

## **Artificial intelligence and journalism in Malaysia: Readiness and adoption**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly transforming journalism globally, with significant implications for content production, newsroom operations, and editorial processes. In Malaysia, the integration of AI into journalism remains in its early stages, influenced by technological advancement, evolving policy frameworks, and ongoing ethical debates. This study examines Malaysia's readiness for AI adoption in the journalism sector by analysing global trends, regional developments in Southeast Asia, and the national context. Using a qualitative methodology that combines literature review and semi-structured interviews with media professionals, the research investigates levels of awareness, perceived benefits and limitations, and policy and ethical considerations. The researcher interviewed a total of twelve interviewees with multi news agencies. Findings revealed that the awareness of using AI tools is high level among the journalists, the journalists acknowledge the benefits and limitations of using AI tool in their journalism field, however, challenges persist, including limited training, ethical uncertainties, and the absence of sector-specific regulatory guidance. The study concludes by recommending a collaborative, ethically grounded framework involving policymakers, media institutions, and academic bodies to support responsible AI integration and ensure the sustainability of journalism in Malaysia's digital transformation.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Journalism, Malaysia, Ethic, Digital Transformation

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital age, artificial intelligence (AI) stands as a pivotal force reshaping industries worldwide, including journalism. The adoption of AI in journalism encompasses a wide array of functions, such as automating news production, conducting audience analytics, streamlining newsroom operations, and enhancing content personalization. These capabilities are revolutionizing the news ecosystem by modifying how information is created, disseminated, and consumed (Marconi & Siegman, 2020; Newman, 2023).

AI's integration into journalism is not merely technical but also strategic, as editors increasingly assume roles that extend beyond traditional journalism into areas such as audience engagement and digital innovation (Zuiderwijk, 2021). Journalists today are required to navigate real-time, data-driven environments, often leveraging AI tools to meet the dynamic informational needs of their audiences. However, this shift brings forth significant challenges, including ethical concerns, the risk of misinformation, and the evolving role of journalistic judgment.

The rise of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok often powered by AI-driven algorithms has complicated public engagement with news. While these platforms offer enhanced reach and audience targeting, they also pose challenges in terms of content credibility, audience fragmentation, and algorithmic transparency (Reuters, 2023). As a result, news organizations are compelled to redefine their digital strategies and explore how AI can be used to foster deeper audience connections while safeguarding journalistic values.

Malaysia is actively pursuing AI adoption through national policy frameworks such as the National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap (2021 - 2025) and the broader National Policy on Science, Technology, and Innovation (2021-2030). These initiatives aim to position Malaysia as a high-tech and high-income nation by building a robust AI ecosystem (MOSTI, 2024; MyDigital, 2025). Within this vision, journalism is recognized as a vital sector for AI integration, as highlighted by programmes like the Malaysia Artificial Intelligence Nexus 2024 and the establishment of the National AI Office (NAIO). Despite technological enthusiasm, Malaysian journalism faces structural and ethical barriers to AI adoption. According to Chinnasamy and Subramaniam (2022), the hybrid media environment in Malaysia comprising both traditional and digital-only platforms exacerbate disparities in AI readiness. Challenges such as job insecurity, misinformation, and inadequate institutional support hinder seamless integration. While, Almakaty (2024), started that the application of AI in journalism is taking over of human jobs by robots and

automation of tasks. This becomes the dilemma of some of the media industry when AI technologies take over the journalism task.

Tajuddin and Ali (2020) further emphasize the socio-political vulnerabilities of journalists in Malaysia, including legal risks, cyber threats, and restrictions on freedom of expression. These contextual realities complicate the operationalization of AI in journalistic practices, especially in investigative and political reporting (Linden, 2020).

Furthermore, while AI can offer insights into audience behaviour and content preferences through analytics, it lacks the emotional and social intelligence inherent in human journalists (Newman et al., 2024). Thus, the interplay between machine efficiency and human editorial judgement remains a central tension in AI-driven journalism. This may reshape journalistic practice, usefulness and broader media landscape.

This study explores the state of AI readiness among Malaysian journalists, focusing on the extent of adoption, perceived benefits and limitations, and the ethical-policy landscape. Specifically, it seeks to address three research questions:

What is the current level of awareness and use of AI tools among journalists in Malaysia?

What are the benefits and limitations of AI in journalistic practice in adopting AI?

