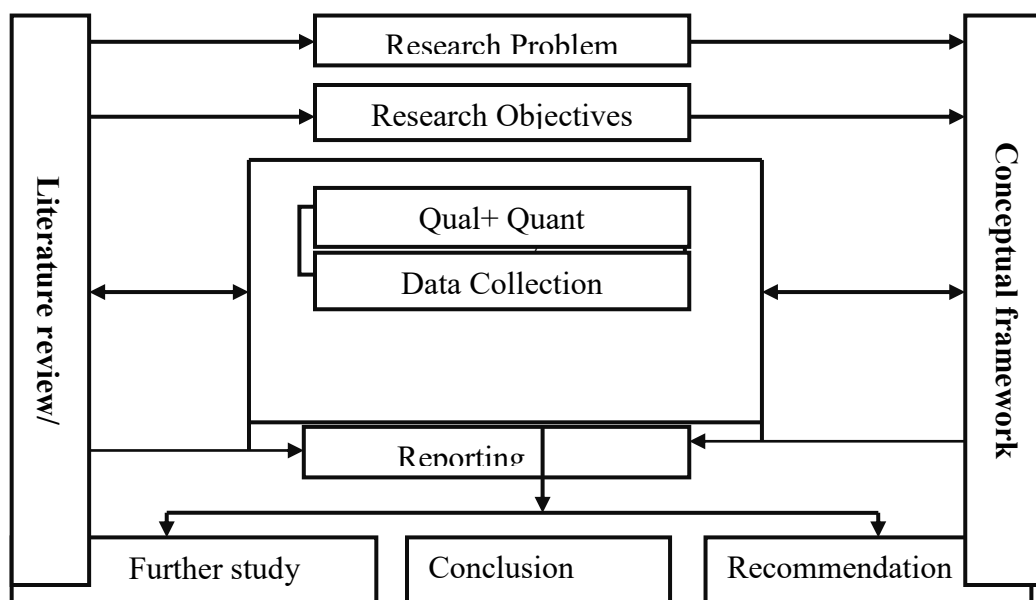


Figure 1: Summary of the Research Design:-

Source: Adopted with Modifications from (Mosso, 2019)

Additionally, it sought to identify the techniques that journalists currently use for news gathering, production, and dissemination. Mainstream media refers to the established and dominant media outlets that have a large audience reach and influence in a given society, such as newspapers, radio stations, television channels, and magazines (Curran et al., 2009).

Findings, Analysis, and Discussions:-

The study highlights the transformative impact of digital platforms on journalism in Tanzania. While traditional methods remain prevalent, digital tools offer new opportunities for immediacy and interactivity. However, challenges such as financial constraints and inadequate support hinder full digital integration. The research underscores the need for strategic investment and skill development to enhance media competitiveness in the digital era.

Gender Dynamics in Tanzanian Newsrooms:-

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 above. According to the findings, the data 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.

A relatively Mix of Balanced Age groups T:-

Hese findings further show 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.

Implications for Media Diversity and Innovation:-

The relatively balanced gender distribution in Tanzanian newsrooms, with a slight male predominance, suggests important implications for both media diversity and innovation. Achieving gender parity can lead to varied perspectives in news coverage, enhancing the richness and inclusivity of content. This diversity allows media organizations to better reflect the society they serve, catering to a wider audience and fostering greater engagement. Moreover, gender diversity can drive innovation within media houses. Diverse teams tend to bring different ideas and approaches, encouraging creative problem-solving and the development of new content strategies. This is crucial in an era where digital transformation demands adaptability and fresh thinking.

Impact on News Processes:-

Quantitative data revealed a reliance on traditional methods, with 73.3% of respondents acknowledging their use. However, qualitative insights highlighted the complementary role of digital platforms, with journalists leveraging social media and multimedia for competitive advantage. Digital platforms have enhanced the immediacy and interactivity of news distribution, yet financial and strategic challenges persist. The study found that 78% of key informants cited inadequate investment and support as major barriers to digital integration. 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: 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). 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.

