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# AI in Cameroonian Newsrooms: Exploring Daily Use and Challenges Among Journalists in Four Regions

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## Abstract

This study examines the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) tools by journalists working for legacy media outlets in four of Cameroon's 10 geopolitical regions. It builds on the premise that journalism practice is continually changing due to the advent of emerging technology. The article analyses semi-structured interviews with 12 Cameroonian mainstream media practitioners working for public and private print- and broadcast-media outlets. The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003) serves as the theoretical lens through which the actions of the research participants are analyzed. Findings reveal that some journalists use AI throughout all stages of their work, from conception, planning, collection, writing, and editing. The extent of use depends on the individual reporter's ability to leverage the tools. The attempt to take full advantage of AI tools is met with significant challenges, such as the absence of appropriate newsroom policies, resource limitations, the absence of context-relevant data, and insufficient knowledge among newsroom managers. The study emphasizes that the adoption of technology in newsrooms cannot be separated from the socio-economic context in which media operate.

## Keywords

artificial intelligence; Cameroon; journalism; linguistic inclusivity; newsrooms; technology adoption

## 1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is gradually taking root in contemporary journalism. Although this affirmation might sound overstated, its manifestations are visible in the daily practice of journalism, and scholars have shown increasing interest in this growing influence (see Kevin-Alerechi et al., 2025; Lewis et al., 2025). As with other technological innovations, the role of AI in journalism is unlikely to be phased out any time soon (Marconi,

2020). At the global level, this technology has been integrated into various parts of news production and is therefore considered not as a mere peripheral innovation, but a revolution that is actively transforming the process of information production and circulation (Broussard et al., 2019). Nonetheless, considering its emergence in isolation could be erroneous. Scholars (Kevin-Alerechi et al., 2025; Roy & Sengupta, 2024) see it as part of a larger framework of technological transformations in the media sphere, characterized by the progressive integration of smarter tools into journalism.

Cameroon serves as an exemplary case for investigating the localized dynamics of AI adoption. The country's media ecosystem is divided between a heavily funded state media apparatus and an economically vulnerable private press that is struggling with falling advertising revenue (Tatchou, 2022). The adoption of digital innovation has been seen to be driven by journalists' ability to effectively use accessible tools to make up for institutional limitations (Nfor, 2024). Furthermore, the general physical infrastructure is also playing a considerable role. As with many other sectors of economic life (Meka'a et al., 2024), local newsrooms routinely navigate systemic structural disruptions, most notably unscheduled power outages and expensive internet connectivity. At the managerial level, newsrooms operate in top-down editorial hierarchies entrenched in legacy workflows, leading to considerable slowness in the deployment of technology. Lefèvre et al. (2025, p. 48) describe this as a "fragmentation of current regulatory frameworks," stating that "the absence of clear, sector-specific guidelines…leads to inconsistencies in AI implementation." As a result, individual professionals tend to independently experiment with these new tools either to the benefit or to the detriment of the organizations they work for. In this evolving context, the level of adoption varies because of factors such as technological competence, level of interest/enthusiasm, and professional preferences (Simon, 2024).

The reaction to the role of AI is also contrasting. While some consider AI tools as a boost to their work, others have adopted what Salvador-Mata et al. (2025, p. 15) described as a "wait-and-see attitude reflecting cautious observation rather than outright resistance." Another group of media professionals is noted to have adopted outright resistance to the use of any AI tool (Morosoli et al., 2026). This cohort often cites concerns regarding the preservation of editorial integrity and the erosion of human agency in the creative process. These divergent perceptions underline the nuances that accompany the integration of AI and all forms of technology in general into regular newsroom practice.

The aim of this study is to examine the adoption of AI by Cameroonian journalists, with emphasis on the use of accessible tools. It also questions the practical challenges that journalists face in integrating AI into their daily professional routines. The research is based on the analysis of 12 semi-structured interviews carried out with English-speaking journalists and editors from media outlets in four of Cameroon's 10 administrative regions. The study is guided by these two research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How do Cameroonian journalists use AI tools in their daily newsroom tasks?

RQ 2: What constraints hinder journalists' full exploitation of AI?

