

Women Journalists in Surabaya: Role Interpretation in AI-Driven Media Transformation

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ABSTRACT

Background: The increasing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) over the past few years has significantly changed the operation of newsrooms, which accelerates production and changes decision-making processes. Previous research has focused on the technology and/or organization features of AI with little attention on the reporters, especially local women journalists in Surabaya, where regional newspapers urgently need change. **Purpose:** The objective of this study is to examine how women journalists in Surabaya interpret and negotiate their professional roles within the framework of AI-driven media transformation using Media Feminism Theory. **Methods:** The current study used a qualitative critical ethnography study design. The data were collected by in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document review. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis with open, axial, and selective coding. **Results:** The results indicate four main themes, such as how AI is changing newsroom routines, how it is contributing to the efficiency of journalistic work, how it is shaping the visibility of women-related issues through the logic of algorithms, and how it is creating new professional pressures for women journalists. Even with the productivity gains that AI can offer, participants stressed that editorial judgment, ethical vetting and professional autonomy are still vital. The results also suggest that algorithmic editorial practices might amplify gender inequalities. **Conclusion:** A media feminist perspective still has relevance to understanding the dynamics of the contemporary digital media industry, especially as algorithms play a greater role in deciding which issues matter and deserve public attention. **Implications:** The study contributes to Media Feminism Theory by showing how AI's transformation of newsrooms intersects with already existing gender structures, and gives recommendations for how to make AI more gender-sensitive.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; gender; journalism; media transformation; women journalists

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has marked the development of an increasingly sophisticated era. Technology has changed the order of life in all sectors including the media industry, which has now changed to digitalization and new media platforms from the original analog (Syerlina et al., 2024, p. 308). One of the masterpieces of digitalization is the presence of AI (Schneider, 2023). It is undeniable that AI has an impact on journalistic work. For example, content automation can reduce journalists' workload (Albizu-Rivas et al., 2024, p. 1847; Thurman et al., 2017, p. 1250). Although there are many conveniences provided by AI, the lack of firm rules on the use of data derived from it raises many concerns. A study conducted in the media in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany stated that the use of AI in the world of journalism will weaken journalists' autonomy because less verified sources if used continuously will limit their ability to think critically (Simon, 2024, pp. 155–166).

The ease of finding data/references is the main advantage of AI in addition to other advantages for journalists. However, the relationship between women and technology is still often debated and has become a global issue. Technology is often considered masculine. O'Brien (2025, pp. 142–146) in her work states that the silencing of women that often occurs to this day, is not caused solely by female biologists, but because of men's dislike of women's abilities that with their biological ability they can master technology and science. O'Brien's (2025) opinion shows that there is a fear that women with their bodies are not as strong as men but can master technology. Meanwhile, other socialist feminists stated that technology can have a negative or negative impact on female workers, so that the discourse emerged that technology was created for men so that technology is synonymous with masculinity. This stereotype is of course a challenge to the issue of gender equality in the media industry. In fact, the existence of women journalists is very important to provide a fairer narrative to news related to women (Konow-Lund & Høiby, 2023). For example, when reporting on victims of sexual harassment where women are victims. Usually, women journalists tend to contain narratives that are more empathetic and do not corner women's positions (Tripalupi et al., 2024, p. 375).

The dialectic between AI and gender reality at the newsroom is an interesting issue to study. This is because it is undeniable that the existence of technology helps the work of journalists, but fundamental problems such as masculine technological stereotypes and the assumption that AI will be able to shift the position of journalists are becoming increasingly complicated. In fact, the transformation of the media cannot be heeded (Gupta & Singh, 2022). For this reason, media actors must follow the trend of shifting audience behavior due to media transformation. With the development of an information era wherein consumers can interpret digital channels such as internet (Susilawaty et al., 2023, pp. 187–190), social media and mobile-based app only in one grip with more convenient and quicker accessibility; It has changed how consumers search for, access and interact with media content (Papaya et al., 2024).

In fact, women journalists in Surabaya have no other choice but to arrive at technology increasingly far enough out of necessity because most technologies are an inseparable part of the journalistic practice. Surabaya was picked for this reason, because it is one of the few cities in Indonesia (besides Jakarta) well covered by media from a lower level local to national. Additionally, a part of Surabaya's newsrooms have begun digitizing even as every company has different work cultures. The two aspects, therefore, underpin this study assessing the adaptation of women journalists to AI in their work environment. Few studies have been conducted on the experience of journalists in Surabaya, regency level, over the past few years. Most research has been on media at the national level. This study examines the relationship between technology and gender, the way female journalists construct their social reality in the rapid technological

transformation.

