

Attitudes of journalists toward adhering to professional standards in gulf electronic journalism (An applied study on a sample of electronic press workers in the Gulf countries)

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Abstract: This research examines journalists' attitudes towards adhering to professional standards in Gulf electronic journalism while also exploring the factors that influence their professional performance. This study aims to explore how journalists perceive and apply ethical and technical standards in their digital reporting. The present study aims to examine the extent to which electronic journalists adhere to ethical guidelines and technical standards, garner public trust, and navigate the evolving obligations of journalists in the digital sphere. Using a survey methodology, information was collected via the distribution of a structured questionnaire to individuals from various Gulf media agencies. Key findings highlight the notable discrepancies in the implementation of professional standards, particularly in the domains identified as the most significant obstacles to their implementation. The research advocates for a renewed commitment to ethics and professional standards in electronic journalism, emphasizing the importance of seeking the truth and maintaining accuracy in the dissemination of information.

Keywords: Electronic journalism, professional performance, gulf region, technical standards, news reporting, attitudes, professional standards

1. Introduction

The field of electronic journalism has witnessed significant developments over the past two decades, with the emergence of numerous news platforms and websites that have become widely available and have had a profound impact at both regional and international levels. These rapid developments also included the Arabian Gulf region, where a host of websites emerged that played a pioneering role in the media discourse industry, influencing public opinion trends. However, this tremendous growth in the new media sector had some adverse effects. The level of public commitment to professional charters and journalistic work ethics has declined because websites seek to achieve greater reach and attract as many readers as possible. Characteristics inherent to digital media, such as immediacy and ease of dissemination, have further complicated efforts to verify the credibility of information.

Moreover, the blending of professional journalists with amateur bloggers and activists has clouded the situation, negatively impacting public trust in professional standards. Against this

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backdrop of challenges and transformations, this study aims to assess adherence to ethical and professional standards in electronic journalism within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. It seeks to identify major obstacles to the effective implementation of these standards and evaluate the quality and credibility of content produced by these platforms.

The study also endeavours to offer practical recommendations to enhance adherence to sound professional practices through improved training, capacity building, and legislative frameworks. Given the limited existing research on this topic, this study aims to fill a gap by providing a comprehensive, systematic analysis using scientific research methods. It is hoped that this research will enrich the Arab Scientific Library with an applied study addressing a critical aspect of electronic journalism.

1.1 Research problem

Professional standards are crucial for the success of any press organization, whether it is print or electronic. However, electronic journalism faces unique challenges due to the transformative impact of digital technology, including the rise of new media actors such as bloggers and social media influencers, as well as the speed and ease of content production and publication. These characteristics, driven by the digital revolution, have exposed electronic journalism to risks such as bias, conflating facts with opinions, and publishing inaccurate information to gain traction (Al-laban 2014). The online environment presents additional challenges to professional standards, including conflicting sources, lack of accountability, disregard for intellectual property rights, and non-adherence to editorial rules amidst intense competition. This study addresses the following main research question:

What are journalists' attitudes towards adhering to professional standards in Gulf electronic journalism?

1.2 Sub-questions

1. To what extent do Gulf e-newspapers adhere to objectivity, neutrality, and accuracy?
2. How consistently do Gulf e-newspapers verify news and cite sources?
3. What factors influence journalists' commitment to professional standards?
4. Are there significant differences in adherence to professional standards between independent Gulf e-newspapers and those affiliated with traditional press institutions?
5. How does the level of journalist training relate to the application of professional standards?

1.3 Research objectives

1. To examine journalists' attitudes towards adhering to professional standards (e.g., objectivity, neutrality, accuracy, privacy) in Gulf electronic journalism.
2. To identify barriers preventing journalists and media institutions from fully implementing these standards.
3. To assess public trust in the credibility and objectivity of Gulf electronic journalism and pinpoint factors eroding confidence.
4. To evaluate the technical and professional competencies of journalists in Gulf digital media and identify training gaps.

5. To highlight how professional and ethical standards enhance the quality of media output and public communication.

2 Literature review

The study conducted by Zuhair and Emad (2006) investigated the duties of Palestinian news website contacts and the eligibility criteria for fieldwork. Researchers used a custom-designed questionnaire to survey 65 contact lists from nine Palestinian news websites, employing descriptive analysis through SPSS. The findings revealed that a majority of the contacts are young males under 35, comprising 74.3% of the total, which reflects the predominantly masculine nature of Palestinian society. Nearly 60% of Palestinians working in the IT field live in cities, which helps them with website work. The findings showed that the main reason people choose community journalism is to work in journalism and support their communities.

