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NEWS MANAGERS' PERCEPTION OF AI ADOPTION IN US NEWSROOMS: A STUDY ON PROFESSIONALISM, JURISDICTION, CONTROL & AUTHORITY

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NEWS MANAGERS' PERCEPTION OF AI ADOPTION IN US NEWSROOMS: A STUDY ON PROFESSIONALISM, JURISDICTION, CONTROL & AUTHORITY

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Dr. Melanie Wilderman, Chair

Dr. Angela Zhang

Dr. Desiree Hill

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Abstract

More and more professional journalists are now learning to adapt to changes AI adoption is bringing into their workplace and how they practice journalism. This study used the concepts of professionalism, jurisdiction, control and authority to conduct in-depth interviews with ten news managers to explore their perceptions on the adoption of AI in local newsrooms in the U.S. The study found that local newsroom managers perceived that without proper training, AI had the potential to erode professionalism standards in journalism and control over journalistic processes to wane. The findings also suggest that participants rejected the idea that AI could replace humans in journalism despite possibilities the jurisdiction to perform journalistic activities could be compromised as the technology continues to evolve. The study also found that although these news managers recognized AI as a tool in the newsroom, they were unwilling to share the authority with AI in framing the narrative.

Keywords: journalism, news managers, professionalism, jurisdiction, control, authority, artificial intelligence, news managers

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Some of the most recognized news organizations in the United States (U.S.) have been experimenting on ways to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) into their newsrooms for almost a decade now as the technology continues to advance and infiltrate industries across the globe (Peiser 2019; Verma 2024). In as early as 2014, the automation of its corporate earnings reports paved the way for the Associated Press to experience greater efficiencies in increasing its news output while the news organization says on its website that it continues to seek more ways to adopt AI in all stages of the news cycle (Associated Press, n.d.). Bloomberg News uses an automated system called Cyborg to generate an estimated 33 percent of all its contents which helps it to stay ahead of its main rival Reuters in the field of financial news (Peiser, 2019). In 2018, Reuters launched its own AI tool called Lynx Insight that it uses to scan and identify patterns and trends in financial reports and on social media for story ideas and report writing (Verma, 2024).

The academic and journalism scholarship has been quick in identifying that fact that AI is a force to reckon with and responded by undertaking large number of studies on how this new technology and journalism was interacting (Kim & Kim, 2018; Latar, 2015; 2018; Miroshnichenko, 2018; Sundar et al., 2017; Tandoc Jr, et al., 2020; Waddell, 2018). These academic interests have explored distinct areas of the scholarship. The recent years has seen a significant number of studies conducted to understand the opportunities and threats of integrating AI in journalism or the future implications for journalism caused by the adoption of AI in newsrooms (Abdulmajeed & Fahmy, 2022; Ali & Hassoun, 2019; Biswal & Gouda, 2020; Hansen et al. 2017; Marconi, 2020; Túñez-López et al., 2021). On the other hand, scholars like Waddell (2018, 2019) and Tandoc Jr. et al. (2020) have chosen to focus on news credibility, perceptions of AI adoption among journalists and audiences, and perceived bias toward automated content.

Others have explored the ethical implications of AI inclusion in newsrooms such as Broussard et al. (2019), Helberger and Diakopoulos (2022), Stray (2021) and Ouchchy et. al (2020). A much popular aspect of the academia has also looked at comparisons between robot journalism versus human journalism (Kim & Kim, 2018; Latar, 2015, 2018; Miroshnichenko, 2018).

In the last few years, fear and speculations on how generative AI tools like *ChatGPT* were going to bring more challenges to professions like journalism which had for so long relied on its human story-telling abilities had been widespread. Scholars like Dupagne and Chuan (2019) believed that it would be prudent to acknowledge that the adoption of AI will result in serious disruptions in the way newsrooms operated. Scholars like Stray (2016), Peiser (2019) and Pallanich (2019) echoed this and reminded that newsroom already been infiltrated by AI in the form of automated assistants and smart search engines. Therefore, scholars stress the need to understand how journalism practitioners, such as news managers, will decide to react to this looming force.

The journalism industry and the academia have both been wrestling with contradicting notions about how significant the effects of AI will be for journalism as a profession and how those effects could be understood. It was at a time like this that the *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* (JMCQ) in 2019 published a forum where journalism, computer science, and human–computer interaction experts placed their arguments on the matter. At this forum, scholars like Meredith Broussard, journalism professor at New York University, recommended professional journalists and scholars to bring more clarity to their use of the term AI when discussing it to quell misunderstandings about the word (Broussard et al., 2019). She claimed that AI had become a trending term, and the sudden awareness of AI had created irrational concerns about its potential

impact on the media industry. On of the suggestions made by her at the forum was for journalists and editors should do more to educate readers and journalism students on the distinction between artificial intelligence and automation to debunk perceptions among people of looking at AI as sentient entities. She also argued that from an economic perspective, the employment and maintenance of AI in the newsroom was not cost-efficient considering the price of high-impact computational journalism and the brain drain that occurred from the industry (Broussard et al., 2019).

However, another group of scholars at the forum like Nicholas Diakopoulos rejected the notions presented by Broussard and argued that AI technologies were embedded in human values and possessed the values of their makers (Diakopoulos, 2019). He states, "AI is a new medium through which journalists can express and exercise their ethical and normative values through the code they implement," (Diakopoulos, 2019, p. 680). He also claimed that, in contrast to popular belief, AI would prove to be boon for the news sector by creating more opportunities for employment through human and AI collaboration.

Diakopoulos' opinions are also substantiated by existing literature which has largely focused on the opportunities and threats presented by AI or the future implications for journalism caused by the inclusion of AI in newsrooms (Wahl-Jorgensen et al., 2016; Hansen et al. 2017; Ali & Hassoun, 2019; Biswal & Gouda, 2020; Túñez-López et al., 2021; Cheng, 2024). Compared to the vast number of studies undertaken to explore the benefits and challenges of using AI in the field, very little research has examined the perceptions of news managers, the people responsible for the recruitment of AI in newsrooms, to provide a deeper understanding on their willingness to adopt the technology. A study by Noain-Sánchez (2022) explored the perception of experts, journalists and academics regarding the impact of AI in journalism. Although the study employed

an in-depth interview method to investigate the topic, it only managed to interview one data journalist in the U.S. Therefore, the perceptions of U.S. journalists from a variety of news media outlets remain unexplored in the context of AI. This is a major gap that the current study set out to address.

For the purpose of realizing this objective, this study applied the concepts of journalistic professionalism and jurisdiction as defined by Andrew Abbott (1988) alongside the concepts of professional control (Larson, 1979; Freidson, 2001) and journalistic authority (Zelizer, 1992; Robinson, 2006).

Freidson (2001) claimed that professionalism was achieved when an organized occupation gained the authority to establish qualifications, limited task performance by others, and set its own standards. Th present study was interested in exploring how those standards were changing for journalism in a digital landscape.

On the other hand, according to Abbott, when it came to competition within the profession, the aim was to secure jurisdiction over the right to perform a particular task for society (1988). This paper sought to understand how the struggle for jurisdiction in newsroom was navigated amid the adoption of AI.

Through her pioneering research on boundary work from a cultural studies approach, Zelizer showed that establishing boundaries is a customary approach to validate the epistemic authority of journalists (1993). This study ties in with Abbott's definition of professions in terms of their competitive application of expertise to claim jurisdiction over solvable problems where professions compete against one another to control this expertise-based authority (1988). In a review of Abbott's propositions made in *The System of Professions: An Essay on The Division of*

Expert Labor, Furness (2019) stated that competition emerged when social or technical changes threatened an existing profession's jurisdiction or created new opportunities, as seen with the rise of computers (or AI in the context of this study).

Thus, this study aimed to fill the gap in the literature about AI journalism by focusing on how newsroom editors perceive the role of AI on journalistic professionalism, jurisdiction, control, and authority to understand if and how the journalists' entitlement to control a sphere of knowledge and the corresponding field of practice is changing. This study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ. 1. How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic professionalism brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

RQ2: How do news managers perceive the changes in professional jurisdiction brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

RQ. 3: How do news managers perceive the changes in professional control brought about by the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

RQ 4: How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic authority brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Overview of Professions

Before embarking on a journey to understand how professionalism is understood in scholarship, it is important to take a glimpse at how research has explored the meanings of professions. Professions, by their very nature, possess expertise in a specific domain of knowledge and practice (Abbott, 1988). Their ultimate goal transcends mere corporate interests; they strive to contribute positively to society through their work (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001). Challenges to professional status can therefore be viewed as struggles to define and maintain boundaries (Gieryn, 1983): establishing who is considered an insider or outsider, delineating ethical conduct, and so forth.

According to Lewis (2011), scholars in the sociology of professions have traditionally identified professions based on their level of self-regulation and presence of certain characteristics, including formal education, licensing, ethical codes, trust-based professional-client relationships, prioritization of public service over commercial interests, and high social status. He added that central to the trait approach was the effort to identify specific characteristics of a profession and assess how different occupational groups measured up (2011).

Aldridge and Evetts (2003) however argued this "trait approach" of structural functionalism to occupational analysis, which had dominated for decades, was largely abandoned decades ago. According to other scholars (Schudson & Anderson, 2009; Lewis, 2011) it is at this time when the most significant period in the sociology of professionalization research began. This approach, with its normative leanings, portrayed professions as models of occupational autonomy and self-regulation, worth emulating (Carr-Saunders & Wilson, 1993). The research of Everett C.

Hughes and Max Weber in the 1960s and 1970s revolutionized how sociologists study professions (Lewis, 2011). Their work on status and authority sparked a shift away from simply classifying occupations as professions or not. Instead, sociologists started exploring the conditions that motivate individuals within an occupation to pursue professionalization (Hughes, 1964; Weber, 1978).

Over the past forty years, this shift has led sociology to replace the idealized structural-functionalist view of professions with a more Weberian focus on professionalization and the "professional project" and on how occupations seek status and authority, advanced by Magali Sarfatti Larson (1977). Larson (1977) proposed the idea of the "professional project" where she claimed that ideal-typical models showed what professions aspire to be, not what they truly were. She, therefore, suggested that researchers would benefit more if they shifted their attention to how professions secured and maintained their special place in society (1977).

Larson's framework of professionalization centers on how occupational groups strive to translate their possession of limited resources — namely, specialized knowledge and competencies — into tangible social and economic rewards to reap the benefits of the monopoly that is ultimately created. Larson asserted that occupations professionalized to the extent that they could establish and sustain exclusive jurisdiction over their domain of expertise, whether in the economic marketplace or within the broader social system.

2.2 Professionalism in Journalism

Freidson (2001) defined professionalism as when an organized occupation has the authority to: determine qualifications, restrict task performance by others, and set performance standards. Classical or "pure" professionalism is described as the structured and institutionalized application

of general, scientific knowledge to specific cases (Noordegraaf, 2007). Matt Carlson (2018) provides one of the most recent definitions of the term where he says that professionalism involves the control of specialized knowledge by a defined community, where professional expertise combines both abstract and practical knowledge, enabling its members to apply it in real-world scenarios.

As a result, journalism is often deemed a hybrid or “semi-profession” (Witschge & Nygren, 2009), leading scholars to assess its professionalization through surveys of journalists’ values and attitudes. The most prominent of these studies, conducted by David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, concluded that journalists are "of a profession but not in one,” and that journalism is unlikely to fully embrace the institutional forms of professionalism (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996, p. 145).

