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Digital Media Management Under Constraint: Exploring Structural and Institutional Barriers in Tanzania

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Abstract

Critical challenges facing digital media management in Tanzania are not because of the technological challenges, rather structural in nature. Amidst of digital platforms availability at a high magnitude as well as internet access expansionism mechanisms; digital media organization are struggling to ensure the smooth digital operations. The problem is not because of the tools, rather the environment surrounding digital media operations. Indistinct and sometimes restrictive regulatory frameworks, limited digital skills, digital divide, uneven law enforcement, and resistance to organizational change collectively weaken digital media management. Such environments pose the challenge in managing the digital media as many Tanzanian media institutions are digitally present but strategically inhibited. Digital media management in Tanzania requires more than adopting new technologies. It requires a stable regulatory climate, strong professional capacity, sustainable business models, digital equality that embraces digital transformation. Without these broader reforms, the democratic and developmental potential of digital media in Tanzania will remain limited.

Keywords: Digital Media Management, Digital Communication and Digital Management

1. Introduction

Digital media has rapidly expanded especially from 2005 to date. This rapid expansion has led to the fundamental transformation in the structure, operations and governance of current media systems in Tanzania, Africa and the world at large. Through the social media and networking sites, online news portals, and other user-generated content platforms have totally re-defined the way information is produced, framed, accessed and consumed by the publics (Ngowi, 2024) [25].

It must be adhered that; in the era of traditional media systems, there were centralized gatekeeping, linear communication flows, and stable information control systems. This is currently very different where digital media environments are decentralized, interactive, and algorithmically driven (Castells, 2010) [4]. These changes have also altered the role of media management from controlling media content production to coordinating, planning and forecasting complex social-technical ecosystems by focusing at the nature of the platforms, audiences, regulators, advertisers, digital infrastructures and other related matters (Küng, 2017) [15].

Basing on such situations as aforementioned, digital media management can directly refer to the strategic, editorial, technological, and economic processes through which media organizations plan, produce, distribute, monetize, and regulate content within digitally networked environments (Küng, 2017) [15]. Most interesting matter currently is that, effective digital media management is apparently not requiring only journalistic expertise, but also it requires competencies in data analytics, platform governance, engaging audience, cybersecurity skills, ethical decision making as well as regulatory awareness and compliance (Demuyakor, 2020) [8].

Napoli (2019) argues that, digital media managers operate at the intersection of editorial values and commercial imperatives, while simultaneously navigating platform algorithms and state regulations. Although, the state regulations are sometimes failing to operate the way they are expected to be. This is because of the fast-moving technological mechanisms and innovations. The more states look the means to curb the cyber-related challenges, the more innovators are finding the way to run from such ties.

All these are not done virtually rather through technological innovations (Kim, 2020)^[14]. All these gives the alarm on how digital media management is not a simple task, rather a complex paradigm.

However; institutional fragility, structural inequality, digital divide as well as uneven technological development are mentioned to the great factors posing the digital media management in the developing nations especially the sub-Saharan Africa (Mare, 2020)^[20]. These are also reflective in Tanzania context. For the past two decades, the country has experienced the very rapid growth of internet penetration, the use of smart gadgets and social media adoption. This has vigorously led to emergency of vibrant digital public sphere in the social media pages such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp, and TikTok (Poushter, *et al.* 2018)^[29]. These platforms have become central arenas for political communication, social debate, entertainment, and news dissemination, often surpassing traditional media in reach and immediacy.

Moreover, the digital growth and its expansion have not yet matched the equivalent growth in institutional capacity, skills of the personnel to operate the platforms, and regulatory awareness in the given media organizations (Omenugha, 2018)^[27]. Following such challenge; the media managers in Tanzania and Africa at large, are facing the very serious challenges like information overload, misinformation and disinformation, unreliable infrastructures, cybersecurity risks and other related challenges just to mention few. As Couldry and Mejias (2019)^[6] argue, digital media environments tend to concentrate power in the hands of global platforms while weakening local media institutions, thereby complicating editorial autonomy and economic sustainability in developing contexts.

