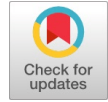




Surviving the Print Crisis: Operational Struggle Facing Tanzania Newspapers



Frank Sanga, Darius Mukiza

Abstract: This study examined the operational challenges faced by print media in Tanzania, with a focus on the Mwananchi and Habari Leo newspapers. The theories of Technological Determinism and Gatekeeping guided it. The study employed a qualitative, case-study design; data were collected through interviews with 29 media professionals, two focus groups, and 70 questionnaires completed by media staff, vendors, readers, and industry experts. The data were thematically analyzed, and the results identified five significant challenges facing print media operation in Tanzania, including: declining journalism quality due to staff layoffs and rushed stories; digital disruption leading to changing consumer behaviour from print to digital; financial constraints caused by decreased circulation, sales, and advertising revenue; an unfriendly media legal framework; and political and business pressures. The study recommends adopting digital technology to improve journalistic standards, increase flexibility, and attract digital consumers. It also advocates for a comprehensive policy review to promote a free, competitive, and sustainable media sector. Specifically, it urges the government to revise restrictive media laws to support the survival, independence, and growth of Tanzania's print media, striking a balance between technological advancements and robust protections for press freedom while maintaining the quality and standards of published news and information.

Keywords: Media Sustainability, Technological Determinism, Gatekeeping, Digital Disruption, Tanzanian Print Media.

Nomenclature:

BTL: Business Times Limited
EAES: Eastern Africa Editors Society
MCL: Mwananchi Communications Limited
MCT: Media Council of Tanzania
NMG: Nation Media Group
TCRA: Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority
UMCA: Universities' Mission to Central Africa
URT: United Republic of Tanzania

I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, Newspapers are circulated daily for public reading [41]. Their publication purpose has evolved from local news reporting aligns with the Global Sustainable Development Goals, as evidenced in the United Arab Emirates.

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[40]. Their strength relies mainly on analytical and in-depth insights to support broader efforts of immediate, instantaneous online news outlets [1; 42]. The origins of print media can be traced back to the Roman Empire's Acta Diurna and Acta Senatus, which were early means of sharing news and information [34]. However, the invention of the printing press in the 15th century by Johannes Gutenberg expanded access to information through books and magazines, preceding the emergence of newspapers in the 17th century, followed by radio and television in the 20th century [23]. The internet's global penetration has digitalised the news industry [44]. The outbreak of Coronavirus accelerated the transition from print to digital as a measure to prevent physical contact in Indonesia [32]. The rise of digital media has negatively impacted newspapers' circulation, sales, and advertising revenue, resulting in layoffs among journalists and the closure of some newspaper companies [14].

The transformation of media from print to digital has negatively impacted print media in Tanzania [3; 33; 42]. Some newsrooms are shutting down, ceasing publications, and journalists are being retrenched [24]. For example, the print media revenue for Mwananchi Communications Limited (MCL), which publishes three newspapers, namely, Mwananchi, Mwanaspoti, and The Citizen, has declined by 50 percent in the past ten years. Similarly, the New Habari (2006) Limited, which was operating five newspapers, including Mtanzania, Rai, Bingwa, Dimba, and The African, has been out of business since 2020 [27]. Even the major media companies such as The Guardian Limited and Media Solutions have reduced their newspapers by 78.5% from 14 to two newspapers [24]. Moreover, Business Times Limited (BTL), the renowned pioneers in the private media industry in Tanzania, which owned 11 newspapers between 1988 and 2015, has shut down publication [24]. The demise of print media has necessitated this study to examine the survival struggles of print media in Tanzania, with a focus on the Mwananchi and Habari Leo newspapers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Status of Print Media Globally

Globally, print media have declined in both circulation and revenue by over 50% [15]. In the context of the United States of America, employment in print media has decreased by 50% in ten years, from 71,000 in 2008 to 35,000 in 2019, while the weekday circulation has dropped by 12% from the previous year because 65% of adults use digital media resources for news and information [22]. In Europe, the classified advertising revenue declined from Euro 9.9 billion in 2003 to Euro 2.8 billion in 2019 [20]. In



Australia, newspaper circulation fell by 30%, and its readership dropped by 11.6%. In Canada, it fell by 40%, and in Japan, it fell to 42.7 million [14]. In France, the report shows that newspaper circulation dropped by around 50 per cent from 2007 to 2018, while in Germany, it fell by 72 per cent from 1991 to 2015 [14]. This detrimental trend, as predicted by Philip Meyer and cited by Saragih and Harahap [34] in *The Vanishing Newspaper*, suggests that by 2044, there will be only one copy of a newspaper globally.

