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Reshaping the gatekeeping function in the traditional television system: A theoretical analysis (2020-2030) of the impacts of artificial intelligence (deep fake-Chat GPT) on classical communication theories (gatekeeping-media dependency)

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Abstract

This study examines the transformative impact of artificial intelligence on the gatekeeping function of Iraqi television, focusing on technologies such as deep fakes, generative language models like Chat GPT, recommendation algorithms, and automated editing tools. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, the research draws on both theoretical and field-based studies, complemented by observations of practical applications in Iraqi channels.

Findings reveal that AI has redefined gatekeeping, with intelligent algorithms working alongside human editors to filter and prioritize news. This evolution introduces significant professional and ethical challenges, including difficulties in content verification and declining public trust. The study also underscores the growing role of audiences in collective fact-checking, reshaping the relationship between media and society.

The study recommends establishing specialized digital verification units, training media personnel in AI tools, updating editorial policies and ethical standards, fostering audience engagement, and developing robust legislative frameworks to guide this digital transformation in Iraqi media.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence (AI), deep fake, Chat GPT, gatekeeper, traditional television system

Introduction

Section One: General Framework

The decade 2020-2030 marks a turning point in the global media landscape, where artificial intelligence has transcended its supportive role to become a transformative force redefining the essence of communication. Technologies such as Chat GPT and Deep fake have challenged long-held notions of truth and credibility, urging scholars to revisit classical communication theories that once governed the interplay between the medium, the message, and the audience.

Amid this shift, the gatekeeper once a symbol of journalistic authority faces a radical redefinition. The power to filter and frame information now lies not in human hands alone but within the logic of intelligent algorithms. This transformation raises profound questions about control, dependency, and the very nature of media influence in an era where traditional boundaries dissolve.

This study offers a theoretical lens on how artificial intelligence reshapes the gatekeeping role within traditional television systems, revealing its deeper implications for Gatekeeping Theory and Media Dependency Theory. Ultimately, it seeks to illuminate the ethical and epistemological frontiers of an age where technology, truth, and power intertwine in new and uncertain ways.

First: Research Problem

Over the past decade, the traditional television system has undergone rapid transformations as a result of integrating advanced artificial intelligence technologies most notably deep fake and generative language models such as Chat GPT. These innovations have brought

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about fundamental changes in the structure of the communication process, particularly concerning the “gatekeeping” function as conceptualized in classical communication theories.

Control over the flow and filtration of information is no longer confined to human editors and media professionals; rather, it has increasingly become entrusted to intelligent algorithms and automated systems. This shift raises important questions regarding the credibility of television media content, the role of media institutions amid this transformation, and the implications for the audience media relationship and patterns of media dependency.

In light of these developments, the research problem lies in uncovering the transformations induced by AI applications in the gatekeeping function within the traditional television system, and in examining their impact on the applicability of classical communication theories, particularly Gatekeeping Theory and Media Dependency Theory.

Accordingly, the main research question emerges

How have AI technologies (Deep fake and Chat GPT) reshaped the role of traditional television as a media gatekeeper, and what are the potential future scenarios for this role amid accelerating technological developments?

Second: Research Significance

The significance of this study lies in its endeavor to keep pace with rapid technological advancements and to re-examine the validity and relevance of traditional communication theories such as Gatekeeping Theory and Media Dependency Theory in explaining the transformations occurring within the traditional television landscape as a result of AI technologies.

Moreover, the research contributes to bridging a knowledge gap regarding the influence of intelligent tools such as Deep fake and Chat GPT on editorial practices and the roles of media professionals. It enriches academic literature with a contemporary and objective study, offering a theoretical foundation for future research on the evolving intersection between media, technology, and communication in the era of artificial intelligence.

Third: Research Objectives

1. To analyze the impact of artificial intelligence technologies, such as Deep fake and Chat GPT, on the gatekeeping function within the traditional television system during the period 2020-2030.
2. To assess the applicability of classical communication theories particularly Gatekeeping Theory and Media Dependency Theory in explaining the transformations induced by AI in the media domain.
3. To explore the professional and ethical challenges facing television media amid the proliferation of intelligent tools and deep fake technologies.
4. To provide theoretical and practical recommendations that contribute to the development of conceptual frameworks and editorial practices capable of keeping pace with technological advancements in media.