As per Schudson and Anderson (2008), the sociology of professions acts as a guiding principle to move beyond categorizing journalism on a professional spectrum and explore how journalism has gained and sought to elevate its professional status. Schudson (1978) and Mindich (1998) demonstrated how journalists adopted objectivity to claim social authority by portraying their work as neutral, credible, and "true." The 20th-century development of journalism routines like the "inverted pyramid" and ethical codes served professionalization goals: control (Freidson, 2001) and closure (Abbott, 1988). According to Anderson (2008b), these efforts increased journalists' social authority in the mass media age.

Lewis (2011) argues that professionalization should not be viewed as an attempt to deceive the public into perceiving journalism as a false profession. Scholars like Beam (1990) have demonstrated how it had brought about many benefits, including fostering a collective identity, ensuring some level of autonomy from external critics, and emphasizing public service over profit,

all of which have positively impacted journalism. Journalism's autonomy has been vital in resisting influences from government, advertisers, and audiences (McDevitt, Gassaway, & Perez, 2002). Yet, this autonomy faced challenges, especially amidst the corporate mergers and managerial control of the 1980s and 1990s, which eroded journalists' independence relative to fields like law and medicine (Reese, 1999).

Despite the threats to journalistic autonomy and authority due to the rise of digital media, new participants infiltrating the boundaries of journalism like bloggers and user-generated content, journalists continue to invoke professionalism as the foundation for their essential role in a functioning democracy (Deuze, 2005). Professionalism remains integral to journalists' self-identity (Kunelius & Ruusunoksa, 2008), shaping their sense of authority, expertise, and defining the boundaries of their professional jurisdiction (Zelizer, 1992).

On the other hand, journalistic professionalism has been criticized for its potential as a means of social control (Soloski, 1989), power preservation (Reese, 1990), and management discipline (Evetts, 2003). This control-oriented mindset, Lewis (2011) has become a barrier to adapting to the changes brought by the digital age, as it is deeply embedded in journalistic ideology.

Professionals rely on their knowledge and reputational authority to make judgments, combining objective knowledge with subjective interpretation in context-specific situations (Lincoln, 1994). Journalists, with their distinctive roles, ethical codes, and sense of appropriate practices (Hanitzsch, 2007), similarly present themselves as having a responsibility to generate knowledge for the public.

Despite this, journalism has never fully established the clear boundaries typical of professional status (Carlson, 2018). Journalists often lack formal educational requirements, credentialing, legal protections, and specialized knowledge that define traditional professions. This lack of boundary-enforcing mechanisms complicates journalistic professionalism (Lewis, 2012; Schudson & Anderson, 2009). The ambiguous nature of journalism makes it a fluid concept, rendering it both selective and open to all, Carlson (2018).

The rise of digital media has further challenged journalism's claims to professionalism. Previously, the high costs of mass communication infrastructure acted as a barrier to who could speak publicly through media. Inexpensive digital technologies have removed these barriers, enabling broader participation (Carlson, 2018). Lewis (2012) described a divide between the professional logic of traditional journalism and the participatory logic of citizen journalism which represented fundamentally different claims to authority (p. 838). The expansion of media voices raises questions about how these dynamics influence journalism's claim to legitimacy as a truthful discourse. Professionalism alone cannot validate journalistic judgment or protect its jurisdictional claims (Abbott, 1988). As journalism's boundaries remain porous and flexible in the digital age, it seems less likely that journalists will rely solely on professionalism to defend their work (Carlson, 2018). The ways journalists form professional groups and produce content have both been impacted by this shift (Carlson, 2018).

This study conceptualizes that journalistic professionalism is established or maintained when journalists produce knowledge for the public as responsible agents with distinctive roles and adhere to their sense of appropriate practices or standards. When the generation of knowledge violates those standards of practice, journalism's claim to professionalism diminishes. This concept will be guided by the following research question:

RQ. 1: How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic professionalism brought about by the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

2.3 Professional Jurisdiction in Journalism

Andrew Abbott (1988) built on Sarfatti Larson's approach in *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*, emphasizing professional work over structural categorization and continuing the shift from "professional traits" to "professional struggle." Abbott (1993) argued that modern societies institutionalized expertise through professions, which dominate various domains like medicine, law, and education. These professions grew, split, and adapted, shaping how expertise was distributed and used (Abbott, 1993). According to Abbott (1988), the core of professional life is the profession-work relationship, or "jurisdiction." He argued that this is where the study of professions must begin, with an examination of professional work (1988).

Abbott's concept of jurisdiction is central to his theory, referring to the exclusive claims a profession makes to a body of work (1988). He asserted that professions competed for these claims, and their strength lay in maintaining control over these tasks (1988). Abbott also rejected traditional definitions of professions, proposing instead that they were groups of individuals applying abstract knowledge to specific cases (1998). In recent years, scholars like Schudson and Anderson (2009) have referred to jurisdiction as how a profession applied and demonstrated its base of “abstract knowledge” in day-to-day practice. Abbott argued that the core of inter-professional competition was the struggle for jurisdiction — the exclusive right to perform a particular task for society. When a profession successfully connected its knowledge claims with its everyday practices, it could ask society to acknowledge its expertise by granting it exclusive rights (p. 59), thus gaining social authority (Schudson & Anderson, 2008, p. 95).

When applying this to the information professions, Abbott noted that journalism remained "a very permeable occupation" because there was significant movement into and from fields like public relations (1988). Despite the presence of journalism schools, associations, and degrees, there is no formal exclusion of those without such qualifications (Abbott, 1988, p. 225). According to Abbott (1988), journalism's "extraordinary power" via its jurisdiction over information dissemination surpasses its professional standing. Central to this power is the objectivity norm, shaped by routines and narratives, historically granting journalists a near-monopoly on truth communication (Shirky, 2008; Schudson & Anderson, 2008). In a recent study on the permeability of boundaries in journalism, Riedl (2023) showed that the boundaries of journalism were conditional in nature as he found evidence that these boundaries were opened for some professionals like community managers but remained closed to non-professionals.

Abbott's analysis included case studies from the U.S., the U.K., and France, and focused on the internal competition between professions, like those in law, information systems, and psychotherapy. This competition, as per Abbott (1988), was vital for understanding how professions evolved. In a review of *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor,* Kellermann (1990) argued that Abbott referred to professions as entities which were vulnerable to changes in tasks and social organization and that this vulnerability opened the door to other professions attempting to take over certain tasks. Kellerman also mentioned that professions, as defined by Abbott in his book, were in constant competition within an interdependent system, and shifts in technology (such as AI in this context), society, and culture continuously reshaped professional boundaries (1990). Abbott (1988) also critiqued the traditional understanding of professions from a functional perspective and redefined professions in terms of

their ability to control jurisdiction. He saw professions as evolving structures that legitimized their control through values such as rationality, efficiency, and science (1988).

This study, therefore, conceptualizes that journalistic jurisdiction is compromised when journalists no longer have the exclusive right to practice journalism due to the inability to exclude non-journalists from performing journalistic activities. The concept will be guided by the following research question:

RQ. 2: How do news managers perceive the changes in professional jurisdiction brought about by the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

2.4 Professional Control in Journalism

In his paper *The Changing Nature of Professional Control,* Eliot Freidson (1984) examined how the traditional control that professions exercised over their members was evolving. At the time he wrote the paper, he asserted that professionals had been historically seen as largely autonomous and self-regulating, with informal, collegial forms of control. However, the paper discussed two prominent theories — deprofessionalization and proletarianization — which suggested that professional autonomy was weakening due to external pressures like political and market forces. Freidson (1984) critiqued these theories and presented an alternative perspective, arguing that while some aspects of professional control were changing, professions retained substantial autonomy through the formalization of control mechanisms.

Friedson found his arguments substantiated by the previous works of Larson (1979) which explored the concept of control through the lens of autonomy predominantly in the context of professionalism. Larson's paper examined how professional occupations interacted with bureaucratic organizations and claimed that professionals owned discretionary control over their

work, which granted them a degree of independence from the direct control experienced by typical workers (1979). However, as per Larson, this autonomy was not absolute, as professionals were often subject to the authority of bureaucratic organizations, which might impose bureaucratic controls that limited the autonomy of professionals, but also offered some structural protections (1979).

In Freidson's (1984) view, the increasing size and complexity of organizations where professionals worked (e.g., universities, hospitals) had led to more formalized systems of accountability and professionals were now subject to evaluations by peers and administrators, leading to a stratification within professions. While rank-and-file professionals might have less individual autonomy, the control of their work remained largely in the hands of other professionals, including managers and technical experts, rather than non-professional supervisors, he mentioned (1984). Freidson concluded that this formalization of professional control did not equate to the loss of professional status or autonomy as suggested by deprofessionalization or proletarianization but represented a restructuring of the internal hierarchies and control mechanisms within professions.

Lewis (2012) argued that professional control referred to professional logic in journalism profession. Journalism's professional control thus helps to unite all the essential elements in the journalism profession, and helps journalists to enjoy a monopoly in the information production and gatekeeping process, and it also created a deeply rooted belief among the journalists that they practice the exclusive gatekeeping roles on behalf of the society and democracy. He also argued that control is an anchoring point that helped to develop the boundary work of journalism (2012).

Lewis (2011) also stated that journalism in the U.S. faces challenges in achieving traditional professional status due to its lack of exclusive control over training and certification, inability to restrict practice, and limited power to enforce ethical codes. In recent periods, Lewis

(2012) applied the lens of boundary work to explore how professional control in journalism was being challenged by the rise of open participation in the digital era, resulting in tensions between traditional journalism practices and the participatory culture fostered by new media. Lewis (2012) claims that journalistic control is essential to maintaining credibility and authority over the flow of information, which contributes to the profession's social legitimacy. He also argued that the profession was evolving to find a balance between maintaining control and embracing the openness that digital platforms provide (2012). For example, Alam and Alam (2023) found that journalists were experiencing a shift in their traditional gatekeeping roles as they also enjoyed less autonomy in moderating audience comments. Therefore, it is only rational to ask if journalists' professional control was being challenged in the wake of AI adoption in newsrooms.

On the other hand, Deuze (2005) looked at control in the context of professionalization of journalism in the 20th century which had fostered a globally shared occupational ideology among journalists. Deuze identified public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics as the five key principles of this ideology and claimed that these principles were rooted in the belief that journalists played an indispensable role in controlling the flow of information and serving as society's watchdogs, truth-tellers, and ethical guardians of public knowledge (2005).

This study conceptualizes that control over journalistic practices is compromised when non-journalistic entities compete with journalists to perform journalistic activities which are not rooted in the principles of public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy and ethics. The concept will be guided by the following research question:

RQ. 3: How do news managers perceive the changes in professional control brought about by the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

2.5 Professional Authority in Journalism

Journalists derive much of their authority not merely from what they know but from how they retell events through narratives (Zelizer, 1990). The ability to frame stories and control the narrative enables journalists to position themselves as authoritative voices, regardless of their actual involvement in the event Zelizer (1990). Her study provided key insights on how journalists used specific narrative strategies to establish and reinforce their authority during the Kennedy assassination.

Robinson echoes this by stating that the claims of journalistic authority have traditionally been rooted in the control over content, truth, and information dissemination (2006). However, with the rise of independent blogs, the monopoly of journalists over the news was challenged. Independent blogs, often seen as a form of "black market" journalism, allowed non-journalists to comment on and create their own versions of news, (Robinson, 2006).

Echoing the findings of Vos and Thomas, Carlson (2020) asserted that in the digital age, journalistic authority was not a given but must be constantly negotiated. According to Carlson, the infrastructure of digital news circulation, the changing practices of news consumption, and the rise of competing epistemic authorities all contribute to a more complex and contested media environment, where journalists must work harder to maintain their authority as credible knowledge producers (2020). Carlson argued that journalistic authority was not a trait or a characteristic that belongs to an individual or organization, but it is the product of an "asymmetrical relationship" between authority and those who recognize it (2017, p. 13). He went to explain that it was a two-way street as journalists established their authority over telling a story leveraging its access (to credible, accurate and verified information) but it order to maintain that authority they needed their readers or audiences to depend on that access for information.