Freelancers Dominate Traditional Media Landscape:-

The study sample, categorized by employment position, reveals a notable trend: freelancers constitute the largest group among participating journalists, accounting for 33.3% (58 individuals). Correspondents follow at 24.7% (43

individuals), while full-time employees make up 21.3% (37 individuals). Part-time workers represent 14.4% (25 individuals), and those identifying as "others" account for 6.3% (11 individuals).

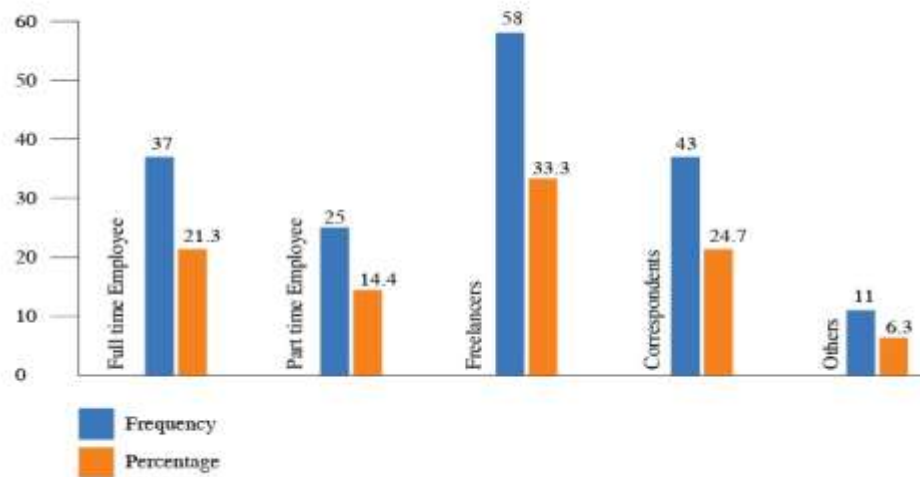


Figure 2: Distribution by Type of Employment

Source: Field Data (April, 2021)

The findings underscore a significant reliance on freelance journalists within Tanzania's traditional media, highlighting the shifting employment dynamics and the increasing flexibility sought by media professionals. However, integrating freelancers into digital workflows may require additional management and infrastructure, posing logistical challenges for media houses. Though, freelancers can also drive digital transformation by bringing fresh perspectives and flexibility, provided that media organizations invest in the necessary support and resources, nonetheless, having more freelance journalists in a traditional media setting can indeed present challenges for digital transformation. Furthermore, the findings suggest the need for media houses to adapt their operational models to accommodate and support freelance journalists effectively. It also underscores the importance of providing freelancers with access to digital tools and platforms, as they are likely to be at the forefront of adopting innovative approaches to news gathering and distribution. This shift may influence the strategies and recommendations for enhancing competitiveness and sustainability in the media sector.

Tensions in Newsrooms:-

Results from this study show that 58(33.3%) are freelancers in mainstream media houses. According to this study, most of these journalists continue to work as freelancers for mainstream media newsrooms as they continue to manage and run their news sites. However, according to this study, the rate of in-house adoption related to the new digital platforms 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. Some editors reported that tensions between digital journalists and traditional journalists are increasing as they compete to make themselves valid. The build-up of tension has resulted in conflict with the loss of advertisers and the loss of audience as people continue to move to other media outlets to find news timely and get engaged. During a face-to-face interview, one of the editors said: While some mainstream media owners are still arguing about the relevance of digital platforms for news purposes, our recent audience assessment report has demonstrated that a growing number of our prime audience members are using digital platforms to consume and share news, particularly breaking news (Female Newspaper Editor, 16 March 2021).

At the same time, scholars of mass media recommend that media organisations employ credible and trustful journalists who cannot compromise their editorial policies and new media platforms respectively for their survival (Mosso L., 2019). The further challenge is that most mainstream media, have established only blogs to post news and events. Mwananchi newspaper and habarileo remain vulnerable to keeping pace with digital platforms, even

though the public has increased demand for instant news, they repeatedly consume much harmful news content, misinformation, and half-cooked current affairs. “These complex regulations pose significant challenges for media houses, creating substantial financial barriers through multiple fees required to initiate new ventures,” a news producer pointed out that the restrictive legal framework, particularly the cumbersome licensing procedures, stifles innovation. (Male Print News Editor, 13 March 2021).