B. Print Media in Africa

The status of newspapers in Africa is declining, as shown by surveys from the Kenya Bureau of Statistics Economic Survey [17; 18], Statista Research Department [39], and Newspapers Fact Sheet [30]. Despite the global advancement of communication and information technology, newspapers have continued to survive in Africa because of their ability to reach rural communities and those without internet access [29]. Currently, this dominance is diminishing, as evidenced in South Africa, which experienced a 49% drop in newspaper circulation [29]. East Africa is also facing the newspaper crisis, with newspapers struggling to find readers and revenue in Uganda, as society turns to cheaper, faster, and more reliable media, leading to a decline in circulation of prominent newspapers like Daily Monitor, Sunday Monitor, New Vision, and Sunday Vision [21]. The Audit Bureau of Circulation of South Africa, as cited by Kyamutetera [21], reports that in Uganda, The Daily Monitor lost 34% of its circulation, dropping from 25,700 copies in 2007 to 16,000 in 2018. Similarly, the Sunday Monitor's readership decreased by 58% —from 25,531 copies to 10,689 — during the same period. The New Vision's circulation fell by 24.4%, from 33,579 copies to 25,252, while Sunday Vision's circulation decreased by 53%, from 34,366 copies to 15,871 between 2007 and 2018 [21]. In Kenya, a report by the East African Editors' Society (EAES) [9] shows that two major newspaper companies are experiencing turbulent times as their profits and revenues decline. The Nation Media Group (NMG), which publishes Taifa Leo, Business Daily, Daily Nation, and The East African, saw its profit drop from KSh. 856 million in 2019 to KSh. 48 million in 2020, while its revenue decreased from KSh 9 billion to KSh 6.8 billion during the same period. On the other hand, the Standard Group, Kenya's oldest media company, which publishes The Standard newspaper, saw its profits decline from Ksh. 22 million in 2021 to Ksh. 1 million in 2022, and its revenue fell from Ksh. 3.1 billion to Ksh. 2.7 billion, resulting in delays in staff salaries [9].

C. Historical Context of Tanzania Print Media

The genesis of print media in Tanzania can be traced back to the German colonial period in 1885, with the first newspaper, Msimulizi (Storyteller), produced in Zanzibar in 1888 by the Anglican Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), and in Mainland Tanzania, *Habari za Mwezi*, in 1894 [25]. The liberalisation policies in the early 1990s allowed private ownership of print media, leading to a significant development of newspapers, with Business Times being the pioneer private newspaper launched in 1988 [26]. By November 2024, Tanzania's media had risen to 1,023 media platforms, among them 179 newspapers [36]. The development of internet users in Tanzania had reached

58.1 million active lines, including SIM cards and fixed internet subscriptions, as of December 2025 (Tanzania Communication Regulatory Authority (TCRA) [43] which suggests a high level of internet connectivity, which may indicate that many people consume news digitally.

However, the media legal reforms in Tanzania have hardened the print media operation; these include the Media Services Act (2016), Access to Information Act (2016), Cybercrime Act (2015), and Statistics Act (2015), all of which have imposed heavy penalties for violating them [24; 25]. These laws have created a climate of fear and self-censorship, curtailed media freedom, and lowered investigative journalism, which affected newspapers' readership and circulation [16; 38]. The shifting in the government, private companies, and NGOs from print to digital has affected the print media revenue base [25]. The circulation and readership effects have reduced the newsroom investments, which in turn deprived their ability to pay salaries, print newspapers, and cover operational costs [31]. In response, media companies took survival strategies by reducing salaries, staff retrenchment, all of which declined the quality of journalism [33]

Tanzania's deteriorating trend in print media is influenced by both external political, economic, and legislative factors and the internal newsroom challenges, including difficulties in maintaining journalistic quality and meeting the flexibility in audience expectations [11]. Furthermore, incidents such as the unresolved forced disappearance of Mwananchi's journalist Azory Gwanda indicate the risks journalists face in this challenging landscape [25]. Despite the growing concern of print media operational survival struggles globally, little is known about the means for print media to survive amid the legal and technological environment in Tanzania; hence, the need for this study, without which there will be a lack of empirical evidence for policy intervention to rescue the print media in Tanzania.

III. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

The underpinning theory of this study was Technological Determinism and Gatekeeping, which postulate critical aspects of the print media struggle in Tanzania. The Technological Determinism identified by the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) [13] asserts that technological advancements drive social change and shape the future of human society [8]. This theory is relevant to the study because it describes how digital technology is a key factor in the decline of print media and offers tools to propose survival strategies. Conversely, Gatekeeping Theory, developed by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1943, focuses on the process of information filtration in traditional media [12]. It explains how editors and journalists, or traditional media, act as gatekeepers, selecting and controlling which news reaches the public within a given timeframe. This filtration ensures that the public receives information deemed relevant and appropriate by media professionals. Both theories share the view that the media plays a critical role in shaping society: Technological Determinism emphasises the



influence of technology on societal change, and Gatekeeping underscores the controlled flow of information. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how technological shifts and editorial decisions jointly impact Tanzanian newspapers' operational challenges and possible survival strategies.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative case-study design to examine the factors influencing the operational survival challenges faced by Mwananchi and Habari Leo newspapers in Tanzania. The approach was chosen based on its effectiveness in utilizing in-depth views, opinions, experiences, testimonials, and perceptions of the respondents to examine the operational survival struggle of print media in Tanzania [6]. The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam city, which is the country's business and media hub, contributing approximately 20% of the national news coverage [37]. It also hosts the head offices of all the major newspapers, including Mwananchi and Habari Leo, under this study [2]. Their ownership structures influenced the choice of newspapers: Mwananchi is privately owned, while Habari Leo is state-owned. Both newspapers are published daily, in Kiswahili, the national language. This difference in ownership provided a comparative analysis base for operational practices and survival strategies.

The study population was clustered into three groups based on their level of engagement with the print media. A purposive sampling technique was used to solicit respondents with daily engagement and industrial experience with print media [19]. The first group consisted of newspaper practitioners, including managers, editors, and news reporters, who provided first-hand information on newsroom experiences. The second were newspaper vendors and readers, representing the distribution and consumers of print media. Vendors were selected for their daily experience with sales and circulation, while readers contributed their consumption habits. The third group comprised media experts, including media association professionals and academicians, whose expertise offered insights into broader structural and policy challenges.

Generally, a total of 29 in-depth interviews were conducted with executives, editors, advertising heads, vendors, professional association leaders, and lecturers, who enriched the study with immediate feedback and richer explanations [10]. An interview guide containing open-ended questions was used to ensure content and internal validity while allowing the participants to elaborate on key topics. In addition, two focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with 12 reporters, six from each newspaper, to capture newsroom practical experiences [6]. To supplement the interview and Focus Group Discussion, 70 online questionnaires were distributed via Google Forms to readers sampled using convenience sampling; 50 responses were received, which is 71%. Data were analysed thematically, with patterns coded and summarised into themes. The results were presented in verbatim quotes, thematic paraphrases, and explanations [5]. The triangulation technique was adopted to validate information from one category of respondents to another, and ethical

standards were highly observed to avoid harm to enhance the validity and credibility of the study [7].

V. RESULTS

The results revealed five key operational challenges in Tanzania's print media industry, including poor-quality content, digital disruption, financial difficulties, restrictive media laws, and business and political interference. These issues emerged from recurring themes in respondents' views, opinions, narratives, and explanations from the study area, in relation to the Technological Determinism and Gatekeeping theories.

A. Quality of Stories

The results reveal a decline in story quality, resulting in operational challenges for Mwananchi and Habari Leo. Based on Gatekeeping theory, editors and journalists determine which stories to publish and which not to, and the stories they publish determine circulation and readability. So, political and economic pressure make editors and journalists prepare and publish stories not for the public's interests but to please the government, thereby deteriorating journalistic standards in terms of content and relevance. They added that the situation has created a conflict of editorial independence, in which subjectivity has surpassed objectivity, favouring sensational reporting. Mwananchi, a private newspaper, was cited for encountering financial difficulties that led to hurried, event-driven reporting, but it still struggles to provide diverse and critical coverage. In contrast, Habari Leo, a government-owned outlet, emphasises political and government narratives, resulting in a weaker balance and less independence. Common criticisms include hurried stories, lack of depth, and the infusion of personal opinions, all of which weaken news quality and integrity by compromising gatekeeping theory.

i. As one key Informant Stated

"Recently, some stories are hurried and lack objectivity, representing personal feelings and attitudes of the journalist or editor instead of the reality, hence reducing readability due to bias."