What policy and ethical considerations should guide AI integration in Malaysian journalism?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute both to academic discourse and to the practical formulation of media policy. It offers insights relevant to media practitioners, scholars, and policymakers committed to shaping a resilient and ethically grounded media landscape in the AI era.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Global Trends in AI and Journalism**

Over the past decade, AI has rapidly transformed the global journalism landscape. News organizations increasingly deploy AI for content automation, data-driven reporting, recommendation systems, and natural language processing. For instance,

The Washington Post uses its in-house AI tool, Heliograf, to generate thousands of short articles from structured data sources (Marconi & Siegman, 2020). This reflects how technological advancements are often outpacing the journalistic field's ability to adapt, especially in newsrooms with limited technical capacity.

Recent data from Newman (2023) shows that more than 60% of major newsrooms in Europe and North America have integrated AI into their editorial processes. These tools enhance operational efficiency, offer personalized content, and provide deeper audience analytics. However, the rapid deployment of such technologies also necessitates the reskilling of media workers, and some media outlets face financial pressures from failing to meet shifting audience demands (Sonni, 2024).

Leading agencies like Reuters and the Associated Press are early adopters of AI for tasks such as automated reporting and data visualization. While these innovations improve productivity and consistency, they also raise concerns regarding algorithmic fairness, lack of transparency, and potential bias in news selection (Reuters, 2023). Furthermore, the spread of news sources has led to information fatigue among consumers, contributing to rising levels of news avoidance and disengagement.

Reuters (2023) further reports that audiences are increasingly seeking content that resonates with their lived experiences rather than simply more news. AI's potential to deliver hyper-personalised content introduces new risks, particularly regarding the reliability and ethical implications of algorithm-curated journalism. Therefore, it is vital for journalism to preserve its foundational values authenticity, human empathy, and editorial judgment in the face of automation.

In the United States, the intersection of AI and journalism has sparked ethical and operational debates. CNET, for example, faced backlash for publishing AI-generated articles with factual errors and lacking transparency, leading to reputational damage (Vincent, 2022). Meanwhile, media outlets like BuzzFeed and Bloomberg are experimenting with AI to produce lifestyle content and financial reporting, respectively, indicating both the promise and pitfalls of generative tools (Newman et al., 2024).

These global developments underscore a pressing need for critical governance, transparent practices, and responsible AI adoption in journalism. As the sector continues to evolve, understanding these trends offers valuable insights into how

Malaysia and similar contexts can navigate their own paths toward AI integration in the media industry.

### **AI and Journalism in Southeast Asia**

Southeast Asia's adoption of AI has shown notable growth over recent years, though it remains uneven across countries (Putra, 2024). This variation in readiness has complicated regional efforts to formulate a unified AI governance framework under ASEAN. Singapore stands out as the most prepared nation, having actively positioned itself as a regional AI hub through strategic government investment, partnerships with global technology firms, and robust infrastructure.

Singapore was among the first ten countries globally to launch a national AI strategy in 2019 and revised its roadmap in 2023, setting ambitious goals such as tripling its AI workforce to 15,000 and expanding research and development centres (Musaddique, 2024). This proactive approach reflects the nation's commitment to becoming a global AI leader.

In contrast, countries like Malaysia and Indonesia have demonstrated more cautious engagement, shaped by economic limitations and comparatively weaker digital infrastructure (Digital Nasional Berhad, 2022). While Malaysia has articulated its AI ambitions through policies such as the AI Roadmap (2021–2025), the practical implementation in media remains constrained by budget allocations and uneven institutional support.

Editorial practices also vary significantly. A study of Indonesian media revealed that despite governmental enthusiasm and policy dialogue, newsrooms have underutilized AI in diversifying content and improving editorial quality (Tuasikal, 2024). This finding suggests a disconnect between national policy and media sector capability. However, other evidence points to growing familiarity with AI among journalists. According to a 2024 regional survey, AI adoption among media professionals in Indonesia and Thailand has reached 95%, suggesting high levels of awareness and integration in newsroom workflows. The study, which included 75 journalists from Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam, indicates a strong foundational understanding of AI tools and their professional applications (Siswoyo, 2024).

While Southeast Asia is collectively progressing toward AI integration in journalism, the pace and depth of adoption vary significantly. Singapore demonstrates a model

of rapid development and institutional coordination, whereas other nations like Malaysia and Indonesia face challenges that stem from infrastructural, financial, and organizational readiness (Putra, 2024). These disparities highlight the need for targeted capacity-building and cross-border collaboration to ensure inclusive AI development across the region.