Digital Platforms Function in News Reporting:-

In this section, the researcher sought to learn the kind of news that the newsrooms cover mostly through various techniques. Findings present the type of news covered mostly in mainstream media. 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.

Table 1: Digital Platforms Function in News Reporting

Category	Frequency	Percent
Breaking news	18	10.3
Current affairs	57	32.8
News Analysis	19	10.9
Features stories	31	17.8
News bulletins	26	14.9
Business news	11	6.3
Sports news	12	6.9
Total	174	100.0

Source: Field Data (March, 2021)

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. 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 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). The present study corroborates some empirical studies, too. For example, according to Okana and Teaching (2017) the move to disseminate news content via social media and aggregators has been halted or is even starting to reverse, while subscriptions are increasing in several countries. In recent years, the advent of digital platforms has dramatically altered the landscape of journalism. Traditional media houses, once the gatekeepers of information, now find themselves competing with a plethora of online news sources, social media influencers, and citizen journalists. This digital revolution has brought both opportunities and challenges (TCRA, 2018; Mtebe & Raphael, 2018). As the traditional media industry fights to stay on top, the need to investigate alternative business models and evaluate emerging technologies becomes increasingly self-evident.

Media companies seeking to innovate in these disruptive surroundings must pay close attention to emerging innovation areas and the startups driving this disruptive digitalisation. 50% of all spending in media [worldwide] will be dedicated to digital affairs by 2019, a clear indicator that digitalisation is the single most important

innovation area actively shaping the media industry” (TMF Report, 2021). The demand is based on the statistics that explain that little has been studied regarding the impacts of digital platforms on news operations within Tanzania’s mainstream media (Dearing, & Cox, 2018). At the same time, studies show that in some areas of the world, especially Africa, where Tanzania is found, there is a lack of appreciation across some mainstream media, which traditionally have been operating in structures that promote gatekeeping processes that may act as barriers or drivers of improved news business within online sites. While it is impossible to accurately predict the future of news business in all media channels, one thing remains noticeable: a return to past patterns is unlikely (Emanuel, 2013). The reluctant media companies to technological changes expire or lose power and prominence as the key media channels for news production and distribution (Sæbø, 2017).

Bridging the Gap: Innovation and Platform Integration Model:-

The evolution towards a business model reliant on reader revenues necessitates innovation in the types of stories journalists produce and the subjects they cover. This shift emphasizes analysis, explanatory, and investigative journalism, stories that delve deeper into social and environmental issues rather than merely reporting on public institutions’ actions. Mitchell Stephens from New York University refers to this as ‘wisdom journalism,’ where journalism evolves into an ideas business, moving beyond just reporting the news (Stephens, 2014). Despite the diversification introduced by digitization, findings reveal that popular news stories are still predominantly gathered and produced through traditional methods. A significant 67% of respondents expressed concerns about the relevance of their media’s news business models. A TV news producer noted: “Our website was the first credible platform to carry advertising on a trial basis. It will pave the way for more news stories and advertisements. Revenue from these initiatives will help offset funding cuts and meet targets for commercial income generation” (Male Newspaper Editor, 18 March 2021). This approach, however, creates a gap in reaching certain audiences.

Tanzanian consumers now have access to diverse local and international news, made possible by digital platforms. Yet, many news production teams struggle to reach mainstream channels due to bureaucratic hurdles and reluctance from media owners to adopt new ideas. A news editor commented: “Digital journalism has transformed news gathering, production, and distribution in Tanzania. Thirty percent of my reporters can create high-quality content using mobile phones, uploading stories to our website and other platforms. To thrive, mainstream journalists must understand audience content access across channels and stay ahead in this fast-paced industry” (Female TV Editor, 19 April 2021). The study further reveals that 83% of editors in Dar es Salaam are skilled in digital news production due to available resources and training opportunities. A male radio news editor shared: “Despite lacking proper equipment, our Dar es Salaam newsroom fares better than up-country regions. Support from the Tanzania Media Foundation enabled us to redesign our newsroom for digital production and train journalists in innovative practices” (Male Radio News Editor, 18 March 2021).