In examining these questions, this article contributes to enriching emerging discourse on AI in journalism by bringing empirical perspectives from Cameroon—a sub-Saharan African country where journalists navigate specific institutional, material, socio-economic, and practical challenges such as poor electricity supply and

limited internet access. How these media professionals succeed in maintaining reporting of events, using technology that depends on these poorly accessible utilities, is of key interest. This study is also relevant because, despite the growing interest in the integration of AI in journalism, a majority of the research has been on newsrooms in the West (e.g., D'haeseleer et al., 2025; Fieiras-Ceide et al., 2022; Grimme & Zabel, 2025; Lefèvre et al., 2025; Murru & Carlo, 2025). A few studies have been carried out in newsrooms in Africa with a focus on specific countries or groups of countries (see Adjin-Tettey et al., 2024; Onebunne, 2026; Umejei et al., 2025), but this contribution will be one of the first that examines the use of AI by Cameroonian journalists. The study also helps to explain how journalists reinterpret their roles in relation to automation. This is particularly important for understanding the future of journalism as a profession, in a context where formal newsroom policies and training structures around AI remain underdeveloped.

## 2. Literature Review

### *2.1. Newsroom Dynamics in the Age of AI*

The adoption of AI has considerably accelerated in journalism in the last decade, marking a major transformation in newsroom practices (Noain-Sánchez, 2022; Simon, 2024). The very first forms of automatization in journalism, often identified as robotic journalism, were mainly limited to the production of structured data such as financial reports, sports scores, weather reports, and forecasts (Latar, 2015). The emergence of generative AI is said to have enlarged the framework of automatization far beyond the routine prompts to now include more complex editorial tasks such as the writing of news reports and analysis, the generation of titles, translation, fact-checking, and investigative reporting (Cools et al., 2023; Kevin-Alerechi et al., 2025; Roy & Sengupta, 2024).

Recent studies show that the adoption of AI in newsrooms is widespread, although its full integration remains timid (Dodds et al., 2026; Sonni et al., 2024). AI tools are integrated in both newsgathering and production phases (Li, 2025; Taha & Abdallah, 2025). In the collection phase, Rinehart and Kung (2022), after studying newsrooms in the US, found that managers were looking for ways to make newsgathering more efficient and considered using AI for content discovery and social media monitoring. During production, these tools are used to transcribe, write, and edit. In fact, Xi and Latif (2022, p. 41) note that:

> The innovation of the news production process under the influence of AI technology ensures a wealth of news sources, provides opportunities for automated writing…increases the engagement [and] channels for feedback. It also widens the path to profitability for news production.

The adoption of AI has largely been motivated by the need for efficiency in media environments facing resource constraints (Oh & Jung, 2025). Media outlets, confronted with reduced revenue and staff, turn to AI to maintain their production levels while reducing costs (Aljalabneh et al., 2024). This evolution is considered part of the broader trends in digital transformation, where technologies are mobilized to optimize the workflow and improve productivity.

Meanwhile, the adoption of AI is not uniform across all media outlets. Organizational capacities, technological infrastructure, priority strategies, and the drive for new experiences are some of the factors that account for the variation in the adoption of AI among newsrooms in the same context and across different contexts.

Studies suggest that the adoption of AI does not depend only on the availability of technology, but also on institutional and personal factors (Albizu-Rivas et al., 2024; Wu, 2026). This makes AI adoption not just a technical process, but also a professional one. Schaetz and Schjøtt (2026, p. 233) note that these factors facilitate an understanding of innovation processes, not only as imbued "with expectations of the future, but that expectations become generative as they guide and motivate actions in the present."

### *2.2. African Newsrooms in the Reality of Generative AI*

The adoption of AI in African newsrooms can be fully understood within the broader context of media development on the continent, where news organizations evolve amidst diverse political, economic, and technological conditions (Munoriyarwa, 2024). Recent scholarship characterizes this process as "innovating against the odds," where Global South newsrooms must navigate unique obstacles while seeking to digitize and adopt emerging technologies (de-Lima-Santos, 2026; Kothari & Cruikshank, 2022). Compared to Western contexts, the adoption of AI in Africa is generally considered progressive but remains slow. While sensitization is growing, integration is hindered by significant structural and socio-technological barriers including limited finances, insufficient digital resources, and a lack of technical expertise (Mutsvairo & Ragnedda, 2019).