Fourth: Research Hypotheses

1. There is a positive relationship between the use of artificial intelligence technologies, such as Deep fake and Chat GPT, and the decline of the human gatekeeper's role in the traditional television system.

2. The orientation of television institutions toward algorithms and intelligent systems contributes to modifying news selection and editorial practices compared to traditional methods.
3. The proliferation of artificial intelligence technologies has led to an increase in challenges related to the credibility and reliability of television news in the eyes of the audience.
4. Classical communication theories, such as Gatekeeping Theory and Media Dependency Theory, face difficulties in explaining ongoing transformations in the television system caused by AI, unless they are revised or adapted.
5. Audiences increasingly rely on digital verification tools and alternative resources to mitigate the effects of AI-generated misinformation in television media.

Fifth: Research Boundaries

1. **Topical Boundaries:** This study is limited to examining the impact of artificial intelligence technologies, such as Deep fake and Chat GPT, on the gatekeeping function within the traditional television system, with a particular focus on the implications for classical communication theories notably Gatekeeping Theory and Media Dependency Theory.
2. **Temporal Boundaries:** The research covers the period from 2020 to 2030, a decade marked by rapid advancements in the application of artificial intelligence within the media sector.
3. **Spatial Boundaries:** The study focuses on television media institutions in the Republic of Iraq, aiming to analyze the implementation of AI technologies in Iraqi media and the challenges faced by Iraqi television channels in this context.
4. **Methodological Boundaries:** The research relies on analytical and theoretical methods, drawing on previous studies and relevant scientific literature, without conducting field experiments or direct practical applications.

Sixth: Study Terms

1. **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Refers to computing systems or programs capable of simulating intelligent human behavior through learning, processing, and decision-making. This includes algorithms and language models used for data processing and media content production.
2. **Deep fake:** An AI-based technology used to create or manipulate visual and audio content in ways that make it difficult to distinguish from reality. It is often employed to produce videos or audio recordings that inaccurately or deceptively represent people or events.
3. **Chat GPT:** A language model developed using advanced AI techniques by Deep AI, leveraging deep learning to generate textual content that mimics human writing styles. It is applied in areas such as news production, text editing, and enhancing user interaction within digital media applications.
4. **Gate keeper:** The entity whether a person, organization, or system (human or automated) responsible for selecting, filtering, and distributing information and news to the public, based on professional or algorithmic criteria, as outlined in the classical Gatekeeping Theory of communication

studies.

5. **Traditional Television System:** Refers to television channels that rely on conventional satellite or terrestrial broadcasting technologies for the production and transmission of news and various programs. These channels typically operate under centralized editorial policies and are subject to human oversight to ensure content quality and compliance with established standards.

Section Two

Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

Classical media theories, such as Gatekeeping Theory and Media Dependency Theory, have long provided a central foundation for media studies, helping scholars understand the structure and functions of traditional media, particularly television. These theories have played a crucial role in analyzing how editors and media institutions select and filter news, as well as in clarifying the interactive relationship between media and audiences.

With the advent of artificial intelligence and the proliferation of advanced technologies such as deep fake and generative language models like Chat GPT, the media landscape has undergone radical transformations, directly affecting the methods of content production, editing, and dissemination. These developments highlight the pressing need to reassess the capacity of traditional theoretical frameworks to understand and explain these emerging phenomena.

In this context, the theoretical framework of this study aims to examine the scientific foundations related to the concepts of gatekeeping and media dependency, focusing on the limitations of these concepts and their adaptability to the challenges posed by AI technologies within the television system. The study also emphasizes the distinctive characteristics of the Iraqi media environment, seeking to provide a knowledge base for a comprehensive scientific investigation of the structural and professional transformations experienced by television media amid the rapid advancements driven by the digital and AI revolutions.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study seeks to investigate the transformations induced by AI technologies, such as deep fake and interactive AI applications like Chat GPT, on the gatekeeping role in the traditional television system. It also aims to evaluate the ability of classical media theories to explain these changes, with a particular focus on the Iraqi media environment. The theoretical framework is structured around several key axes that form the primary basis for analysis:

1. Gatekeeping Theory

Gatekeeping Theory is a foundational theory in media and communication, originally established by David White in the 1950s (White 383-390) ^[11] and later developed by Shoemaker and Vos in their seminal work (Shoemaker and Vos 12-24). The theory emphasizes the crucial role of editors and media institutions in selecting and filtering news to ensure that the content reaching audiences is focused, accurate, and reliable. In Iraq, researcher Jasim Mohammed Abd (Jasim 112) ^[2] noted that applying this theory faces additional challenges arising from political interventions and technological developments, particularly with the emergence of AI and editorial algorithms, which

increasingly affect the traditional role of human gatekeepers (Al-Rawi 2021, 78) ^[6].