### **The Malaysian Context**

Malaysia's engagement with AI has expanded considerably, propelled by the rapid growth of digital infrastructure and widespread internet penetration. However, when it comes to journalism, the integration of AI remains at an early stage. As noted by Jodie (2024), efforts to implement AI in Malaysian newsrooms lag behind those of other nations. While AI offers significant benefits such as audience prediction and optimal content scheduling it lacks emotional intelligence, which, combined with restrictive media regulation, poses challenges for effective adoption.

Government initiatives reflect a growing commitment to AI development. Programmes such as the Malaysia Artificial Intelligence Nexus 2024, along with collaborations with international technology firms like Google and Microsoft, underscore the strategic national emphasis on AI (MOSTI, 2024). According to Yen et al. (2024), AI can improve productivity and innovation, but institutional readiness defined as an organisation's willingness and capacity to embrace new technologies remains uneven across the media sector.

Despite increasing interest in AI, journalism-specific research in Malaysia remains limited (Jodie et al., 2024; Almakaty, 2024). Prior studies have identified critical challenges such as a lack of clear regulatory frameworks, insufficient training for media practitioners, and ethical uncertainties in algorithmic decision-making (Omar Al-Zoubi, 2024; Toh, 2023). These gaps hinder the responsible and effective deployment of AI in journalistic workflows.

Ownership and labour market dynamics also pose structural challenges. The dominance of global platforms like Google and Meta threatens the viability of local media enterprises and risks exacerbating employment instability (Hairi, 2024; Ong, 2023). Moreover, algorithmic bias remains a concern, raising ethical questions about fairness and inclusivity in AI-driven reporting.

Encouragingly, there are signs of readiness among local media organisations. A qualitative study involving 29 major Malaysian media institutions reported that 94%

of participants expressed willingness to adopt AI to enhance content quality (Azizah Hamzah, 2014). Yet, operational hurdles such as limited technical expertise and inadequate funding persist, often undermining these intentions.

### **Ethical and Governance Considerations**

Ethics refers to the principles governing human conduct, guiding decisions between what is morally right and wrong. In journalism, ethical conduct is foundational, embodied in journalistic codes that emphasize truth, accountability, and public service. This section applies Social Responsibility Theory, which posits that the media has an obligation to serve the public good by disseminating truthful and socially constructive information. Within this framework, technologies including AI are viewed as tools that should aid in the development of society. Journalists, therefore, carry the ethical responsibility of ensuring that the news they produce, and the way it is presented, aligns with societal well-being and democratic values (Abigail, 2019; Omar Al-Zoubi, 2024).

The integration of AI into journalism introduces new ethical complexities. AI systems, when used for tasks such as content creation, audience targeting, and news curation, can significantly influence public perception and discourse. As such, ethical principles must guide the development and deployment of these technologies. Floridi and Cowls (2019) propose a widely cited AI ethics framework built on five core principles: beneficence (promoting well-being), non-maleficence (avoiding harm), autonomy (respecting human agency), justice (ensuring fairness), and explicability (transparency and accountability). These values are particularly relevant in journalism, where algorithmic decisions can affect what information reaches which audiences and under what framing.

Explicability, in particular, is crucial. Without transparent algorithms and explainable AI, editorial accountability becomes diffused, potentially undermining trust in media institutions. Autonomy is also a pressing concern, as algorithm-driven news feeds may restrict exposure to diverse perspectives, reinforcing echo chambers and compromising informed public debate.

Governance mechanisms must evolve alongside these ethical principles. Regulatory frameworks, editorial oversight policies, and public accountability systems are essential to ensuring responsible AI use in journalism. As Omar Al-Zoubi (2024) notes, the lack of clear ethical guidelines and institutional standards for AI use in Malaysian newsrooms remains a critical gap.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, which is widely used in social sciences to explore complex, context-specific phenomena through detailed, interpretive data (Maxwell, 2013). This method is particularly appropriate for investigating the perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by journalists and media organisations regarding the adoption of AI in Malaysia.