Other scholars (Vos & Thomas, 2018) examined how journalistic authority was constructed and reconstructed through a discursive institutionalism lens from 2000 to 2016. According to them (2018), the 21st century has brought about significant challenges to journalistic authority due to factors like declining advertising revenues, shrinking newsrooms, technological advancements allowing non-journalists to participate in news production, and decreasing public trust (2018). This forced journalists to renegotiate their authority, particularly as they competed with new forms of quasi-journalism (e.g., bloggers).

On the other hand, journalists have attempted to recapture authority through negotiating their willingness to adapt to new practices such as the incorporation of hyperlinks into stories (Coddington, 2014) and blogging (Hermida, 2009). A growing body of scholarship (Berkowitz, 2000; Hindman; 2005) has also documented ways in which the field of journalism is repaired in the wake of norm violations through increased attention on the research area centering journalistic authority discourses.

This study will conceptualize journalistic authority in the digital age to be established when journalists remain in control over their storytelling ability but negotiate with non-journalists over other aspects of the news production process such as editing or tagging.

RQ. 4: How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic authority brought about by the adoption of AI in newsrooms.

2.6 Artificial Intelligence in Journalism

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad field that includes various data-driven algorithms, robots, and systems designed to handle tasks typically performed by humans. While some AI systems learn and improve over time as they process more data, many rely on static scripts that perform

the same functions repeatedly (Eloundou, 2024). According to scholars (Marconi, 2020; van Dalen, 2024), this raises the possibility that AI could take over a significant portion of routine journalistic tasks, freeing human journalists to focus on more creative work.

In a study conducted on the use of AI, de-Lima-Santos and Ceron (2021) examined which sub-fields of AI were dominant in the news industry. They analyzed 102 case studies pulled from a dataset put together by JournalismAI, an initiative of the London School of Economics journalism. The findings indicated that the most used AI subfields in journalism were machine learning; computer vision; and planning, scheduling, and optimization. The authors (de-Lima-Santos and Ceron (2021) claimed that the other four subfields - speech recognition; expert systems; and robotics – were not used in journalism while the use of the first three often accompanied the use of natural language processing.

In a recent study, Cherepakhin (2024) listed some of the most promising applications of AI in journalism today which include personalized content distribution, more efficient content generation through automation, effective content moderation, improved transcription services and dynamic pricing models for ads and subscriptions, detection of deepfakes and fake news, new tools for fact-checking and debunking, enhanced search capabilities for images and videos, better sentiment analysis for user-generated content and the ability to find more data in narratives and more narratives in data.

A global review of 130 AI projects by the Knight Foundation identified two main goals for using AI in journalism: improving reporting capabilities and reducing variable costs (Knight Foundation, 2021). This was echoed at the JMCQ forum by scholars like Diakopoulos who claimed that AI brought new opportunities for journalists to enhance their work routines (Broussard et al., 2019). Echoing with him, Møller et al. (2024) mentioned that AI allowed

journalists to spend more time to "reclaim" their age-old traditional skills, such as investigative reporting (p. 9).

Reuters' News Tracer algorithm uses AI to help with research and information gathering by automatically identifying breaking news on social media (Liu et al., 2017). It alerts journalists to newsworthy events by detecting clusters of related information and analyzing the accounts sharing the material.

AI adoption is more common in newsrooms located in North America and Europe, and other regions are beginning to adopt the technology as well. However, a study conducted by Munoriyarwa et al. (2021) found that the adoption of AI in developing countries like South African newsrooms had been slower and factors like the high cost of implementation, ethical implications, and job loss fears played a significant role in this. The findings also suggested that many journalists remained skeptical of integrating AI in an already precarious profession as it could threaten journalists' control and autonomy.

In countries with fragile democracies and state-controlled media, algorithms can potentially serve as a tool to mitigate bias and misinformation. A study conducted in Korea by Jung et al. (2017) revealed that audience perception was undifferentiated between AI-generated news articles and stories reported by human journalists. The findings from the study indicate that the quality of algorithm-written articles, although in early stages at the time in Korea, was good enough to beat human reporting (Jung et al., 2017). Although this may be used to combat misinformation in journalism, this also increases the potential for replacing human reporting in newsrooms and erodes the control of journalistic practices by humans.

The adoption of AI in journalism is part of a larger effort to transform newsroom business models and encourage innovation, (Simon, 2024). A comprehensive literature review done by Paulussen (2016) helped to showcase how journalistic innovation was impacted by the interplay between structural and individual factors as well as human and non-human actors.

However, Carlson (2015) raised several professional concerns about automated journalism, including its impact on journalistic authority. While he acknowledged that automation could help to raise efficiency in the news production process and gave journalists the opportunity to focus on investigative stories, he warned it could result in unwanted job cuts and news commoditization.

Thurman, Dörr, and Kunert (2017) interviewed journalists about automation which highlighted drawbacks such as reliance on isolated data sources, use of one-dimensional quantitative data, difficulty in interpreting challenging data, news generated in devoid of human perspective, needs journalists to pre-write top-lines and difficulty in using data creatively.

Verman (2024) warned that despite its improvements, AI still had trouble understanding context and cultural ques, which are frequently crucial in news reporting. Artificial intelligence (AI) systems may misunderstand sophisticated sociopolitical nuances, cultural contexts, or sarcasm, which could result in inaccurate reporting or interpretation, she said. This restriction emphasizes how crucial human journalists are to delivering complex background, comprehending cultural nuances, and reaching moral conclusions while covering news.

Adoption of AI in newsrooms also posed organizational challenges such a lack of resources, expertise, or motivation, as well as structural barriers, difficulty hiring qualified staff, and no clear AI strategy (Beckett, 2019). AI success depended on how well organizations adopted and used it. Resistance to change and resource challenges make leaders skeptical of new technologies. So, AI

concerns affect managers and editors too and the need for the present study is not only time-befitting but also much needed.

Beckett (2019) conducted a study on media innovators and editors and emphasized that collaboration, well-defined roles, and robust objective evaluation methods were critical in today's journalism landscape. The blurring of lines between human- and algorithm-generated content (Clerwall, 2014) had prompted a reevaluation of journalistic skills and a shift in professional identity (van Dalen, 2012).

Historically, journalists have resisted standardization or rationalization of their work, but this stance is becoming increasingly untenable. Analytics dashboards, which provide continuous performance tracking and peer comparison, had become indispensable in newsroom management (Petre, 2018).

The journalism profession has consistently evolved in response to technological changes, shifting organizational objectives, and an increasingly prominent management culture (Waldenström et al., 2019). Technological developments have historically been incorporated into journalism's professionalization process, solidifying the shared belief among media owners, readers, journalists, and other stakeholders that validates journalism as a distinct profession (Nerone, 2013). However, the media sector has not been at the forefront of innovation, and the automation and AI tools that have been implemented are generally viewed as supplementary to human journalists (Beckett, 2019).

Conversations with editors, software developers, and innovation strategists involved in news production indicate a widespread view that journalists will remain at the heart of the industry. The majority of AI currently employed in newsrooms lacks the sophistication to replace the work

of highly skilled journalists, and even if it possessed such capability, there would be reluctance to surrender human supervision of the process. A 2019 study of editorial managers conducted by Milosavljević and Vobič revealed that many underlined the importance of human labor over complete automation. Milosavljević and Vobič (2019) also argued that although journalistic logic had traditionally been central to the profession, editors and publishers were increasingly seeing it as outdated.

In a recent study, Cools and Diakopoulos (2024) interviewed journalists from the Netherlands and Denmark to understand their perspectives about the opportunities and risks of using Generative AI. The authors claimed that the study unearthed 16 different yet "specific" uses of Generative AI in the reporting process (2024). These uses include automated content generation, topic trend analysis, anticipating news events and scenarios; automated article writing; multilingual translation, automated transcripts, data analysis and visualization, voice and speech synthesis; auto summarization; real time fact checking; content personalization; user engagement analysis; social media posting; automated content distribution; and search engine optimization. The findings from the study (Cools & Diakopoulos, 2024) reveal that respondents were appreciative of the enhanced efficiency and data handling capabilities that the use of these tools provided. However, they were concerned that the use of generative AI could lead to an oversimplification of complex matters besides the fact that generative AI had no news judgement. The respondents in this study expressed concern that the use of generative AI in the newsroom could result in a loss of control over their journalistic autonomy. The participants also stressed the need for journalists to become more educated and algorithmic literate and the need for greater surveillance and assessments to ensure that newsrooms use AI responsibly and ethically.

AI presents numerous opportunities for journalism, and newsrooms are embracing innovative approaches more than ever now. While research has highlighted tensions between competing logics and skills in the human-machine dynamic, there is an overall trend towards increased automation over a larger range of the production process (Simon, 2024). Broussard (2019) argued that new technologies like AI were broadening the scope of tasks, enabling journalists to concentrate on more core journalistic works, and enhancing the dissemination of news to audiences. However, newsroom innovation has frequently been spearheaded by IT departments (Westlund et al., 2021). This warrants an even greater need for editorial staff and management to take an active role to ensure journalism's development remains both professionally and financially viable.

Latar (2018) argued that the one of the most prominent reasons behind this was the fact that AI, intelligent machines and automation were being integrated into every form of human communication, inevitably changing how media platforms operated and communicated with their audiences. Consequently, the fundamental elements of journalism — storytelling in various formats, critical thinking, verification, human values, ethics, autonomy, and integrity — become even more vital (Lindén, 2020). As these underlying factors evolve, journalists' professional identities will likely shift accordingly. However, this should not be perceived as a threat; rather, it signifies that the skills, responsibilities, and roles that cannot be automated will become even more esteemed. Scholars like Diakopoulos (2019) believe that journalism will adapt to these changes, collaborating with AI and technology to enhance its practices.

Citing Autor (2015), Jung et al. (2017) argued that journalists were one of many other professions that could either benefit or be put at risk by the progress of automation. Jung further argued that threats of automation and technology replacing "ordinary" or middle-class jobs had

been looming large now and again for the last two hundred years and was resurfacing again in the digital era (2017).

The Journalism AI Report (Beckett, 2019) found that 60 per cent journalists surveyed in the report were worried about the impact of AI on their journalistic work. The report also found that new divides will emerge while existing ones will deepen between small and big newsrooms through the adoption of AI in the bigger newsrooms with smaller newsrooms feeling cornered and isolated (Beckett, 2019). This is also echoed by Finnset (2020) who found that the shift in the revenue model and the financial cutbacks in the media industry did not make media houses attractive employers of AI experts as there was little left to invest in either the technology or the experts needed to run them.

One of the numerous obstacles to integrating AI in newsrooms, as mentioned in the report (Beckett, 2019), was the cultural divide between computer scientists and journalists. The study also indicated that most journalists were averse to the idea of having more time to do more work because of AI being used in newsrooms.

To understand how AI was being used in newsrooms to verify content in order to stop the spread of misinformation and fake news, El Gody (2021) used Al Jazeera as a case study in the Arab media in another study. According to the findings, Al Jazeera was collaborating with major global media organizations like Reuters and the BBC to fight fake news and was making significant investments to implement AI in all its newsrooms (El Gody, 2021). The study found that the biggest challenge to achieving the full potential of AI adoption at the Al Jazeera newsrooms were infrastructural and technological issues, such as addressing the demands of a diverse newsroom with a wide range of journalists with global profiles, the economy and investment, and the reluctance of journalists to adopt new technology.