This study uses feminist media theory as the basis for its analysis. This theory suggests that the media has a significant influence on the formation, maintenance, and even the questioning of gender relations or inequalities (van Zoonen, 2013). In the world of journalism, women are often represented or viewed based on their gender identity. This has occurred repeatedly, which leads to significant influences such as the infiltration of patriarchal culture into newsrooms and the field of journalism. Interestingly, in feminist media theory, women are seen not merely as the affected party but also individuals capable of making decisions and adapting to social and technological changes. Based on this, it can be said that feminist media theory is used to examine how the gender identities of women journalists interact with the presence of new technologies, in this case, AI within the newsroom environment. Feminist media theory emerged from two major fields: feminism and media studies. It focuses on critiquing gender inequalities in the media production process as well as on how media is consumed.

The main figure of this theory is Liesbet van Zoonen who initially wrote this theory in her book *Feminist Media Studies* in 1994 (van Zoonen, 1994). She combines liberal, radical, and socialist feminist theories with cultural studies to analyze media and gender roles in it. The main assumptions of the theory are: Media as an ideological field: the media reproduces patriarchal ideology; Representations of women are biased and stereotyped: women are often portrayed as objects or weak; Inequality in media production: women rarely fill strategic positions in the media industry; Women as active agents: women also become agents of change through the media; and The influence of intersectionality: considering race, class, and sexual orientation in women's experiences in the media.

Previous studies have shown that women journalists still face structural and cultural barriers in carrying out their profession. The beliefs and practices of women journalists in voicing gender equality issues through the media, and find structural challenges and ideological responsibilities in their work (Dani et al., 2025, pp. 40–48). Lahagu (2012) examine the barriers of women journalists in the implementation of gender-sensitive journalism in *People's Sovereignty Newspapers*, such as lack of institutional support and masculine culture. Juharsi (2019) highlighting the experiences of women journalists in online media, who still face the juggling of reporting duties and the pressure of dual roles between professional and domestic work.

Likewise, the research by Palupi et al. (2024) see how to clearly show that societal norms and stereotypes about gender that do not prioritize women journalists are the cause of discrimination. Another research was conducted by Meidina et al. (2024), which found that women's role in the media industry is limited and policy standards differ from each medium which always makes a stereotype harmful for women.

The review of the previous studies shows that no study has investigated how female journalists balance technological changes especially AI. Many of these studies have addressed work culture in newsrooms, and some fail even to acknowledge gender discrimination or the status of women in media as a whole. Most of the earlier efforts have broadly focused on issues set within national perspectives in Jakarta. But from a larger perspective, local media possibly have different angles; be it the culture of work, or policies and frameworks dictating how media uses new technology.

This study was envisioned in accordance with the aforementioned points, and to investigate adaptations for female journalists encountering AI tools within newsroom settings. This research questions if there is an effect on the way journalists perform their jobs when AI was present in any capacity and what this influence ends up really looking like concerning

autonomy. In many situations, technology influences how information is produced, distributed, and gains public attention. AI has become part of a process that determines work rhythms, issue priorities, and even the visibility of a news story. Therefore, this study employs a media feminism perspective to critically examine how technological transformation interacts with long-standing gender structures within the media industry, as well as how women journalists respond to, adapt to, and negotiate these changes in their professional practices.

RESEARCH METHOD

The critical ethnographic approach is the main method used in this study, where this approach is included in the qualitative research cluster. In general, this approach is not much different from conventional ethnographic approaches, but critical ethnographic approaches offer a number of more complex explanations (Pozo, 2020) one of which is the concern to dissect power relations, ideologies, and structural injustices that are often hidden behind daily social practices (Gobo & Marciniak, 2016; Rohim et al., 2023). Looking at the object of this research, namely women journalists, the researcher believes that critical ethnography is the most suitable method to be used in this research. Critical ethnography itself emerged as a form of criticism of conventional ethnography, which at the time was considered less sensitive in reading the domination and inequality that subtly took place in society (Madison, 2020).

