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Artificial Intelligent in UAE (A Study on the Uses and Attitudes of AI in Media Companies)

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the attitudes of potential usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in media companies in the United Arab Emirates. The UAE has given more prominence to AI in recent years especially after launching the UAE Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in 2017 which aims toward achieving the country's continental vision in making the UAE the pioneering in the field of AI by investing this technology in various sectors and integrate a smart digital system for better problem solving (UAE Government Portal, 2020). In addition, the media sector shall have it's share of AI investment as H.E. Omar Sultan Al Olama, Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, indicated that this will benefit the industry by enriching media content and supporting media research (Masterminds, 2019).

Keywords:
UAE, Artificial Intelligence, Media

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1. Introduction

It's becoming quite apparent how newsrooms are depending more and more on Artificial Intelligence as associated technologies are providing flexible production of news that is less affordable and more rapid (Anja Wölker, Thomas E Powell, 2018). The technology that these machines obtain can enable them to go through the steps of producing media content and with the machine learning mechanisms these machines will soon be able to generate news stories similar to what humans can write (Schmelzer, 2019). In fact, automated journalism (AJ) is doing a good job in producing news stories. This is done in presence of clean, accurate and well-structured data. The algorithms associated with AJ can help in generating, at a large scale, faster news with less errors than human-made articles. It also can provide different angles for a story to be covered, different languages for it and keeping in mind the needs and preferences of the readers. Furthermore, users now can create stories from their own data thanks to software developers who are starting to release tools that allows for that (Graefe, 2016). Many practitioners have agreed upon the ability to utilize automated storytelling technologies. For instance, the Heliograf, is being used by the Washington Post's newsroom as it allows for more area of news coverage and enables journalists to concentrate more on indepth reporting (WashPostPR, 2017). In addition, Forbes has developed "Bertie" an artificially intelligent publishing platform that guides journalists toward trending topics to write about, provides suggestions for news headliners and gives recommendations on images to attach to news stories (Forbes, 2018).

2. Defining the Research Problem.

The purpose of this research is to explore the attitudes of potential usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in media companies in the United Arab Emirates. The UAE has given more prominence to AI in recent years especially after launching the UAE Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in 2017 which aims toward achieving the country's continental vision in making the UAE the pioneering in the field of AI by investing this technology in various sectors and integrate a smart digital system for better problem solving (UAE Government Portal, 2020). This was followed by appointing His Excellency Omar bin Sultan Al Olama as the world's first ever minister of state for Artificial Intelligence in 2017 (UAE Cabinet, n, d,). Since then, investments within the AI sector in UAE have increased as reports have predicted that AI shall potentially contribute up to 96 billion US dollars by 2030, equals to 13.6% of the country's GDP (PwC Middle East, 2018). In addition, the media sector shall have its share of AI investment as H.E. Omar Sultan Al Olama, Minister of State for Artificial Intelligence, indicated that this will benefit the industry by enriching media content and supporting media research (Masterminds, 2019).

3. Literature Review

According to (Graefe, 2016), human and automated journalism are closely integrating forming what can be called as a "man-machine marriage". This shall definitely the way journalists work. However, it will enable them to focus more on tasks that machines can't perform such as interviews, investigative reports and in-depth analysis. It maybe arguable that automation will eliminate jobs related to daily routine topics coverage, but on the other hand, this will create new opportunities concerning programing news-gathering algorithms. (Corinna Underwood, 2019) argues how AI is being utilized in newsrooms. The technology has helped in streamlining media workflows as AI enables journalists to focus on reporting as illustrated by BBC's Juicer. Ai also has enabled automating mundane tasks whereas an application such as Reuter's News Tracer can track down breaking news. Thanks to AI, research can be performed much faster. The New York Times Research and Development Lab's Editor application is aiding in crunching more data at lesser time. When it comes to media insights, AI aids in correlating information more quickly and effectively similar what The Washington Post's Knowledge Map does. While many suffer from fake news, AI provides a more speed and reliable fact checking. Such technology is used by Facebook to detect word patterns that may indicate a fake news story. What these machines can do is putting together reports and stories from raw data. Quill is a platform developed by Narrative Science and it can simply turn data into intelligent stories.

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The adaption of AI technology is already taking place as Sky News Arabia announcing the upgrade of its digital platform including the dashboards' performance across all platforms and the installation of predictive analytic tools (Masterminds, 2019). Nevertheless, speculations surround this shifting as Klime Mickovski, acting head of product digital, questions the ability of media practitioners to operate such technology. "There's big investment, but there is a lack of expertise [at Sky News Arabia]. It's very rare to find someone that understands how this work." Mickovski added. In April 2019 a partnership between Abu Dhabi Media and Sogou Inc, a Chinese innovator, have been announced to develop the first AI TV anchor. This first ever digital journalist will be assigned to present the news both in Arabic and English and will be featured with facial expressions.
(LeCompte, 2015) Argues how algorithms are being utilized by journalists to tell stories in various topics. The usage of automation in reporting and publishing is helping in reducing the journalists' workload. The automation is raising debates upon new issues regarding news coverage such like news judgement and ethical story customization for specific audience. In addition, journalists now can be more focused in enhancing their selection of stories to cover.