Following such challenges; Tanzania regulatory environment in digital management is still a thorn. State institutions responsible to oversee the online and digital related matters like Tanzania Communication and Regulatory Authority (TCRA) are still in challenge as the rapid evolution of digital communication outpaces the regulatory frameworks (Churk, 2020)^[5]. The situation creates uncertainty for media practitioners regarding compliance, freedom of expression, and professional accountability (Makulilo, 2016)^[18]. This regulatory ambiguity frequently results in self-censorship, uneven enforcement, and tensions between state authority and journalistic independence.

Not only that, but also the challenges of digital media management in Tanzania have extensive assertions. Digital media has currently become the center for political participation, civic engagement and public discourse. Following such expanded paradigms, media organizations are struggling to manage digital content effectively as it is much associated to misinformation, disinformation and other complications associated to public communication (Habermas, 2006)^[13].

Following such paradigms. The following ascertains the key challenges of digital media management in Tanzania, situating them within broader theoretical debates on media power, platformization, and communication governance. By focusing on concrete institutional practices, identifiable actors, and structural constraints. This focuses at providing a contextualized understanding of how Tanzanian media organizations navigate the opportunities and contradictions of the digital media environment. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing scholarly discussions on media management in

the Global South and offers insights relevant to policymakers, media practitioners, and researchers concerned with the future of digital journalism and democratic communication.

2. Challenges of digital media management in Tanzania

2.1. Misinformation and Disinformation

In the contemporary digital communication, misinformation and disinformation are mentioned to be the core matters destabilizing digital media systems. They are acting the great barrier of trusting the content presented via the given platforms (Mallya & Bedia, 2022)^[19]. They make digital media communication stakeholders estate to directly trust on the given kind of the content. This is becoming the very serious threat in trusting media and its content. While misinformation refers to false information shared unintentionally, disinformation involves the deliberate production and circulation of false content for political, economic, or ideological gain (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Basing on the study by Nyabola (2018)^[26], increased rate of misinformation and disinformation in Tanzania is a product of prolonged platform algorithms, weak verification cultures, and high trust in peer-shared content, particularly on WhatsApp and Facebook. This creates the very complicated environment for the digital media managers and other communication stakeholders to trust the certain kind of produced content. However, prolonged misinformation and disinformation make it easy to create uninformed society as the circulated content is not true. This leads to the formation of fabricated society which cannot make the sound and reasonable decision due to the fake information they are exposed to (Duffy *et al.*, 2020)^[9].

However; basing on such truth, digital platforms have been offering a wide ground for the circulation of fake news because of its limited barriers to creation and dissemination of information. As a result, a high number of unauthenticated and misleading content propagates on social media platforms for financial and political gains (Duffy *et al.*, 2020)^[9].

However, digital media have been very active in spread of misinformation in political or election times. Most of information flowing during election times aims at character assassination, defamations and sometimes seditions (Awinia, 2021)^[2]. Flow of information in the election processes directly affects the way people make the informed decision on whether to participate in election times or not (Alfred, 2024)^[1]. Basing on the limited cyberspace, monitoring and legal paradigms in mainstream media, the most prominent and useful platform is social media. Social media allows all people to share information, reply and act upon in a number of ways at a larger magnitude has it has no physical limitations in its applicability.

Misinformation and disinformation altitudes have been creating the very difficult environment for managing the digital media. It has been putting the managers in dilemma in a number of ways. Firstly, they create the trust dilemma. In some circumstances, the digital media managers are passing through the very difficult times to trust the certain content they see circulating in the other social media pages before they allow it to be published in their official pages (Byanyuma *et al.*, 2018)^[3]. As aforementioned, the presence of citizen journalism has allowed every person to publish any content in his/her page. In such circumstances, the managers in digital media needs to take time to verify such circulating information before they are re-published from other digital media platforms and pages.