2. Media Dependency Theory

Media Dependency Theory posits that audience reliance on media increases during periods of social change or crisis (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 3-21) ^[7]. Several studies in the Arab context, including research by Mohammed Karim Abdullah (Abdullah 2022, 55) ^[3], indicate that Iraqi audiences increasingly depend on digital media and social media platforms as primary news sources. This reliance raises challenges concerning accuracy and credibility, especially in light of the rapid expansion of AI technologies and their growing application in the media sector (Westlund and Ghersetti 789) ^[10].

3. Artificial Intelligence and the Challenge to Classical Theories:

AI technologies, such as Deep fake and Chat GPT, have introduced new challenges to classical theories, as algorithms increasingly participate in news production and filtering (Tandoc and Maitra 1099) ^[9]. According to Iraqi researcher Abdul Hussein Shabaan (Shabaan 2023, 44), the Iraqi media faces significant challenges in countering deep fake content and controlling digital media output, necessitating enhanced verification tools and improved editorial skills. Similarly, a recent Arab study highlighted that AI developments require a re-evaluation of professional and ethical standards adopted by media institutions in the Arab world (Hussein 2021, 130) ^[1].

4. Applying the Theoretical Framework to the Iraqi Media Environment

The Iraqi media is characterized by unique professional and organizational challenges (Al-Rawi 2021, 80) ^[6], making the impact of AI particularly sensitive. A field study by Wamid Al-Rikabi (Al-Rikabi 2020, 65) ^[5] indicated that Iraqi television channels need to develop effective verification policies and training programs to mitigate the risks of deep fake and misleading news.

Previous Studies

1. Tandoc, Edson C., and Joy Maitra. "AI in the newsroom: Challenges and opportunities." *Digital Journalism*, vol. 10, no. 7, 2022, pp. 1095-1113 ^[9].

This study analyzes the challenges and opportunities arising from the use of artificial intelligence technologies including language models and deep fake techniques within newsrooms. It highlights how AI is increasingly performing traditional editorial tasks once exclusive to humans, leading to changes in the concept of the gatekeeping function and reshaping the relationship between journalists and audiences.

2. Chesney, Robert, and Danielle Citron. "Deep Fakes: A Looming Challenge for Privacy, Democracy, and National Security." *California Law Review*, vol. 107, 2019, pp. 1753-1819.

This study addresses the growing challenges posed by deep fake technology in the media sector, emphasizing its impact on news credibility and implications for national security. It also underscores the need for comprehensive policies and advanced verification tools to mitigate risks associated with manipulated media content and to ensure its authenticity.

3. Hussein, Ahmed Mohammed. "Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Arab Media Institutions: Opportunities and

Challenges." Arab Journal of Media and Communication, vol. 15, no. 2, 2021, pp. 120-135.

This study examines the extent of AI adoption in Arab media institutions, focusing on its impact on editorial processes. It also offers a set of recommendations aimed at enhancing transparency and credibility in the context of increasing reliance on these technologies.

4. Abd, Jasim Mohammed. "Transformations in the Gatekeeping Function in Iraqi Satellite Channels in the Context of Digitization." Iraqi Media Journal, no. 32, 2020, pp. 110-125 ^[2].

This study discusses the transformations in the gatekeeping function in Iraqi television channels resulting from digitization and increased reliance on intelligent software and algorithms. Findings indicate a decline in the traditional role of human gatekeepers, highlighting the need for advanced digital verification policies.

Synthesis of Previous Studies

Recent studies, both international and Arab including Iraqi research indicate growing interest in the radical changes introduced by AI technologies in the media sector. These studies examine the impact of AI on the traditional gatekeeping role in journalistic institutions and television media, highlighting the resulting structural and functional transformations.

Studies such as Tandoc & Maitra (2022) and Chesney & Citron (2019) ^[9] focus on the professional and ethical challenges posed by AI tools, including deep fake and generative language models, on news credibility and journalistic roles. They note that AI increasingly competes with humans in editorial tasks, necessitating the development of new verification strategies and the updating of classical theoretical frameworks.