Using a purposive sampling method, this study selected participants with sufficient knowledge and experience in journalism. According to Guest et al., (2006), data saturation in qualitative studies around 12 respondents is sufficient in a situation of involving homogenous groups and chosen according to some common criteria. The more similar participants in interviews and the shared their experience in a field, the sooner the saturation is reached and this study supported by Ahmed (2025).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 respondents media professionals, including journalists and editors from both traditional and digital news organisations. Participants were selected through purposive sampling that efficiently employ limited research resources by selecting participants who are most likely to profile suitable and helpful information (Campbell et al., 2020), with inclusion criteria requiring a minimum of three years' experience in journalism and demonstrated familiarity with digital tools or AI applications. Most participants had over three years of experience in the media industry.

Table 1: Summary of participant demographics

Participant Code	Job Designation	Gender	Years of experience	Type of media	Familiar with AI Tools
R1	Senior Journalist/Editor	Female	12	Digital	Yes
R2	Senior Journalist	Male	28	Digital	Yes
R3	Senior Journalist/Editor	Male	16	Traditional and Digital	Yes
R4	Senior Journalist/Editor	Male	> 30	Traditional and Digital	Moderate
R5	Journalist/Editor	Female	15	Traditional and Digital	Yes

R6	Senior Journalist	Female	18	Digital	Yes
R7	Senior Journalist	Female	17	Traditional and Digital	Yes
R8	Journalist	Female	5	Digital	Yes
R9	Journalist	Female	4	Digital	Yes
R10	Senior Journalist/Editors	Female	> 30	Traditional and Digital	Yes
R11	Senior Journalist	Female	24	Traditional and Digital	Yes
R12	Senior Journalist	Female	23	Traditional and Digital	Moderate

Interviewees were drawn from a variety of media outlets, including traditional newspapers and digital such as Daily Express, The Star, Borneo Post, Sin Chew Daily and New Straits Times Press (NSTP), as well as digital platforms including BERNAMA, The Malaysian Press, The Vibes, and the Information Department of Malaysia Sabah. This diversity enabled a wide-ranging understanding of perspectives on AI across different media ecosystems.

The interview questions were designed to elicit in-depth reflection according to the first research objective with four questions, second research objective with three questions and third research objective with four questions. The additional questions also added on the organizational support and training to get their views. These interviews provided journalists with a free space to express their independent views on AI. The interviews were conducted through face-to-face and through online, the respondents were informed that the interviews were recorded. All interviews were transcribed and translated from the original language where necessary. To maintain confidentiality and ethical integrity, participants were anonymised using alphanumeric codes. Participants were also briefed on the voluntary nature of the study and provided informed consent (Fleming & Zefwaard, 2018).

The data were analysed using thematic analysis, a method suitable for identifying and interpreting patterns within qualitative data. Thematic analysis can be essentialist or realist in reporting participants' experiences and reality, or constructionist, examining how events, realities, meanings and experiences are influenced by various discourses in society (Braun & Clarke, 2006) This analytic approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of how journalists experience and

respond to the integration of AI technologies in their work, and how these experiences relate to broader structural and ethical considerations. This methodological design supports the overall aim of the study to assess AI readiness in Malaysian journalism while also addressing the three core research questions concerning awareness, benefits and limitations, and policy or ethical implications.

## **FINDINGS**

This study identified three key themes that shape journalists' readiness and adoption of AI in Malaysian journalism and the interviews focused on key themes (1) awareness and use of AI tools, (2) perceived benefits and limitations and (3) ethical concerns and governance.

### **Awareness and Use of AI Tools**

The majority of journalists interviewed reported a strong awareness of AI tools, often introduced through peers or discovered independently via online platforms. Most informants could articulate what AI is and how it relates to their daily routines in journalism. Ten out of twelve participants reported actively using AI tools to enhance their productivity, particularly in transcription and language refinement.

"I use AI to speed up my work; nowadays the demand for news is very intense. Sometimes I have to do 20 news stories a day, but AI tools help me to boost my work." (Respondent 9)

Another participant echoed similar sentiments:

"AI helps me to do my write-up fast and accurately. In terms of transcription, it can do it faster. It is very helpful, and my time from two hours of work can reduce to one hour." (Respondent 1)

Despite these advantages, there was also cautious scepticism. One senior journalist raised concerns about ethical boundaries and over-reliance:

"Actually, the AI is a good tool, but it should be used carefully and not to take away the other journalist's story and use AI to revamp the story and claim that story as an original story by them. This is unethical. (Respondent 4).