This is because, editors must constantly decide whether to ignore viral falsehoods or actively expose them, both of which carry risks. Ignoring misinformation allows false narratives to dominate public discourse, while responding to them may inadvertently amplify them (Napoli, 2019)^[24]. This is becoming the very serious dilemma on what to do. Managers and editors find themselves looking for other sources and other alternatives; something which alters the fast provision of information to the publics.

For example; during election periods, anonymous Facebook pages publish unverified vote counts before official announcements by the National Electoral Commission. Media houses face pressure to respond quickly, yet publishing without confirmation risks legal consequences and reputational damage (Makulilo, 2016)^[18]. This makes the digital media managers land in dilemma on what to do. Managing the digital media is becoming the great challenge on its cause. In the same bases; some information pertaining candidates passes through the digital platforms. Some information has been named illegitimate and under such situation making people not trusting the digital media related content.

Secondly, Misinformation and disinformation make people have a little or sometimes no trust to digital media. This challenges the digital media managers to come out with the best tactic to make sure the audience are real understanding and trusting the content of their media houses (Masele & Joseph, 2023)^[21]. This is a very serious matter. The lost trust harbingers the failure in setting the agenda through the social media platforms. This is greatly making the digital media managers to find the notable and trusted way to make audience comply with the disseminated content. In nutshell, misinformation and disinformation hijacks editorial agendas, draining institutional resources as well as undermining public trust in digital media (Duffy, 2020).

The other notable example is that, during the COVID-19 pandemic in Tanzania, individual YouTubers and WhatsApp influencers in Tanzania promoted herbal remedies and conspiracy narratives. Professional outlets such as BBC Swahili were forced to divert resources toward corrective journalism rather than original reporting, illustrating how misinformation reshapes newsroom priorities (Coudry & Mejias, 2019)^[6].

2.2. Information Overload

Following the fact that, digital media have become the free area for people to share content on their own bases and understanding. This is what Habermas (2006)^[13] named as the public sphere. Digital media being the public sphere creates the environment for people to share a number of information and details. With such situation, the society is found with a lot of information which are either true or false, coming from the right or illegal sources, authentic or unauthentic (Pushkarna *et al*, 2022)^[30]. The presence of a huge information in the society creates the very great gap of knowing which is one right and which one is not right for the given time.

However, it must be adhered that, the fundamental of digital media management extents at editorial gatekeeping. This relies at systematic selection, verification, prioritization and scheduling of the certain content for public consumption. Following the presence of digital communication paradigms, this matter is destabilized by the information overload. Eppler and Mengis (2004)^[11] describes information overload as a

situation in which the volume, velocity, and variety of information exceed the cognitive and organizational capacity of media institutions to process it effectively.

In Tanzania context, digital media managers are working under the environments where information is no longer controlled by the institutions at it was in mainstream media. Digital media currently works under the environment where the information is network driven (Eliaman, 2012). People in the digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter (X), WhatsApp, Instagram just to mention few are the ones determining the information to circulate among the publics. Basing on this situation, the digital media managers are finding themselves confronted not with scarcity of information, as in traditional media systems, but with excess, much of which is redundant, unverifiable, or irrelevant (Küng, 2017)^[15].

Information overload in the digital media management becomes the challenge in a number of aspects. Firstly, the increased amount of information from different sources poses the challenge of accuracy verification. Following the presence of information reported in different pages with different statistics and sources; verification of such information becomes the very big challenge. Knowing which page is authentic, the right source, the right statistics and other verifiable facts become the very big challenge (Lwoga & Chigona, 2017)^[17].

For example, in Tanzania election times a number of information circulate through digital platforms pertaining a number of votes, information about the candidates, about the political parties, government officials influence on the exercises, the legitimate of the election and the electoral commissions, media imbalance and other related disorders (Masele & Joseph, 2023)^[21]. This situation is directly posing the great challenge to the editors to take which information, from which source and to verify how factual it is. Therefore, the overload is becoming a very disturbing matter. Following the ascertain by Mare (2020)^[20], editors must determine which materials are current, authentic, and newsworthy before publication. Therefore, this whole situation significantly slows down newsroom operations.

