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#### RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## Assessing the Effectiveness of GMA'S AI Sportscasters Maia and Marco

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#### **ARTICLE INFO**

#### ABSTRACT

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The broadcast industry is experiencing significant transformations driven by rapid advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is reshaping how content is created, distributed, and consumed by analyzing vast datasets, identifying patterns, and generating actionable insights. In broadcasting, content creation remains central, and AI technologies are streamlining production processes, boosting creativity, and enhancing viewer engagement. By personalizing content delivery based on audience preferences (Buiani), AI sportscasting marks a major innovation in Philippine media. This study assesses the effectiveness of the GMA AI Sports Series on YouTube, which features AI-generated sportscasters Maia and Marco during NCAA Season 99. It focuses on three areas: guidelines for broadcasting in terms of accuracy, reliability, and engagement; levels of viewer satisfaction; and recommended courses of action. The study draws upon Katz and Blumler's Uses and Gratification Theory, Daft and Lengel's Media Richness Theory, and Goffman's Framing Theory, using a mixed-method design that integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches through survey questionnaires. Findings indicate that 50% of media professionals recognize the accuracy of GMA's AI sportscasters, 50% affirm their reliability, and 80% find them engaging as pioneering AI presenters. However, viewer satisfaction results reveal that only 20% of respondents are satisfied, 20% dissatisfied, 50% very dissatisfied, and 10% neutral toward the AI sportscasting series. Based on these results, the study recommends enhancing emotional expressiveness in AI delivery, strengthening human-AI collaboration, and implementing educational and training initiatives for AI-driven broadcasting. This study highlights opportunities for innovation in Philippine media, aligning with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by promoting technological advancement and SDG 4 (Quality Education) through skill-building programs. In essence, the findings emphasize a pressing need to refine AI sportscasters to improve broadcasting effectiveness and elevate viewer satisfaction, contributing to a sustainable and innovative future in the digital media industry.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The broadcasting industry is rapidly evolving with the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is transforming content creation, distribution, and consumption. By analyzing large datasets, identifying patterns, and generating insights, AI streamlines production processes and fosters innovation. It also enhances content delivery, enabling broadcasters to personalize and enrich viewing experiences based on audience preferences (Buiani).

Exploring the context of AI Sportscasters, traditionally, sportscasters have been human professionals, but the advent of AI has changed that. AI sportscasters can adapt their style and knowledge to various sports, providing insightful analysis and even mimicking human emotional expressions. This alliance of technology and sports has opened up new possibilities, capturing viewers' attention. AI-generated sportscasters are designed to complement human commentators. This hybrid approach aims to enhance traditional broadcasting teams by offering additional insights

and coverage, potentially leading to a more comprehensive and engaging sports viewing experience for a diverse audience (Toshi).

In India, the integration of AI into many companies is increasing, and the media sector is no exception. The country's booming technology sector and increased digital media consumption have resulted in experimental uses of artificial intelligence in journalism. Indian media outlets are leveraging AI tools to enhance news production, aiming to address the challenges of delivering timely and personalized content (Basu 45). Despite this enthusiasm, there has been little research conducted into the effectiveness of AI technologies in Indian journalism. The situation in India demonstrates a growing interest in AI, but it also emphasizes the need for empirical research to better understand the impact of these breakthroughs on traditional journalism methods and audience trust.

In the Philippines, the situation is characterized by both opportunities and challenges related to AI adoption in journalism. Local news organizations are increasingly exploring AI-powered solutions to cope with issues such as resource constraints and high operational costs (Garcia 103). The use of AI anchors in Philippine media aims to provide continuous coverage and address the limitations of human resources. However, there are concerns regarding the effectiveness of these technologies in maintaining the quality and credibility of news content (Reyes 89).

Despite the increasing interest in AI-powered broadcasting, significant gaps remain in the need for attention. Most studies concentrate on the technical aspects of AI and its potential to automate news production, often neglecting the broader implications for journalistic integrity and audience trust. (Kumar 76). There is a need for a study that examines AI's broadcasting ability to maintain high journalistic standards while effectively engaging viewers. This study aims to close these gaps given that the Philippines also launched its first AI sportscaster on national TV.