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their active involvement in newsroom editorial processes and their experience in utilizing AI within journalistic practice. Five women journalists participated in this study, representing both print and digital media organizations in Surabaya. The participants in this study consisted of five women journalists. The group comprised one bureau chief, two editors, and two reporters from different media outlets in Surabaya. This composition was chosen to ensure diversity among sources, so that the data collected would not rely solely on a single type of position or location. In addition, length of service was also taken into consideration so that this study could provide an overview of how and to what extent AI is changing working conditions in newsrooms. The complete profiles of the five participants can be found in Table 1.

Characteristically, critical ethnography has several characteristics that make it different from other approaches. First, critical ethnographers take a lot of footholds from critical, feminist, postcolonial, to critical theories of race, where these theories are widely used to read social reality. Second, critical ethnography seeks to be able to dismantle power relations inequality, including how power works through institutions, discourse and technology. Third, in the context of research, researchers actively and participially understand the conditions of the research subjects, so that there is no distance between the researcher and the research subject. Fourth, through this approach, research does not only stop at the stage of understanding reality

Table 1. Profile of Research Participants

Code	Position	Media Outlet	Years of Experience
P1	Bureau Chief	Kompas Jawa Timur	30
P2	Editor	Harian Disway	17
P3	Editor	Harian Disway	19
P4	Reporter	Kanalsatu.com	6
P5	Reporter	Warta17	5

Source: Developed by the authors, 2026

but is also oriented towards encouraging more concrete changes. In relation to this research, the orientation mentioned can be realized through efforts to dissect the issue of how the use of AI in the newsroom has the potential to perpetuate the marginalization of women's issues (Hafied et al., 2025; Mulyani et al., 2025).

Data collection in this study was carried out through an in-depth interview process, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews with the sources were selected purposively, where the selection was based on the needs of the research data. The inclusion criteria required participants to (1) be active professional journalists working in Surabaya, (2) have direct experience with newsroom digital transformation, (3) have used AI-assisted tools in journalistic activities, and (4) possess editorial experience relevant to the objectives of this study.

After data collection was completed, the entire set of transcripts were analyzed through coding in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The interview transcripts were then read through and reviewed to identify key parts during the open coding stage. Once identified, they were categorized based on their relationships. First, along with an international panel to achieve consensus on similar meaning points being put into a larger category. In selective coding, these bulk findings were organized into high-level themes. These overarching themes serves to respond directly the research queries.

The important thing to do before entering the analysis stage is that all the raw data collected must go through a thematic coding process. Where the researcher sorts the data based on certain themes, then identifies who is the most benefited and who is the most disadvantaged for each practice found during field observation. This process is important because data analysis basically does not stop at the descriptive level but must really enter into the critical dimension that has been the main spirit of critical ethnography (Prasojo, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The thematic analysis generated four overarching themes describing how women journalists experience AI-based transformation in newsroom practices. These themes emerged through open, axial, and selective coding of interview transcripts and provided the analytical structure for the following discussion. A summary of the themes identified through the coding process is presented in Table 2.

AI Brings Media to the Era of Disruption

The adoption of AI technology in newsrooms today has caused major disruptions to journalistic work practices, especially in the content production process and the accuracy level of a news story (Banafi, 2024; Martínez-Navarro, 2025, pp. 267–271). Based on the results of the interviews, it can be seen how some journalists have begun to use AI as a tool in writing

Table 2. Themes Generated from the Thematic Analysis of Interview Data

Theme	Main Finding
Theme 1	AI Brings Media to the Era of Disruption
Theme 2	AI Helps Journalistic Work
Theme 3	Algorithmic Logic Sets Aside Women's Issues
Theme 4	AI Triggers New Work Pressures for Women Journalists

Source: Developed by the authors based on thematic analysis of interview data, 2026

manuscripts within the scope of editorial. However, the data used must still be checked for veracity. One of the print media editors in Surabaya expressed his opinion about the use of AI, where sometimes AI produces factual errors, mainly related to the identity of the source so that journalists must still do manual verification before the news is finally published. This shows that AI is more suitable to be used as a helper rather than as a substitute for human roles (Canavilhas, 2022, p. 519; Fieiras Ceide et al., 2024, pp. 15–18).