Core Components of the Proposed Digital Competitiveness Model:-

- a) **Integration of Real-Time Digital Tools:** The study highlights how digital platforms have revolutionized news gathering by enabling real-time updates and access to global sources. Journalists now leverage social media for instant reporting, significantly enhancing the immediacy and scope of news coverage.
- b) **Shift to Multimedia Storytelling:** There’s a notable shift towards integrating multimedia elements such as videos, podcasts, and infographics. This enriches storytelling and engages audiences more effectively than traditional text-based reporting.
- c) **Freelancing and Flexibility:** The rise of freelance journalism is a significant trend, with 33.3% of respondents working independently. This shift allows journalists to use digital platforms creatively, increasing their reach and adaptability in the industry.
- d) **Community-Centric Focus:** Media houses are increasingly focusing on community-centric journalism to maintain relevance. Covering local stories and public interest topics strengthens connections with audiences and builds trust.
- e) **Collaborative Efforts:** There is a growing trend of collaborations and partnerships within the industry. Media houses are pooling resources and expertise to enhance digital capabilities, allowing them to compete more effectively with digital platforms.

Recommendations:-**Recommendation for news practice in mainstream media:-**

Based on the findings and a summary of conclusions, the following are recommended for the future implementation of mainstream media in Tanzania. Providing capacity building to journalists, editors, and managers of mainstream media houses on the importance of gathering, production, and distribution was crucial. The survey observed that the stand of editors and reporters on the use of digital platforms in mainstream media houses is not very strong. To meaningfully address this challenge, there is a need to be done by having capacity-building workshops and, in-house seminars and mentoring sessions.

In-house Mentorship in the Newsrooms:-

The survey found that many media houses and journalists report news issues but lack the competency and skills to report the news on digital platforms confidently. The mentorship should also emphasise the media outlet's establishing mechanisms of soliciting feedback from the audience through digital platforms on the kind of content produced and disseminated. The survey has revealed that young journalists are more enthusiastically ready and passionate about digital platforms compared to senior journalists who have been in the media for longer years. Most of them identified themselves as multimedia journalists, claiming that the owners and members of management are reluctant to support reporters to cover news issues effectively through digital news. Given all these situations, there is thus a need for targeted newsroom capacity building and incentives and support for strong leadership and newsroom mentorship. As each media house is unique, the benefit is thus to be greatly from a tailor-made package to address the challenges it faces.

Professionally Managed Online Media:-

Online journalism in Tanzania is still in its infancy but has all the potential to grow due to the evolution of the web and a rapid deepening of internet and mobile phone penetration in Tanzania. The increasing popularity of digital platforms, coupled with the growth of mobile phone usage in the country, point to a huge potential for online journalism. There is a gradual shift from traditional broadcasting to online media due to the convenience of accessing information through internet applications. However, traditional broadcast services will remain viable due to their ability to provide fixed, portable, and mobile reception, regional and local content, a large receiver base, free-to-air services, flexibility, technical and cost efficiency, and support from broadcasters, network operators, regulators, and the industry. This combination makes traditional broadcasting difficult to replicate by any single alternative technology, ensuring its viability for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation for Future Competitive Model:-

It was revealed that in developing stories having different sources of information is crucial for them to process and distribute credible news. However, some media houses do not have a policy to guide them to produce quantity and quality news that guides their news operation. This is a risk to the media development and transformation in the mainstream media house and the community that feeds on the information produced by these media houses. Until then, the mainstream media in Tanzania will continue to be vulnerable in the news market. It is recommended thus, current news business model has to dismantle; thus, the current news business model be dismantled. Using reliable technologies as well as putting in place digital-skilled journalists and leadership that mind digital transformation for news purposes shall be key solutions.