Thanks to automation, new tools are being introduced that can actually help utilizing this huge amount of data and filter from it what would be considered as important to talk about.

Research Questions

- What are the attitudes of media practitioners in UAE towards AI technologies in their field?
- What are some of the used AI applications in media companies in UAE?
- To what extend does media practitioners in UAE comprehend AI technologies that are used in the field of media?

Theoretical Framework.

- Diffusion of Innovation Theory.

The essence of this theory is based on the assumption that diffusion is a social process surrounding a group of people trying to learn about a certain innovation, This learning procedure is often conveyed through specific channels in order to reach the individuals in that social system (Rogers, 2003). Diffusion of Innovation (DoI) was developed by Everett Rogers in 1962, it is a social science theory that has been originated in communication in order to explain "how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system". This diffusion eventually ends up with people adopting a new idea, a behaviour or a product (LaMorte, 2019). While this adoption doesn't happen simultaneously in a social system, it rather goes through a process where some individuals tend to adopt innovation in different stages than others. This disparity in adoption is explained by researchers due to the different characteristics of individuals. Diffusion of innovation is often affected by the awareness of the actual need for this change. It also influenced by the decision to either adopt or reject the innovation. Furthermore, the change can be associated with the initial use of innovation to test it, and finally, the continuity of the innovation's usage. Rogers argues that there are five different adopting categories as follows:

1. **Innovators**: People who want to be the first to try the innovation, their characteristics drives them to be willing to take the risk and be the pioneers in developing new ideas.

2. **Early Adopters**: Usually this is the category of individuals with leadership roles. It consists mainly of opinion leaders who are willing to embrace the change. Theirawareness of alteration makes them comfortable to adopt new ideas and set strategies in order to influence others to the change.

3. **Early Majority**: People who tends to embrace change after witnessing evidences for the success of the innovation. Their adoption of change is usually concerned with the effectiveness of the innovation and related success stories.

4. **Late Majority**: This category shall adopt the change following it's trail by the majority. Their speculation of change will make them embrace it only after receiving information from other's experiences.

5. **Laggards**: This is the least category to be affected with change. The traditions and conservatism that individuals have in this group requires certain strategies such as statistics and pressure from other groups to inflict the change.

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In addition, the distribution of these categories is subject to effect by certain factors:

- Relative Advantage: The degree to which innovation is seen as better than the idea, program, or product it replaces.
- Compatibility: How consistent the innovation is with the values, experiences, and needs of the potential adopters.
- Complexity: How difficult the innovation is to understand and/or use.
- Triability: The extent to which the innovation can be tested or experimented with before a commitment to adopt is made.
- Observability: The extent to which the innovation provides tangible results.

Research Design (Approach)
The aim of this research is to explore the attitudes of potential usage of artificial intelligence (AI) in media companies in the United Arab Emirates. The information gathering and data analysis in media studies are divided into two main methodologies, quantitative and qualitative. In this study, the researcher will conduct a mixed approach consist of both a qualitative intensive interviews method, and a quantitative survey method in order to collect the desired information.

Research Population:
The study population consists of three media institutions from three different emirates. This is done in order to try to cover the region of the UAE. Suggested media companies will be from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah.

Sampling Technique and selection:
For the survey, a purposive sample of 6 journalists from each media institute is targeted. The sample will be stratified to ensure a balance of males and females in equal number.

Intensive Interviews:
Intensive interviews, or in-depth interviews is a qualitative research method which gives researches an opportunity to provide detailed background about the reasons in which respondents give specific answers. It also enables researches to elaborate data concerning respondents' opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences, and feelings are obtained. In addition, this method allows for lengthy observation of respondents' nonverbal responses. While in a personal interview all respondents are usually asked the same questions, intensive interviews allow interviewers to form questions based on each respondent's answers (Wimmer, Dominick, 2011). For this paper, the researcher will try to interview two media practitioners from each institution. The researcher will make sure that these selected experts are being exposed to AI in their jobs to provide professional opinion and share some of their experiences in the regards of the research topic.

The Survey:
For this research, a survey will be conducted to collect relevant information from a sample of media practitioners through their responses to questions given in a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be consisted of three different sections: demographic background, knowledge of AI in media, and their attitudes toward implementing AI in their field. The questions that will be asked in the survey will be used to answer the research questions.

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