Based on data analysis through interviews and observations, researchers found that the increasing use of AI as a technological change is transforming daily newsroom work practices, focusing more on the technical efficiency of news presentation. More and more these days, journalists can find their work done far faster than just a few years ago. As a number of sources have pointed out, AI has been invaluable for gathering information, prepping news stories and preparing content for the editors desk. But this efficiency comes with real pressure, and that pressure emerges as you use AI. Unlike journalists or media outlets — who feel an extraordinary pressure to keep up with the times and audience expectations, AI analysis results still need validation and verification; hence, urgent publication due to public demand is a challenge in itself. That goes with the proposition supported by Deuze (2005) in his theory that journalism is “a professional activity rooted into values, norms, and culture.” Hence, whilst AI storms into the world of journalism, the basic principles of good journalistic conduct are ultimately an editorial prerogative which is responsibility of journalists.

However, a large number of journalists stuck in the old way find it hard to adjust with these changes. This presents a problem, particularly for journalists who have been left behind technologically. The results of this study, when viewed through the lens of media feminism theory indicate that technology is not as neutral. In this case, AI is clearly transforming how newsrooms run, but it cannot change the journalists themselves and their roles. There will always be a need for reporters to do what they have done over many decades regardless of technological changes.

Within the scope of this case study, AI has changed newsroom routines without fundamentally modifying what women journalists do for a living. Rather, participants are negotiating the pull of technological adaptation while holding it to editorial responsibility and journalistic standards; thus indicating that technology as innovation supports women’s professional agency, not replaces or supersedes it.

AI Helps Journalistic Work

Journalists whose days are dictated by high news production quotas have increasingly been integrating AI into their daily routines based on interview results. For example, one interviewee said she had to turn out 8 to 10 news stories a day. These conditions require a very high degree of efficiency and effectiveness, which is where AI can play an important role. According to sources, AI is very fast especially when it comes to writing copy for content drafts first as a starting point and outlining stories with 100s of tweets running through brainstorming sessions — which are useful during tight deadlines. Journalists don’t so much compete among themselves: most use the same tools, with a result that their styles of writing or approach to contexts and stories become virtually identical. Though humans still do the finalizing process, this means certain journals will then have a very similar writing style and story structure (Carlson, 2022).

Madanchian and Taherdoost (2025) discuss this matter as well. When it comes to gathering data and information, AI is invaluable. Data collection was lengthy, and manual with no reference to produce results before AI came on board *malasana marutis*; nowadays, it can take minutes or seconds. Therefore, journalists are not viewing AI as a competition anymore.

Journalists, especially women tend to view AI as a way of expediting their work. However, as mentioned above, verification is still important because the information that AI provides can never be entirely accurate.

If these observations are placed into the context of Latour's Actor-Network Theory, AI is not only a tool; today it acts as an actor itself in newsrooms processes. For example, when the AI is gathering information it own its own find out most searched type of content so if any other journalist searching for that trending topic later on their query will show him or her this specific data by its sole powers. It takes people out of the media production loop – which means we end up without a diverse range of news.

The influence of AI is also clear in terms of the decision-making process for journalists regarding choice content to release. Prior to the ways AI started reshaping journalism as we've seen recently, editorial judgement formed a lot of decisions about if something was newsworthy. But these days, those calls are guided by audience engagement data; the larger the audience, the more likely it is that a certain topic will be taken up. This is where AI finds its place, as the social media algorithms are created based on certain preferences of users regarding types of content and these same tendencies are analyzed through AI. As a result, topics considered less "engaging", such as gender equality and protections for vulnerable groups or minorities often get crowded out by viral or sensational content that caters to specific parts of the audience more effectively.

Noble (2018) describes that algorithms native to social media are not neutral. Humans create these algorithms and human biases inevitably make their way into the systems. Therefore, the use of these algorithms is to brain wash newsrooms and our society perception as social reality meaning that technology will assist in building out public knowledge around certain issues. In order to explore AI usage and its impact on women, the researchers have summarized their findings in Table 3. Table 3 is a summary of interview data, analysed inductively with the above methodology and interpreted through Media Feminism Theory.

Based on Table 3, AI was initially introduced as a technological advancement that helps streamline and optimize work. But when we look more closely, AI does play a part in the changes in the work environment of journalists. These results suggest that technology, no matter how advanced, will not resolve gender-related issues when considered thru the lens of media feminism theory. Hence, AI should be limited to being a tool, not a substitute for journalists themselves, to maintain journalistic professionalism and ethics.