Despite these challenges, African journalists are actively experimenting with generative AI tools, and journalists' attitudes toward its use have been categorized as optimism, pessimism, and pragmatism (Umejei et al., 2025). Studies across the continent show that AI helps journalists with routine tasks such as transcription, research, generating story ideas, and fact-checking (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2024; Gondwe, 2025). However, a notable characteristic of this adoption is its individual and informal nature; journalists often use these tools at their own discretion without formal organizational support or established policies (Adjin-Tettey et al., 2024; Onebunne, 2026). This appropriation based on personal judgment contrasts sharply with the Western hemisphere, where AI is typically guided by institutional strategies and governance frameworks (Beckett, 2019).

Furthermore, there is a risk that AI models trained on Western data misrepresent African realities and reinforce colonial echoes (Matsilele & Tshuma, 2025). This lack of representation may marginalize local journalism by prioritizing content from larger international newsrooms. For instance, in Tanzanian newsrooms, while AI shows high accuracy in translation, it often fails to preserve vital cultural nuances, leading to a struggle for journalistic autonomy and a dependence on external sources (Gondwe, 2025). As a result, systems do not fully take into consideration local languages, cultural nuances, or sociopolitical realities.

As a matter of fact, generative AI offers significant opportunities to improve productivity and facilitate access to information. For smaller media organizations, AI could serve as a stepping stone to overcome resource constraints (Oh & Jung, 2025). However, some view these affordances through a "dystopian" lens, fearing that AI is inimical to the legitimacy and credibility of the profession (Makwambeni et al., 2023). The concretization of AI's benefits requires addressing the divide through collaborative efforts among policymakers and industry leaders to create an inclusive environment (Matsilele & Tshuma, 2025; Munoriyarwa, 2024).

## 3. Theoretical Framework

The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT), developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003), is the theoretical underpinning for this study. It is considered a comprehensive behavioral model that explains how individuals come to accept and use new technologies in professional and personal contexts. Venkatesh et al. (2003) drew insights from eight previous theories on technological adoption, among which are the technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989), the theory of reasoned action (Hale et al., 2002), and the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985). This unified framework identifies the core drivers of technology adoption.

The theory lays its foundation in the identification of four independent constructs that directly influence the intention to use technology, which in turn can lead to actual use behavior (Trang et al., 2024). The first of them is performance expectancy (PE; Sudirman et al., 2022), which refers to the level of belief that an individual has that using technology will enhance their job performance or lead to highly valued outcomes. The second is effort expectancy (EE; Badowska et al., 2016), which captures the degree to which the use of particular technologies is perceived to be effortless, showing that learning and interaction are easy to achieve. The third is social influence (SI; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2011), in which the individual's adoption of technology is the result of whether key reference groups (employers, supervisors, colleagues or peers) express some level of validation. At the fourth level stands facilitating conditions (FCs), which represent how individuals view organizational and technical infrastructure available to support their use of technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003). A key strength of UTAUT is the fact that it integrates multiple theoretical perspectives and still maintains sufficient specificity for practical implementation. Researchers have built on the framework to add layers such as trust, perceived risk, ethical concerns, perceived costs, and cultural compatibility to enable the applicability to specific contexts (Al-Hattami, 2025; Cody-Allen & Kishore, 2006; Rana et al., 2024).

Journalism can be considered a distinctive field in which UTAUT can be applied since newsrooms are seen as merging individual professional autonomy with organizational demands when adopting new technologies. Paulussen (2016), for example, notes that the structural conditions of newsrooms can either serve as barriers or enablers to innovation. The guiding principles of journalism, such as accuracy, independence, and public service, are often known to determine whether specific technologies will be adopted or not. PE in journalism will determine whether AI tools improve reporting speed without compromising quality. Trang et al. (2024), for example, found that Vietnamese journalists consider PE to be the strongest predictor of AI adoption as they weigh the ability for AI systems to enhance professional practice against adding administrative burden. EE has been seen to shape the adoption of AI within journalism, particularly in contexts where infrastructural and practical limitations, coupled with inadequate training, make tools that are otherwise easy to use difficult (Munoriyarwa, 2024). SI can be noted to operate through horizontal informal peer networks and shared experiences rather than formal hierarchical pressure (Mtemang'ombe & Chikunkhuzeni, 2025). FCs are considered paradoxical because they could predict actual usage once adoption intentions form, but they do not seem to have the strength to shape initial behavioral intention (Perez-Gallardo, 2025). Having established this theoretical and geographic context, I proceed in Section 4 to provide the detailed methodology employed to investigate how these global and continental trends manifest themselves within Cameroon.