With the above discussion, this study investigates the effectiveness of the GMA AI Sports Series on YouTube featuring AI-generated sportscasters Maia and Marco on NCAA Season 99. Specifically, it focuses on the following: 1. effective guidelines for broadcasting in terms of: 1.1 accuracy; 1.2 reliability; 1.3 engagement; 2. the degree of viewer's satisfaction, and 3. courses of action.

#### **Theoretical Background**

This study utilizes the communication theories of Katz and Blumler's Uses and Gratification Theory, Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel's Media Richness Theory, and Erving Goffman's Framing Theory.

The first communication theory anchored in this study is the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) of Katz and Blumler in 1974. UGT posits that individuals actively seek out media content that satisfies specific needs and desires, such as information, entertainment, or social interaction (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch). This theory challenges the notion of passive media consumption by highlighting the active role of audiences in choosing media that aligns with their requirements and preferences. In the context of assessing the effectiveness of AI-powered news anchors in broadcast journalism, UGT offers a valuable perspective for evaluating how these digital entities meet viewers' needs compared to traditional human anchors. For example, AI-powered anchors might cater to viewers seeking real-time updates and efficiency, while traditional anchors might be preferred for their personal engagement and nuanced reporting.

By applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to this study, researchers can investigate whether AI-powered broadcasting technology meets the specific gratifications that viewers seek from news media.

This involves exploring whether AI systems offer unique advantages, such as 24/7 availability and consistent content delivery, and whether they meet or fall short of viewers' expectations for human-like interaction and emotional connection. Understanding these dynamics will provide insights into the effectiveness of AI in broadcasting, helping to reveal its potential role in the future of broadcast journalism.

The second communication theory applied in this study is the Media Richness Theory (MRT) by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel in 1986. Media Richness Theory (MRT) suggests that the effectiveness of communication is determined by the medium's ability to convey complex

information and reduce ambiguity (Daft and Lengel). This theory posits that media vary in their richness, which refers to the capability of a medium to facilitate understanding through multiple cues, such as visual and verbal elements, immediate feedback, and personal presence. In the context of assessing the effectiveness of AI-powered news anchors in broadcast journalism, MRT provides a framework for evaluating whether these AI entities deliver news in a way that effectively reduces uncertainty and enhances comprehension compared to traditional human anchors. AI-powered news anchors may offer consistent and accurate information, but their effectiveness in conveying the richness of news such as emotional connection and contextual depth remains to be assessed.

Integrating Media Richness Theory (MRT) into this study involves examining how AI-powered broadcasting handles the complexity of news content and interacts with audiences. Researchers can assess whether AI systems, relying on pre-programmed algorithms and data, are as effective in delivering comprehensive and contextually rich news as human broadcasters, who use personal expression and adaptive communication (Daft and Lengel).

This analysis helps determine if AI-powered broadcasting meets the media richness criteria necessary for effective news delivery, offering insights into its role and limitations within broadcast journalism.

The third and last communication theory utilized in this study is the Framing Theory formulated by Erving Goffman in 1959. Erving Goffman's Framing Theory, articulated in his seminal work "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life", explores how individuals present and interpret information within specific social contexts (Goffman). According to Goffman, framing involves the creation of a structured narrative that guides how information is perceived and understood by audiences. In the context of assessing the effectiveness of AI-powered news anchors in broadcast journalism, Goffman's theory can be applied to understand how these digital entities construct and present news stories. AI-powered anchors, programmed with specific algorithms, frame news content based on predefined parameters, which may affect the way news is perceived by the audience.