Recommendations for Media Owners:-

One of the biggest barriers to producing high-quality news for public interest journalism in Tanzania is the sector's access to and use of expert knowledge and reliable data and analysis for editorial and business decision-making. Capacity constraints in the media sector are evident in editorial and media business leadership, particularly amongst small to medium enterprises such as radio. Specific editorial concerns include newsgathering, particularly investigative, storytelling, news production and the crosscutting issue of professionalism. At the same time, media business weaknesses often involve lack of management skills and experience. Young journalists enter the sector with limited practical experience. Once there may not have access to professional development and opportunities to work on special reports that have the potential to influence and inform decision-making or promote accountability, with women particularly disadvantaged. With the mainstream media industry struggling to keep up with traditional journalism skills, new areas such as data journalism, innovations, collaborative journalism, and fact-checking and verification are increasingly important in other parts of the world for digital journalism; they are limited locally. Innovation, in mainstream media sectors, is seen as something important but not well perceived in terms of making things happen. So, managers should be to nurture them and provide necessary support.

Recommendation for the Ministry of Information:-

In Tanzania, digital platforms and news sites continue to alter how news is produced, delivered, and consumed (Mosso, 2019). However, the government seems not to have put enough investment in it even though even it provides employment opportunities and acts as a quick bridge between the government and its citizens (Chen & Qiu, 2019). Mainstream media claim that the Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA), which has the overseeing power of online content, should be able to understand their business and control harsh laws that affect online news operations.

Areas for Further Research:-

The findings of the present study indicate that while a majority of journalists in Tanzanian mainstream media are familiar and are trying to cope with digital platforms, there is still a need for further researches to ensure that the media sector sits can fully understand various paradigms, models, and prototypes related to digital transformation. For example, impact of digital platforms on news gathering, production, and distribution is profound, offering opportunities for more efficient, engaging, and wide-reaching journalism. However, addressing the gaps digital platforms holistically is essential for maximising these benefits across the entire journalistic community in Tanzania. In the present study, some researchers can explore the following areas to provide a comprehensive analysis of the digital transformation in traditional media in Tanzania:

1. **Adaptation of Tanzanian Newspapers to Digital Platforms:** Investigate how Tanzanian newspapers have transitioned to digital platforms. Examine the strategies they have employed to maintain readership and engagement in the digital age (Smith, 2020).
2. **Revenue Challenges:** Analyse the financial challenges faced by Tanzanian newspapers in the digital era. Explore how the shift to digital has impacted traditional revenue models and what alternative sources of income, such as digital subscriptions and online advertising, are being utilized (Miller, 2020).
3. **Misinformation and Fact-Checking:** Study the prevalence of misinformation on digital platforms and the measures taken by Tanzanian newspapers to combat it. Assess the effectiveness of fact-checking and verification processes in maintaining journalistic credibility (Nguyen, 2019).
4. **Changing Role of Journalists:** Examine how the role of journalists has evolved with the advent of digital media. Investigate the new skills and competencies required for journalists to effectively gather, produce, and distribute news in the digital age (Garcia, 2021).
5. **Impact on News Consumption:** Explore how digital platforms have changed news consumption patterns among the Tanzanian audience. Analyze the preferences for different types of digital content and the implications for news production and distribution strategies (Jones, 2019).
6. **Digital Literacy and Training:** Investigate the level of digital literacy among journalists in Tanzania and the availability of training programs to enhance their skills. Assess the impact of digital literacy on the quality of journalism and the ability to leverage digital tools effectively (Brown, 2018).

Conclusion:-

Based on the study findings, three broad conclusions, findings show that journalists in traditional media in Tanzania primarily use digital platforms for entertainment and social gratifications, with limited use for news gathering, production, and distribution. Digital platforms have had a significant impact on news and journalism practice in Tanzania, but mainstream media have not fully integrated them into their news models. Consequently, emerging digital platforms like Ayo TV, Global TV, Michuzi Blog, and some online radio stations are becoming prominent for timely and widespread news dissemination.

In addition, traditional news business is altered; mainstream on mainstream media's ways of doing news business have been altered by digital platforms. Requirements include, effective digital skills, news business strategies, and accurate newsrooms governance are essential for producing quality, timely, and useful news content. Finally, a new model is proposed to enhance journalism practices in news gathering, production, and dissemination amidst the rise of digital platforms. This model involves innovation and platform integration for competitive news gathering, production, and distribution in Tanzania's legacy media. It emphasizes further the need for quality content production and for media organizations to adapt to the digital landscape strategically and quickly.

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