## 4. Methods

I adopted a qualitative research design, conscious of its ability to provide "techniques for the analysis of subjective, nebulous and difficult-to-pin-down phenomena" (Bhangu et al., 2023, p. 40). To explore how journalists in the Southwest, Northwest, Littoral, and Centre regions of Cameroon adopt and use AI in their routine tasks, this approach was appropriate for examining the reasons, experiences, and challenges that might not be adequately captured through quantitative methods (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Denzin (2008) opines that reality is socially constructed from subjective experiences. This view is relevant for exploring how journalists make sense of emerging technologies within specific professional and cultural contexts such as the one under study.

Sampling was carried out in two phases. First, I conducted a purposive sample of English-speaking journalists and editors from public and private radio, TV, and newspaper outlets in the four regions. Focusing on English-speaking journalists across the Northwest, Southwest, Littoral, and Centre regions ensured a shared working language and access to similar tools whose original language is English. Out of 44 journalists and editors contacted in September 2025, seven expressed interest in the topic and consented to participate. I used snowball sampling in the second phase to recruit the remaining interviewees. Some research participants put me in touch with other colleagues, while some of those who declined my request referred me to other potential participants. Consequently, five additional interviewees were recruited through referrals. In total, 12 participants took part in the study, a sample size that is consistent with qualitative research standards, as I prioritized the depth of the discussions and aimed for richness and relevance of the data (Malterud et al., 2016). Table 1 below shows the demographics of the participants.

**Table 1.** Demographic distribution of interview participants.

| Category | Options | *N* |
|---|---|---|
| Location | Centre region | 3 |
| | Littoral region | 2 |
| | Northwest region | 1 |
| | Southwest region | 6 |
| Media outlet | Print | 3 |
| | Broadcast | 8 |
| | Online | 1 |
| Affiliation | Public media | 3 |
| | Private media | 9 |
| Role | Reporter | 10 |
| | Editor | 2 |

I conducted interviews in November 2025 and February 2026. All interviews were conducted online in English via Zoom, depending on participants' availability. Recording was carried out simultaneously after verbal consent from each interviewee. Interview sessions lasted between 28 minutes and 1 hour and 5 minutes. The duration depended on the depth of each participant's responses to the questions. Through the interview guide, I aimed to elicit responses and examples along three main themes: (a) knowledge and familiarity with AI tools; (b) patterns of adoption and use in newsroom practices; (c) perceived challenges and constraints.

The data were transcribed in Microsoft Office 365, and I proofread the transcripts to ensure accuracy. The data were pseudonymized to maintain confidentiality. In presenting the results, I have described the participants by their roles, affiliations, and locations. I employed inductive thematic analysis that allowed me to highlight patterns and themes emerging from the data rather than imposing predefined categories (Braun & Clarke, 2023; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This approach has been noted to meet the requirements of exploratory research where new phenomena and new contexts are being studied.

The process of proofreading the transcribed data constituted the first step in the analysis, as I familiarized myself with the data to make initial observations that formed the basis for subsequent coding. Each interview transcript was separately loaded into ATLAS.ti 25 for open coding. I assigned labels to segments of the data, arriving at 58 initial codes that reflected a wide range of experiences and perspectives. I reviewed the codes and grouped similar codes that conveyed the same conceptual similarities. After grouping the codes, themes capturing recurring patterns were identified across the dataset. This process helped to organize the data into 12 broader analytical categories. The emerging themes were iteratively reviewed to ensure consistency with the dataset. Each theme was supported by representative excerpts from the interviews. The themes emerging from the data reveal both enabling factors and constraints to the adoption of AI in Cameroon. In Section 5, I present some of the findings emanating from these analyses. The results are presented in a way that allows the reader to gain firsthand accounts of the use of AI, drawing heavily on what I consider the most revealing direct quotes.

