

Review

Augmentation or Displacement? How TRT Journalists and Creative Staff Read AI's Impact on Creative Autonomy and Job Security

Bader Alakklouk*

Selçuk University, Konya, Türkiye

*Corresponding author: Bader Alakklouk, Baderaklouk@gmail.com

Abstract

Background: The spread of generative AI through media production has put the future of journalistic labour and creative agency squarely on the table, yet little empirical work examines how journalists themselves experience this shift, particularly outside major Western commercial newsrooms. **Methods:** This article reports a qualitative study of how media professionals at TRT World and TRT Arabic, the internationally facing divisions of Turkey's state-affiliated public broadcaster, read AI's impact on their professional identity and job security, drawing on twenty-two semi-structured interviews with reporters, editors, producers, and creative staff (five reporters/journalists, four news producers, two news editors, two program directors, four craft editors, a creative video editor, an interview producer, a director, an AI ethics specialist, and a quality department specialist), analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. **Results:** The findings point to widespread concern that AI-generated content, now capable of producing human-like text, imagery, and audio, devalues human creativity and threatens role security, particularly around transcription, editing, and content-generation tasks. At the same time, staff report using AI tools voluntarily to sharpen their own output rather than replace it, which sets up a real tension between anxiety and pragmatic adoption. Drawing on interview evidence presented throughout, the article develops a Human-Centred AI Adoption framework built on three pillars, redefined creative roles, AI-human collaborative workflows, and upskilling-based job protection, and argues that perceived threat, not actual displacement, is the main barrier to acceptance among TRT staff. **Conclusion:** The article treats this framework, and the seniority- and role-based patterns reported alongside it, as propositions grounded in a single-institution qualitative sample rather than as generalisable findings, and specifies the boundary conditions under which they may not hold. In doing so, the study grounds debates on technological unemployment in creative industries in first-hand newsroom testimony and connects its findings to the broader literature on human-centred AI design and workforce adaptation to automation.

Keywords

Job displacement, Creative autonomy, Human-AI collaboration, Journalism labour, Technology acceptance, Media workforce

Article History

Received: 21 August 2026

Revised: 04 September 2026

Accepted: 22 September 2026

Available Online: 09 October 2026

Copyright

© 2026 by the authors. This article is published by the Cultech Publishing Sdn. Bhd. under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0): <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

1. Introduction

Worries about technological unemployment go back to industrialisation itself, but generative AI has given them new urgency in creative and knowledge-intensive professions once thought largely safe from automation [1]. Journalism sits close to the centre of this concern: AI systems can now draft text, generate images, produce synthetic audio and video, and take on much of the research and editing work long understood as requiring distinctly human judgement and creativity [2]. Yet the empirical literature on how journalists themselves experience this shift, as opposed to how commentators and policymakers speculate about its aggregate labour-market effects, remains thin, especially outside the major Western media markets.

This article closes part of that gap through a qualitative study of TRT World and TRT Arabic, examining how reporters, editors, producers, and creative staff at a national public broadcaster read AI's implications for their professional autonomy and job security. It asks two questions: how do TRT media professionals describe AI's impact on their sense of creative agency and professional identity, and how far does that perceived threat line up with, or pull away from, their actual behaviour when they choose to adopt AI tools in their daily work?

The central argument is that perceived threat and pragmatic adoption sit together in productive tension among TRT staff. The same people who voice concern about AI's implications for creative autonomy and job security are, in many cases, also among the most active voluntary users of AI tools in their daily work. Rather than reading this as inconsistency, the article treats it as evidence that TRT staff draw an implicit line between AI as an augmentative tool under their own control and AI as a potential substitute for their professional judgement and creative contribution, a distinction that tracks the augmentation-versus-substitution framing developed in a companion article drawing on the same interview dataset, described in Section 4.1. Building on this, the article develops a Human-Centred AI Adoption framework meant to help public broadcasters manage the tension constructively rather than let it harden into either uncritical over-adoption or defensive resistance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Automation and the Future of Creative Labour

The literature on automation's impact on creative labour has shifted considerably as generative AI capabilities have advanced. Early work on automated journalism focused on the substitution of routine, template-driven content production, such as financial and sports reporting [2], and argued that automation redefined rather than eliminated journalistic labour by pushing human effort toward higher-value editorial and investigative work. More recent scholarship, responding to generative systems that can now produce music, art, and literature with growing sophistication, asks whether that earlier, reassuring framing still holds once AI reaches into domains once considered distinctly human, including creative writing and visual art. The World Economic Forum's [1] Future of Jobs Report named content creation and media roles among the occupational categories facing significant projected disruption from generative AI, giving empirical weight to concerns that had mostly been speculative until then.