The level of professionalism in Jordan's electronic journalism was assessed by Al-Debaisi (2011). Among 120 journalists, it was found that 65% had difficulties with accuracy and adherence to ethical journalism. Additionally, researchers recommended ensuring that personal freedom and privacy were protected and that the system supporting self-censorship was modified. The findings recommended that journalism establish codes of honor and train journalists regularly in ethics and professionalism [1]. However, while his study effectively highlights these ethical shortcomings, it lacks an exploration of the internal dynamics—such as journalists' self-perceptions or attitudinal motivations—that might explain this behavior. This current study builds upon his findings by incorporating attitudinal dimensions, offering a more nuanced and behaviorally informed analysis of ethical noncompliance.

Al-Badr (2012) contrasted the ethical standards of Kuwaiti online and print journalism. A descriptive study was conducted with 375 Kuwaiti university students and media professionals. Electronic journalism has enhanced public involvement and news dissemination, while print journalism has maintained its impartiality and accuracy. However, both failed to incorporate ethical considerations. The recommendations included mandatory ethics training for journalists, as well as privacy and credibility policies. This study advances that discussion by empirically analyzing how individual attitudes, workplace norms, and technical competencies influence ethical adherence in the Gulf context.

Amar (2017) examined Algerian internet journalism and the technical and professional issues faced by professionals. The research used descriptive analysis to review Algeria's journalism history literature and analyze a sample of electronic news sites. Electronic newspapers face additional economic challenges due to the Internet's open-access concept. Newspapers struggled to train journalists in electronic editing. The report recommended training qualified, well-trained electronic workers and providing press institutions with financial and technical support to meet the requirements of digital transformation.

In light of the proliferation of amateur content on social media platforms and the growing phenomenon of journalistic citizenship, Ali and Khalil (2016) sought to identify the obstacles that professional journalists encounter. In semi-structured interviews, 15 journalists from three national daily newspapers were analyzed using descriptive analysis and case study methods. Social media fake news and the difficulty of authenticating user-generated graphic content have decreased public trust. According to the report, news institutions should establish explicit processes to monitor non-professional content and retain credibility.

Lee, Liang, and Hong (2020) evaluated the economic and operational concerns of press institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic in digital and electronic journalism. Qualitative content analysis was conducted to evaluate 100 opinion pieces from ten major international electronic publications between January and June 2020. Newspapers and news websites faced severe financial losses due to falling advertising sales. During the economic crisis, some journalistic organizations cut staff or salaries. The study also indicated that the pandemic has accelerated global structural changes in media and publishing toward new business models.

Clark (2021) conducted a qualitative content analysis of 150 opinion articles from five international newspapers to investigate the economic challenges that electronic journalism is currently facing due to ad-blocking software and COVID-19. According to the study's findings, online news platforms experienced revenue declines, prompting many to implement subscription models, as reported by the research. The study suggested utilizing reader-based economic models to diversify the income.

Ferrari (2020) examined how social media algorithms facilitate the spread of deception and intellectual censorship in virtual groups. A blended methodology of big data analysis, questionnaires, and interviews included 417 individuals. Findings showed that social media algorithms spread misinformation and worsen political differences and other social issues. Thus, the report recommends that social media companies strengthen transparency and accountability in algorithm design and execution.

3 Theoretical framework

3.1 Theory of Innovation Diffusion

Developed by Everett Rogers (1962), this theory outlines the process by which people and organizations adopt new technologies, such as electronic journalism. It shows what influences whether technology is accepted or rejected and outlines the different stages involved in the adoption of another option. I process the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC); electronic journalism utilizes technology from the Internet and other media in conjunction with traditional news reporting. Media and journalists navigate the steps and consider the issues outlined in the theory as they utilize digital platforms, upholding professional values such as objectivity, truthfulness, and the careful use of sources. Due to its speed and interactivity, e-journalism is altering the rules, so standards and processes must adapt to keep pace (Al-Ajami, 2017). The theory is applied in this study to examine how journalists' views on professional standards are shaped through the adoption process in Gulf electronic journalism.