## 5. Findings

### *5.1. RQ1*

Participants highlighted several ways in which they use AI tools in their daily tasks. For clarity, these have been grouped into four main categories: concept development and planning; streamlining information gathering and bridging language barriers; managing deadlines and polishing up grammatical inefficiencies; and crisis management and time-sensitive reporting.

#### 5.1.1. Concept Development and Planning

Some of the interviewees indicated that they use AI at the conception phase of programs and story ideas for news coverage. This includes tasks such as coining the program topic, brainstorming program angles, and designing questionnaires for guests. They noted that specific prompts play a pivotal role in this aspect. To some of these media professionals, using available tools shifts their consideration of AI from a mere technical tool into a collaborative partner in the early stages of news production:

> Sometimes…when I'm looking for the angle of the news story to propose in the news conference…for me not to have the same angle as the other newsrooms, I'll probably ask for an angle, for example, "help me with angling this story that would be different from what has been treated in other newsrooms." And then that's what I'll propose in my own newsroom in the morning. (Reporter, private radio station, Southwest region)

This quest for editorial distinctiveness is echoed across private media practitioners. For instance, another private radio reporter and anchor from the Southwest region explained that when running out of ideas for their programs, they input past topics into the prompt bar to generate fresh, contextualized thematic angles. Similarly, a private TV anchor in the Centre region described a co-creation process where they "fix the topic together" with AI, using the system to generate a draft questionnaire which the journalist later reviews manually.

### 5.1.2. Streamlining Information Gathering and Bridging Language Barriers

When it comes to information gathering, journalists interviewed indicated that AI serves them in several ways. They revealed that AI assists them in sourcing information, especially about international news, considering that some tools now have links to websites of international news outlets. Within Cameroon's unique bilingual media landscape, AI also serves as an essential tool for translation:

> I am in a newsroom that is French-dominated. So many times, when I have to write a report and only the French journalist has gone to the field, I use ChatGPT for translation. And sometimes, when I'm in the field, and it's a government ceremony, and we're given a press kit which is totally in French, I snap it and put it in, and it gives me the English version or even a summary of what has been written there in French (Reporter/anchor, private TV Station, Centre region)

This necessity to bridge the institutional language barrier is further emphasized by a state news reporter and anchor who noted that because her editor-in-chief is Francophone and the daily news menu is presented in French, image-to-text AI translation features are used daily to overcome their basic French language inadequacies. Beyond translation, respondents also highlight its ability to lighten the labor of data aggregation. An editor-in-chief from a private TV station in the Littoral region observed that AI acts as an information source because it cites major international news outlets. Furthermore, a reporter for the public broadcaster in the Southwest region detailed using AI to extract the "essential remarks" from long audio soundbites, which serve him in his reports for both the radio and the broadcaster's online platforms.

### 5.1.3. Polishing Up Grammatical Inefficiencies

Data from the interviews revealed that journalists use AI tools for writing, proofreading, condensing and expanding texts, as well as fine-tuning the language. The use of AI goes from generating words and sentences to writing entire texts of news reports and program lead-ins. Respondents also said they use it to make up for mental blackouts and to adhere to professional grammatical standards:

> There are times when you think in English. But now when you put it down, it sounds like pidgin English. So, I know that if I put this thing on AI, AI is going to give me the English, which is not my language, which is the language of the Americans, the British. So, I am very confident with its use when it comes to correcting my grammar and my tone. (Reporter/news anchor, private radio Southwest region)

A private television editor-in-chief in the Littoral region corroborated this point by noting that since indigenous languages have a great impact on the appropriate use of the English language among many Cameroonians, AI helps to correct grammatical errors and boost professional confidence by ensuring delivery in clear and accurate English.