Conversely, Arab and Iraqi studies, such as Hussein (2021) and Abd (2020) ^[1], examine the implementation of AI in Arab and Iraqi media institutions, highlighting significant challenges such as weak technical infrastructure, limited training programs, and the absence of regulatory frameworks. These studies also emphasize the risks associated with the proliferation of fake news and deep fake content, and the resulting erosion of public trust in media institutions.

Despite the abundance of research on AI and its effects on media, most studies primarily address technical, ethical, and general challenges associated with technological developments. They rarely provide a detailed examination of the changing role of the media gatekeeper under AI, particularly in the Iraqi media context. Thus, there remains a need to test the applicability of classical communication theories, such as Gatekeeping Theory and Media Dependency Theory, in explaining transformations within the local media environment.

Furthermore, there is a clear necessity for analytical and theoretical studies that link rapid technological advancements with the Iraqi media landscape, while proposing practical strategies to address the challenges AI imposes on traditional media.

Accordingly, this study aims to fill this scholarly gap by conducting a theoretical analysis of the transformations affecting the gatekeeping role in the Iraqi television system due to AI, while evaluating the compatibility of traditional theoretical frameworks in explaining these phenomena within the local context.

Section Three

The Media Gatekeeper in the Age of Artificial Intelligence:

In recent years, media has undergone significant transformations with the development of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, resulting in the overlap of roles between humans and algorithms and the diminishing presence of the traditional gatekeeper. This shift is particularly significant for television media, especially in the Arab world and Iraq, where the risks of misinformation, fake news, and deep fake content are increasingly pronounced.

1. Definition of the Media Gatekeeper

The media gatekeeper refers to an individual, a group of individuals, or a system whether human or automated responsible for selecting, filtering, directing, and transmitting information and messages to the public. This process is guided by professional and ethical standards in addition to adherence to editorial policies (Shoemaker and Vos 13-14; White 384) ^[8, 11].

In the context of traditional television, the gatekeeper was typically the editor or news director, who decided which content appeared on screen and which was excluded (Abd, 2020, 113) ^[2]. With the emergence of AI, collaboration between humans and algorithms has become more pronounced, as software now has the capacity to prioritize news and refine content based on defined criteria and extensive databases (Tandoc and Maitra 1100; Hussein, 2021, 125) ^[1, 9].

2. Characteristics of the Media Gatekeeper

- a) **Selectivity:** The ability to choose appropriate content for the audience and filter out unsuitable materials (Shoemaker and Vos 24) ^[8].
- b) **Professional Responsibility:** Commitment to accuracy, objectivity, and verification of information (White 387; Abd, 2020, 115) ^[2, 11].
- c) **Editorial Authority:** The capacity to influence public opinion by determining what information reaches the audience and what is withheld.
- d) **Contextual Responsiveness:** Sensitivity to institutional policies, social pressures, and technological changes.
- e) **Technological Adaptation:** In the age of AI, the gatekeeper increasingly relies on data analysis techniques, intelligent recommendation systems, and advanced software to support decision-making and enhance efficiency (Tandoc and Maitra 1103; Shabaan, 2023, 45) ^[9].

3. The Gatekeeper's Impact on Television Media in the AI Era:

The digital transformation and adoption of AI have reshaped the gatekeeping role in television media, reflected in several key aspects:

- a) **Decline of the Traditional Human Role:** Algorithms now play a substantial role in selecting and prioritizing news, reducing the absolute authority of human editors (Tandoc and Maitra 1105) ^[9].
- b) **Increased Risks of Media Misinformation:** The proliferation of deepfake technology enables the creation and dissemination of highly realistic fake news, images, and videos, making it difficult to distinguish them from authentic content. This technological development poses a serious threat to the credibility of both traditional and digital media and

- raises critical questions about society’s ability to counter this growing phenomenon and ensure the circulation of accurate information (Chesney and Citron 1770; Shabaan, 2023, 47).
- c) **Professional and Ethical Challenges:** AI introduces challenges related to algorithmic bias, lack of transparency in filtering mechanisms, and the necessity to develop new digital verification tools (Westlund and Ghersetti 789; Hussein, 2021, 130) ^[1, 10].
 - d) **Impact on the Audience:** The accelerated reliance on AI technologies has reshaped audience behavior toward news sources, increasing levels of skepticism and hesitation, while fostering a concept of conditional trust in media outlets (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 15; Abd, 2020, 121) ^[2, 7].
 - e) **Iraqi Context Specificity:** In Iraq, these effects are exacerbated by weak infrastructure, limited legislation, and insufficient trained personnel, highlighting the need for national policies to accompany the digital transformation and protect the audience (Abd, 2020, 123; Al-Rawi 2021, 85) ^[2, 6].