Secondly, information overload poses the challenge in digital media management through editorial prioritization. It must be adhered that, media editors have the duty to select which news stories have to be published and being given the priorities basing on a number of reasons. Editors under the society which a lot of information faces the challenge to select which content is suitable and relevant to audience (Yonazi, 2012). However, this extends at not only focusing which news to be published, but also focusing at which news is new and not well known by audience. The failure to abide to which news story is currently suitable makes the audience not be interested by the given media hence losing the audience.

According to Dahlgren (2009)^[7], When multiple stories trend simultaneously on social media, digital editors feel pressure to prioritize virality rather than public importance. For instance, entertainment-related stories posted by Instagram gossip pages often trend more than governance-related issues. This again forces mainstream media to balance audience demand with editorial responsibility (McCombs, 2014)^[22]. This directly poses the very being challenge in management as the one has to be focusing on most viral matter regardless of how it is helpful to the development of the given institution or nation at large.

Furthermore; with information overload, the strategic

scheduling of content is becoming the very serious challenge. Basing on the argument by McCombs (2014)^[22] that, good media house has to be with the strategic scheduling and planning of the programs for the sake of producing and disseminating the information to the publics which are full potential; in information overload this becomes the great question.

With information overload especially in the digital media paradigms, scheduling becomes reactive rather than strategic. Instead of planned editorial calendars, Tanzanian digital newsrooms increasingly respond to trending hashtags or viral clips, which undermines long-term content planning and weakens institutional agenda-setting power (Ngowi, 2024)^[25]. Thus, information overload transforms digital media management in Tanzania from a proactive editorial process into a reactive content survival mechanism.

2.3. Cybersecurity gap

One among the very critical challenges under a world probe currently is the matter of cybersecurity. Official accounts of some organizations are of being hacked and phishing (Churk, 2024)^[5]. This is appearing to be more critical when the official page is observed giving out the very critical information. Basing on the ascertain by Makulilo (2016)^[18], Cybersecurity is fundamental component of digital media management because it is directly affecting source protection, audience trust, institutional credibility, operational continuity, and compliance with legal frameworks.

The increased rate of cybersecurity in digital media management is becoming also a great threat. This is because, problems associated with cybersecurity not only expose digital media outlets to hacking and phishing but also to strategic threats in which enemies exploit vulnerabilities to manipulate public discourse and undermine media credibility (Peter, 2014)^[28]. This directly affects the management and reduces the audience as the credibility of the given media enters in a challenge. The cybersecurity gap becomes the challenge to the digital media management in a number of aspects.

Firstly; Cybersecurity gap increases the institutional vulnerabilities. This is happening when the official account of the certain institution is hacked and start publishing the content which is misinforming, seditious, defamatory and character assassinating (Awinia, 2021)^[2]. The citizens (audience) will be in apposition to trust the so provided information and act upon them. This creates the very serious gap between the audience and the institution through its managers. Overtime people will not trust such account again. Cease in trust will result at audience not trust even the real content published under such account.

In Tanzania context; In May 2025, the official X (formerly Twitter) account of the Tanzania Police Force which is highly followed and trusted source of public safety information was hacked. Hackers used the account to post false information including fabricated claims about the death of President Samia Suluhu Hassan and explicit content, which was not issued by the institution. These fake messages spread widely before official statements could be made, creating public confusion and reputational damage not only for the police but also for any media organization reporting on police updates. This gives the message that, even the current credible and verified channels are not safe as they can land under the cybersecurity challenge at any time. In management

perspective, editors are passing under the challenge of trusting the information from the official pages of the reputable institutions as sometimes can be compromised by enemies. But also, when authoritative accounts publish false content, media managers must quickly withdraw or correct published news, risking loss of credibility. Such vulnerabilities show that cybersecurity is not just a technical challenge concern, but a frontline editorial risk that can create pouring misinformation in the broader news ecosystem (Ngowi, 2024)^[25].