#### 5.1.4. Crisis Management and Time-Sensitive Reporting

For some participants in this study, in addition to routine activities, they also find AI tools handy when dealing with emergencies. What the interviewees considered emergency situations are breaking news stories, live programs, and tight deadlines. During such circumstances, journalists prompt specific tools to maintain the flow of information, answer questions on topics that they do not fully master, write news reports with tight deadlines, or condense texts. This highlights how AI is leveraged to preserve professional authority in real time:

> In terms of speed, it helps, especially for impromptu events. On a breakfast show or a talk show on the radio, a caller can ask a question about something I'm not really versed in. Let's say something about health or topics that I don't really have much knowledge about. And I don't just want to talk based on the layman's perspective. I have to give them facts. So, I just prompt AI, and it gives me what I have to say at that point. (Reporter/anchor, private radio, Southwest region)

This reliance on instantaneous information retrieval during live broadcasts is also practiced by state-employed journalists. A reporter and anchor for the state-owned broadcaster in the Southwest region explained that they utilize AI for live commentaries because it is "instant," allowing them to immediately contextualize issues in real time. In a similar vein, an editor-in-chief of a private newspaper in the Southwest explained that sometimes, with the absence of editorial assistants, they turn to Meta AI to format articles rapidly before conducting final editorial review.

Additionally, participants in this study revealed that the use of AI is a vital mechanism for coping with time-induced stress. A TV reporter in the Centre region confessed to using AI to process a complex court story in under five minutes right before a prime-time news broadcast deadline, noting its efficiency despite having feelings of guilt for not respecting stated editorial processes. This form of processing is also used by some editors who have embraced the technology. An editor-in-chief of a private newspaper in the Southwest region noted that when racing against time, they issue prompts into either ChatGPT, Gemini, or Meta AI to cut exhaustive field drafts down to concise, print-ready texts.

### *5.2. RQ2*

Although the use of AI is seemingly facilitating the tasks of journalists as some of the respondents highlighted in Section 5.1, the exploration of its full capabilities is hampered by several factors. Interview participants highlighted challenges that have been classified under three specific themes: (a) infrastructural and economic barriers, (b) context-specific data deficit, and (c) managerial inertia—all compounded by newsroom managers' poor knowledge of the use of AI.

#### 5.2.1. Infrastructural and Economic Barriers to AI Adoption

Cameroonian journalists, similar to those in other parts of the Global South, face significant resource limitations that hamper their work, and this is particularly severe when exploring new technologies. In this study, participants highlight three major resource constraints to their full use of AI tools—namely, unstable electricity and limited internet access, alongside the overarching challenge of limited financial resources.

These hurdles do not only restrict access. But as respondents reveal, they also disrupt the continuity of digital journalistic workflows:

> I think that the highest impediment to the use of AI in our newsroom is electricity, because we are still in an environment where it's not guaranteed to have electricity, even just for one full day. And internet connectivity is also very, very poor and very limited. So, there are days when we don't even have electricity completely. There are days when the internet is generally down. That means you cannot use any system that relies on electricity and the internet. (Editor-in-chief, private newspaper, Southwest region)

This infrastructural precarity is sometimes exacerbated by the general sociopolitical atmosphere in the country. A reporter and news anchor for the state broadcaster in the Southwest region highlighted that during the post-election tensions of October 2025, network shutdowns paralyzed internet functionality, making it difficult to fully rely on online AI tools. A freelance reporter and online publisher in the Centre region pointed out the financial inability of local practitioners to "go premium," emphasizing that because journalists cannot afford monthly or yearly corporate subscriptions, they are restricted to free models, which are generally limited. As a result, journalists who are interested in exploring AI are confined to inferior, entry-level versions, thus widening the gap between their reporting capabilities and those of their counterparts in better-resourced contexts.

### 5.2.2. Context-Specific Data Deficit

Findings from this study also show that AI tools generally have insufficient data about Cameroon. Some respondents expressed frustration that their prompts yield very little information, which they consider far below expectations. Such a deficit, according to them, represents a form of "algorithmic marginalization," where local realities are absent from Western-trained models:

> The AI tools we're using don't have enough data on Cameroon to give us [unbiased responses], because AI is trained on data….We don't have AI that is 100% African. I think the AI still needs a lot of data from Africa, including Cameroon. (Reporter/news anchor, state-owned broadcaster, Southwest region)

Due to the scarcity of data, research participants reported that platforms churn out outdated or fabricated information when queried about local topics. A reporter from the state broadcaster in the Northwest region revealed that AI tools frequently deliver outdated metrics, especially on judicial and policy topics, presenting data from several years back when current data is required. This obliges journalists to commit themselves to rigorous verification to reduce the incidence of misinformation. The consequence of this contextual vacuum is the generation of "hallucinations." A newspaper proprietor in the Southwest region recounted how they discovered severe historical inaccuracies when they tried to track past ministerial appointments using AI. The output, according to their account, conflicted with official records on the presidency website. Furthermore, a freelance reporter from the Centre region revealed that AI systems frequently invent quotations, necessitating considerable manual surveillance by the journalist.