Finnset (2020) conducted a study on AI adoption in Norwegian newsrooms using SWOT analysis. The findings indicated that AI was increasingly used for news gathering, production, and distribution, with experts viewing it as an opportunity to transform, rather than replace, journalism. AI improved efficiency by reducing time spent on repetitive tasks and enhanced the ability to tailor reader experiences.

Opportunities included predictive approaches and collaboration with other organizations to innovate media competencies, the study found (Finnset, 2020). However, insufficient expertise and the complexity of personalization algorithms posed significant challenges to adopting AI while competition from tech giants like Google and Facebook created a competitive edge that went against the smaller news outlets.

In a study conducted on the perceptions of Pakistani journalists about AI, Jamil (2021) found that these journalists looked at AI merely as a medium of communication and presented pessimistic opinions about the importance of AI in communication, contrary to the propositions presented by Guzman (2018). The findings from the study revealed that both female and male journalists in Pakistan viewed AI as a threat to their jobs while male journalists shared the added concern that AI-driven journalism will alienate them from their audiences (Jamil, 2021). The barriers identified by the interviewees in the inclusion of AI in the newsrooms of Pakistan include scarce economic and technological resources; data inaccuracy; limitation in data accessibility; absence of government strategy to foster AI in journalism; lack of journalists' AI-related and digital journalism education and training, and the existing digital divide in Pakistan (Jamil, 2021).

A review of literature found that while most recent studies have extensively studied how AI is being implemented in newsrooms or what are the opportunities and challenges presented by the inclusion of AI, very few have studied the perceptions of news managers about AI on their

own. Most recent studies have either studied the perceptions of mostly reporters (Jamil, 2021) or the perceptions of AI experts (Finnset, 2020) or a combination of both (El Gody, 2021). Other research endeavors focused on measuring the credibility of news articles written by machines and journalists among readers (Longoni et al., 2021; Waddell, 2018; Mayo & Leshner, 2000).

The inclusion of AI in the newsrooms will inherently make them diverse. According to Basset-Jones (2005), while diversity fostered creativity, it hindered cohesiveness and caused greater conflict and communication problems compared to work environments that are more homogenous. Scholars like Lüscher and Lewis (2008) suggested that newsroom managers would have to inevitably resort to new strategies to help them make sense of the paradoxical scenarios that would arise in diverse workplaces. Other scholars like Sylvie and Gade (2015) and Sylvie and Huang (2008) echoed this notion when they predicted that how newsroom managers managed diversity would become integral to addressing change and the challenges of a changing environment.

The author argues that one such strategy for managers could be to redefine and readjust their roles in the age of AI as conceptualized in the sociology of professions that emphasizes the role of specialized knowledge in distinguishing professionals from non-professionals (Parsons, 1954; Greenwood, 1957; Freidson, 1970; Larson, 1977), underpinning professional expertise and cognitive superiority. Abbott's (1988) system of professions framework theorizes how professional knowledge relates to work, societal context, and competition. Møller et al. (2024) applied this to understand artificial intelligence’s impact on journalism, arguing that the profession’s vulnerability to automation depends on both its practices and societal role.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

3.0 Overview

The study aims to provide an in-depth examination of the perceptions of news managers on adoption of AI in U.S. newsrooms qualitative interview methodology to achieve this objective; the author will interview news managers who work in the newsrooms (broadcast, print, radio and online) across the United States.

The most important rationale behind using qualitative interviews for the study is that "interviews are particularly well-suited to understanding people's experience, knowledge and worldviews" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). Lindlof and Taylor (2017) assert that qualitative interviews are a great way for researchers to learn how people explain and defend a philosophy, a cultural logic, a belief system, or a lay theory, and how this explanation is then applied to various situations, problems, and dilemmas and so on. In this study, the researcher is interested in understanding how news managers defend their decisions to hire AI in their newsrooms and how they interpret they the changes occurring in journalistic professionalism, jurisdiction, control, and authority as a result.

According to McCrakken (1988), finding out what types of people and in what quantities share traits is not the goal of the qualitative interview but the goal is rather to acquire knowledge of the cultural classifications and presumptions that one culture uses to understand the world. He further mentioned that "qualitative research does not survey the terrain, it mines it. It is, in other words, much intensive than extensive in its objectives" (McCracken, 1988). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2017), interviews are a remarkably original approach of penetrating the surface of everyday life. They can:

> reveal emotional dimensions of social experience That are often not evident in behavior….. (F)or many people the imagined meanings of their activities, their self-concepts, their fantasies about themselves (and about others) are also significant, and we generally cannot get at those without asking. (Lamont & Swidler, 2014, p.159).

It is the anticipation of a researcher that a person's experience, perspective, or ideological affiliation will result in phrases and sentiments that only a person who has "been there" or who "is there" can express (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017). This study is focused on investigating the perceptions of news managers of AI in the newsrooms in the U.S and their experiences of employing AI in journalistic work.

The inquiry instrument used in the study is a long-interview method which is known for its descriptive and analytical strength. Through a dialogue between the author and the participants, the long-interview method provides a platform for the participants' voices to emerge alongside the data (DeVito, 2014). The participants in this process take on the role of experts or specialists in a field and several categories arise from the data (Angen, 2000). The author believes dialogue makes the participants feel valued and they are more willing to share insights that would otherwise be hard to gather through mere surveys posted online.

In the study, the participants described their perceptions of the adoption of Artificial Intelligence in newsrooms, what kind of AI model was used in the newsroom they worked for if the newsroom had adopted AI, if they were considering adopting AI in their newsroom in future and why, they also shared if they were not using AI in their newsroom and also if did not intend to do so in future.

In qualitative research, methodological accuracy is achieved by using checkpoints, which consist of meticulously coded data and themes that are recognized and recorded for consistency and reliability (Lindolf & Taylor, 2017). The author employed this technique to investigate human perception, its regulation, and its underlying causes because research that uses it is known for maintaining methodological rigor and transparency while carrying out a thorough examination of the data.

Open-ended questions allow participants to build on their own understandings in their own words, which is one of the main advantages of using "qualitative methods in exploratory research" (Readings, p. 4). Open-ended questions also allow the researcher to engage with the participant and build a rapport with them.

3.1 The Long Interview Method

Qualitative researchers advocate the use of long interviews as they allow a researcher to take a glimpse inside the participants' minds and examine how they comprehend the topics under investigation, according to McCracken (1988). Therefore, the method is very beneficial for both analytical and descriptive purposes and is frequently utilized by qualitative researchers.

"The method can take us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world. It can take us into the life world of the individual, to see content and patterns of daily experience. The long interview gives us the opportunity to step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves" (McCracken, 1988; p. 9).

The instrument plays a critical role in social science research since it opens up a plethora of applications and makes allowances for clear expression of a participant or actor's experiences

and views. Such an instrument has, of course, infinite applications. A deeper comprehension of the attitudes and experiences of the relevant actors enhances every social science research.

"Without a qualitative understanding of how culture mediates human action, we can know only what numbers tell us. The long qualitative interview is useful because it can help us to situate these numbers in their fuller scholar and cultural contexts" (McCracken, 1988; p. 9). McCraken further emphasized how "obligatory" and "compelling" it is to use the qualitative approach in conjunction with the long-interview inquiry strategy.

However, the long interview method has an inherent disadvantage of being time-consuming, and participants may find it inconvenient to sit through long hours and answer questions. The same drawback affects the researchers as well because it can be challenging to arrange a suitable time and appointment with the participants. The author's interpretations in this respect do not differ much from those of McCracken (1988), who mentioned both problems.

3.2 Researcher As Key Instrument

According to Creswell (2013), "the qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behavior, and interviewing participants" (p. 44). Following the guidelines of Creswell, the author will act as the key instrument in the study where the author will rely entirely on open-ended questions designed by herself to interact with, observe and probe into the perceptions of the participants. McCracken (1988) argued that as qualitative data was often complex and required techniques to identify patterns and assumptions, the researcher is compelled to rely on his cognitive abilities, experience, and imagination to locate a match for patterns concealed in the data. He further mentioned that "the diverse aspects of the self become a bundle of templates to be held up against the data until parallels emerge," (1988, p. 19).

3.3 Reflexivity

As a researcher and a former journalist, I believe that it is only human for me to have ideas of my own as I walk into an interview. It is also true that my perceptions of the adoption of AI in newsrooms will have the possibility of being reflected in the interpretation of some of the findings. Therefore, it was important for the author as a researcher to acknowledge her personal biases so that she could make a conscious effort to put them aside as she embarked upon interpreting the findings from interviewing the participants who provided in-depth information on how they made meaning of a changing newsroom environment in the wake of the adoption of AI in them.

The author believes that AI will become an integral part of all newsrooms in future, except for perhaps the smaller media outlets. Therefore, it was important for the author that the participants would not be able to realize this during the interview process. The author made sure that during the interview, the questions remained neutral and were asked from a very neutral perspective using neutral phrases. The author ensured no question was accompanied by value judgements or personal opinions or preferences. During each interview, the author consciously avoided using leading questions while providing examples and contexts to participants about questions on the four variables of the study. During the study, the author made sure that her identity as a former journalist did not interfere with her role as the interviewer by ensuring that there was a distinct line between how much she shared about herself and her own career as a former journalist during the process. While building a rapport with the participants was necessary for getting the participants to engage, it was also important to establish very early on that the researcher wished to keep her own opinions to herself. It is important to mention this here as the participants were journalists and some often exhibited a tendency to counter-question the researcher for her own opinions.

The author also believes that despite all the buzz, anticipation and gloom surrounding the invasion of AI in newsrooms, journalists and news managers will have a long way to go before they fully understand how to harness the opportunities presented by AI. The author is also concerned that given the rising number of newsrooms in the U.S. that have adopted AI, very few have contingency plans in place to tackle any unforeseen circumstances that may arise from automating newsroom operations and content production. Nevertheless, the author firmly believes that a greater understanding of how the adoption of AI impacts U.S. newsrooms can do more good than harm.

3.4 Online Video Research Interviews

As the author attempted to interview news managers employed across newsrooms in the United States, the author has chosen to apply the video conferencing method as she is enrolled in a master's program at the University of Oklahoma during the course of conducting this study. Conducting the interviews within a short time frame means that the author has to take advantage of modern digital technologies such as OVRIs to ensure that no matter what part of the United States the participants work in, their testimonies can be recorded at their convenience to allow them the comfort to talk at leisure and share their experiences so that rich and in-depth data could be gathered. On the other hand, since all the participants do not live in one particular state of the United States, time zone differences need to be taken into account and OVRIs also play a significant role in mitigating these challenges.

McCracken (1988) wrote that the qualitative long interview methods were time-consuming which, however, allowed the authors to do as they wished to investigate and maximize the data. On the other hand, the participants, being news managers, had a busy schedule, worked in bustling newsrooms to daily hard deadlines and worked six days a week. Therefore, the only way to

capitalize on the time with the participants, the author will choose the video conferencing interview method.

In recent years, advancements in technology have meant that video conferencing can now be looked upon as a practical substitute for the once popular telephone interview method for both the researchers and participants for a number of reasons (Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel, & Cook, 2020; Lobe & Morgan, 2021). Video conferencing offers certain prominent advantages, including cost savings (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014), increased accessibility to a wider range of populations (Deakin & Wakefield, 2014; Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009), faster interviewing by removing travel time (Winiarska, 2017), the ability to reach difficult-to-reach demographics, and the reduction of unforeseen circumstances, like bad weather, that might discourage participants from meeting in person (Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009). Simultaneously, as opposed to telephone conferences, researchers can enjoy the additional benefits of online video conferencing services increasing the likelihood of gathering high-quality data from both verbal and non-verbal cues during in-person interviews, according to a recent study by Heiselberg and Stępińska (2023). The scholars (2023) showed in their study that the limitations associated with in-person interviews, such as time, money, and the possibility that the researcher's physical presence during data collection can affect subjects' responses, can be overcome with the employment of Online Video Research Interviews. One of the primary benefits of utilizing video conferencing services for data collecting is the ability to hold meetings with participants in any location (Heiselberg & Stępińska, 2023).