Secondly, cybersecurity challenges are always followed by platforms restrictions. The prolonged challenge of hacking the official pages of reputable institutions forces the relevant authorities to put some restrictions on the use of the given digital platforms. This affects the news and information circulation, services downness, decrease in marketing strategies through digital platforms and other related consequences (McCombs, 2014)^[22]. The consequences of cyberattacks in Tanzania extended beyond individual accounts to affect platform availability, further complicating digital media operations.

For example, following the Police Force account breach in May 2025 as aforementioned, Tanzanian authorities in cooperation with Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) blocked access to the entire X platform on major internet service providers, citing the cyberattacks and potential for further dissemination of harmful content. This complicated the decrease in digital platforms for discussions, opinions and democracy spearheading paradigms. This also disrupted content hubs used by the digital media managers. This is happening in a sense that, when platforms used for news dissemination are inaccessible or restricted, editors must pivot instantly to alternative channels, often without preparation.

However, the cybersecurity challenge passes to imposing the challenge in privacy related matters. It is argued that, when the internal systems of the given institutions are not well secured (inappropriate secured), attackers may access or expose the very sensitive contents of the given organization or institution (Makulilo, 2016)^[18]. This can be through the digital communication with sources on sensitive matters and sometimes official communication on the confidential matters. Basing on the report by (TMC Internet Governance Report), Although documented evidence of specific newsroom data breaches in Tanzania is limited in public sources, the expansive nature of cyber threats identified in government and institutional reports suggests that media organizations are equally exposed to similar risks (Pushkarna, 2022)^[30].

Such challenge directly puts the digital managers in a great dilemma. The very serious questions are posed by Makulilo (2026)^[18] that, should they avoid digital communication with sensitive sources entirely for security reasons, or risk exposure while trying to fulfill editorial missions? Such trade-offs directly impact newsroom dynamics and reporting quality. This directly communicate the very critical challenge to the media management paradigms in Tanzania.

2.4. Digital divide

Preparing the content for audience is very technical as the information flow must consider whole population regardless of their differences. Selwyn (2004) describes digital divide as the systematic disparities in access, skills, and effective use of digital technologies across different population groups.

Basing on his argument, digital divide does not only rely on whether people have internet access but also it extends in the paradigm which defines whether they can meaningfully participate in digital communication activities including producing, sharing, and interpreting digital information (Byanyuma *et al*, 2018)^[3].

Digital divide has been reported in several times as great barrier in the information access and flow. The presence of unequal digital access also challenges the management associated with creation and distribution of information to the publics. In seconding this; State of Internet Governance and Analysis on Emerging Digital Threats report of 2024 stipulates that, In the Tanzanian context, digital inequality manifests in urban–rural divides, affordability barriers, uneven device penetration, digital literacy gaps, and gender disparities. This is a great challenge in Tanzania locality.

The TMC (2025)^[32] nominates Tanzania as not only the nation which has the great digital divide in the aforementioned factors but also noting that many rural areas still rely on 2G networks and lack smartphones. This gives the picture that the digital divide is still high in Tanzania. This challenges the digital media management in preparing the content (RIA, 2017)^[31]. For instance, preparing and releasing the content with 100MB will obviously be a very big challenges to be accessed by a person without the smartphone or the one under 2G internet speed.

Urban-rural digital divide spearheads the accessibility of the information in urban areas and leaving the rural areas vulnerable with information. The information flow in urban areas becomes very easy due to the presence of internet connectivity, reliable resources like electricity for keeping smart gadgets active, networking behaviors and other related matters (RIA, 2017)^[31]. This challenges the digital media management in looking for the best alternative to serve this marginalized group.