### 5.2.3. Managerial Inertia Leading to Institutional Blind Spots and Policy Underdevelopment

Another key challenge cited by interviewees was that several newsroom managers, editors, and media proprietors have limited knowledge about the use of AI. This tends to work against journalists' full adoption as they lack the enabling environment and newsroom support to fully explore AI tools as desired. All participants in this study indicated that their newsrooms do not have clearly outlined policies on the use of AI, and so journalists are left to explore it by themselves. This institutional lag reflects a structural divide that stifles formalized technological integration:

> Unfortunately, we don't have formal guidelines. Most of our newsrooms…are managed by people over 40. In the adoption model of technology, they are not really among the early adopters. So, they are still dragging their feet to accept such a model. (Reporter, public broadcaster, Southwest region)

What can be described here as a generational gap impedes the evolution of the full adoption of AI into newsroom routines. An editor-in-chief of a private TV station in the Littoral region admitted that their current editorial policies were established long before the advent of automated workflows, and the institution is still to make amendments to formally incorporate AI. As a result, practitioners have been left to use it haphazardly. As a newspaper proprietor from the Southwest region corroborated, "old school" legacy news editors and publishers will only welcome and formalize AI integration once they are explicitly educated on its professional advantages.

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that media professionals are not passive spectators but active agents who creatively deploy AI to make up for professional and linguistic lapses as well as pressures related to deadlines. However, this individualized adoption is seen as throttled by institutional inertia and contextual infrastructural realities. Section 6 presents a discussion of the results to fully explore how these localized realities align with, challenge, redefine, or reshape understanding of theoretical underpinnings.

## 6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine how Cameroonian journalists utilize accessible AI tools and the practical challenges they confront when trying to integrate these technologies into their daily workflows. By employing Venkatesh et al.'s (2003) UTAUT as the theoretical lens, this study demonstrates that technology adoption in a resource-scarce media ecosystem does not follow the predictable, top-down pathways established in Western organizational models. Instead, it can be described as a fragmented and individualized process (Lefèvre et al., 2025). Below, the empirical findings are contextualized within the core constructs of UTAUT to illustrate how the realities faced by these journalists redefine the boundaries of digital media practice.

The data reveal a disconnect between individual adoption intentions and organizational support structures, creating what I choose to call a bottom-up innovation paradox. While some of the research participants demonstrated high levels of PE with the belief that AI tools can enhance their reporting speed and output quality (Sudirman et al., 2022), they note that their newsrooms are lagging far behind. Interviewees employed what Katz et al. (1963) described as laggards to demonstrate the slow pace at which newsroom decision-makers are gaining interest and adopting the use of AI. This divide upends the classic UTAUT

construct of SI. In traditional corporate settings, SI operates as a top-down reality where supervisors validate or recommend the use of a new tool (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). In Cameroonian newsrooms, however, top-down validation seems absent. But the reality here is that horizontal, informal peer recommendations drive journalists' use of accessible mobile AI tools. Because newsrooms are slow in cultivating an enabling environment, AI integration is left entirely to the discretion and personal risk of individual practitioners.

In Cameroon's unique socio-political landscape, EE is deeply tied to linguistic necessity. For English-speaking journalists operating within French-dominated administrative, institutional, and social spheres, accessible generative tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini enable professional survival. Their accessibility redefines the operational workflows of Anglophone journalists, allowing them to instantly translate and process French documents that would otherwise remain unclear to them due to language barriers. Similar to the findings of Çipuri et al. (2025), these local practitioners exhibit preferences for intuitive AI translation and transcription apps over older methods. Operationally, this means AI is facilitating the task of Anglophone journalists who had to await official translation of documents from cross-lingual information brokers, mitigating post-colonial linguistic disparities.