By utilizing Goffman's Framing Theory in this study, researchers can analyze how AI-powered broadcasting creates and maintains specific frames for news stories. This involves examining whether AI systems, through their programming and presentation styles, establish coherent narratives that influence audience interpretations similarly to human broadcasters. The study can investigate how the framing practices of AI-powered broadcasting affect viewers' understanding of news events and whether these practices align with or diverge from traditional framing strategies used by human journalists (Goffman). Such an analysis provides insight into the role of AI in shaping news narratives and its potential implications for audience perception and engagement.

These three communication theories serve as the study's foundation and provide the critical basis for conducting and analyzing the study.

## **Review of Related Readings**

This section provides a series of reviews of related literature and research relevant to the current topic to make it comprehensive. Reviews of related literature and studies are discussed and cited from various sources, including books, internet articles, blogs, and journals.

Related Literature Reviewed. Whittaker's book, "Tech Giants, Artificial Intelligence, and the Future of Journalism", examines the profound impact of the "Big Five" technology companies – Apple, Alphabet/Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Microsoft – on journalism and the media industry. It explores the role of algorithms and artificial intelligence in shaping media consumption and their growing influence on news production. By analyzing the changes in news production, distribution, and consumption over the past decade, the book delves into what happens to journalism once it enters the media ecosystems controlled by these tech giants. It also looks at how social media and AI affect problems such as information disorders in today's world where it is hard to tell what is true.

The current study relates to Whittaker's book by examining how AI technologies, as discussed above, are reshaping broadcast journalism. While Whittaker addresses the broader impact of tech giants on news production and media ecosystems, this study specifically evaluates AI sportscasters and their effectiveness in enhancing sports journalism coverage.

Regardless of whether it is technically feasible, producing video packages from scratch at the pixel level appears optional for news and sports as they are based on live events. Prioritizing authenticity in live production is crucial, as opposed to using AI systems that create content independently. Content that is broadcast must remain authentic to its live source (Generative AI's impact on the Broadcast industry).

The study at hand relates to the discussion on the role of AI in producing video content from scratch, particularly for news and sports based on live events. While AI systems can create content independently, this study emphasizes the importance of maintaining authenticity in live broadcasting. It evaluates how AI sportscasters balance technological advancements with the need to preserve the genuine nature of live sports coverage.

With regards to AI Sportscasters, GMA Network, the NCAA's official broadcaster, showcased AI presenters Maia and Marco at the league's 98th basketball tournament kickoff at the Mall of Asia Arena. The introduction of AI-generated sportscasters in the broadcast of NCAA's Season 98 is seen as a technological advancement, but some human sportscasters have voiced their opposition. Paolo Barcelon, a sports commentator and a former news reporter for PTV and CNN Philippines expresses concern over GMA's use of AI presenters. He highlighted that AI sportscasters have significant limitations, particularly in capturing the emotions and excitement of sports. Barcelon asserts that while a technological step ahead, AI-generated sportscasters are alarming for talents like them who do gigs for sports. He further stresses that AI sportscasters cannot entirely capture the mood, emotion, feeling, and excitement of the game (Villanueva, "'Players Aren't Automated, so Why?': Filipino Sportscasters Cry Foul as AI Presenters Debut on Local Sports TV").

This study on the effectiveness of AI sportscasters relates to the debut of AI presenters Maia and Marco by GMA Network at the NCAA's 98th basketball tournament. While this advancement shifts sports broadcasting, it raises concerns from human sportscasters like Paolo Barcelon, who argues that AI fails to capture the full emotional

impact of sports. The study evaluates AI sportscasters' accuracy, reliability, and engagement, measures viewer satisfaction, and identifies actions to address any shortcomings.

Related Studies Reviewed. Fitria's study, "Artificial Intelligence (AI) News Anchor: How AI's Performance in the Journalistic Sector?" explores how AI can create news anchors with synthesized voices and digitally generated faces. While AI is still developing and its use in media faces many challenges, future trends may include interactive broadcasting and effective AI news anchors. Robots with AI could take on various roles, potentially even replacing human journalists and news presenters. However, Fitria emphasizes that AI is not a replacement for humans but a tool to enhance human performance.

