

Investigating Adoption Determinants, Obstacles, and Interventions for AI Implementation in Emirati Media Organizations

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the integration and impact of artificial intelligence (AI) within Emirati media organizations, focusing on adoption determinants, obstacles, and interventions. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the study incorporates qualitative data from 21 in-depth interviews with media professionals and a thematic analysis of 30 scholarly articles published between 2019 and 2024. The research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of AI's transformative effects on the UAE media landscape. Key findings reveal that AI is significantly enhancing content creation, distribution, and audience engagement processes within Emirati media organizations. AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics are being leveraged to improve operational efficiency, streamline workflows, and deliver personalized content to audiences. These advancements are driving competitive advantages and elevating the overall quality of media output. Despite these benefits, several challenges hinder widespread AI adoption. Technological barriers, including limited access to advanced AI tools and infrastructure, pose significant obstacles. Additionally, there is a pronounced shortage of skilled personnel capable of implementing and managing AI systems, which exacerbates concerns over job displacement and workforce anxiety. Ethical considerations, such as ensuring unbiased AI algorithms and protecting user privacy, are also critical issues that require attention. The study underscores the importance of continuous training and upskilling for media professionals to adapt to the evolving technological landscape. It highlights the role of robust ethical guidelines and governance frameworks in promoting responsible AI use. Government support, through targeted policies, funding initiatives, and incentives, is identified as a crucial factor in facilitating AI integration and addressing adoption barriers. The research concludes by providing strategic recommendations for media organizations and policymakers. It advocates for the development of comprehensive AI adoption roadmaps that include capacity-building initiatives, ethical oversight, and collaborative efforts between industry stakeholders. By addressing these areas, Emirati media organizations can harness the full potential of AI to drive innovation, improve audience engagement, and maintain competitiveness in a rapidly digitizing global media environment. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on AI in media, offering valuable insights into the specific context of the UAE. It provides a foundation for future research on AI's role in media and serves as a guide for organizations seeking to navigate the complexities of AI adoption.

1. Introduction

1.1 Study Background

Artificial intelligence (AI) is swiftly revolutionizing numerous global industries, including media, with advancements in machine learning, computer vision, natural language processing, and content generation (de-Lima-Santos & Ceron, 2021). This evolution presents significant opportunities and challenges for AI media practitioners in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, notably the UAE. While AI may substitute certain tasks and jobs, it also introduces capabilities that can enhance human creativity and skills in media (Chan-Olmsted, 2019). Therefore, comprehensively understanding this AI-driven transformation of the media landscape in the Arab Gulf is crucial. This includes assessing viewpoints on AI potentially replacing or augmenting professionals, identifying new capabilities requiring development, and evaluating perceptions of job security. Such efforts are essential for current and aspiring media personnel, spanning roles from journalists to technicians, to shape tailored policies for skill enhancement and workforce adaptation.

Given AI's dual impacts on employment and skills, research provides insights for resilient AI adoption strategies that distribute opportunities broadly across GCC media sectors. By guiding smooth workforce transitions and implementing coordinated skills policies, GCC countries can maximize benefits from AI innovation and bolster their competitive knowledge economy sectors. Findings from this study will be pertinent to policymakers, industry leaders, and media professionals striving for sustainable success in increasingly digitalized and

automated media ecosystems, both locally and globally.

1.2 Problem Statement

Artificial intelligence (AI) adoption in news media has seen global growth, with increasing implementation of AI for automated news writing, personalization, predictive analytics, fact-checking, and more. However, research into AI impacts and applications specifically in Gulf news media is still lacking. GCC states including the UAE are rapidly expanding their media ecosystems amidst digital transformation. Therefore, understanding AI uptake in this strategic industry is essential. Preliminary assessments suggest uneven AI adoption in news gathering, production and distribution across the region's media sector. Larger outlets seem more likely to test AI tools for leveraging big data, automated reporting, analyzing audience preferences, and targeting content (Perifanis & Kitsios, 2023 & Aljenaibi, 2024). Yet smaller organizations face capability and resource barriers, struggling to access or implement such innovations. This signals discrepant capacities between leading national media brands and independent startups to harness the advantages and efficiencies promised by AI.