For example, in Tanzania; a 2023 TCRA Internet Usage Report stipulates that, while 67.8% of urban residents have internet access, only 28.9% in rural areas do (Digest Tanzania, 2023). This shows the gap of almost 40%. This is a very huge gap in communication paradigms. On the other hand, these statistics shows that, the digital media managers save the urban living citizens. This is against the principle that, communication in the digital era has to be for everyone as every person can access internet (Eliaman, 2012)^[10]. With this the media managers in digital parastatals have something to learn and are obliged to find the alternative on saving this remained group.

However, the situation seems to be similar to Zanzibar. according to the report In Zanzibar, urban areas like Zanzibar City have approximately 80% internet connectivity, whereas rural districts are below 40% (ZIBI, 2024). These statistics have the great communication that, digital media are working and spreading the information to only few individuals. The digital media managers have the duty to find the best alternatives to communicate with this group like SMS news alerts, call-in news summaries, radio integration for rural audiences because social media engagement is low outside cities. This is also observed to media outlets with national digital ambitions (e.g., Citizen Online, TBC Digital) which struggle to balance content that resonates with both urban and rural communities, because rural users often cannot access or engage with the same digital content formats.

Not only that but also digital divide extends in Data and gadgets affordability in terms of costs. In Tanzania context

the costs of the data are still too high to be affordable by the large number of citizens. The larger number of Tanzanians can afford very few Megabytes (MBs) but not a number Gigabyte (GBs) (Lwoga & Chigona, 2017)^[17]. This situation limits the nature of the content to be afforded. For instance, YouTube, Live streaming and other related digital contents needs a reasonable number of MBs or GBs. Basing on the situation that, those who can afford that are few, thus; the digital media platform will be just communicating with few but not majority. This creates the challenge to the digital media managers.

Basing on the research made by The Chanzo (2023), despite seemingly competitive pricing, the average price of 1GB of data exceeds TZS 2,000. This amount seems to be high as many Tanzanians cannot afford given income levels and poverty rates is approximately 43.4% of the population. This tells that, many Tanzanians are below the poverty line. This is not only in the prices of the data, but also extends to the affordability of the gadgets to be used in accessing the digital related information and content. In 2025, The State of Internet Governance report found that only 33.85% of Tanzanians have smartphones, leaving the majority reliant on feature phones, which are limited in their ability to consume multimedia content (TMC, 2025)^[32].

Data proves that, it is only one third of the population is in a position to access digital communicated matters. It is a very huge gap. The majority have no access to the smart-gadgets which are used for digital communication. This heterogeneity in device capability is a challenge in digital media management as it complicates digital media planning. Media houses must create dual delivery systems like light text content and full multimedia content in order to avoid excluding feature-phone users.

On the other hand, digital divide extends to the digital literacy of the audiences. It must be adhered that, the digital literacy gap complicates the way people will be actively dealing and reacting to the content in the digital communication platforms. Moreover, audiences with limited digital literacy are less likely to engage with complex online interfaces, interpret news critically, or participate in interactive elements like commenting and sharing (Kita *et al*, 2019).

This situation has to awake the managers of the digital platforms. They can come out with the strategy that, regardless of being pioneers of news and other content circulation; they should also invest at giving seminars and trainings on the use of the digital tools and engagement strategies. Failure to do so, the news and other information will not be a crucial part of them rather the other unrealistic needs. Audience education, simplified interfaces, and explanatory content just to ensure effective engagement can be done.

For example, the report by UNESCO (2021) shows that only 17% of women in Tanzania have access to mobile internet, compared to 35% of men. This challenges on how to digital media houses have to craft the content and for who. Many rural areas lack exposure to digital literacy training, meaning that even where connectivity exists, users may not know how to search for news, verify sources, or navigate platforms, forcing media managers to include basic digital literacy components in news packages (Kita *et al*, 2019).

2.5. Legal framework

Digital media operations in Tanzania are done through legal implications. Laws are enacted and enforced by Tanzania

Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). Enacted laws are meant to look and deal with permissible content, accountability mechanisms, and institutional responsibilities. The common laws dealing with digital related communication in Tanzania includes Cybercrimes Act (2015), the Media Services Act (2016), and the Electronic and Postal Communications (Online Content) Regulations (2020).