Paraphrasing the views of other respondents, it indicates the effects of staff retrenchment, where Mwananchi newspapers closed six regional offices between 2021 and 2025, and staff retrenchment by 30% as a survival strategy to reduce the operational costs due to the decline in sales and advertising revenue, have overloaded the available staff to perform multiple tasks, which led to the quality decline.

ii. One Key Informant Said

"The newsroom is currently operated by fewer journalists and editors, with one person often performing various tasks previously handled by three individuals, such as gathering information, capturing photographs and videos, and writing for both social media and the newspaper."

Respondent added another survival operation strategy adopted by print media to reduce page numbers, for example, Mwananchi from 40 to 24 pages and Habari Leo from 32 to 24 pages, which removed the unique Jimbo kwa Jimbo pullout from Habari

Leo. The respondents mentioned the weak editorial language skills, poor sourcing, and overemphasis on political events at the expense of human-interest and governance stories. One respondent highlighted that:

"These days, most of the newspaper stories praise politicians and government events instead of being critical and analytical to shape society for sustainable development. Essential issues like corruption, human rights, governance, and economic challenges are given less weight in most cases."

Paraphrasing the views of the focus group discussion, they said journalists often lack refresher training to equip them with essential skills for in-depth investigative reporting, hence a focus on event-driven and press-release-based reporting, most of which is political in nature. The interview and focused group discussion results agree that deteriorating news quality is a factor in the operational survival struggle of print media in Tanzania.

B. Digital Disruption

The results show a shift in news production, distribution, and consumption from print to digital, caused by technological advances for both Mwananchi and Habari Leo. Respondents argued that digital platforms are replacing traditional print media. Therefore, Mwananchi made a deliberate effort to invest in digital media, social media, and online editions to keep up with the audience's changing behaviour. However, it continues to lose its customers to free online news and citizen journalism. Conversely, Habari Leo has moved to digital media as business as usual, relying heavily on government support rather than competing in that space. This situation reflects Technological Determinism, which suggests that technological progress drives social and historical change.

i. One Key Respondent Highlighted

"Print newspaper consumption has lost its centuries' supremacy due to various factors, digitalization trends in human lives, which have changed readers' consumption preferences."

Circulation and advertising revenues have also declined as audiences' preferences have shifted from print to online platforms. Organisations also favour digital media for advertising because it reaches a broader, more targeted audience than traditional media. The quickness and cost-effectiveness of online content have been regarded as a critical driver from print to digital. One respondent argued:

"Digital and online media enable stories to be easily accessible, reducing the waiting time by avoiding geographical and transport barriers, at the same time saving costs."

The questionnaire results indicated that 94% of respondents accessed online stories rather than print resources, and 80% preferred digital media over printed newspapers for their affordability and flexibility. Another respondent informed that:

"The digital transformation has changed the audience's mindset, who, instead of buying the newspaper for Tsh 1000, would recharge their phones with internet bundles, peruse the internet, and get the current news from different online platforms, most of which are instant and unbiased."

Generational change was also evident, with youth audiences consuming more virtual content through social media, podcasts, and YouTube. As one respondent said:

"Digitalization has transformed consumers' behaviour patterns. The attention has shifted from being informed later but instantly, in minutes, podcasts, YouTube, and other social media."

Paraphrasing the focus group discussions, the respondents raised concerns about the redundant news. Newspapers frequently reproduce news stories that have already circulated widely on citizen-journalism platforms. This practice has not only reduced the value of print journalism but also led to the traditional media's disengagement from consumers.

As one key informant defended the critical role of citizen journalism by saying,

"You may find that social media has already circulated certain news and information to the public today, and the next day the newspapers publish the same news and information, no one will buy a newspaper to read what he/she have already been informed of."

ii. As One Respondent Said

"For print journalism to survive, it should demonstrate a critical investigative journalism to inform more on what has already been offered by citizen journalism, which will add value to newspapers and influence readability."

The interview, focus group discussion, and questionnaire results raise the technological effect on print media, which instigate the operational survival struggles.