As shown in the study, journalists are highly motivated to explore AI, but they also run into severe localized data deficits. This deficit exposes a major flaw in FC available to African media practitioners. Western-trained algorithmic models rely on data sets that largely marginalize or ignore parts of Cameroonian socio-political history, legal frameworks, and contemporary realities. As a result, when prompted for localized information, these utilities frequently fabricate historical data or invent quotations. This algorithmic blind spot introduces operational risks. As Gondwe (2025) observed regarding AI in Tanzanian media, preserving local cultural nuances and precise factual truth remains a persistent challenge. Cameroon's deep linguistic complexity spanning official bilingualism, Pidgin English variations, and over 240 indigenous languages magnifies this vacuum. Therefore, integrating AI into specific workflows does not turn out to be as time-effective as hoped, since journalists are obliged to include significant manual verification steps into their routine to guard against propagating automated misinformation.

At the organizational level, the general absence of institutional newsroom guidelines creates a delicate ethical vacuum in the adoption of AI. Corroborating the work of Wu (2026), this study shows that given newsroom managers' insufficient technical knowledge, there is a loophole in systemic policy development, leading to a bottom-up adoption instead of the conventional top-down adoption approach common within organizations. Because newsrooms have not updated editorial policies to encompass automated workflows, journalists are forced to establish their own ad-hoc ethical boundaries, creating an operational ambiguity susceptible to producing a negative impact on newsroom accountability. Research participants highlighted deploying AI to rapidly generate scripts or run live commentaries. However, because managers overlook the underlying process, they tend to offer little institutional oversight in case of abusive use, which in turn exposes not only journalists but also media outlets to considerable ethical challenges.

Finally, the material vulnerability of the Cameroonian media environment completely reconfigures the construct of FC. In the classic UTAUT model, FC assumes that there is a stable physical environment and focuses on organizational support (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In Cameroon, journalists are caught between a high PE and desire for speed on the one hand (Munoriyarwa, 2024), and the realities of macro-level systemic challenges such as chronic electricity outages, exorbitant mobile data costs, and politically motivated

internet shutdowns during times of civic tension on the other. To adapt, journalists prioritize tools with exceptionally low EE that can run efficiently on low-bandwidth mobile devices (Badowska et al., 2016). In a Global South context such as Cameroon, technology adoption can seldom be separated from the physical infrastructural realities of the system in which they operate.

## 7. Conclusion

This study provides a vital empirical contribution to the general understanding of AI adoption within the under-researched Cameroonian media ecosystem. The study shows that AI integration reinforces the hybrid work ethic (Li, 2025; Nfor, 2024), as newer automated logics merge with older, legacy newsroom realities. In this environment, individual self-motivated journalists eagerly deploy AI to overcome professional and linguistic barriers but are faced with systems that are lagging behind in managerial guidelines, formal policies, or structural training.

Theoretically, this research extends the boundaries of the UTAUT framework by proving that in such contexts, FC cannot be viewed as a passive organizational variable. Instead, material conditions such as stable electricity and internet connectivity are active forces that dictate the pace and ethics of innovation. Furthermore, AI is seen to be reshaping the traditional gatekeeping process, as the lingering oversight of newsroom management in verifying automated output leaves the ethical and professional responsibility on individual journalists. For practicing media professionals and scholars alike, this indicates that effective ways of bridging the gap between ad-hoc usage and responsible journalism should be urgently considered, with localized media literacy, collaborative policy formulation, and targeted training frameworks, involving both managers and practitioners.

This study acknowledges two primary limitations. First, the explicit focus on English-speaking journalists from selected regions excludes the lived experiences of French-speaking practitioners, who navigate a different institutional space within Cameroon's bilingual landscape, thereby limiting national generalizability. Second, the rapid, real-time evolution of generative AI utilities means these findings represent an empirical snapshot in time. Future research can therefore expand its scope to include a broader quantitative or qualitative sampling across all ten administrative regions of Cameroon to capture a comprehensive national perspective. Additionally, incorporating mixed methodologies, such as newsroom ethnographies or automated content analyses of actual published outputs, would yield deeper insights into exactly how AI-generated text is modified before public dissemination. Finally, longitudinal studies would be highly valuable in tracking how these personalized, bottom-up practices evolve as newsroom policies and national regulatory frameworks eventually become more formalized.

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## Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## Data Availability

The anonymized data can be requested from the author.

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To prepare this manuscript, the author used ChatGPT-5 to check grammar and contextualize some words and short expressions.

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