The author will use the Zoom video conferring platform to interview the participants and record the interviews. The recordings will be carefully categorized and saved in a double-password-protected folder on the author's personal laptop.

3.5 Non-Probability Sampling

The non-probability sampling method was used, as suggested by various scholars such as projects Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) and Battaglia et al. (2008), as the population was not defined. “Subjective methods” are used in non-probability sampling to determine which items will be included in the sample. Another factor contributing to this sample technique’s importance is the time and money it saves (Battaglia et al., 2008). Because the author had no access to funds for conducting the study, which was an essential part of the coursework required to complete her degree, she found this recruitment approach more suitable for meeting the sampling objectives of the study.

The snowball sampling methodology is a popular non-probability strategy frequently utilized in the recruitment process of social science research projects (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Battaglia et al., 2008). According to Battaglia et al. (2008), the snowball sampling approach is applied in two situations: first, when the population is rare or ill-defined; and second, when individuals within the population are acquainted with one another or have mutual relationships. Battaglia et al. (2008) also asserted that the respondents in both situations would be aware of the identities of other people in the same population group was to be expected.

Guided by the above-mentioned sampling techniques, the author set about the recruitment process by first contacting news managers who worked in newsrooms along with the author’s colleagues or who were introduced to the author through faculty and peers. In the second stage of the recruitment process, the participants recruited in the first round suggested the names of other news managers who worked in newsrooms across the United States. “The process continues until an adequate sample size has been obtained or until no new names are elicited from the process” (Battaglia et al., 2008). In the end, the author conducted interviews with eight participants who

worked in newsrooms in the United States and who held managerial positions or supervised AI projects undertaken by the newsroom.

3.6 Recruitment Procedure of Participants

The study interviewed eight participants who are employed in managerial positions or supervised AI projects run in newsrooms based in the United States. Initially, the author contacted around 30 news managers to discuss their perceptions of the adoption of AI in U.S. newsrooms. All of them were contacted via email and phone between August 2024 and October 2024. The author then sought the consent of those who agreed to take part in the study and closed recruitment once the desired number of participants for the study was reached.

The participants were provided with the consent form (Appendix A) after they gave their consent to participate in the study. The consent form along with the questionnaire consisting of a total of eight questions, including ice-breaking questions, were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Oklahoma to be used in the study.

The participants initially received the consent form through email and were interviewed in their offices or newsrooms and at homes as well. Before starting the discussions with the participants guided by a questionnaire of 12 questions (Appendix B), the author also informed all the participants beforehand through email that the conversation would be recorded. McCracken (1998) mentioned that discussion guide was to be considered a requisite for the long interview method. According to him, a guide was there to set a direction for the interview so that the material was dealt with in the same way for each participant and thereby helping the interviewer to focus on the words of the interviewee (p. 24). The discussion guide serves the purpose of a starting point for a conversation in which mainly the participants ascertain the course of the interview.

3.7 Data Analysis

After the conclusion of each interview, the video recording was replayed and transcribed by the author by hand on individual Microsoft Word files. The author was the only individual transcribing the scripts of the audio of the interviews. The next step in the analysis involved replaying the interview to check for errors or omissions. This helped to reduce the number of mistakes made during the transcription process.

The most important step involved a microanalysis of each interview through open coding. Strauss and Corbin (1998) referred to open coding as an analytical tool that aided in the identification of relevant concepts and in locating their elements, properties, and dimensions within the data. Corbin and Strauss (1998) also mentioned that this process, also known as line-by-line analysis, contained the elements of both open and axial coding and recommended that it be undertaken at the very beginning of the data analysis process.

Therefore, the author undertook a line-by-line analysis of the individual interviews transcribed on MS Word files to find commonalities in individual-level information and similarities in statements made by the participants during the interviews. Similarities in the statements were then grouped into separate categories and sub-categories. A total of 23 codes were developed from which six themes emerged. These themes were then systematically placed under the four corresponding concepts – professionalism, jurisdiction, control and authority.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Prior to designing this study, the author completed the Responsible Conduct of Research online training, which is mandated for all graduate students at the University of Oklahoma who

conduct research, especially those involving human participants. Before beginning data collection, the author obtained the approval of the University of Oklahoma's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study on news managers employed in the U.S. As part of the IRB application, the author drafted the recruitment materials and the informed consent form. This form informed the participants about the purpose of the study, provided details of the interview process, specified the participants' rights during the study, outlined the measures taken to preserve their confidentiality, and listed the contact information of the author along with that of the author's committee chair as the faculty sponsor.

Before each interview, the author sent the participants the IRB written consent form to be signed and sent back to the author before the start of the interviews. On receiving back the signed consent forms, they were signed by the author and saved on a double password-protected file on her personal computer.

After conducting the interviews, the video recordings were downloaded from the Zoom cloud onto the author's personal computer and saved on the same double-password-protected file. The default recording of the Zoom interview, saved on the OU server, was deleted as an added measure to ensure the confidentiality of the identity and data of the participants. The author was also the only person to transcribe these video recordings as another measure taken to secure the confidentiality of the participants' data collected. As part of the transcription process, the author ensured that the interview transcriptions contained no identifying data or any information that could lead to the disclosure of the identity of any of the interviewees.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter explains the rationale for the study design, including the sampling, data collection methods, and data analysis. This chapter also outlines how the author addressed issues related to personal bias in the reflexivity statement and listed out the necessary ethical considerations ensured for conducting the study involving human subjects. The findings from the data analysis will be outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.0 Demographic Data and AI Usage

A total of eight participants were interviewed for this study. All the participants worked in managerial positions at eight different U.S. newsrooms located in the Midwest, the South and the West (categorized in Table 1). Among the participants, two were female and six were males from different types of newsrooms – one television, two newspapers, one school-based newspaper, two public radio stations, one online news website and one trade magazine.

Each participant managed a different kind of local newsroom. Since all the eight participants worked at local newsrooms, none of the newsrooms studied can be categorized as large. Participant 1 was a news manager from the Midwest and managed news editors and newsroom staff at two local television stations based within the same state. They were also the only participant in the study from broadcast. Three of the participants – Participants 2, 5 and 7 – worked in print. While Participant 2 was employed at a city newspaper in the Midwest, Participant 5 managed a news bulletin in the West that went to print on two days a week and Participant 7 worked at a school newspaper that also served the entire community in the city the school was based in. All three of the print newsrooms can be categorized as small newsrooms. The two participants who managed public radio stations both were based in the Midwest. However, Participant 6 managed a public radio station that can be categorized as medium-sized because it caters to the audiences in the entire state it operates in while Participant 4 supervised a small-sized newsroom as it only catered to the audiences in the city in was based in. The online news website based in the South is also a medium-sized newsroom as it caters to the needs of readers in the entire state it is based in.

Respondent	Gender	Type of Newsroom	Location	Role
Participant 1	Male	Television	Midwest	Supervises news editors and newsroom staff for two television stations
Participant 2	Male	Print	Midwest	In charge of newsroom
Participant 3	Female	Online	South	Manages data, photo and multimedia teams
Participant 4	Male	Public Radio Station	Midwest	In charge of newsroom
Participant 5	Male	Print	West	In charge of newsroom
Participant 6	Male	Public Radio Station	Midwest	Reporting, overseeing management of an AI project
Participant 7	Female	School Newspaper	Midwest	In charge of newsroom
Participant 8	Male	Trade Magazine	West	Oversees website, social media accounts, manages data visualization for website, assigns stories, commissions articles

Table 1: Respondents' gender, type of newsrooms managed, and newsroom locations

The interview respondents also shared whether their organizations used AI, and how as well as if they had any AI policies in place (categorized in Table 2). Seven of the eight participants shared that their organizations used AI in some form or the other while the school-based newspaper did not use AI officially. The two print newsrooms – one based in the Midwest and the other in the West - used an AI-powered content management system called BLOX. The online newsroom in the South used AI for content management and audio content generation and was the only newsroom in the study with the most reader-facing products. The medium-sized radio station in the Midwest used AI for generating transcriptions, audio cleaning, grant applications and had also taken part in a pilot project involving AI bias tracker while the other public radio from the Midwest

used AI for transcription of government meetings and had been experimenting with AI for summarizing the transcriptions. The trade magazine based in the West only used AI for internal use and story idea generation purposes.

Respondent	Type of Newsroom	AI Policy	AI Use
Participant 1	Television	No. Awaiting audit report	Production of ads for social media
Participant 2	Print	No	Uses BLOX for content management
Participant 3	Online	Yes	Content management: tagging & AI-gen audio content
Participant 4	Public Radio Station	No	Yes; transcriptions, audio cleaning, grant applications; took part in a pilot project involving AI bias tracker
Participant 5	Print	No	Uses BLOX for content management
Participant 6	Public Radio Station	Yes	Transcription of government meetings; experimenting with summarizing transcriptions
Participant 7	School Newspaper	Yes	No
Participant 8	Trade Magazine	No	Yes; only for internal use and idea generation

Table 2: AI usage and AI policy in Newsrooms

The studied newsroom managers, except for one, shared a diverse range of uses for AI in the newsrooms they managed. However, the study found that not all the newsrooms that used AI had policies in place for using the technology. Only three of the eight newsrooms had AI policies during the study period. Four of the newsrooms did not have any policies regarding AI use, and one of the eight newsrooms was awaiting an AI audit report before fully adopting an AI policy.

Nonetheless, the school-based newspaper in the Midwest had already a draft AI policy in place to be used in future but it was not yet using AI officially in the newsroom.

4.1 Themes

An analysis of the data led to the emergence of six themes which were then used to answer the four research questions which this study set out to ask. This section provides an in-depth insight into the various themes which emerged from the codes developed during analysis. The section also discusses each theme in the context of how they tie in with each concept in the paper and shed light on how each concept is perceived to be impacted by the participants in the study. The section will outline how the explication of each concept from the existing literature provides a lens for the concepts to have an applied meaning in research on professionalism, jurisdiction, control and authority.

A) Impact on Journalistic Standards/Transparency/Ethics

This theme centers around how the participants perceived journalism professionalism and control to be impacted through the adoption of AI in newsrooms. The study found that the news managers were broadly concerned about erosion in journalistic standards and norms and the ethical lapses that may result from the adoption of AI in journalism and how that might impact journalism's role in serving the public. They were also concerned about how AI's adoption would impact transparency and accuracy in the information production and dissemination. The theme was used to answer RQ. 1. How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic professionalism brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms? and RQ. 3: How do news managers perceive the changes in professional control brought about by the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

Participant 5, who managed a news bulletin in the West, said that they were firm believers of adhering to the traditional journalism practices and that they were concerned about a more intense adoption of AI in his newsroom without any guidelines in place. They were of the opinion that if AI was used as a shortcut to reporting and writing, it would make the job too easy and journalists would no longer have personal investments in a news story. They said that they found it scary knowing that there would be journalists out there who would be tempted to take shortcuts through the adoption of AI in newsrooms. This would not only adversely impact journalistic professionalism, but also cause journalists to give away a part of the journalistic control to technologies like AI as an erosion in journalism standards is synonymous to an erosion in journalistic norms.