C. Financial Challenges

The results highlight the financial challenge as a source of operational strain in print media. The respondents' views indicate that Mwananchi is highly vulnerable to declines in advertising revenue and circulation, with no subsidies to rely on compared to its counterpart, the state-subsided Habari Leo. The respondents explained rising production costs, reduced circulation, and declining advertising revenues as key obstacles to the survival of print media. Unlike other sectors, newspapers cannot easily pass these costs to consumers, as print is not a necessity. As a result, rising operational costs are eroding newspapers' profitability.

For the Mwananchi newspaper, for example, advertising revenue has decreased significantly by over 50% over the past 10 years, from 2015 to 2025. The findings also indicate that non-governmental organisations have reduced their advertising funding. At the same time, circulation has declined by 50% to 80%, from 80,000 to 100,000 combined copies of the leading six dailies in 2015 to 30,000 in 2025. However, in the case of Mwananchi, the respondents argued that, despite the minimal returns, Mwananchi continued to distribute to remote areas to maintain its market presence, thereby increasing financial strain.

i. In the Case of Habari Leo, One Key Informant Said the Declining Trend of Circulation

"The decreasing percentage in daily sales is around 80%; we were initially able to sell around 20,000 copies, but now, the most copies that can be sold per day are less than



6,000.” The interviews and focus group discussion results indicate that financial constraints are the primary factor in the operational survival struggle of the print media in Tanzania, hitting private media houses more than their state-owned counterparts.

D. Political and Business Interference

The respondents informed that direct and indirect pressure from politicians, government institutions, and advertisers constrained editorial independence, financial sustainability, and public trust. Mwananchi faces indirect pressure from advertisers, leading to editorial self-censorship to protect its revenue. By contrast, Habari Leo is directly controlled by the government, resulting in stronger negative public perceptions of bias. Political interference is a common barrier, fostering widespread self-censorship and discouraging investigative reporting. Some respondents argued that during periods of restricted civic space, journalists either censored themselves or left the profession altogether to protect their security. As one key informant said:

“We have experienced periods where the media was restricted by a civic space that was not that open, which brought self-censorship that made good journalists quit the profession, or others self-censored themselves.”

i. Another Pointed

“Political interference from government officials undermines the freedom of the press, and the media is viewed as an enemy of the state, which endangers the journalist and editors’ lives.”

The results indicate that business interference also limits media independence; advertisers, particularly from the government and private companies, often threaten to withdraw contracts if the coverage or portrayal does not convince them.

ii. As One Key Informant Explained:

“The advertising entities, when they are covered unfavourably, threaten to cancel the contract. The other thing is the discount nature of the rate card, which has remained unchanged for a long time, affecting advertisement revenue. For example, while the government wants a discount of up to 70%, banks demand a discount of up to 60%”

iii. In Addition, Respondents Described Advertisers as “Bosses” who Dictate Editorial Content

“Since advertisements act as a chief source of revenue, the institute brings in the advertisements, acts as the boss, and monitors the content. Since that can be the government or other private organization, journalists cannot criticize or write content that does not support their main adverts.”

Some respondents said government ownership creates a public perception of bias:

“The audience has a negative perception of government-owned newspapers. Some news sources believe that the stories taken from them will be sieved to favour the government because it is the owner of the paper.”

The interview and focus group discussion results indicate a quality challenge in the Tanzanian print media, attributed to the political and business environment, thereby exacerbating the print media's operational survival struggle.

E. Media Laws

The respondents expressed concerns about the media's legal environment, which has contributed to struggles in print media in Tanzania. One specific case highlighted was the Media Services Act (2016), which limits foreign ownership and has particularly affected Mwananchi. Other unfavourable media laws identified include the Cybercrime Act (2015), which has created fear among journalists about new reporting requirements. Although Habari Leo is also subject to a similar legal framework, its ownership structure gives it an advantage over Mwananchi, a private newspaper. Respondents cited laws such as the Access to Information Act (2016) and the Statistics Act (2015) as barriers to investigative journalism and as factors discouraging independent analysis, citing the criminalisation of newsroom staff.

“The Media Service Act and the Access to Information Act need an amendment to rescue the freedom of the press. We do not get stories on time; bureaucracy delays or totally prevents story balancing; hence, investigative stories are not well covered.”