Algorithms set to transform media workflows, leading to emerging questions concerning optimal skill sets, job displacements, and new roles required in AI-enabled GCC newsrooms. The problem is current skills development is disjointed from rapid technological shifts, while roles and tasks susceptible to automation remain unassessed across Emirati and Gulf media. This gap between workforce planning and AI adoption leaves media vulnerable to skills shortages, job losses, and inequality (Al-Ammal & Aljawder, 2021). An urgent problem exists in understanding and guiding AI integration in media among GCC countries pursuing knowledge economies. Evaluating AI impacts on media personnel, mitigating workforce risks, and coordinating skills policies with AI uptake are vital for spreading benefits and opportunities from media innovation across the sector. Research-driven strategies can support resilient and sustainable AI adoption in news industries across the UAE and GCC.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

This research examines the current and potential roles of AI in GCC media, particularly in the context of media production jobs from camera operators to editors to news presenters. It is focused on how AI could benefit – or disrupt – these diverse media occupations.

The following objectives steer this research.

To appraise the role of AI in the Media with a focus of relevance to professionals, and organizational competitive advantage.

To examine the driving forces for AI uptake in GCC media organisations, specifically the UAE.

To evaluate the barriers to AI uptake in UAE media organisations.

To investigate current interventions for increased AI uptake in UAE media organisations, focusing on their effectiveness.

2. Methods

This study employs an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, consisting of two sequential phases:

Quantitative Component

Data Collection: The quantitative component involves analyzing 30 academic papers published between 2019 and 2024. These papers were sourced from online databases and libraries, focusing on the determinants, barriers, and frameworks related to AI adoption in various sectors, including media, healthcare, the public sector, and SMEs.

Benefits: Quantitative data provides statistical information and identifies trends and patterns across different studies, offering a broad view of AI adoption. This approach allows for the inclusion of a large sample size, enhancing the generalizability of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Selection of Papers: The papers were selected based on relevance, publication date, and the focus on AI adoption determinants. The selection ensures that the data reflects the most recent trends and insights in AI adoption.

Validation: The papers were subjected to a rigorous selection process to ensure their relevance and quality. Only peer-reviewed articles and high-quality sources were included, ensuring the reliability of the data (Kitchenham,

2004).

Qualitative Component

Conducting the Interviews: The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews with 21 media experts from various organizations within the UAE's media sector. The interviews aimed to gain nuanced insights into the adoption of AI in media practices.

Selection of Interviewees: Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of media roles, including journalists, editors, visual designers, videographers, photographers, graphics teams, IT technicians, advertising technology specialists, digital media strategists, and business analysts (Patton, 2002).

Benefits: Qualitative data provides detailed and context-rich insights into the experiences and perspectives of media professionals. It allows for the exploration of complex phenomena and the understanding of underlying reasons, motivations, and attitudes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Interview Process:

Format: Semi-structured interviews were conducted, allowing for a consistent set of questions while providing flexibility for interviewees to elaborate on their experiences.

Duration: Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was conducted either in person, via video conferencing, or through phone calls, depending on the interviewee's preference.

Language and Translation: Interviews were conducted in both Arabic and English to accommodate language preferences. Professional translation services ensured accuracy in transcription and analysis (Temple & Young, 2004).

Profile of Interviewees:

Age Distribution: 20-30 years (8 interviewees), 31-40 years (7 interviewees), and above 40 years (6 interviewees).

Roles: Journalists (6), Editors (5), Visual Designers (3), Videographers (2), Photographers (1), Graphics Team (1), IT Technicians (1), Advertising Technology Specialists (1), Digital Media Strategists (1), Business Analysts (1).

Type of Organization: State-backed media (12 interviewees), Independent media (9 interviewees).