While digital platforms demonstrated higher levels of AI adoption using tools such as Transcribe, Turboscribe, Google Translate, and ChatGPT traditional newsrooms exhibited more limited use, mainly confined to analytics and content automation. This discrepancy was often attributed to budgetary constraints, rigid editorial hierarchies, and limited technical infrastructure.

These findings are consistent with Linden (2020), who observed that digital media tend to adopt innovative technologies more rapidly, while traditional outlets struggle with systemic limitations. Moreover, the global trend of AI-assisted journalism, such as the 20 Minuten app in Switzerland which offers AI-generated multilingual news personalisation highlights the widening gap in adoption. Yet, truly generative AI remains limited to select organisations. However, the recent proliferation of tools like ChatGPT has brought AI firmly into strategic discussions within the journalism sector.

### **Awareness in term of Organisational Support and Training**

To transition effectively into AI-integrated journalism, professional training is essential. While Malaysia's government through the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Digital, and MOSTI has introduced national-level initiatives such as the National Artificial Intelligence Office (NAIO) and MyDigital (2025) to accelerate AI adoption, these efforts have not consistently reached the journalism sector.

Among the twelve participants interviewed, only one reported receiving formal AI-related training from their organisation. Most journalists acquired AI knowledge through external training providers such as the Malaysian Press Institute (MPI) and BERNAMA, or through self-directed exploration.

"My organisation provides training on AI to us, and apart from that, my organisation also provides training on AI tools to all journalists in Malaysia, regardless of any media organisations." (Respondent 8)

In contrast, the majority of informants emphasised a lack of internal support, often relying on peer sharing or self-learning.

"We follow the AI tools training for journalism from other training providers; other than that, we explore ourselves and get sharing from other journalists who have used the AI tools." (Respondent 2)

The statement supported by another informant on how the company does not give formal training of AI in their respective workplace.

“My company never provide AI training for us, I explored myself on AI tools and with the help of my peers” (Respondent 6)

Similar respond by another respondent on the involvement of AI training in organization:

“We have never been training on AI in our organization but I know my company are using AI in their reporting until there was a serious issue came out. I think we need the training to know more about the advantages and disadvantages” (Respondent 12)

Participants suggested the need for hands-on workshops, seminars on ethical AI usage, and integration of AI modules into journalism education. This finding aligns with Talabi et al. (2024), who emphasised the importance of training journalists to understand both the opportunities and risks associated with AI tools. Overall, the findings shows that while awareness and adoption of AI are relatively high among individual journalists, while for the organizations the awareness are still not fully supported.

### **Perceived Benefits and Limitations**

The most commonly reported opportunities and benefits of AI tools was their ability to save time and enhance efficiency. Tools like ChatGPT, Google Translate, and transcription software were used to assist in research, drafting, translation, and transcription.

“I use ChatGPT to search for data, enhance my reporting, and improve the quality of my writing. It helps a lot.” (Respondent 7)

“ChatGPT helps with fast and accurate translations, and it simplifies complex information. It’s improved my transcription and translation work.” (Respondent 5)

“I have to buy myself the advanced apps in order to get my work more efficient and my company never provide. But it’s ok after all it’s about my job” (Respondent 9)

Despite of stated the benefits of using AI tools another respondent responded in another way of using AI tool with cautious.

“Normally, I only use ChatGPT to check my transcribe, I would see if this is what I want in my reporting or not and I still believe in using my own brain to think and definitely use my own idea to reach people” (Respondent 11)

Nine out of twelve informants acknowledged the value of AI for improving speed and output quality, but all stressed that AI-generated information must be verified for accuracy. AI was also used for sentiment analysis, speech-to-text conversion, and audio editing functions that previously consumed significant time. According to the report of Digital 2025, ChatGPT is one of the most downloaded apps and a quarter of a billion monthly active users between September and November in 2024 globally. In similar report mentioned that undeniably AI plays a vital role in shaping the future of technologies but despite of the advance tools it is important to maintain a balance of assessment while using them (Digital, 2025).

These findings align with Patel and Mausam (2024), who argue that while AI tools cannot replace journalists, they can enhance journalistic performance by improving speed, clarity, and accessibility.

Despite the opportunities and benefits, several critical limitations were identified, particularly around accountability, ethics, and transparency. Journalists remain responsible for the accuracy of the news, even when AI tools are used in the content creation process. Several participants raised concerns about the ethical implications of using AI without proper oversight.