Their views suggest that the media should be treated like the professions of doctors and lawyers, being regulated themselves for the sake of freedom of the press, rather than by the direct hand of the government, because the Media Service Act allows the establishment of the Independent Media Council. However, not all respondents perceived media laws negatively. Some of those from the government newspaper described the laws as safeguarding to promote professionalism and discipline. Another respondent commented:

“Media laws have never been an obstacle to the freedom of the press so long as editors adhere to procedures, principles, and professional standards in journalism.”

In contrast, another respondent added that.

“The laws' interpretation and effect depend on media ownership structure and internal media house policies.”

However, most respondents viewed laws regulating media operations in Tanzania as unfriendly and unfavourable, leading to fear, declining newspaper quality, and reductions in circulation, sales, and advertising revenue. The interview and focus group discussion results show mixed feelings about media laws, which seem to favour state-owned media over private media, complicating story balance and access to critical information for investigative journalism.

VI. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study results indicate that print media in Tanzania is struggling with operational challenges, including poor-quality content, technological disruptions, financial constraints, restrictive media laws, and interference from business and political interests. These results mean print media in Tanzania face an integrated range of challenges that threaten its future operation and survival. The results found quality as a challenge for print media. It can be argued that, if the quality of the story is an issue in print media, it is difficult to convince readers to buy and read substandard stories. These



results are consistent with a previous study in Tanzania, which found that quality issues were a challenge for print media [37]. Similarly, the study highlighted the financial challenges facing print media in Tanzania. The economic crisis concurs with the state of print media in Kenya and Uganda, as evidenced by declining circulation, sales, and advertising revenue, as established by Kyamutetera [21]. It aligns with a study in Norway that found a 30% decline in revenue due to declines in readership and circulation [4]. The financial challenges have caused staff layoffs, fewer newspaper pages, and declining story quality. The economic crisis is a serious challenge that requires intervention.

Also, media laws were found to affect freedom of the press, investigative journalism, and the balance of stories. This result is new; previous studies did not establish it as a challenge [32; 14; 35; 39]. If media laws negatively affect the print media industry in Tanzania, it becomes difficult for the media to remain independent and meet consumers' needs.

This study has found that political and business factors are external pressures facing print media in Tanzania. The results about these interferences are new; they were not established in previous studies, a challenge to print media [14; 32; 33; 39]. If the print media is not free and independent, it will dilute its content to please external influencers, thereby lowering the quality of news and information. Moreover, the results indicated digital disruption as a challenge to print media; the study shows that readers' preferences are shifting from print to digital platforms, which are cheaper, faster, and timelier. The results concur with previous studies, which regarded digital transformation as a threat to print media if it does not blend its print media with digital platforms [28]. If digital platforms are more affordable and reliable than print newspapers, and unless print media offers more critical content than citizen journalism or combines print and digital formats, traditional print media is likely to fade away automatically. The results are also supported by Technological Determinism, which underscores the need to integrate technology as a driver of social and behavioural change.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that Tanzania's print media is facing intertwined challenges that threaten its viability and sustainability. Key issues include declining journalism quality, digital disruption, financial strain, restrictive media laws, and political and business interference. While economic difficulties contribute to operational decline, they do not entirely excuse the erosion of journalistic standards. Newsrooms must respond by prioritising investigative, well-sourced, and balanced reporting to regain public trust. Digital transformation, as explained by Technological Determinism, has fundamentally changed how audiences consume news. Print media must adapt by investing in digital platforms, embracing multimedia storytelling, and responding to audience preferences without sacrificing their credibility. Political and commercial interference, framed by Gatekeeping Theory, continues to undermine editorial independence. Both government-owned and private

newspapers face pressure, either through direct state control or commercial self-censorship, which compromises their ability to serve the public interest. To ensure sustainability, media owners should adopt innovation-driven strategies while maintaining ethical journalism. The government must reform restrictive media laws to foster a more enabling environment for free and independent journalism to thrive. Ultimately, the survival of Tanzania's print media depends on its capacity to modernise, resist undue influence, and uphold professional standards that reflect society's evolving needs.

DECLARATION STATEMENT

As the article's author, I must verify the accuracy of the following information after aggregating input from all authors.

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- **Funding Support:** This article has not been funded by any organizations or agencies. This independence ensures that the research is conducted objectively and without external influence.
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- **Data Access Statement and Material Availability:** The adequate resources of this article are publicly accessible.
- **Author's Contributions:** The authorship of this article is contributed equally to all participating individuals.

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