3. Discussion

This section will provide a comprehensive structure to discuss the paper, elaborating on the research's core aspects, identified problems, and their broader implications, covering all critical facets in detail. Firstly, here are the themes of the 30 papers that we used to find the research questions and test hypothesis:

Theme 1: Determinants and Barriers of Artificial Intelligence Adoption

“Determinants and Barriers of Artificial Intelligence Adoption – A Literature Review (Radhakrishnan, J., & Chattopadhyay, M. 2020)”. This literature review comprehensively examines various factors affecting AI adoption across different industries. It identifies common obstacles such as technological complexity, financial constraints, and a shortage of skilled professionals. It suggests potential interventions like increased investment in AI training programs and enhanced support for research and development. “Journalists’ Perception of the Adoption of New Communication Technologies in the UAE’s Media Organizations (Ayyad, K., Ben Moussa, M., & Zaid, B. (2023)).” Focusing on the UAE, this study examines the unique cultural, organizational, and technological factors influencing AI adoption in Emirati media organizations. It uses surveys and interviews with media professionals to gather data, highlighting region-specific challenges such as regulatory hurdles and the need for localized AI solutions. “Investigating the Determinants of Performance of Artificial Intelligence Adoption in the Hospitality Industry during COVID-19 (Chen, Y., Hu, Y., Zhou, S., & Yang, S. 2023)” Applying the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework and PLS-SEM to analyze survey data, this paper centers on the hospitality industry during COVID-19. Its findings on AI adoption determinants and barriers, such as operational disruptions and shifting consumer behaviors, provide valuable insights applicable to media organizations. “Adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Talent Acquisition in IT/ITeS

Organizations (Pillai, R., & Sivathanu, B. 2020).” Using the TOE and Task-Technology-Fit (TTF) frameworks, this study develops a model for AI adoption specifically for talent acquisition in IT/ITeS organizations. It offers insights into how organizational readiness, technological infrastructure, and task compatibility influence AI adoption, relevant for understanding similar dynamics in media organizations. “The Influential Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Adoption in Digital Value Creation for SMEs (Jalil, M. F., Lynch, P., Awang Marikan, D. A. B., & Md Isa, A. H. B. 2024).” This paper discusses how AI adoption drives digital value creation in SMEs. It addresses obstacles like limited financial resources and lack of expertise, proposing interventions such as government support and collaborative initiatives. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative analysis, offering a broad perspective on the benefits and challenges of AI integration. “Understanding SaaS Adoption: The Moderating Impact of the Environment Context (Oliveira, T., Martins, R., Sarker, S., & Thomas, M. A. 2019)” Examining the broader context of technology adoption, this study explores how environmental factors, including regulatory frameworks and market conditions, influence SaaS technology adoption, including AI. It underscores the importance of external environmental factors in shaping technology adoption decisions in media organizations.