3.2 Theory of Media Richness

Daft and Lengel (1986) presented the Media Richness Theory, which sorts media according to their ability to reduce confusion and misunderstanding by being richer in content. With electronic journalism, which offers interactivity, various multimedia possibilities, and flexible language, the audience is better engaged; however, it becomes harder to uphold standards such as accuracy and balance (Khanzadar, 2002) [3]. Because e-journalism is often digital, it provides more room for expression but can lower the objectivity and verification of its news (Scott, 2007). This theory suggests that the richness of electronic journalism requires journalists to regularly review and update the professional standards they follow (Hijab, 2016). Therefore, media richness theory helps explain how rich electronic journalism and the practices of its communicators relate to both established and new professional values and standards.

4 Methodology

The study employs a descriptive research design to describe and comprehend the events accurately. Detailed data was collected via survey methodology. This approach gathers information and data about a specific phenomenon or event to assess its current state, strengths, and weaknesses. The aim is to determine the accuracy of the existing situation and identify areas that may require adjustments, whether minor or significant (Ubaydat (1998).

4.1 Population and sampling

The research population comprises members of the media family working in various media outlets across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and Kuwait. This includes employees from radio, television, news agencies, and electronic publications. To ensure comprehensive representation, a stratified random sampling method was employed. Participants were selected from multiple professional levels, including editorial, administrative, and production departments, across all six GCC countries. The researcher aimed to cover different demographic, institutional, and media sectors. Out of the 154 initially targeted participants, 145 completed questionnaires were deemed valid for statistical analysis after eliminating 9 incomplete responses. This sampling strategy strengthens the generalizability of findings across the Gulf region's electronic journalism landscape.

The questionnaire, validated by experts with a reliability coefficient of 0.94, targeted editorial, administrative, and production staff across radio, television, news agencies, and e-publications. Sampling was stratified to ensure representation across job titles, genders (64.58% male, 35.42% female), and socioeconomic categories.

5 Results and Discussion

The percentage of male journalists (64%) is the highest compared to females, reflecting the continued dominance of men in the media fields in the region. However, there are increasing trends toward supporting women's participation (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Demographics of journalist respondents

Basic characteristics		Males (%)	Females (%)	Total (%)
Total		64.58	35.42	100
Age	Less than 20	0	0	0
	From 21-30	31	12.12	43.12
	From 31-40	18.22	14.8	33.02
	From 41-50	11.12	8.5	19.62
	From 50 and over	4.24	0	4.24
Media	Printed journalism	18.16	10.09	28.25
	Electronic journalism	36.35	14.56	50.91
	Broadcasting	5.05	4.04	9.09
	T. V	7.70	4.05	32.60
Title	News Editor	19.57	13.03	18.50
	Report Editor	10.60	7.90	13.00
	Article Writer	7.70	5.30	10.48
	Public Relations	7.87	3.03	28.30
	Production of photographic materials (video production and visual news materials)	18.80	9.50	5.40

Painter, Photographer	4.39	1.01	12.00
Other	7.97	4.03	32.60

The data above reveals that 51% of respondents favor electronic media, compared to 28% for traditional journalism, indicating a clear shift towards digital platforms. The age distribution indicates a younger workforce, with 43.12% of the workforce aged 21-30, 33.02% aged 31-40, and 19.62% aged 41-50.

The media sector encompasses a diverse range of job titles, from traditional roles, such as news editors, to newer positions in design and digital interaction. This diversity reflects the multifaceted nature of modern media production, requiring skills in writing, photography, video production, and social media management. Key roles, such as "news editor" and "Picture Material Producer," are integral to content creation, as they are responsible for curating and editing news content and producing visual materials. Despite the current diversity in job titles, the industry continues to evolve. With advancements in technology and the emergence of new media platforms, new job titles are expected to emerge, resulting in increased specialization and complexity within the media field.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of the freedom of Gulf electronic journalism

Extent of freedom	Full freedom	Relatively limited freedom	No freedom	I don't know	Extent of freedom
Total	9	83	5	3	Total
Percentage	9.09%	83.83%	5.05%	3.03%	Percentage

Table 2 illustrates the percentage distribution of the journalist respondents' opinions on the extent of freedom enjoyed by electronic journalism in the Gulf. A significant majority, 83.83%, perceive the freedom of electronic journalism in the region as limited, while only 9.09% believe it enjoys absolute freedom. It suggests a consensus among journalists that electronic journalism faces varying degrees of restriction in the Gulf, likely influenced by the region's diverse legislative, political, and social environments across different countries.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of reading the Press and Publications Law