This relates to the present study as both explore AI's role in media. While Fitria looks at AI's broader impact on journalism, the sportscaster study focuses on evaluating AI's effectiveness in delivering sports news, particularly in terms of accuracy, reliability, and engagement.

The study by Guanah et al., titled "Artificial Intelligence and Journalism Practice in Nigeria: Perception of Journalists in Benin City, Edo State," declares that automation represents the future of journalism. It asserts that Nigerian journalists must adapt to this shift and embrace AI to stay relevant. The study recommends that journalism schools incorporate technology-focused curricula to effectively prepare future journalists for the integration of AI in their profession.

Both studies emphasize the evolving role of AI in journalism, with Guanah et al. focusing on the broader field of journalism in Nigeria, while the current study specifically evaluates the impact of AI sportscasters on sports broadcasting. Both illustrate the need for adaptation and effective integration of AI to enhance professional practices in journalism.

The reviewed literature and studies provide crucial context for the topic addressed in this study. They also help avoid duplication and ensure proper acknowledgment of previous researchers' contributions.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter contains the research design, the research environment, the research respondents, the research instrument, the data-gathering procedure, data analysis, and the ethical considerations in this study.

Research Design. This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques. This mixed-method approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the research problem and validates data from multiple sources (Dawadi et al.). In addition, a survey questionnaire is employed to gather the data on the effective guidelines for broadcasting in terms of accuracy, reliability, and engagement, and to evaluate the degree of viewers satisfaction toward AI broadcasting. Survey methods are used to assess and analyze respondents' perceptions of the specific topic (Colorado State University). A discourse analysis on the other hand, is applied in this study to craft the course of action based on the findings.

In its simplest form, discourse is communication that goes beyond a single sentence, focusing on the overall meaning conveyed in context. In studying AI anchors in newscasting, understanding discourse helps analyze how AI-generated language communicates broader meanings and engages audiences (Jansen).

Finally, the results are presented in tabular and textual formats, facilitating an extensive examination of the data.

For further questions, researcher Joseph Elvir C. Tubilan can be contacted at josephtubilan@cnu.edu.ph. For respondent rights and grievances, the Ethics Review Committee can be reached at cnuerc@cnu.edu.ph.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter analyzes and interprets the collected data, presented in tables, and elaborated with narrative explanations. It covers the effective guidelines for broadcasting, the degree of viewer satisfaction, and courses of action based on the findings of the in-today's broadcast journalism.

Effective Guidelines for Broadcasting. This section presents the effective guidelines for broadcasting in terms of accuracy, reliability, and engagement of AI Sportscasters in today's broadcast journalism.

scriptwriters and researchers 5 accuracy 50% are still on board to provide the details well-delivered reliability remains since GMA reliability 5 50% is mainstream media AI does not differ from real reporters engaging, and eliciting 80% curiosity engagement AI is new to the viewers engaging in the use of AI

Table 1. Effective Guidelines for Broadcast Journalism

Table 1 summarizes the frequency and percentage of responses for three key guidelines: accuracy, reliability, and engagement. Five out of ten respondents, or 50%, said that accuracy is a crucial rule for effective broadcasting. Maintaining the public's trust and journalism's credibility depends on accuracy, which makes sure that the information shared is accurate and true. Respondents in the study attest to the accuracy of the AI broadcasts, emphasizing that human news writers and editors continue to oversee and ensure the correctness of the content. R10 mentions:

From the few episodes I've seen, the AI sports broadcasters in GMA provided accurate details. I believe scriptwriters and researchers are still involved to ensure the information is correct.

Andre Broadstone's article, "Using AI and ML to Simplify Live Broadcast Operations," highlights the importance of accuracy in modern broadcasting technology. It explains how AI and machine learning are essential for the next generation of broadcasting, as they can analyze large datasets, detect issues, and alert users before problems occur, all without human intervention. For instance, if a live stream encounters issues, AI can them, minimizing viewership and revenue loss. By

addressing challenges like stream interruptions, AI significantly s broadcasters' ability to manage such situations, safeguarding their reputation and revenue. Similarly, 50% of the respondents highlighted reliability as an essential aspect of effective broadcasting. Reliability pertains to the consistency and dependability of the information provided. The media and its audience can build a steady relationship when there is continuous and reliable broadcasting because viewers can rely on the information they get.