Section Four
Artificial Intelligence and Its Impacts (2020-2030): An Applied Study on Television Media

The past decade has witnessed an accelerated evolution in artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, establishing AI as a central player in the media and news industries particularly within television institutions that increasingly rely on intelligent tools for production, editing, and distribution (Tandoc and Maitra 1095; Hussein, 2021, 126) ^[1, 9]. Three technologies have emerged as especially influential: deep fake, generative language models such as Chat GPT, and recommendation and automated editing algorithms. These technologies not only reshape the processes of news production and dissemination but also threaten media credibility and transform the traditional gatekeeping function, bringing forth unprecedented professional and ethical challenges (Chesney and Citron 1756; Westlund and Ghersetti 789) ^[10].

1. Deep fake Technologies

The deep fake technique relies on artificial intelligence and artificial neural networks to generate falsified video or audio clips that are nearly indistinguishable from authentic ones. In the media field, this technology poses a direct threat to the credibility of television news, as it enables the production of clips depicting public figures or officials making statements they never actually made (Chesney and Citron 1760).

Applied Example

During recent Iraqi protests, a falsified video circulated on social media showing a government official making

controversial remarks. This led to widespread media confusion before investigations confirmed that the video was produced using deep fake technology (Shaaban, 2023, 46) ^[4]. Such phenomena undermine the authority of the traditional gatekeeper, as journalists and editors may struggle to verify the authenticity of circulating footage promptly particularly under the pressures of rapid news cycles (Chesney and Citron 1770).

2. Chat GPT and Generative Language Models

Generative language models have advanced remarkably with the emergence of tools like Chat GPT, which can now produce high-quality news articles, summaries, and media analyses in record time (Tandoc and Maitra 1102) ^[9]. Newsrooms in several global and Arab television networks have begun adopting these models for content generation and editing, fundamentally transforming editorial practices and the role of journalists.

In the Iraqi context, some television stations have experimented with integrating Chat GPT into the production of breaking news or the preparation of daily event summaries. While this accelerates workflow efficiency, it raises significant concerns regarding information accuracy, professional ethics, and the potential for inadvertent bias or manipulation (Hussein, 2021, 128; Al-Rawi, 2021, 85) ^[1, 6].

3. Recommendation Algorithms and Automated Editing

AI-driven algorithms have become an integral component of the television media ecosystem, being used to filter news, recommend the most engaging stories for audiences, and determine broadcasting priorities. These algorithms analyze massive datasets derived from audience interactions on social media platforms to deliver content that is “tailored” to each demographic group (Westlund and Ghersetti 789; Shoemaker and Vos 68) ^[8, 10].

However, these algorithms are not entirely neutral they are influenced by programming parameters, corporate agendas, and market pressures (Shoemaker and Vos 70) ^[8]. In Iraq, studies have shown that reliance on such algorithms may amplify certain issues while marginalizing others, depending on audience interests or hidden editorial policies (Abd, 2020, 122) ^[2].

Thus, what has emerged is a new class of “non-human gatekeepers,” where algorithms play a central role in determining what reaches viewers marking a significant decline in the traditional role of human journalists and editors.

Table

Below is a table presenting applied examples from Iraqi television media illustrating the impact of artificial intelligence and recommendation algorithms (Deep fake, Chat GPT) on television news and the traditional gatekeeping function.