Table 3. AI Mechanisms and Gendered Consequences in Digital News Production

AI Mechanism in Newsrooms	Transformation of Journalistic Practice	Gendered Consequences
Audience metrics and analytics dashboards	Editorial decisions increasingly rely on engagement indicators	Women issues do not generate as much traffic or audience engagement in digital media, which leads to less time and space being allocated for their coverage compared with more popular topics. This is why issues regarding gender equality, reproductive health and opening up about taboo subjects so as to report on cases of violence based around gender finding their way into some headlines but then losing out in the priority ranking of things by news editors.

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Table 3 (continued)

SEO optimization systems	News production follows trending topics and search behavior	From a practical standpoint, gender issues need to fight for space against the hottest topics that receive lower traffic but higher CTR%. That makes it even more difficult to continue reporting on issues relevant for women. Fewer journalists are able to write about the issues they care about and would ordinarily succeed at knowing that content performance is now a significant driver of success.
Automated content production tools	News writing and information gathering become faster	The changes in response to widespread requests from the media for indicating a more influential staff personnel are working methods among newsrooms nowadays. That means production speed and volume of content now receives at least as much attention in performance review. Women journalists many of whom also face inordinate challenges to join media houses too faced impediments with a film around records that are out dating again into the dinner table context.
Recommendation algorithms	Content distribution is determined by audience interaction patterns	Due to these characteristics, algorithmic systems that promote content based on engagement behaviours from the past may reproduce gender biases. Put another way, it means that news subjects within shrinking windows of public visibility may increasingly chew at the edges of digital news systems.
Real-time news monitoring	Continuous updates become newsroom standards	Their experience is compounded by pressures on them, as women journalists have become overburdened with the pressure of needing to be constantly available between their professional and personal responsibilities. At the same time, pressure for rapid reporting may limit opportunities for reflection and verification or deeper coverage of gender issues.

Source: Thematic analysis of interview data, 2026

Algorithmic Logic Sets Aside Women’s Issues

Nowadays, especially in the digital media world of journalism (which will be more thoroughly explored later), search engine trends and SEO dashboards can act as standard operating procedure. This tools are used to measure the performance in media like how much news articles read by a reader or how many times, based on this it helps you know which story is referred. It is this media performance that arguably defines the qualitative landscape of newsrooms today. Newsrooms thrive on engagement with any one news story, so stories or subjects that are getting discussed a lot will take precedence.

Tuchman (2000) has explained this phenomenon through the concept of ‘symbolic annihilation’. She says the issue is that women and their life experiences get sidelined or don’t receive equivalent press coverage. The distinction being that this issue was largely rooted in

editorial decisions, but now its influence has seeped in the technological systems templated by so many participants of the media (Nelson, 2025). It has become more difficult to identify because it operates behind a curtain of algorithms and interfaces that look neutral.

Noble (2018) stated that algorithms never are not really neutral, echoing similar thoughts. Given that algorithms are designed by humans and operate in a certain social context, the values, assumptions and biases inherent to society can transit into systems. These biases do not only continue but are able to even be amplified as algorithms start determining which stories deserve our attention and the way they spread.

Another cause that is not often mentioned relates to the status of women journalists in a newsroom. It may not be outright censorship, but the pressure to make what is algorithmically favorable can leave gaps in areas where important discussions might take place. Actual journalists an effort, but they had the choice of sticking to journalistic principles and ideals on one hand whilst at the same time securing readership numbers as imposed by the system. This is also linked to how digital media represents information as a commodity. Most news stories are not measured by the goal of their reporter to send traffic, clicks or engagement but usually as pieces within a pantomime. This logic also causes the industry to categorize women's issues as too unclickable compared to topics that catch the public eye more easily. For that reason, these kinds of complaints do not always receive the same weight they otherwise might at other points during news-making.

Hence, it is not merely a matter of editorial choice or for attracting audiences therefore. It is merely a cog in an ecosystem of the economics of content and the technologies designed to manage it. That imbalance will only be remedied, if at all, by deliberate effort from harried editors and reporters eager to cover a wider range of issues or technological tools that are less blind to problem diversity. This not only affects the quality of reporting but also how media can operate as a public sphere for representation between groups in society, including women.

Media Feminism Theory theorizes that the unequal representation of women in media are directly linked to power structures found within media systems. The current findings indicate that AI-enabled recommendation systems might inadvertently reinforce gender disparity by favouring market attractive issues rather than gender-related topics which are socially relevant. Instead of being neutral technological systems, algorithms are part of the editorial process that determines what is visible and who gets to be heard (or silenced) in digital news ecosystems.