Some respondents noted that GMA's AI sportscasters are reliable due to the credible team behind the production, whose main goal is to inform the public accurately. However, while the AI reports are accurate, they lack the human presence such as emotion, excitement, and passion that influence how sports news is delivered and received by the audience. R6 states:

Als doesn't really differ a lot from conventional reporters or sports journalists, and reliability is still present since GMA is a main stream media. Accuracy and reliability, both identified by 50% of respondents, are also essential broadcasting guidelines. These attributes are fundamental to journalistic integrity and are necessary for building and maintaining the audience trust. The emphasis on accuracy and reliability emphasizes the continued necessity for journalists to uphold ethical standards and rigorous fact-checking procedures in an age of disinformation and deception. The equal importance given to accuracy and reliability suggests that these factors are viewed as interconnected. Accurate reporting is a component of reliability, as consistent accuracy over time builds reputation. Lastly, eight out of ten respondents, or 80% identified that engagement is an important aspect of effective broadcasting. The term "engagement" describes a broadcast's capacity to draw in and hold the attention of its viewers. Messages can be conveyed to the audience more successfully and through greater viewer retention rates in engaging broadcasts. Most respondents of Cebu Media are intrigued by GMA AI sportscasters Maia and Marco, as they represent a first in Philippine sports TV history. However, they believe that AI sportscasters cannot fully replicate the host-audience connection. R6 cites:

Overall, the production is engaging and generates curiosity as a first in the Philippines, reflected in its high social media engagement. However, it cannot fully provide the host- audience connection.

Azahra's study, "Modern Broadcasting: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data for More Personalized Content," highlights how AI and big data have transformed broadcasting by enhancing audience understanding, personalizing content, and boosting engagement. The study explores the impact of these technologies, focusing on demographic analysis, recommendation algorithms, AI-driven interactions, and optimized broadcast timing to improve content personalization and viewer engagement.

As a whole, Table 1 shows that a successful broadcasting strategy prioritizes audience engagement while ensuring accuracy and reliability. To meet today's media demands, broadcasters may deliver content that is factual, dependable, and engaging, even with the country's first AI sportscasters Maia and Marco on GMA.

**The Degree of Viewer's Satisfaction.** This section presents various degrees of the viewer's satisfaction with AI Sportscasters in today's broadcast journalism.

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Degree of Viewer's Satisfaction	Frequency N=20	Percentage	Reason
satisfied	4	20%	clearly articulated good content
very satisfied	0	0%	<ul> <li>not prone to stuttering</li> </ul>
dissatisfied	4	20%	<ul> <li>unnatural</li> <li>reporting should be a real person</li> <li>lack of emotions and thrill</li> </ul>
very dissatisfied	10	50%	<ul> <li>media job loss</li> <li>less energy</li> <li>insult to media professiona</li> <li>awkward to watch AI face</li> </ul>
neutral	2	10%	it depends on the preference of the viewer

Table 2. The Degree of Viewer's Satisfaction with GMA's AI Sportscasters

Table 2 illustrates varying degrees of viewer satisfaction with AI sportscasters in today's broadcast journalism, based on a study of 20 respondents. The data reveal that 20% of viewers are satisfied with the current AI sportscasters, suggesting that some find the technology acceptable. Contributing factors to this satisfaction include clear articulation, quality content, and smooth delivery without stuttering. R2 cites:

I am satisfied with GMA's AI sportscasters for their clear, detailed reports and without stuttering, despite their lack of emotional depth.

This result aligns with the Media Richness Theory, developed by Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel in 1986, which evaluates communication channels based on their ability to convey information effectively. The theory ranks channels from low to high richness, with richness defined by speed, clarity, and depth of communication. As remote work and virtual teams become more common, Media Richness Theory emphasizes selecting channels that enhance communication in the absence of face-to-face interaction (Media Theory).