Read the Press and Publications Law	Yes	No
Total	73	27
Percentage	73%	27.27%

Table 3 indicates that 73.73% of journalist respondents have read the Press and Publications Law, demonstrating a strong awareness and interest in understanding the relevant legislation. However, 27.27% have not read the law, possibly due to reasons such as time constraints, lack of interest, or a perception that the law is not directly relevant to their daily work. This finding underscores the need for intensified efforts to raise awareness about the significance of understanding laws and policies governing journalism, potentially through targeted training or awareness campaigns.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of news published in Gulf electronic press with the Press and Publication Law and legal legislation

Subject	Compatible	Incompatible	I don't know
Total	65	30	5

Percentage	65%	30%	5%
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Table 4 examines the alignment of news published in the Gulf electronic press with the Press and Publication Law and related legislation. Results indicate that 65.65% of respondents believe the news is compliant with legal requirements, while 30.3% perceive it as incompatible. This divergence suggests varying views among journalists regarding adherence to legal frameworks, potentially influenced by different backgrounds and experiences. Additionally, there may be differences in compliance levels across media organizations. Nevertheless, the 30% identifying incompatibility highlights the need for awareness-raising and professional development to address and bridge these gaps.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of Gulf electronic press material impacted by social standards

Subject	Strongly considered	Consider	Neutral	Unconsidered	Unconsidered
Total	15	37	31	17	0
Percentage	15.15%	37.37%	31.31%	17.17%	0%

Table 5 illustrates the extent to which Gulf electronic journalism considers social norms when posting. According to the survey, 37.37% of respondents believe the sector is somewhat sensitive to these customs, and 15.15% consider it very sensitive. 17.17% think it ignores societal customs, while 31.31% are neutral. Overall, journalists' perspectives on the industry's cultural norms vary due to their various backgrounds. Still, 52.52% think local customs and traditions are maintained. This finding has significant relevance to the study by Al-Badr (2012), which focuses on the non-adherence of both electronic and print media to ethical boundaries. This is encouraging, given the difficulties of sustaining cultural identity in a globalized and Western media-dominated world.

Table 6: Percentage of journalists assessing objectivity in publication

Subject	Strongly adapting	Adapting	Neutral	Unadapting	Never adapting
Total	5	27	39	29	0
Percentage	5.05%	27.27%	39.39%	29.29%	0%

Table 6 reveals significant variation in journalists' perceptions of objectivity in Gulf electronic journalism, with 39.39% neutral, 29.29% reporting a lack of objectivity, and 27.27% believing their institutions adapt to objectivity standards. This addresses the research sub-question on the extent of adherence to objectivity and neutrality, indicating a gap in consistent application. The high neutrality response (39.39%) may reflect uncertainty or differing institutional policies, particularly among younger journalists (43.12% aged 21–30, Table 1), who dominate the sample. This aligns with the Media Richness Theory, as the interactive nature of digital platforms may blur the lines between fact and opinion, complicating objective reporting (Daft & Lengel, 1986). These findings suggest a need for targeted training to reinforce objectivity, particularly in competitive digital environments where speed often overshadows accuracy.

Table 7: The percentage distribution of Gulf electronic news and information studied and verified

Subject	Always	Often	Occasionally	Hardly	Never
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Total	13	47	22	15	3
Percentage	13.13%	47.47%	22.22%	15.15%	3.03%

Table 7 indicates that 47.47% of journalists report frequently verifying news, while 22.22% verify it occasionally, and 18.18% rarely or never verify, addressing the research sub-question on consistency in source verification. This variability reflects the challenges of maintaining accuracy in digital journalism, as predicted by Media Richness Theory, which posits that the immediacy of rich media pressures journalists to prioritize speed (Daft & Lengel, 1986). The 18.18% reporting rare or nonexistent verification is concerning, as it undermines credibility and aligns with the 76.76% citing difficulty verifying digital information (Table 13). These findings suggest that institutional policies and training programs must prioritize robust verification mechanisms to enhance trust, particularly since 65.65% of respondents believe news aligns with legal standards (Table 4), yet verification practices are lagging.