Regulation which are set in Tanzania, does not merely set boundaries; it shapes newsroom culture, managerial priorities, risk calculation, innovation capacity, investment decisions, and even professional identity (LHRC, 2017) [16]. In Tanzania, regulatory ambiguity, overlapping legal instruments, and selective enforcement have created a climate of legal uncertainty and strategic caution, fundamentally reshaping how digital media is managed. In its basic tie, these laws were enacted with the aim of promoting accountability and professionalism; although basing on its practices scholars argue that their breadth and interpretive flexibility create uncertainty for digital publishers (Makulilo, 2016; Freedom House, 2023) [18][12].

Following such uncertainties, the editors find themselves in a very big dilemma. Digital editors often refrain from publishing sensitive political or governance-related stories due to fear of sanctions, even when such stories are in the public interest (Freedom House, 2023) [12]. The increased ambiguities and uncertainties media managers cannot clearly predict which content might trigger sanctions. Technical terms which are used in the enacted laws are lacking the common definition rather are broadly defined based on the circumstances. Terms such as false information, misleading content, sedition, content that causes public disorder, defamation just to mention few are often broadly defined, allowing discretionary interpretation (Makulilo, 2016) [18].

It must be adhered that, digital communication is characterized by speed. Any delay makes the certain news or content to sound unclear and not new (McCombs, 2014) [22]. The uncertainties in legal implication leads to delay in giving out the information. This is because, editors will be busy to vet for legal implication on the content they want to publish to the publics. Not only that, but also the editorial in the digital platforms will not be in a position to publish sensitive political stories with the fear that people under leadership will interpret it negatively (LHRC, 2017) [16].

However, investigative journalism becomes a high-risk practice. This is because, any sensitive content which will be aired can lead to legal challenge even if the content was good. Uncertainties in legal framework extends to the level to which any person can interpret the law basing on his/her own interpretation which is technically called 'flexible interpretive'. Basing on the argument by Mutsvairo and Bebawi (2019) [23] regulatory unpredictability in African digital environments encourages what they call "precautionary compliance," where organizations over-regulate themselves to avoid sanctions.

For example, during politically sensitive periods such as the election processes and election campaigns digital and mainstream media houses often avoid publishing real-time critical commentary for fear of regulatory action. Freedom House (2023) [12] notes that regulatory penalties, including fines and suspensions, have fostered widespread self-censorship among online publishers. Following such big challenge of legal uncertainty, digital media management find itself into a process of risk containment rather than

innovation. Instead of asking each other, "How can we break this story first?" managers try to ask one another that, "Can this story put us at risk?" (Mutsvairo & Bebawi, 2019) [23].

Moreover, unfriendly legal frameworks lead to the rise of self-censorship and change of newsroom culture. In the presence of the laws which are not in compliance with the nature of the environments, the editors work under pressure of sanctions. Editors find themselves publishing content which are directly in favor of the ruling class and ignoring the content which is for public interests (LHRC, 2017) [16]. Editors change the culture of the newsroom form serving the publics, to content vanishing so as to comply with government and regulatory authorities which are full of flexible interpretive. This is also becoming the challenge to the managers in producing the content which will suit all audiences.

This situation leads into the journalists prioritizing the cautions and their security rather than prioritizing in initiating the sensitive political agenda. It also leads to the editorial tone neutralization. As the result the stories on governance accountability may be reframed as development updates, corruption related stories are reported without the serious commentary as well as citizen-oriented content may be rejected if politically sensitive (Churk, 2020) [5]. After a long run, persistence of these practices of the media impacts at reduced audience trust among politically aware users, loss of competitive differentiation as well as weak development of investigative digital brands.