The absence of very satisfied viewers highlights a gap between current capabilities and optimal performance. To improve satisfaction, AI developers tapped by TV stations may focus on enhancing the emotional expressiveness and authenticity of AI sportscasters.

Table 2 also shows that 20% of respondents which is four out of 20 are dissatisfied, indicating concerns about the performance of AI sportscasters. This dissatisfaction likely arises from issues such as the unnatural appearance of AI sportscasters, the preference for human reporters, and the lack of emotional engagement and excitement in their delivery. R11 explains:

I support AI's benefits but it lacks emotional connection in delivery. Humans use tone and voice to connect with audiences, which Maia and Marco, as sportscasters, fail to achieve.

The findings conform with the Media Richness Theory, which posits that various forms of communication offer different levels of informational richness. Media can be ranked based on how well they handle uncertainty and deliver detailed messages. additionally, media that incorporates personal feelings and emotions tends to communicate messages more effectively and comprehensively (Media Theory).

Among the respondents, 50% reported being very dissatisfied. This high percentage highlights significant issues with AI sportscasters, including concerns about job loss in the media industry, the perception of AI as an insult to media professionals, and the awkwardness of watching AI faces. This indicates that AI sportscasters are facing substantial challenges in delivering a satisfactory viewing experience. R2 utters:

All sportscasters pose a risk to aspiring media careers and could lead to job displacement. This technology might undermine the years of training media practitioners have invested in and potentially affect the credibility and editorial judgment of newscasters.

These findings correspond with the Uses and Gratification Theory, which highlights that media users are active and intentional in their choices. People select media based on their specific needs and motivations, actively engaging with content to satisfy their specific needs (Vinney).

Lastly, 10% of the respondents which are two out of 20 are neutral, indicating that a small segment of viewers remains indifferent to the current state of AI sportscasting. This group neither expresses strong satisfaction nor dissatisfaction, suggesting they may not be significantly impacted by the AI technology.

In summary, Table 2 signifies that while some viewers find AI sportscasters satisfactory, a significant number remain dissatisfied. This indicates a need for substantial improvements to address the current limitations and enhance the viewer experience.

**Courses of Action.** Based on the study's findings, these courses of action aim to enhance the effectiveness of GMA's AI sportscasters.

**Enhance Emotional Expressiveness.** The significant dissatisfaction (50%) and absence of very satisfied viewers suggest a need to improve the emotional depth and authenticity of AI sportscasters. Developers may focus on incorporating more human-like emotional cues and expressions to make AI sportscasters more engaging and relatable.

**Integrate Human-AI Collaboration.** To address concerns about the unnatural appearance and lack of excitement, AI sportscasters may be used in conjunction with human sportscasters. This hybrid approach can leverage the strengths of both AI with clear articulation, and smooth delivery, and humans with emotional connection, and authenticity, providing a more balanced and satisfying viewer experience.

**Educational and Training Programs.** To prepare future journalists and address fears of job displacement, journalism schools, and media organizations should incorporate AI training into their curricula and professional development programs. This helps aspiring media professionals understand and effectively use AI tools, ensuring they remain relevant in a rapidly evolving industry.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, the study concludes that substantial improvements are needed in AI sportscasters to enhance viewer satisfaction. The assessment of GMA's AI sportscasters, Maia and

Marco, reveals that while these AI entities represent a significant technological advancement, they still have a room to grow in delivering the level of viewer engagement and emotional connection typically provided by human sportscasters.

To achieve higher levels of viewer satisfaction, this study recommends refining AI capabilities, improving emotional expressiveness, and incorporating more dynamic interactions. Enhancements in these areas are essential for AI sportscasters to meet the evolving expectations of viewers and fully capitalize on their potential within the broadcasting industry.

## **Authors' Contributions**

This scholarly work was conceptualized and written by Joseph Elvir C. Tubilan, PhD.

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