In regards with the impact the adoption of AI would have on journalistic professionalism, at least two of the participants mentioned the example of some publications which had recently made use of AI to generate a story and to create fabricated bylines. Participant 8, who also worked at a newsroom in the West, said that there were already existing examples out there on how the inappropriate use of AI by some famous publications had caused a stir among both readers and professional journalist community for publishing articles using the names of made-up reporters or for printing an article about something that never happened. They believed that instead of blaming AI for these erosions in journalistic standards and ethics, it should be realized that the particular journalistic organization which had used AI in a way that it should not be using had to be blamed.

Speaking in the same vein, Participant 5 mentioned the incident where a popular sports magazine had allowed AI to not only write a story but also to make up the names of reporters to go as the byline was a clear example of a line having been crossed. They also mentioned that in doing so this magazine had not only lied to the readers, but also fooled them. They also felt

threatened by the ignorant use of AI. The study found that these unethical practices which were already taking in the journalism industry had the potential to erode the standards of professionalism among journalists and take away their control over journalism if the use of AI violated journalistic norms.

While discussing the issue of journalistic control, six of the eight participants emphasized journalistic values, ethical standards, and human oversight as critical to AI integration in journalism. Two of the interviewed participants discussed the ethical implications of adopting AI in newsrooms while five of the eight interviewees spoke at length about transparency in the use of AI.

Participants 1, 3, 4 and 5 stressed the need for greater transparency regarding the use of AI. Regarding the use of AI in news stories, Participant 5 mentioned that it was important for journalists to fully disclose to readers that a human being did not write a certain story, and it was generated by using AI. They also said that any policies drafted on the use of AI should make it mandatory for news organizations to inform their readers about what was being generated using AI. Participant 3 said that they were planning to launch an AI generated news quiz and they were disclosing to the public how those news articles would be selected for the quiz to stay transparent with their readers.

Participant 8 said that if news organizations chose to use AI in video production, it must be held responsible for disclosing and staying transparent about how it had used AI. They were skeptical of the fact that journalists who had worked for organizations with a history of being ethical and transparent would ever do that kind of thing. They also believed that it was unlikely that news organizations would at some point choose not to verify that content generated by AI as

they perceived that even 99.90 per cent accuracy was not enough in journalism as journalists did not want to be wrong.

On the other hand, Participant 4 approached the topic of ethical concerns from the perspective of educating journalists and reporters on how the adoption of AI could impact the profession. He believed that good ethics training could help journalists in the 21st century understand how their use of AI will impact the subject of their story, or how it might impact the trust of their community on the profession. They thought that reporters and journalists in general needed to have a good understanding of what technology was out there and how it could be used appropriately without violating the norms or ethics practiced in journalism.

Participant 1, who managed two television stations in the Midwest, believed that they were there to provide a service to the public and it was important for the public to trust them. They stressed the importance of reflecting on the basic journalism values and guidelines and the need to strengthen the gatekeeping roles of journalists. They also believed that it was important to not lose sight of journalistic values and the need for constant evaluation of how those values were impacted every time there was a new technology on the market. They highlighted the fact that computers or algorithms were designed to only understand inputs and outputs and there was so much to consider and be mindful of in journalism. They said that for instance, AI would not know that the name of a rape victim was not mentioned by a human journalist in his reports. When discussing how to control or regulate AI, he said:

> "We have guidelines, but there's no rules. It's our democracy at stake. It's so many things that we have to be aware of. Our role is to protect democracy."

The study found that the participants perceived the adoption of AI in newsrooms to have an adverse impact on journalism standards and practices. This suggests that the adoption of AI has the potential for eroding journalism standards and professionalism in journalism. On the other hand, the findings also suggest that the need for transparency and abiding by journalistic ethics in the use of AI will increase as the adoption of AI in newsrooms increases. This indicates that the participants perceived both professionalism and control to take a hit in the absence of transparency and ethical use of AI in journalism.

B) Need for Upskilling of Journalists

This theme emerged through discussions about the need for initiating and undertaking more AI-related training in newsrooms to help build the skills of journalists about the uses of AI and the latest developments in the technology alongside raising awareness about the pitfalls and concerns associated. The participants thought that given the advancements in AI technology, it was inevitable that AI would be used in more and more newsrooms in the U.S. in the coming years. These participants were aware that future journalists who were now students needed to be educated on how AI was going to impact the profession and the industry, the opportunities and challenges that came with the adoption of AI in today's newsrooms and how best to harness the benefits of having AI as a tool and how to tackle ethical challenges such as plagiarism which arise from the ignorant use of Generative AI tools. This theme was used to answer RQ 1. How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic professionalism brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

All eight participants interviewed for the study echoed the notion that the adoption of AI in newsrooms needed to be accompanied by more training designed to educate and inform journalists about using AI in a way that would not cause harm to the professional standards or

norms practiced in journalism. The participants all admitted that AI was here to stay and therefore, there was a need to familiarize themselves with the technology instead of giving in to the fears of technology taking over the industry.

Regarding the need for more training, Participant 5 said that the training was not only necessary for practical purposes but also because of ethical purposes. Participant 6 shared that for journalists, the need to train in new skillsets and learning new things should not feel like a burden but an opportunity to enhance their own capabilities in the industry.

Two participants also shared that the curricula in journalism schools needed to be updated to educate journalism students and future journalists about how to use AI in the newsroom by adhering to the standards of professionalism practiced in journalism. At least two out of the eight participants directly discussed that there was need for current journalism curricula taught in journalism schools across the U.S. to incorporate textbooks and lessons on how AI can be and cannot be used in journalism as a profession.

Participant 5 shared his thoughts on the current journalism school curricula. As a former journalism student, who received his degree in the Fall of 1988, he was not sure how the journalism curricula were incorporating lessons on the correct use of AI in journalism. He stressed the issue that journalism schools today needed to revise their curricula in response to the growing use of AI in the profession. Participant 7, who managed a school-based newspaper, echoed this notion and shared that it had become vital for the journalism schools to reflect on what they were teaching today as students needed to learn how to use AI to build their own capabilities while doing their job. They also pointed out that lessons on the use of AI could start in the newsrooms since AI was developing every day and newer tools were also becoming available. The teaching in newsrooms could involve younger people teaching their seniors about how to use AI. They saw an opportunity

here for the younger people to learn the techniques from journalism schools and then sharing their knowledge with their senior colleagues.

The findings suggest that all eight participants perceived that greater and well-designed training initiatives on the proper use of AI would aid in preserving the standards of journalism and prevent any erosion in profession brought about by the adoption of AI in newsrooms. The findings also suggest that the need for revising journalism curricula in schools was not a notion shared by most participants as only two out of the eight interviewees discussed the issue.

C) AI Cannot Replace Human Journalists

This theme encompasses how journalistic jurisdiction is impacted through the adoption of AI in newsrooms. The study found that most of the participants were skeptical of the notion that AI could replace human journalists, not now and not in the future and that AI as a non-journalistic entity would not have the ability to perform core journalistic tasks, indicating that the participants perceived the exclusive right to perform journalist tasks to remain in the hands of journalists despite the adoption of AI in the newsrooms. The theme was used to answer RQ. 1. How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic professionalism brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms? and RQ2: How do news managers perceive the changes in professional jurisdiction brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

All eight participants agreed that AI could not replace human journalists for critical journalistic tasks such as investigative reporting, building sources, interpreting nuanced topics, and maintaining the ethical standards of journalism. The participants compared AI to spellcheckers and suggested that they would accept the adoption of AI in newsrooms if its use was limited to tasks like data summarization, visualization or transcriptions.

According to Participant 3, who worked for the online news website in the South, the news outlet had no intention of replacing human journalists and their motivation behind adopting AI in their newsroom was to diversify the range of formats in which their news reports were available to the readers. Both Participants 1 and 2, both of whom managed newsrooms based in the Midwest, pointed out that AI could not replace the physical presence, source-building, or investigative work done in journalism by human reporters like attending a crime scene or reviewing public records. Participant 1 said that AI was not going to cover a homicide or go to a traffic rollover on the freeway or go investigate the wrongdoing in a county that was cheating their people out of water. They also said that AI was never going to replace the footwork of human journalists or replace looking through open records. According to them, there was too much a human journalist was required to do, and which AI could not do.

Many participants believed that AI could assist with technical or repetitive tasks like transcription, summarization, or copy editing. Participants 2 and 4 argued that both human editors and journalists remained indispensable and could not be replaced, even for simpler roles. Participant 7 saw AI as beneficial for grammar or stylistic tasks. Participant 5 mentioned AI's potential to handle press release summaries but insisted these must be still verified by humans. Participant 8, who worked for a trade magazine in Washington D.C., thought that it would be more acceptable if AI was made to handle basic data processing or sports score summaries. They mentioned that summarizing sports scores neither brought a huge amount of value to writing a story nor needed huge investment in research the way it was required in reporting sensitive stories about a difficult topic with multiple points of views. They also stressed that AI was nowhere near being able to do anything like that, and it was even difficult to imagine that it would be close to

doing so. They were convinced that for now and for some time into the foreseeable future, they did not see much cause for concern in that arena.

All the journalists agreed that human oversight was crucial to maintaining ethical and accurate journalism when AI tools were used. Participant 5 emphasized editing AI-generated content to ensure accuracy and objectivity while Participant 8 stated that AI's output must be checked and monitored by human journalists.

According to Participant 7, who managed a school newspaper in the Midwest, journalism was a public service and they dismissed the idea of AI as a competitor, focusing instead on human-centric, community-driven reporting. Participant 5, who managed a newsroom in the West, emphasized the importance of accuracy and ethical standards over speed when it came to reporting in journalism. Participant 8 envisioned that AI would evolve in the future to handle more processes but within strict limits.

The findings suggest that the news managers did not perceive AI as a replacement for human journalists and that they viewed the exclusive right to perform journalistic activities to still belong to human journalists. However, there is evidence to indicate that some of the participants felt that AI may be able to take over journalistic tasks such as copyediting, which suggest that the exclusivity of performing journalistic activities may be compromised as AI makes further progress in its capabilities.

D) Can AI Be Trusted?

This theme addresses how journalistic control is impacted through the adoption of AI in newsrooms. The study found that most of the news managers who participated in the study exhibited a lack of trust for using AI in newsrooms without human intervention. The findings

suggest that the reluctance shown here to trust AI with doing journalistic work in the newsroom was a strategy employed by journalists to retain the monopoly over the control of over the production and dissemination of information to the public. The theme was used to answer RQ3: How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic control brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

This theme was one of most prominent overarching themes that emerged from the codes developed and discussed issues related to trust in AI. The answer to the theme: Yes and No. All eight of the participants mentioned the word trust in the context of using AI in the news production process. Seven out of the eight participants said that they did not trust AI to not make mistakes and saw human intervention as a must in the adoption of AI in newsroom. Only one participant voiced a somewhat mixed opinion. Participants 1 and 4 both expressed that they were very concerned about the ability of AI to generate fake content.

Participant 1 was very firm in their opinion that the stations they managed would not want to be accused of faking anything or altering any kind of content. Participant 4 also mentioned a recent news story on how live streamed commercials had been run in a South Asian country using fake Avatars which had posed as real influencers. They said that they were very skeptical of the emerging possibilities that were now arising for misrepresentation, altered things and misinformation. They also voiced concern over the fact that that there was a real threat that some organizations could run rampant with AI.

Participant 5 said that according to them, if a program was introduced into the newsroom that could generate stories without any human intervention, it would take journalists a step back in terms of the battles with credibility and trust. According to them, if AI was used as a relevant resource for correct, accurate information, it would instead open the gateway to much more

misinformation and errors and might hurt the public face of journalism as a profession. They, however, admitted that they did not dabble in the latest technology themselves while others, including some in their newsroom and out in the journalistic community, might be more familiar with the parameters of AI or how to define AI.