“The content might not be factual and outdated and must put the disclaimer for that content using the AI generator; this is for the transparency part. (Respondent 10).

“Journalists should be very careful in using the AI tools in their reports, although AI can boost productivity and personalisation, but AI doesn’t know sensitive issues such as 3R (Religion, Race and Royal Institution) in Malaysia (Respondent 9)

The respondents indicated in the study that not all the information of AI can be used in journalism reporting. Journalists and editors must verify the information before release it.

“There is one thing I really don’t like about it (AI tool) they like to put additional information that is not relevant and mixed up the whole things, but I realize that it’s all about prompting also, we cannot rely so much on Ai” (Respondent 12).

Similar challenges echoes by a respondent faced while using AI tools.

“Not all the information can be used though AI can access the information that journalist hard to find but the validity of the data should be verified. It seems so perfect and correct with the sources but don’t trust one hundred percent” (Respondent 3)

Issues of algorithmic bias, inaccurate content, and authorship attribution were frequently mentioned. There was concern that AI-generated stories without human review could mislead audiences and undermine credibility. This is consistent with Kumari (2024), who advocates for regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible AI use in journalism. The excerpt indicates that, the respondents recognise both advantages of AI tools and limitations or challenges associated with their use. In this study, the journalist and editors remain vigilant with the use of AI as it presents both benefits and challenges in employing these tools.

Participants stressed the need for transparency in how AI is used. News organisations must explain how AI is used in their reporting and indicate which content is AI-generated. Without transparency, public trust will erode. This echoes the ethical guidelines proposed by Floridi and Cowls (2019), who emphasise beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, explicability, and autonomy as key principles for ethical AI integration. Sonni et al. (2024) also highlight the newsroom’s responsibility in monitoring for bias in AI systems.

### **Ethical Concerns and Governance**

Malaysia’s National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap (2021–2025) outlines strategies for integrating AI across sectors such as healthcare, finance, and manufacturing. However, it does not contain provisions specific to the media and journalism industry. Given the increasing use of AI in content creation, audience analytics, and editorial processes, the absence of a media-specific regulatory framework presents a critical gap. This omission leaves journalists and media institutions without formal ethical or operational guidance for AI adoption.

“The AI lacks the human touch, yet we cannot fight with its ability and I believe that if we want to use AI, we must include a disclaimer. The use of AI should have guidelines, especially in journalism competition and the government should implement the AI law to prevent the miscommunication, misleading information and irresponsible data in reporting” (Respondent 1)

“That’s our concern on ethics especially in plagiarism using AI, the write up becomes the AI robotic writing and no human touch and no emotions”. (Respondent 10)

“For me, the use of AI must have ethics in terms of bringing up the story they must post a disclaimer and be honest to say that, this is AI generated. Personally, I don’t rely on AI in my reports. Government should release ethical rules and policy guidelines on the application of AI in their reporting. They claim that their narrative is true but in fact, it is AI does the stories, and anyone cheats if there are no guidelines. Indeed, AI also makes mistakes so facts need to be verified. My advice is that AI should have the policy and guidelines when you using it to disseminate information”. (Respondent 4)

The ethical concerns and governance AI technology’s theme is highly concern by the 12 respondents. They concern of unethical manner by the journalists when they are using the AI tools in their reporting and this may affects the credibility of their professionalism. The respondents proposed a guidelines policy produced by the government to help the media where the truth is upheld. This result is consistent with the study of Almakaty (2024), which found that while ethics, accountability, and transparency are essential to journalism powered by AI technology, the methodology for doing so is still in its infancy.

To address this, a supplementary framework tailored to the media sector is needed. This framework should incorporate editorial transparency, ethical safeguards, and training requirements. It can draw on international models such as UNESCO’s Guidelines for AI and Journalism (2021), which recommend principles such as human oversight, algorithmic transparency, and protection of editorial independence. Additionally, the European Union’s Artificial Intelligence Act though still under deliberation offers a precedent for regulating high-risk AI applications, including those used in journalism. Malaysia can adapt these principles to its national context, ensuring alignment with local laws, media practices, and societal sensitivities.