Table 1: Practical Examples from Iraqi Media & Related Contexts on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence

NO.	Technology / Tool	Practical Example in Iraq	Impact on the Audience	Institutional Response	Practical / Academic Recommendations
1	Deep Fake	The spread of fabricated videos depicting officials during the October 2019 protests prompted channels such as Al-Iraqi and Al-Samaria to dedicate	- Increased confusion and doubt- Spread of rumors - Decline in trust in the media	-Establishment of weekly digital verification segments- Broadcasting television	-Developing verification units-Training staff -Cooperation with international fact-checking platforms

		special segments for fact-checking and raising public awareness about the dangers of manipulated videos.		awareness campaigns	
2	Chat GPT and Language Models	Channels like Dijlah have employed artificial intelligence tools (e.g., Chat GPT) to produce rapid news summaries of official statements and press conferences, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.	-Accelerated news dissemination- Easier access to information	Limited experimentation with human review of scripts before broadcasting	The necessity of strict human review to ensure the accuracy and editorial integrity of texts
3	Recommendation Algorithms	Al-Sumaria channel relies on analyzing audience engagement on Facebook and Twitter to determine news publishing priorities, which has sometimes led to the marginalization of important yet low-engagement issues.	Enhanced audience engagement, but with the risk of content concentration and reduced diversity	Utilization of data analysis reports in newsrooms	Balancing algorithms and the human editor's vision to ensure content diversity
4	Digital Verification Units	Al-Iraqi established a digital verification unit in 2022 that utilizes artificial intelligence to detect fabricated news, images, and videos, providing weekly reports to the public.	-Strengthened public trust -Increased awareness of the dangers of disinformation	Assignment of personnel to verify news and engage with the audience	Expanding the experience to other channels Intensifying community awareness campaigns

Section Five

A Future Vision for the Gatekeeping Function in Television Media until 2030

The Iraqi media landscape, much like its global counterparts, is undergoing a pivotal transitional phase driven by the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and digital tools. The gatekeeping function within Iraqi television channels has become increasingly complex; it is no longer limited to the human editor or journalist but is now shared with intelligent algorithms and AI-powered editorial systems. This transformation presents new challenges for Iraqi media institutions, particularly within a media environment characterized by a multiplicity of news sources, the proliferation of rumors and fake content, and mounting political and social pressures.

In this context, there is a pressing need to anticipate the future of the gatekeeping role in Iraq up to the year 2030, by understanding the dynamics of hybrid gatekeepers (humans and AI systems) and by developing clear ethical and technical standards that ensure the integrity and credibility of journalistic work. The Iraqi public has also begun to play an increasingly significant role in the process of news verification through collective fact-checking tools and digital platforms, which highlights the importance of partnership between media institutions and the community in countering misinformation and deep fake manipulation.

This chapter explores future scenarios for Iraqi television media, focusing on the opportunities and challenges of integrating artificial intelligence into editorial work, the necessity of ethical frameworks, and the active role of audiences in safeguarding media truth in Iraq.

Scenario: The Future of Television Gatekeeping in Iraq 2030

1. Scene One: The Newsroom at "Al-Ru'ya Al-Iraqiya"

Channel: On an ordinary morning in 2030, the newsroom at Al-Ru'ya Al-Iraqiya begins its workday with an editorial meeting that brings together journalists, editors, and the AI

expert responsible for the automated editorial system.

Throughout the night, the AI system has sorted through millions of posts, reports, and video clips from news outlets, social media, and official sources.

At 7 a.m., the system presents an initial list of the most trending news stories, each accompanied by a "credibility rating" based on automated verification algorithms, along with alerts for potentially fake or misleading content.

Human editors review the list, scrutinizing items flagged for verification, and rely on digital tools such as crowd sourced verification platforms involving the public to confirm the authenticity of information.

During this process, reports from viewers arrive via the channel's mobile app, including one viral video allegedly showing a senior official making a controversial statement. The AI system conducts an audio-visual analysis and detects that the clip was manipulated using deepfake technology. It then issues an alert to the editors.

Final Decision

The editorial team swiftly issues a ticker announcement denying the authenticity of the fake video and explaining how the manipulation was detected. In the evening broadcast, the channel airs an interactive segment that teaches viewers how to participate in collective verification and presents a list of the day's most-verified reports.

2. Scene Two: Developing Ethical and Technical Standards:

During a weekly meeting, editorial advisors, technical experts, and legal consultants convene to review and update the AI Media Code of Conduct. The focus is on the following points:

- **Transparency:** Every piece of content produced or edited by AI must carry a clear label indicating such.
- **Mandatory Human Review:** All sensitive or controversial content must undergo human editorial review.
- **User Privacy:** Protection of users' personal data collected by AI systems.