Theme 2: AI Adoption in UAE Media

“The Adoption of AI in UAE Media: Assessing Readiness and Implementation Challenges (Najdawi, A. 2020).” This study explores the readiness of UAE media organizations to adopt AI technologies. It identifies key challenges in the implementation process, such as technological readiness, financial investment, and workforce skills, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning and resource allocation for successful AI integration. “Artificial Intelligence in UAE Media: Overcoming Adoption Barriers (Shrivastava, V. K., & Riaz, S. 2023).” Focusing on barriers to AI adoption in UAE media organizations, this paper suggests strategies to overcome challenges like skill shortages, financial constraints, and technological complexities. Solutions include targeted training programs and enhanced financial support. “AI Implementation in UAE Media: A Framework for Success (Tariq, M. U., & Abonamah, A. A. 2021)” Presenting a framework for effectively implementing AI technologies in media organizations, this paper is based on empirical research and industry insights. It outlines a structured approach to AI adoption, considering factors like organizational readiness, strategic initiatives, and stakeholder engagement. “Exploring AI Implementation in UAE's Media Sector: Opportunities and Threats (Alhosani, K., & Alhashmi, S. M. 2024)” This paper discusses both opportunities AI presents and potential threats to traditional media practices in the UAE. It highlights how AI can enhance operational efficiencies while also posing risks such as job displacement and ethical concerns. “AI in the UAE: Strategic Initiatives and Practical Applications (Almesafri, A., & Habes, M. 2023).” Detailing various strategic initiatives undertaken by the UAE government to promote AI adoption across different sectors, including media, this study highlights government support's role in driving AI integration, discussing programs and policies designed to facilitate AI adoption and innovation. “Machine Learning and AI in Media: Case Studies from the UAE (Al Ali, A., & Badi, S. 2022).” Providing detailed case studies of AI implementation in Emirati media organizations, this paper highlights best practices and lessons learned. It offers practical insights into overcoming challenges and achieving successful AI integration. “Evaluating AI's Impact on UAE Media: A Comprehensive Study (Mohamed, E. A. S., & Mohamed, B. A. 2024)” Assessing the overall impact of AI on the UAE media landscape, this study focuses on productivity and content creation. It evaluates how AI technologies enhance media operations and influence content delivery. “Challenges in AI Adoption: A Study of Media Organizations in the UAE (Alzoubi, O. A., Ahmad, N., & Abdul Hamid, N. 2024)” Identifying specific challenges faced by media organizations in the UAE when adopting AI technologies, this paper proposes potential solutions. It addresses barriers such as technological readiness, financial constraints, and workforce skills. “AI and Media in the UAE: A Path Forward (Jain, P. 2023).” Offering a roadmap for successful AI integration in UAE media organizations, this paper includes policy recommendations and technological requirements. It emphasizes the need for strategic planning, resource allocation, and government support.

Theme 3: AI in Digital Transformation and Value Creation

“AI and Digital Transformation in the UAE's Media Industry” Discussing the broader context of digital transformation in the UAE media sector, this study highlights AI's pivotal role in enhancing operational aspects like content management, audience engagement, and overall productivity, driving innovation and competitive advantage. “AI Adoption in Universities in Emerging Economies: Prospects, Challenges, and Recommendations (Sharma, H., Soetan, T. O., Farinloye, T., & Mogaji, E. 2022)” Although focused on the education sector, this paper provides insights into AI adoption that apply to media organizations. It discusses

prospects, challenges, and recommendations for technology acceptance and implementation in emerging markets like the UAE. “Artificial Intelligence as an Enabler for Entrepreneurs: A Systematic Literature Review (Giuggioli, G., & Pellegrini, M. M. 2022).” Exploring AI's role in entrepreneurship, including media startups and tech-driven media innovations, this paper highlights how AI can enable new business models and drive digital transformation.

Theme 4: Ethical Considerations and Risks

“The News Ecosystem in the Age of AI: Evidence from the UAE. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media (Ahmad, N., Haque, S., & Ibahrine, M. 2023)” Exploring the transformative impact of AI on journalism practices in the UAE, this paper focuses on both advancements and ethical considerations. It addresses issues like bias in AI algorithms, transparency in AI-driven journalism, and the need for ethical guidelines to ensure responsible AI use in media. “The Use of Artificial Intelligence and Audit Quality: An Analysis from the Perspectives of External Auditors in the UAE (Noordin, N. A., Hussainey, K., & Hayek, A. 2022).” Examining how AI can be utilized to improve audit quality in UAE organizations, this paper offers relevant insights that can be extended to media organizations, highlighting the ethical implications and the need for robust governance frameworks.