2.6. Capacity deficit

Digital media operationalizations in Tanzania needs the skilled labor. These are the key personnel in the dissemination of any serious and critical content to the publics. The very big challenge is that, the well skilled labor in digital related matters is too limited. There is a very big gap in these aspects. Küng (2017) [15] describes the situation as structural. This is because most of the journalists and the media personnel in Tanzania were trained in the bases of electronic and print media. This creates the very big gap in getting the graduates who are multi-sectoral.

It is also argued by Küng (2017) [15] that, digital media management currently requires the dynamic capabilities. The media house to be in a position and ability to integrate technological, editorial and business competencies in such changing digital media environments. This is still a very big challenge in Tanzania as most of the operators at the media houses including editors have the skills in print and broadcast media as aforementioned. African media systems often experience a hybrid transition where digital technologies are adopted without a full transformation of professional routines and institutional logics (Mare, 2020) [20]. Capacity and skills gap in challenging the digital media management is in a number of aspects.

Firstly, digital media requires data journalism. Limited skills in data journalism also limits the visibility and the competitive advantages. This is because, data journalism requires the digital skills for visualization, online calculation of data and displaying skills McCombs (2014) [22]. These increases the anxiety of audience to focus on the so produced content. Failure to get the personnel who is well equipped with these matters can challenge the editors and managers in the media houses in terms of business, audience retention and visualization processes. After the long run digital capacity gap reinforces failure of the media houses to produce high-

impact investigative stories that attract digital subscriptions or international recognition. In contexts involving public finance, elections, or health data, digital investigative capacity enhances credibility and authority.

However, shortage of data analytics for audience segmentation relies in these aspects. In the digitalization world, audience are heterozygous in nature. They are different basing on needs, geographical locations, ethnical background, education levels, and other related factors. To cope up with this situation, data analytics skills are highly needed. It is essential for making sure that, the media house is preparing the content to suit all groups in the society (Ngowi, 2024) ^[25].

Data analytics does not only help in knowing which content to produce to the certain kind of audience, it also helps in knowing the right platform and the language to use so that the given group can get the intended message. This is totally a big challenge to the digital media managers as most of them are not well trained and skilled with these matters. This increases the very big gap. This awakes the vote of challenge to the managers in the digital media. Pertaining this gap, the competition in the world market remains the challenge. Mare (2020) ^[20] comments that, digital transformation without skills development leads to surface-level digitization. It is a situation where platforms change but real practices do not.

On the other hand, this capacity deficit challenges itself in some aspects. This is on the fact that; in some media houses, there are skilled youngsters in digital matters who are at the bottom levels, but there are editors and other personnels with power at the given media houses. These people with power are skeptical to change and adapt new technologies as well as adopting new digital skills. However, these people with power and senior editors were much oriented to traditional media. This increases the battle between the youngsters who needs changes basing on the moving world, and others in battle to remain in what they were oriented to.

3. Conclusion

Digital media management in Tanzania is not failing because of backwardness in technology. It is struggling in the womb of some complicated environments which is full of uncertainty, restrictive as well as uneven. Laws are draconic and under flexible interpretive. Capacity and skills gaps are pushing back the desired step. Financial pressure to run the platforms for covering both human and physical resources are still a big thorn of the step. Organizational cultures remain partly rooted in traditional media systems. Together, these factors create a system where managers focus more on survival and compliance than on creativity, growth, and democratic engagement.

In the developing nation like Tanzania, digital media is not only just a platform for mere communication but also it is the platform for political debate for democracy. It extends more at being the platform for business and economic generation tool for the nation. Digital media elongate at being the escalator of civic engagement. Digital media management is not just a technical issue. It is connected to governance, regulation, institutional capacity, and economic sustainability.

The persistent of these environments for a long run, digital media becomes present but not fully empowered. Technically, it can be communicated that, the main challenge is not simply adopting digital tools. The deeper challenge is building a stable regulatory environment, investing in skills,

encouraging innovation, and strengthening institutional confidence. It can therefore be communicated that, Tanzania has digital platforms, but it still needs digital strength.

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