The newsroom that Participant 8 worked for in the West often had to write stories which were formulaic in nature and involved writing about promotions and appointments of people from different industries. When suggested by their co-editor if AI could be fed with some kind of template to write those stories, they recalled that they had told their supervisor that they were not ready to use the technology where it could create content and it went on the website "just like that". They also mentioned that their supervisor trusted them to have checks and balances to use AI internally. For instance, they said that they would always spot check anything that AI did with data to ensure that the technology was not making anything up because "of course it can do that". Participant 8, therefore, insisted that it was another reason why they were taking the necessary precautions to double check everything and to make sure that any work done by AI was accurate.

Participant 4 said that as they had previously dealt with a lot of imperfections in the transcriptions generated using Otter AI, there was always the possibility that people (reporters) would not double check the transcriptions and it could result in quotes that have errors in them. Participant 7 also echoed them saying that their own experiences of experimenting with AI to generate headlines for stories had produced appropriate results which could easily be perceived as misleading language. Participant 2 agreed with both these participants and said that AI made the kinds of mistakes that a normal human being just could not make or that any human being would not make. Their own experiences of using AI for transcription purposes had led Participant 2 to

believe that it was more efficient for them to use their own notes because they trusted their notes to have the names of people spelled correctly in the very least.

Participant 2 also said that they had caught ChatGPT and Pi, both AI programs, to be "hallucinating" at times and with glitches like that they said that they would be very reluctant to trust putting AI to use it at a newspaper where there were harsher consequences for making mistakes. They admitted that although the AI applications and programs showing significant improvements in performance, they did not know how it could be prevented from hallucinating again. They were also concerned about how people had become too reliant on AI for transcription services.

When discussing trust related issues with AI, Participant 3 was the only one to say that they thought in some contexts, AI might be more trusted than journalists because it was seen as neutral. However, they also admitted that when their newsroom surveyed the residents of the state they catered to about their perceptions of AI, they found that most of their readers, who were elderly, had responded by saying that they (the readers) trusted them as a news outlet, not the technology and wanted the outlet to disclose whenever AI was used.

The findings suggest that the lack of trust in AI among the participants was stemmed in concerns over how any misrepresentations or misinformation made by utilizing AI will impact the accuracy of the news provided by the news organizations these participants managed. Therefore, it can be concluded that a lack of trust in AI was rooted in these journalists' ideologies to preserve the professionalism standards in journalism and to maintain the monopoly or control over dissemination over the news production by checking for inaccuracies or misinformation.

E) AI as a Tool/Future Potential

This theme encompasses the current uses of AI as a tool in the newsroom and how the journalists perceived the use of AI as a tool in the context of their authority. It highlights which uses of AI were perceived to be beneficial by the participants and how they weighed in on its future use in the journalism industry. This theme was used to answer RQ 4: How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic authority brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

The participants looked at AI as a tool that held the potential to enhance human journalistic capabilities but stressed that the power to create a story or a report must remain in the hands of human journalists. Some of them were vehemently opposed to the idea of letting AI generate content of any kind and that content being published to the public. All the participants spoke about the possibilities of using AI to enhance the capabilities of human reporters and editors, emphasizing its role as merely an assistant and not a replacement for human journalists. All eight participants emphasized the use of AI as a tool to increase efficiency, enhance or augment human capabilities and reach more audiences. They highlighted the current uses of AI as a tool to create more content for social media, to log tapes, to visualize data.

Two of the participants – the news manager from the West and that from the South – highlighted the potential for using AI to gather data on public meetings that would help reporters to receive alerts on things they were looking for. Participant 6 said that they were already gathering public meeting recordings to set up alerts for reporters in this way.

Participant 2 believed that AI would be potentially important as a tool in future if it could be used to interact with human reporters and pitch ideas back and forth. However, they were aware of the fact that this needed greater computing abilities and AI was “not there yet”. The existing

problems with AI technologies needed to be addressed first before those potentials could be considered, he said, such as AI's tendencies to hallucinate. They were, however, comfortable with using it as a search engine.

Participant 1 saw the possibility of AI in helping them lift scripts written for broadcast by their journalists and using it for their website in AP style or the inverted pyralid style. This, however, needed to be accompanied by human oversight and the original script must be written by a human. However, they were very sure that they were not going to use AI to generate images or voices of others. They also said that anything that would help enhance their existing capabilities in the newsroom would be welcome, but they wanted to take slow steps in adopting AI in the newsroom.

At the newsroom in the West, they were scheduled to switch their CMS to a more AI-powered system. They were also mulling the idea of making AI generate police blotters for them. However, Participant 5 was skeptical of having AI create images from prompts. They believed given all its potential, its use as a tool needed to be restricted. They were also concerned about the potential that AI gave anyone the opportunity to open a news outlet and the power to run campaigns against the local press, local media or mainstream media.

Participant 3 spoke extensively about how they were trying to think of ways to adopt AI to enhance accessibility in the news production process. They were trying to generate audio versions of their news reports using AI. They already used to transcribe interviews but were also looking for ways for AI to help with transcribing public meetings under circumstances where AI facilitates the availability of transcripts about everything that happened at a government meeting. They said it would help reporters to save time by not having to go on YouTube and watch an entire recording of the incident.

They were also looking into a model created by Cal matters, a very similar nonprofit newsroom in California, which made a tool called digital democracy that used AI to connect the dots for State government. It transcribed meetings, identified the individuals within the meeting like a lobbyist who spoke, and then they also linked that up to how the lawmakers voted and their funding sources, so who gave their campaigns financial support. She said that it was not a large language model, but just an AI relational model that built connections between those different elements of state government. She said that this was helpful "because AI was good at taking in a lot of information and processing it and making sense of it." However, they seemed to lament the fact it still did not know what the information meant in the context of the real world.

While the participants were found to be perceptive of the potential of AI as a tool, they were also found to be reluctant to allow AI as a non-journalistic entity a place in the newsroom where it would be allowed to generate content. The findings suggest that while the journalists may come to terms with the fact that AI was already intervening in the newsrooms as an entity, the reluctance exhibited by the interviewees to identify the technology as anything other than a tool in the newsroom may be an effort to preserve the right or authority to frame the narrative in journalism. This also indicates that the fear of AI and its generative abilities among journalists may be rooted in a fear of losing the authority to set the narrative and make sense of the world for audiences.

F) AI: A Possible Threat!

This theme emerged from discussions on the potential dangers or threats posed by the adoption of AI in newsrooms. The study found that six of the eight interviewed news managers from different U.S. newsrooms perceived AI as a possible threat for journalistic professionalism, jurisdiction, control, and authority that could bring harm in many ways to the information

ecosystem. Two of the participants did not share anything corroborating the view that AI could be a possible danger to journalists as professionals. This theme was used to answer RQ. 1. How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic professionalism brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms? RQ2: How do news managers perceive the changes in professional jurisdiction brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms? RQ. 3: How do news managers perceive the changes in professional control brought about by the adoption of AI in newsrooms? and RQ 4: How do news managers perceive the changes in journalistic authority brought about the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

A common discussion among the journalists who thought of AI was a possible threat was that AI could become a tool for spreading misinformation and disinformation as it lacked accuracy, gatekeeping values of journalists, and at the same time today's journalism was not properly prepared for gatekeeping and overseeing AI and its content. In this way, journalism's control was perceived as diminishing. In this context, participants 4, 7 and 8 shared their skepticism about AI generated content's accuracy and contextuality. They also held AI responsible for being used as a tool of inaccurate information as well as misinformation and disinformation.

Participant 3 shared that the non-journalistic human actors that have been attempting to break the boundaries of journalism by claiming journalistic jurisdiction might use AI for spreading misinformation. They thought that AI's contribution to misinformation or inaccuracy could change the *"sense of reality"* among people. The "making sense of reality" has been considered a core role of journalism, and now AI was breaking the wall of this journalistic jurisdiction, shared this newsroom manager. They were also worried that AI-generated visual content was becoming too realistic for gatekeeping. In mentioning AI's impact on photojournalism, they voiced concern over

the fact that AI's ability to fabricate photographs was "going to mess with our sense of what is real."

The interviewed news managers shared that AI could pose a threat to journalistic control by spreading misinformation and violating the ethical norms of journalism. Participant 5 from a print newsroom shed light on a key weakness of AI related to how it did not source any of information it generated. In saying this, they also stressed the issue of transparency as a key element of journalistic ethics that allowed journalists to uphold their control over the flow of information dissemination. They said that they were thinking of using AI to create a police log or blotter. However, given the fact that AI had begun generating things without citing sources, they were not sure how to verify the source of the information provided by AI and they thought that was where the danger lay.

They shared that journalistic control was being compromised as the journalists were now using AI for news production and borrowing a few thoughts and even sentences into their news stories bypassing the ethical norms and standards developed over many years in the journalism profession. When a journalist allows AI's ideas into any news story, he or she is just not following the ethical norm of authenticity which can only be ensured by the originality of a writer's thoughts and skills of writing.

Participant 8 was critical of some of the existing newsroom executives as they were overlooking AI's negative aspects related to journalistic professionalism and thus, were inviting the threats associated with AI use into their own newsrooms. He thought those executives were harming their own newsrooms and journalistic professionalism in a broader sense. The executives, according to this participant, employed AI for two reasons – to save money and to replace the journalists job with AI at the cost of the long cherished journalistic professional norms,

overlooking AI's threat to professionalization of journalism. They also shared that any news organization that would employ AI in newsrooms should have a human in the position of overseeing that AI and its activities.

> "…executives overseeing the journalism their primary concern is not being ethical and transparent. Their primary concern is saving money and trying to find ways to do a journalist's job with AI, but not understanding the drawbacks of that." – said Participant 8.

Participant 3 emphasized that in the digital age, professionalism in journalism was already being challenged due to the disruptions caused by the internet. Like the internet, AI would also be disruptive to journalistic standards and act as an added pressure on journalists navigating professionalization when many newsrooms still were struggling to adapt with digital settings, she shared. Any disruption in the journalism standards would consequentially result in adverse impacts on the professionalism of journalists.

According to Participant 5, when the readers would realize that a news story was developed with AI, without any human involvement starting from idea generation to story writing, then the authority of journalism would be challenged. Mentioning a popular sports magazine, this male editor from the West said that the magazine had faced backlash when they used an AI program to create a news story to which the AI had even attributed bylines of people who did not even exist. This incident, according to them, had created not only a false attribution but diminished the credibility of that magazine among its readers. They, therefore, warned that AI could easily destroy journalists and their profession by destroying the credibility of journalism in general. The threats to credibility meant that the authority of journalists in creating a narrative would be lost while the ability possessed by AI to generate content suggests that the exclusive right to perform journalistic activities had also the potential of being compromised.