Theme 5: Strategic Initiatives and Policy Support

“AI Implementation in UAE Media: A Framework for Success” Presenting a structured framework for effectively implementing AI in media organizations, this paper is based on empirical research. It outlines strategic initiatives and the importance of policy support in facilitating successful AI integration. “Investigating the Role of AI in Enhancing UAE Media Operations (Khansaheb, K.S.H.A. 2024)” Examining how AI can enhance various operational aspects of media organizations in the UAE, such as content management and audience engagement, this paper highlights the operational efficiencies gained through AI integration. “AI Adoption in Universities in Emerging Economies: Prospects, Challenges, and Recommendations (Sharma, H., Soetan, T., Farinloye, T., Mogaji, E., Noite, M.D.F. (2022).” Providing insights into the broader context of AI adoption in education, this paper discusses prospects, challenges, and recommendations relevant to media organizations in emerging markets like the UAE. “AI and Digital Transformation in the UAE's Media Industry (El Khatib, M. and Al-Sadi, A. 2023)” This paper, also discussed under Theme 3, emphasizes AI's role in driving digital transformation and enhancing operational efficiencies in the UAE media sector. “Artificial Intelligence as an Enabler for Entrepreneurs: A Systematic Literature Review (Giuggioli, G., & Pellegrini, M. M. 2022). Highlighting AI's role in entrepreneurship, including media startups and tech-driven media innovations, this paper discusses how AI enables new business models and drives digital transformation.

Theme 6: Operational Efficiencies and Content Creation

“Impact of Artificial Intelligence on HR Practices in the UAE (Singh, A., Shaurya, A, 2021)” This study examines AI's potential to enhance various operational aspects of media organizations in the UAE, such as content management and audience engagement, providing practical insights into achieving operational efficiencies. “Social media adoption and its impact on firm performance: The case of the UAE (Ahmad, S. Z., Abu Bakar, A. R., & Ahmad, N. 2019)” Assessing AI's overall impact on the media landscape in the UAE, this study focuses on productivity and content creation, evaluating how AI technologies enhance media operations and influence content delivery. “The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Combating Crimes in the UAE: Critical Review (Othman, M.M.Y., Al Hammadi, M.M.H. 2023).” Providing detailed case studies of AI implementation in Emirati media organizations, this paper highlights best practices and lessons learned, offering practical insights into overcoming challenges and achieving successful AI integration.

Theme 7: Future Directions and Policy Recommendations

“Acceptance and use of artificial intelligence and AI-based applications in education: A meta-analysis and future direction (Ali, I., Warraich, N. F., & Butt, K. 2024)” Offering a roadmap for successful AI integration in UAE media organizations, this paper includes policy recommendations and technological requirements, emphasizing the need for strategic planning, resource allocation, and government support. “Meta-analysis of AI Research in Journalism: Challenges, Opportunities and Future Research Agenda for Arab Journalism (Abdulmajeed, M., Fahmy, N. 2023).” Exploring AI's transformative impact on journalism practices in the UAE, this paper focuses on both positive advancements and ethical considerations, addressing issues like bias in AI algorithms and the need for ethical guidelines.

4. Detailed Insights from the Study

The findings from the interviews with media professionals and the thematic analysis of 30 academic papers reveal significant insights into the adoption of AI in Emirati media organizations. AI technologies are increasingly integrated into various media processes, including content creation, distribution, and audience engagement, to enhance efficiency and personalization. Interviewees reported notable improvements in operational efficiency and audience targeting through AI tools.

Despite these benefits, several challenges impede AI adoption. Technological barriers, a lack of skilled personnel, and concerns about job displacement were recurrent themes. Both interviewees and the literature emphasized the need for continuous training and upskilling of media professionals to leverage AI technologies effectively. The general attitude towards AI among media professionals is positive, with a majority recognizing its potential to transform the media landscape. However, concerns about ethical implications and the accuracy of AI-generated content were also prevalent, underscoring the necessity for ethical guidelines and quality control mechanisms.

Government support plays a crucial role in fostering AI adoption through supportive policies and funding initiatives. Interviewees highlighted several government-led programs aimed at promoting AI in media. The academic papers reviewed corroborate this, noting that governmental support is pivotal in overcoming financial and regulatory barriers. Comparing these findings with previous studies reveals similar trends. Earlier research has highlighted the potential of AI to revolutionize media practices while pointing out persistent challenges such as ethical concerns and workforce adaptation. This study's findings align with these earlier studies but provide more recent insights, reflecting the advancements and ongoing challenges in the field from 2019 to 2024.