AI Triggers New Work Pressures for Women Journalists

From the interviews conducted, one thing that continues to emerge is the issue of speed. Women journalists say the rhythm of work has changed drastically, no longer a daily count or edition, but almost a second by second. The news must air at the same time as the event itself takes place. One of the speakers described it as a race without a finish line, continuing to race so as not to be considered stale by readers who have switched to other media in a matter of minutes. Hassan calls this condition network time, a new time regime formed by digital infrastructure. In a digital newsroom time stops and moves as it should. Everything is quick. Everything is urgent. Interviews sometimes need to be cut short, source confirmation cannot always be fully investigated and there is often not enough time to develop a new perspective. It's not that journalists don't care about the quality of their stories – it's that the pace of work as it exists now doesn't leave much room for it. This leads to news stories being put out in an immature condition with little analysis and unexplored perspectives. The rush for speed is beginning to collide with core journalistic tenets like accuracy, objectivity and narrative completeness.

Thussu (2007) has a longstanding argument on this is, where he sees that in the media world there are increasing incentives to chase the trends rather than what people need to know; Adding to this trend is the increase use of algorithms. Recommendation systems (for give a little insight) prefer content that gets reactions rather than ready to think more. Call for Critical Examination of AI as Equalizer Due to the assumption that more often than not, AI benefits some equally over others (Wajcman & Young, 2023). Writing in the field of feminist technology studies, Wajcman has long admonished that there is no neutral social space for technology. Technology works with structures that already contain inequality and often reinforces these relationships (Sartori & Bocca, 2023, pp. 455–466).

Another problem occurs at the content level. They discards all issues that do not yield rapid public outcry because algorithms like immediacy. On the other hand, social problems like gender-based violence, reproductive health and rights, workers' rights of women or childcare hardly get any burn. So, these are slowly pushed to the bottom of your content distribution needs. Not because they are unimportant, but simply due to them being considered less interesting metric wise. Interesting point: the editorial staff rarely actually do these things. They take place via undersupervised systems that are far harder to detect, much less contest.

Another one comes from competency. In this context, the main transition from a work system to an AI-based one requires new skills — data literacy; how and what analytical dashboards are used for; understanding of distribution algorithms. But getting such training is not an option that is always equal. As van Doorn and van Zoonen (2008) noted, this pattern also often returns when innovative technologies enter organizations because women have been historically excluded from technology decision-making.

There is little room left for women journalists to surface stories that they believe warrant their input. They can still write, sure — but they have to constantly consider how algorithms and trends will affect their writing choice becomes One of Warrior Writer or the Content that is Foreseen To Generate High Engagement/High Interest content. It turns certainties into uncertainties – which makes one to wonder, who decides what the public ought to know; is it still up for a debate at an editorial desk or has power moved on from there, this time driven not by editors but by tech.

From a feminist perspective, this study indicates the impact of AI on women journalists as a structural problem with parallel developments to changing technology. Therefore, if media organizations do not use a gender lens in their editorial practice they risk perpetuating inequalities that pre-dated the arrival of AI. Technology is not the answer to escape work, but now a real-life hazard that makes it harder for female journalists to highlight issues they feel deserve attention.

CONCLUSION

This study has found that the digital transformation brought about by AI is transforming newsrooms as well. Editorial decisions used to be based on editorial considerations but increasingly they are based on content performance, audience data and algorithmic logic. These changes also bring specific challenges for women journalists, particularly in maintaining journalistic standards. This study also finds that AI is not always used in a neutral way. Part of the digital media ecosystem, algorithmic systems may intensify existing inequalities in the media industry. Gender-based violence, reproductive health, the pay gap and women's rights often are struggling to get equal visibility. It does not translate that such topics are not crucial, but they are deemed less interested by audience than the sensational ones. This study suggests that the use of AI must be governed by policies that consider journalistic ethics and gender equality.

Training on digital literacy and the use of AI must also be provided equitably to prevent skills gaps in the workplace. Furthermore, media organisations must ensure that editorial judgement retains a strong position so that news decisions are not entirely determined by algorithmic logic and performance metrics. This study focuses only on the experiences of women journalists in Surabaya. Future research could expand the geographical scope of the study or compare the experiences of female and male journalists in navigating digital transformation.

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