Local media institutions will play a vital role in operationalising such policies. Organisations like the Malaysian Press Institute (MPI), journalism faculties at public universities, and media associations should collaborate with government agencies to co-develop ethical guidelines, AI literacy training modules, and multi-stakeholder dialogues. These efforts will not only promote responsible AI use but also help safeguard journalistic integrity, freedom of expression, and public trust in an AI-enhanced media environment.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study set out to explore the readiness and adoption of AI in Malaysian journalism, focusing on journalists' awareness, perceived benefits and limitations, organizational support, and ethical considerations. The findings revealed a high level of AI awareness among Malaysian journalists, particularly those working in digital media, alongside a growing use of tools such as ChatGPT and transcription applications. However, access to structured training remains limited, with most journalists relying on self-learning or informal knowledge sharing.

Whereas, in term of readiness of using AI in newsroom is a multifaceted and it is depending on the ability and willingness of the organisation to fully adopt AI in their reports. There is a highly consideration of using the AI applications in journalism industry especially on the organisation's digital transformation. Therefore, the firm has to be carefully planned to keep up with the competitors and with the demands of the consumers.

In comparison to regional peers such as Singapore where strong government support, funding, and policy infrastructure foster rapid AI integration Malaysia lags due to financial constraints, infrastructural limitations, and insufficient institutional support within media organisations (Putra, 2024). Despite these challenges, Malaysian journalism holds considerable potential to harness AI for innovation. AI technologies can empower small and independent media outlets to increase productivity, expand their audience reach, and improve workflow efficiency. Moreover, locally developed AI tools could offer better alignment with Malaysia's linguistic diversity and socio-cultural context filling the gap left by global AI products. In line of this, Malaysia's approach to AI governance emphasizes both national security and ethical innovation (Said & Nabihah, 2024).

The study of the impact of AI on global journalism suggested a clear path forward. AI adoption in journalism should be gradual, inclusive, and ethically grounded. A proactive policy approach is needed, ensuring that journalists are part of the AI development process, and that emerging tools align with core journalistic values such as truth, accountability, and public service (Almakaty, 2024). Ethical concerns particularly regarding algorithmic bias, misinformation, and editorial responsibility must be addressed through robust ethical frameworks and regulatory guidelines. The principles proposed by Floridi and Cowls (2019) and guidelines from UNESCO could inform the development of local standards (UNESCO, 2024).

Journalists must be equipped with AI literacy and critical thinking skills to responsibly navigate the use of these tools. Training programmes should be prioritised across both public and private media institutions to ensure that professionals understand the capabilities and limitations of AI, especially its inability to grasp nuance in sensitive topics like race, religion, and monarchy key in the Malaysian context.

Importantly, the Social Responsibility Theory underpins this study, reminding us that journalism holds an ethical obligation to serve the public interest. AI must not replace journalistic judgment or creativity but should instead augment the role of journalists in producing timely, accurate, and socially responsible content. Maintaining human control over AI ensures that technological advancements do not compromise journalistic integrity.

## **CONCLUSION**

The advent of technology mainly on AI has had a significant influence on news reporting activities. The digital developments that introduce a new scene to the sector has changed both in an industry and a profession. The new opportunities to journalistic practice seem almost everyone can access due to better infrastructure. The findings of this study, exposed the level of AI readiness among Malaysian journalists and media organizations.

The Malaysian journalists generally have high level of awareness of readiness and adoption, they also know about employing the AI tools and the applications to simplify their tasks. Though they face challenges using AI technologies, they also have concerned on the ethics utilisation of AI tools and unregulated usage without

examining the facts, the news may not be reliable. The integration of AI in Malaysian journalism requires multi-stakeholder collaboration including journalists, policymakers, developers, academic institutions, and media associations are needed to approach the ethical issue. Together, these actors can shape a governance model that supports innovation while safeguarding democratic discourse and public trust. As Malaysia continues its digital transformation, a well-regulated, ethically-informed AI ecosystem in journalism will be crucial for fostering a resilient and future-ready media landscape.

This makes the AI tools in journalism not only for the media industry but also socially responsible in line with democratic value. This study brings insight to both transformative potential and the vigorous challenges of AI in journalism, in fact to bring fully benefits of AI tools there is also to address the ethical concerns on accountability, transparency, and monetary investment. It is recommended that more extended studies to address the issues on AI in journalism and strategizing about AI technology adoption especially in Malaysia. Policymakers also must be involved in drafting good guidelines to ensure the accountable use of AI and while journalists are guided to utilize AI tools in mixed-method skill and transparent in using the AI tools without compromising the ethical principles.

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