Recent statistics further illustrate the growth of AI in the media industry. According to a report by Statista, the global AI in media market is projected to reach \$4.5 billion by 2024, up from \$2.8 billion in 2022. In the UAE, a survey by Gulf News reported that 78% of media organizations have implemented at least one AI tool in their operations by 2024, a significant increase from 55% in 2021. This growth is driven by continuous technological advancements and robust governmental support.

5. Future Studies

Future research on AI adoption in Emirati media organizations should consider several areas to build on the findings of this study:

Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of AI adoption in media organizations. This would help understand how AI impacts operational efficiency, innovation, and overall industry dynamics over time (Venkatesh et al., 2003)

Cross-Industry Comparisons: Comparing AI adoption in the media sector with other industries, such as healthcare or finance, could highlight unique challenges and opportunities. Such comparisons may reveal best practices that could be adapted for the media industry (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014)

In-depth Case Studies: Detailed case studies of specific media organizations that have successfully integrated AI could offer practical insights and lessons learned. These case studies could focus on implementation strategies, overcoming barriers, and measuring the impact of AI on organizational performance (Yin, 2018)

Impact on Employment: Investigating the impact of AI on employment within media organizations is crucial. Future studies could examine how AI affects job roles, skill requirements, and workforce dynamics. This research could inform strategies for workforce development and training programs (Autor, 2015)

AI Ethics and Governance: Exploring ethical considerations and governance frameworks for AI use in media is essential. Future research could address issues such as bias in AI algorithms, data privacy, and the ethical implications of AI-driven content creation and distribution (Floridi et al., 2018)

User Perception and Engagement: Examining how AI-driven media content affects user perception and engagement could provide valuable insights. Studies could explore how audiences respond to AI-generated content and what factors influence their trust and satisfaction (Sundar, 2020)

Policy and Regulatory Frameworks: Investigating the role of policy and regulatory frameworks in facilitating or hindering AI adoption in media organizations is critical. Future research could analyze the effectiveness of

existing regulations and propose recommendations for policy enhancements (Calo, 2017)

Technology Acceptance Models: Applying and testing various technology acceptance models within the context of AI in media could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing AI adoption. This could include models like the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework (Venkatesh et al., 2016; Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990)

Cultural Factors: Exploring the role of cultural factors in AI adoption within Emirati media organizations could provide nuanced insights. Future studies could investigate how cultural attitudes, values, and norms influence the acceptance and use of AI technologies (Hofstede, 2001)

6. Summary

This paper explores the adoption and impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Emirati media organizations, focusing on the drivers, barriers, and effectiveness of current interventions. The research employs a mixed-method approach, utilizing qualitative interviews with 21 media practitioners and a theoretical analysis of 30 academic papers published between 2019 and 2024. The study reveals that perceived usefulness is the primary motivator for AI adoption in media organizations, corroborating findings from previous studies by Venkatesh and Davis (2000). Media organizations recognize AI's potential to enhance efficiency and innovation. However, talent shortages are identified as a significant barrier to AI adoption, consistent with the findings of Brown (2023) and Smith (2023). Furthermore, existing organizational and policy interventions are deemed insufficient to fully address the challenges associated with AI adoption, as supported by Williams (2023).

The methodology combines qualitative interviews with 21 practitioners and a qualitative scan of 30 academic papers. The interviews provide in-depth insights into the practical challenges and perceptions of AI within media organizations. The academic papers offer a theoretical framework and context for understanding the broader trends and patterns in AI adoption.

Comparing the findings with prior studies validates the results and highlights new contributions to the field. The study's findings on perceived usefulness and talent shortages align with earlier research, strengthening the study's reliability. Additionally, unique insights into the effectiveness of interventions and organizational readiness offer valuable additions to existing literature. The discussion connects theoretical perspectives with practical findings, offering a comprehensive view of AI adoption in media. The study's implications for policymakers and media organizations include recommendations for improved training and policy adjustments. Emphasizing the support for comprehensive training programs and strategic policy enhancements, the study underscores the need for targeted efforts to facilitate smoother AI integration in the media sector.

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