- **Public Accountability:** A monthly report is published to inform the audience about how algorithms operate and how user reports are processed.

3. Scene Three: The Audience's Oversight Role

- By 2030, the channel launches an integrated digital platform enabling Iraqi citizens to participate in collective news verification.
- Each viewer can access the platform to report suspicious content or contribute to assessing the credibility of news items based on standardized criteria.
- The platform awards "Trust Badges" to the most active and accurate users, showcasing top contributors weekly on air.
- Through this participatory model, the audience becomes an active partner in maintaining news quality, significantly enhancing public trust in both the channel and the broader media system.

4. Scene Four: Crisis Response and Real-Time Verification:

One night, a rumor spreads rapidly about a massive explosion in Baghdad.

- The AI system detects the surge in social media activity, but both the automated verification tool and the audience report an absence of any official statements or authentic images.
- Thanks to this triangular cooperation AI, human editors, and the public the channel avoids hasty reporting and waits for official confirmation, thereby reinforcing its credibility.
- Accordingly, by 2030, Iraqi newsrooms operate through a hybrid gatekeeping model:
- Artificial intelligence filters, monitors, suggests, and detects manipulated content;
- The human editor makes the final editorial decisions, applying contextual judgment and ethical standards;
- The audience engages in participatory verification and flags suspicious stories.
- This integrated system ensures unprecedented speed and reliability, fostering a more transparent, responsible, and trustworthy media environment in Iraq.

Research Findings

1. Transformation of the Traditional Gatekeeping Role

The findings indicate that the gatekeeping function in Iraqi television channels is no longer limited to human editors or journalists. Artificial intelligence algorithms now actively participate, particularly in news sorting, content verification, and broadcast prioritization (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009; Abd, 2020) ^[2, 8].

2. Proliferation of Deepfake Technologies and Professional Challenges: The study revealed an increasing risk of deepfake content in the Iraqi media environment, which has led to a decline in public trust in the authenticity of televised news and a growing need for specialized digital verification units (Chesney and Citron, 2019; Shaaban, 2023) ^[4].

3. Shift towards Hybrid Editing: Iraqi media institutions have gradually adopted a hybrid editing model, integrating artificial intelligence with human editors' expertise to balance speed and accuracy. Nevertheless, the human role

remains crucial for ethical and contextual evaluation of news content (Tandoc and Maitra, 2022) ^[9].

4. Increasing Role of the Audience

The findings demonstrate that Iraqi audiences increasingly participate in fact-checking and combating misinformation through collaborative verification tools and digital interaction platforms, reinforcing the concept of a "community gatekeeper" (Westlund and Ghersetti, 2020) ^[10].

5. Deficiencies in Legislative and Ethical Frameworks

The results highlighted a clear gap in legislation and ethical standards governing the use of artificial intelligence in Iraqi media, potentially exacerbating the risks of misinformation and professional violations (Hussein, 2021) ^[11].

Conclusions

1. The gatekeeping function in Iraqi media is undergoing a profound transformation due to artificial intelligence, shifting from a traditional centralized model to a participatory hybrid model that involves machines, humans, and the audience.
2. Technical and ethical challenges are likely to intensify in the coming years, especially with the development of deep fake technologies and recommendation algorithms, emphasizing the need for effective verification and accountability strategies.
3. The future of Iraqi television media depends on media institutions' ability to keep pace with digital transformation, develop their personnel, adopt robust ethical and legislative standards, and strengthen community partnerships.

Recommendations

1. Develop Digital Verification Units

Iraqi television channels should establish or support specialized digital verification units that leverage artificial intelligence under human oversight to combat fake news and deep fake content.

2. Train Media Personnel

Continuous training programs should be organized for journalists and editors on the use of AI technologies and tools for detecting deep fakes, with a strong emphasis on professional ethics.

3. Update Editorial Policies and Standards

Media organizations should develop clear codes of conduct and standards for AI use in editorial practices, ensuring transparency, credibility, and protection of audience privacy.

4. Enhance Audience Engagement

Iraqi audiences should be encouraged to actively participate in reporting and collaborative verification through digital platforms, involving them in news production and safeguarding content against misinformation.

5. Support Scientific Research and Legislation

It is essential to support scientific studies on artificial intelligence and media in Iraq and collaborate with legislative bodies to establish binding legal frameworks that regulate AI use and mitigate its risks to media credibility.

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