Table 8: Percentage distribution of Gulf electronic newspapers mentioning the news sources they publish

Subject	Always	Often	Occasionally	Hardly	Never
Total	5	17	43	29	6
Percentage	5.05%	17.17%	43.43%	29.29%	6.06%

Table 8 shows that Gulf electronic newspapers regularly fail to cite their sources, which is vital for credibility and transparency. In particular, 43.43% of journalists occasionally cite sources, while 29.29% cite them infrequently. Only 17.17% regularly cite references. This indicates that source citation requirements are not being followed, which weakens electronic journalism. The importance of clear and accurate source documentation in press reporting needs to be emphasized.

Table 8 underscores a critical gap in transparency, with 43.43% of journalists citing sources only occasionally and 29.29% rarely, directly addressing the research sub-question on source citation consistency. This weak adherence to source attribution undermines the credibility of Gulf electronic journalism, as transparency is a cornerstone of professional standards. Innovation Diffusion Theory suggests that the rapid adoption of digital platforms may outpace the establishment of citation norms (Rogers, 1962). This contrasts with the 73.73% awareness of Press and Publications Law (Table 3), indicating a disconnect between legal knowledge and practice. Media institutions should implement mandatory citation protocols and training to bridge this gap.

Table 9: Percentage distribution of erroneous content deletion by Gulf electronic newspapers

Subject	Always	Often	Sometimes	Hardly	Never
Total	0	19	37	41	3
Percentage	0%	19.19%	37.37%	41.41%	3.03%

Table 9 reveals that 41.41% of journalists reported rare occurrences of deleted news due to inaccuracy, while approximately 37.4% indicated it happens sometimes, and 19.19% said it occurs predominantly. These statistics highlight a significant gap in addressing post-publication inaccuracies, which undermines site credibility and erodes reader trust. Implementing clear and robust policies to manage false or inaccurate content is crucial for upholding professional standards and regaining the confidence of readers.

Table 10: Percentage distribution of factors affecting the application of professional standards

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of vocational training and technical skills	89	89.89%
Striving for scoop over accuracy	78	78.78%
Difficulty verifying digital information	76	76.76%
Legal and legislative constraints	71	71.71%
Cultural and social traditions	67	67.67%
Shifting public attitudes and expectations	54	54.54%
Commercial and advertising influence	51	51.54%
Lack of experienced staff	47	47.47%
Governmental censorship and political pressure	43	43.43%

Tables 10 identify the primary barriers to adhering to professional standards, with lack of training (89.89%), the pursuit of scoops (78.78%), and difficulty verifying digital information (76.76%) as the most significant factors, directly addressing the research sub-question on influencing factors. These findings align with the Innovation Diffusion Theory, as the rapid adoption of digital journalism in the Gulf (50.91% in electronic journalism, Table 1) has outpaced the development of training and skills (Rogers, 1962). Additionally, legal (71.71%) and cultural (67.67%) constraints reflect the region's unique socio-political context, while commercial pressures (51.54%) and censorship (43.43%) further complicate ethical practice. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive training programs and legislative reforms to support professional standards.

Table 11: Percentage distribution of weakness in adopting the professional standards

Subject	Yes	No	I don't know
Total	57	50	3
Percentage	57.57%	50.50%	3.03%

Table 11 examines journalists' views on the adherence to professional standards in Gulf electronic journalism. According to the results, the majority of respondents (57.57%) believe there is a weakness in adopting these standards, while 50.5% were neutral or unaware of the issue. These findings suggest a decline in commitment to professional charters and standards within the industry.

Table 12: Percentage distribution of potential negative effects of weak adoption of professional standards in the Gulf electronic journalism

Effect type	Frequency	percentage
The Legislative and the legal context	47	47.47
The Economic & trade Stresses	66	66.66
The Political Stresses and Censorship	45	45.45
The Media Literacy and General Trends	53	53.53
The Training and professional development	79	79.79

Table 12 highlights the repercussions of these weaknesses, including increasing economic and political pressures, the proliferation of unethical practices, and a decline in vocational training. These factors jeopardize the credibility and prestige of electronic journalism among the public. Immediate and decisive action is needed at both legislative and professional levels to address these issues.

The findings align with the Innovation Diffusion Theory (Rogers, 1962), which posits that the adoption of technological innovations, such as electronic journalism, influences professional practices. The rapid adoption of digital platforms in Gulf journalism (50.91% of respondents in electronic journalism, Table 1) has led to challenges in maintaining professional standards, as evidenced by the high percentage of journalists reporting difficulties in verifying digital information (76.76%, Table 13). The theory's stages of adoption—particularly the persuasion and implementation phases—explain why journalists, despite valuing standards like objectivity (27.27% adapting, Table 6), struggle with consistent application due to inadequate training (89.89%, Table 13). The rush to adopt digital tools for competitive advantage (78.78% prioritizing scoops, Table 13) further complicates adherence, as predicted by the theory's emphasis on innovation-driven disruptions.