The findings suggest that the perceptions presented by these participants on the possible threats presented by AI through its adoption in the newsrooms would have an impact on all four concepts in the study: professionalism, jurisdiction, control and authority. The fact that information generated by AI did not come with verified sources meant that using this information would jeopardize the credibility of the work of news organizations with a subsequent impact on the professionalism of journalists for providing unsourced information to its audiences and readers. On the other hand, a threat to credibility will have a ripple effect on journalists' authority to tell stories. In the context of jurisdiction, allowing AI to generate stories or generate images means that reporters and photographers no longer have the exclusive right to perform journalistic activities.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings which have emerged from analyzing the six themes above provide a detailed glimpse into how the news managers who took part in this study perceived the impact of AI if it was adopted in newsrooms. The most prominent perceptions were related to threats to transparency and accuracy in journalism alongside a concern for ethical use of AI in the profession. The findings broadly suggest that the emergence of Generative AI had deepened fears related to the spread of misinformation and inaccurate or sometimes fabricated news among audiences. The participants strongly advocated for restricting the generative uses of AI as they believed it could have destructive impacts on the authority of journalists in making sense of realities for their audiences while taking away the control from journalists in monopolizing the dissemination of information. The recognition of the fact that AI had the potential to take over tasks in the newsroom such as copyediting effectively suggests that the jurisdiction of human journalists over performing journalistic activities will increasingly come under threat if the technology continues to advance

at the current rate. Although it is true that AI can never replace the human agency in journalism, some of the participants highlighted the need for responsible and ethical use of AI in newsroom to preserve the standards practiced by journalists as professionals and to uphold the public's trust in news organizations to provide accurate and credible information.

This chapter outlined the findings from the study, provided an in-depth analysis of the themes which emerged from the data collected. Each the of themes was analyzed in the context of the relevant research questions they answered, and an overall summary of the findings was presented at the end of the chapter. The following chapter will provide a discussion on how the findings weighed in against the literature and theoretical and practical implications of the findings along with the limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion

This study set out to understand the perspectives of news managers in the United States on how the adoption of AI would impact the professionalism in journalism, journalistic jurisdiction, control and authority. The purpose of the study was to look at the perspectives of news managers through the lens of professionalism as framework. The rationale behind conducting this study was to solely focus on the perspectives of news managers about the adoption of AI, given the rate at which the technology was advancing. The importance of the study lies in the fact that news managers in their managerial role have the power to make decisions that can have lasting impact on the journalism industry. For instance, if they decide that a newsroom would never make use of Generative AI, it will have a lasting impact on journalism standards and the credibility of journalists among readers/audiences. A second contribution of the study lay in its endeavor to explore the perspectives of news managers based in newsroom which have rarely be done in the journalism scholarship.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

When exploring the concept of professionalism, the study found that the adoption of AI in newsrooms would lead to an erosion in the standards practiced in journalism, causing professionalism in the journalistic profession to come under fire. The news managers who participated in this study also stressed the importance of updating journalism curricula taught in journalism schools today to better prepare journalism students for the age of AI and how standards of practice in journalism would be influenced by the adoption of AI in the news production process. This echoes Carlson (2018) who claimed that the rise of the digital media would impact how

journalists produced content. On the other hand, the findings from this study also showed that the participants believed that AI lacked the ability to contextualize information. Moreover, there is considerable doubt about the objectivity of the knowledge generated by AI which is trained on different data sets, and no one can guarantee if those datasets are without bias. Therefore, according to the definition of Lincoln (1994), AI cannot be considered a professional in the profession of journalism and thus, it cannot perform journalistic tasks based on the ideals of professionalism.

In the context of jurisdiction, this study found that the news managers did not perceive AI as a replacement for human journalists and asserted that journalists as professionals could not be replaced by AI. This finding contrasts with Kellermann (1990) who argued that the professional boundaries of professions would be reshaped by competition within an interdependent system and shifts in technology. The findings from this study indicate that despite facing peer pressure or pressure from other organizations to adopt AI as a technology in newsrooms, this adoption of technology cannot replace journalistic tasks such as the leg work involved in reporting or covering a traffic rollover, as echoed by Milosavljević and Vobič (2019). This implies that journalism as a profession may be able to eliminate competition from AI as a non-journalistic entity, preserving its jurisdiction in journalism. The findings partially support the notion of permeability brought forth by Abbott (1988) when he termed journalism as a profession with permeable boundaries. However, the author argues that permeability in the boundaries of journalism through the adoption of AI in newsroom is conditional in nature. This argument is based on the evidence from the study where the participants mentioned that they would allow AI to visualize data for them or transcribe recordings for them but would be opposed to letting AI create content for them. This notion of conditional permeability was introduced in a study (Riedl, 2023) on how the boundaries of

journalism was partly opened for professionals like community managers but closed to other non-professionals.

The findings from the study also showed that news managers did not trust AI to maintain accuracy in the content it generated and emphasized the need for greater transparency on the part of the news organizations if AI is used to generate content for publishing. The adoption of AI in the newsrooms and its use in generating content for readers has the possibility of eroding the control of journalists over its role in serving the public and maintaining its role as watchdog for society, as conceptualized by Dueze (2005). Since AI is not guided by any such ethic, the use of generative AI was strongly opposed by the news managers who participated in the study. Lewis argued that if journalists could restrict the practice of journalism to actors who would only engage in journalistic activities in the interest of the public and to serve democracy (2011), the control of journalism as a profession over dissemination of truthful and credible information can be secured. The findings suggest that these news managers were striving for greater transparency in the use of AI in newsrooms while restricting the use of Generative AI to create content – text and visual – for their readers.

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings from the study suggest that despite the hype around AI (especially Generative AI this year), local newsrooms are approaching the issue of AI adoption much more cautiously than what is assumed automatically about the journalism industry. The findings from this study indicate that the adoption of AI might be faster in bigger local newsrooms which have more resources at their disposal, echoing the findings of Simon (2024), while the rate of adoption will also depend on the type of newsroom. For instance, news websites such as the one in the South will have more uses for AI for purposes of reformatting their human-generated stories, such using

Generative AI to create an audio version of the original news scripts written by their human reporters, to reach a wider audience who may want to listen to the news on the go or may be for consumers who are visually-impaired.

On the other hand, smaller radio stations may be more reluctant to use AI in their public facing news products as they are neither overburdened with work nor do they serve a large audience. This supports the arguments presented by Broussard (2019) who thought that not every newsroom needed AI, especially those which operated on a smaller scale. However, the notion that the adoption of AI would create greater divisions among bigger and smaller newsrooms, a finding from the study conducted by Beckett (2019) could not be verified in this study as none of the participants interviewed managed a national newsroom.

Among the four types of newsrooms studied, television, print, online and radio, the findings suggest that print would be the slowest to adopt AI in their newsrooms as at least one participant from print highlighted the fact that mistakes in print media were the hardest to rectify and to make amends for simple because of the format of the news which leaves indelible evidence of the errors. On a different note, the findings suggested that the most potential future use of AI would be its use in data visualization as it is good at making sense of large amounts of data in a short amount of time.

One of the findings from the study showed that although the newsroom managers admitted that AI was here to stay, they said that they were neither worried nor threatened by its emergence. However, the author argues that some of the participants were too quick to dismiss the notion of AI being a threat to human journalists. This rush could be due to a fear of not fully realizing the capabilities of AI or could also stem from an overconfidence in one's own capabilities. However, the study findings on the participants' perception of AI as a tool that could augment existing human

reporting capabilities in newsrooms are supported by the findings of the Knight Foundation (2021) and Simon (2024).

However, although the findings from the study showed a reluctance among some of the participants regarding the adoption of AI, especially due to its generative abilities, there was no evidence to suggest that the journalists were unwilling at the prospect of having to do more work if the adoption of AI in newsrooms would free them from mundane tasks, as found by Beckett (2019).

On the other hand, the study did find evidence that the adoption of AI in newsrooms will make journalistic elements such as human values, need for verification, maintaining ethics and the ability to contextualize information more important than ever, as suggested by Lindén (2020). However, although performing a journalistic activity to serve the public was part of how control was conceptualized in this paper, understanding the impact of AI adoption in newsroom on democracy was beyond the scope of this study and was not analyzed in the findings on its own.

5.4 Conclusion

This study is the first of its kind to empirically test the concepts of professionalism, jurisdiction, control and authority as part of one single research in the journalism scholarship. The author hopes that one such studies will be under in journalism focused towards providing a better understanding of how these concepts can be applied to measure the impacts of emerging technologies on journalism as a field. The author also believes that the four same concepts can be applied to understand the perceptions of audiences on the adoption of AI in U.S. newsrooms.

One limitation of this study is that it did not concentrate on a single type of newsroom and attempted to provide a holistic view of the impact of journalism in U.S. newsrooms. Future studies

can investigate the impact of AI on different kinds of newsrooms in the U.S. from a managerial perspective. On the other hand, the methodology adopted for this study does not allow for generalizations to be made about the population based on the sample. As the purpose of the study was to provide in-depth insights into the perceptions of local newsroom managers in the U.S., the author argues that more qualitative studies are needed to provide deeper insights into how national and local newsroom managers differ on their perceptions about AI adoption in newsrooms.

One last concluding remark about the study pertains to the fact that although the findings from this study are perceptions of news managers from local U.S. newsrooms, the study was not initially conceptualized to confine it to the realm of local newsrooms. However, the snowball sampling method created a sample of study participants who were all employed in local newsrooms.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

University of Oklahoma

You are invited to participate in research about News Editors' Perception of AI Adoption in Us Newsrooms: A Study on Professionalism, Jurisdiction, Control & Authority.

If you agree to participate, you will participate in a 60-minute interview online or zoom/similar platform. The conversations' audio and video will be recorded and may be used in University research reports with your permission.

There are no benefits for participating in this research.

Your participation is voluntary and your responses will be confidential.

We might share your de-identified data with other researchers or use it in future research without obtaining additional assent from you.

Even if you choose to participate now, you may stop participating at any time and for any reason.

If you have questions about this research, please contact:

Principal Investigator: Wahida Alam, Master's Student, Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Oklahoma. Email: wahida.a1@ou.edu

Faculty Advisor: Melanie Wilderman, Associate Professor, Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Oklahoma. Email: mgwilderman@ou.edu

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu with questions, concerns or complaints about your child's rights as a research participant, or if you don't want to talk to the researcher.

Please print this document for your records. By providing information to the researcher(s), I am agreeing to participate in this research.

Are you 18 years of age or older? ___ Yes ___ No (If no- cannot participate)

Are you employed at a news outlet in the U.S. ___ Yes ___ No (If no–cannot participate)

IRB #_____ IRB Approval Date_____

APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR AN EXAMINATION OF U.S. NEWS EDITORS' PERCEPTION OF AI ADOPTION IN NEWSROOMS: FOCUSING ON JOURNALISTIC PROFESSIONALIZATION

1. Can you please tell me about your current role in the newsroom you work for?
2. What kind of AI do you use in your newsroom? Do you use an AI model developed by your outlet or do you use a model developed by a tech company?
3. What jobs does AI perform in your newsroom? How efficient is AI in performing these jobs?
4. How do you perceive AI's inclusion in your newsroom? Please explain.
5. What role do you play as a news manager in the adoption and management of AI in your newsroom?
6. How have your colleagues in the newsroom responded to the adoption of AI in your operations?
7. Have there been any glitches since its adoption? If yes, how did your newsroom respond?
8. Have you had to train the journalists in your newsroom to be able to manage and work with the AI adopted? Have you had to hire any technical experts to supervise the AI's operations?
9. There is this idea of journalistic professionalism which is the expected qualifications in a journalist or an entity to be in the profession? How do you feel the expectations regarding professional journalistic qualifications are changing through the adoption of AI in newsrooms?
10. Journalistic jurisdiction is defined by scholars as the exclusive right to perform journalistic activities for society. How do you perceive journalistic jurisdiction to be changing through the adoption of AI in newsrooms?

11. Some scholars argue that journalists were enjoying less control over restricting the practice of journalism to only journalists. For example, anyone can have a blog or start a news-style website. Keeping that in mind, how you do perceive the issue of this journalistic control in the adoption of AI in your newsroom?
12. Journalists are known for their authority in framing and controlling the narrative of a story. How do you perceive that authority is navigated if AI generates a story?