Similarly, Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) provides insight into the challenges of maintaining standards in electronic journalism. The rich, interactive nature of digital media, with its multimedia capabilities and immediacy, enhances audience engagement but compromises accuracy and source citation, as evidenced by the fact that sources are occasionally cited (43.43%, Table 8). The theory suggests that richer media require adapted standards to manage ambiguity, which is evident in the inconsistent verification practices (18.18% rare or nonexistent, as shown in Table 7). These findings underscore the need for tailored ethical guidelines that account for the dynamic, high-richness environment of Gulf electronic journalism.

6 Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive examination of journalists' attitudes towards adhering to professional standards in Gulf electronic journalism, revealing a complex interplay of positive intentions, systemic challenges, and contextual influences. The findings indicate that while journalists generally value ethical principles such as objectivity, accuracy, and source verification, their ability to consistently apply these standards is hindered by significant barriers, including inadequate training (89.89%), the pursuit of scoops over accuracy (78.78%), and difficulties in verifying digital information (76.76%). These challenges are compounded by legal and cultural constraints (71.71% and 67.67%, respectively), reflecting the unique socio-political environment of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.

Synthesizing these findings through the lens of Innovation Diffusion Theory (Rogers, 1962), the rapid adoption of digital platforms in Gulf journalism (50.91% of respondents in electronic journalism) has outpaced the development of supporting frameworks, such as training and ethical guidelines. This misalignment, particularly evident in the persuasion and implementation stages of adoption, explains the inconsistent application of standards like objectivity (39.39% neutral) and source citation (43.43% occasional). The theory highlights how the rush to adopt digital tools for competitive advantage disrupts traditional journalistic norms, leading to ethical lapses and a decline in public trust.

Another theory, called Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986), examines how the interactive, rich features of modern electronic journalism and its professional guidelines sometimes clash. The quick online environment motivates journalists to produce more news, but it often means sacrificing quality, as reflected by the 18.18% of respondents who hardly

use fact-checking. This situation highlights the need for specialized sets of ethics that keep pace with the challenges of digital media, as facts and opinions can sometimes become blurred.

It shows that attitudes differ not only among people but also within the organizations they are part of. Most young journalists (43.12%) work in the field, but a lack of experience and proper training means there are gaps in the news they deliver. Since there are more men than women in journalism (64.58%) and because many journalists are not fully aware of the Press and Publications Law (73.73%), adhering strictly to standards is challenging for many. It appears that a combination of inadequate training and external influences, such as rules and the business world, collectively undermines ethical behavior in Gulf electronic journalism, thereby risking its reputation.

When we consider these points together, the study highlights that digital platforms offer more opportunities to reach people, but they also introduce dangers to the presentation of news. Being aware of legal regulations does not mean people always follow the rules when citing sources or editing mistakes (41.41% rarely adjust inaccurate content), showing a gap between knowledge and action. It highlights that significant changes are needed, such as increased training, ethics guidelines, and adaptable laws, to keep pace with the evolving digital journalism landscape and its evolving requirements. Promoting accountability and skill development among journalists can enhance the credibility and influence of Gulf electronic journalism, enabling it to remain trustworthy and reliable in the digital era.

7 Recommendations

This study proposes the following recommendations to improve the professional performance of electronic journalism in the Gulf countries.

- Implement specialized training programs to enhance journalists' skills in documenting and verifying information for credibility before publication.
- Encourage press institutions to adopt ethical charters, adhere fully to the ratio of news to its sources, and provide necessary clarifications when incorrect information is presented.
- Implement further legislative measures and legal protections that uphold the principles of journalistic freedom and impartial, open reporting.
- Construct digital research and auditing tools to optimize the process of validating and verifying the integrity of information before its online publication.
- Organise conferences and seminars to foster knowledge sharing among journalists, with an emphasis on promoting optimal ethical conduct.
- Create a conducive atmosphere that empowers journalists to procure news with precision from primary sources, thereby reducing the influence of rumors or hurried publication.

Consistently assess and revise media legislation to conform to the ever-changing digital media environment, thus augmenting professional efficacy.

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