Newsroom-level studies add a practical dimension to this picture. Reviewing adoption trends across news organisations internationally, Feio and Oliveira [3], in a systematic review of AI and news, identify uneven adoption and recurring challenges around automation, skills, ethics, transparency, and accountability, while Jamil [4] documented specific structural barriers, limited training, unclear editorial policy, and resource constraints, that shape whether developing-market newsrooms can adopt AI tools at all. Al-Zoubi et al. [5] found that journalists in several Arab newsrooms raised ethical concerns about AI-generated content that closely track this article's Section 5.1 findings on creative devaluation, while Porlezza [6] argued that European governance frameworks for AI in journalism have so far paid more attention to technical and legal compliance than to the lived experience of newsroom staff, a gap this article addresses directly.

2.2 Perceived versus Actual Threat

A separate strand of the literature looks at the gap between the perceived threat of automation and its actual, realised labour-market impact. Chui et al.'s [7] widely cited analysis of automation potential across occupations found that while many tasks within a job could technically be automated, full occupational displacement was considerably rarer, since most jobs are a bundle of tasks and only some lend themselves to automation. This task-versus-occupation distinction matters directly for journalism, where AI may increasingly automate specific tasks, transcription or first-draft generation among them, without eliminating the broader journalistic role, provided that role can be redefined around the tasks that resist automation.

Recent newsroom research confirms this gap between perceived and actual threat is not specific to TRT. Cools and Diakopoulos [8], interviewing early-adopter journalists in the Netherlands and Denmark, found that reporters readily identified more than a dozen uses for generative AI in their daily workflows while simultaneously voicing concern about accuracy, credibility, and the erosion of journalistic craft, a coexistence of enthusiasm and worry that mirrors what this article documents at TRT. Møller et al. [9], working from a system-of-professions framework, argue that the routine character of much journalistic work leaves the profession's claim to expertise genuinely vulnerable to

automation over time, even absent immediate job losses, helping explain why perceived threat can run ahead of demonstrated displacement.

2.3 Human-Centred AI and Collaborative Design

In response to concerns about AI-driven displacement, a growing literature sets out design principles meant to ensure that AI implementation augments rather than displaces human workers. Cronholm and Göbel [10] proposed design principles for human-centred AI emphasising preserved human agency and decision-making authority, rather than positioning workers as passive supervisors of autonomous systems. Passalacqua et al. [11], reviewing human-centred AI within Industry 5.0, likewise stressed that successful AI integration requires deliberate attention to wellbeing, skill development, and meaningful work, not just efficiency gains. Schmager et al. [12] extended this line of work with a research agenda that names creative and knowledge-intensive professions such as journalism as a priority for further study, a call this article answers.

A parallel literature moves past the binary framing of AI as either threat or replacement, proposing a collaborative framing in which AI augments human capability. Jarrahi [13] conceptualised human-AI work in terms of complementarity and symbiosis, arguing that AI can extend human cognition while human professionals retain strengths in judgement under uncertainty and contextual complexity. Amershi et al. [14] provide empirically evaluated guidelines for human-AI interaction, emphasising design choices that help users understand, control, and appropriately incorporate AI outputs into human workflows. Møller et al. [9] found that many journalists are actively redefining their own expertise in response to AI, repositioning around judgement, verification, and a distinctly human touch rather than the mechanics of drafting or transcription, anticipating the role-redefinition pattern this article documents among TRT respondents in Section 5.4.

2.4 Workforce Transition, Ownership, and Identity

A body of literature addresses workforce transition strategies for managing automation-related disruption responsibly. Tenakwah and Watson [15] argued that organisations preparing their workforce for an AI/automation age must invest deliberately in preparing both human and machine capabilities together, rather than treating adaptation as an afterthought. Jenkins and Khanna [16] examined the role of AI-enhanced training and leadership development in workforce adaptation, while Tasleem et al. [17] warned that organisations often import AI ambitions without a realistic human-resources strategy, a mismatch their paper’s title captures memorably as building “a rocket with bicycle blueprints” [17].

A related strand suggests perceived threat is not spread evenly across a workforce but varies by generation, seniority, and role. World Economic Forum’s data suggest workers in roles closer to routine content production face greater projected task automation than those in roles built around strategic judgement [1]; if that pattern holds within journalism, perceived threat should vary systematically by role, in ways this article examines empirically, and with appropriate caution given sample size, in Section 5.5.

Psychological ownership, the subjective sense of possessiveness and personal investment an individual develops toward a piece of work independent of any formal legal ownership, helps explain why introducing AI into creative production can generate distress even where output quality improves. A professional’s sense of ownership over their creative output may shrink when an AI system, rather than the professional, generates a substantial share of that output’s raw content, even where the professional retains full editorial control over the final version. This complements the creative-devaluation concerns documented in Section 5.1, since such concerns may persist even among staff who report no realistic fear of job loss, suggesting the underlying driver is attribution rather than employment security narrowly defined.

A related concept, anticipatory anxiety, is the psychological burden that comes not from an already-realised job loss but from sustained uncertainty about a future disruption whose timing and severity remain unknown. Where the perceived-versus-actual-threat distinction concerns whether a feared outcome will happen, anticipatory anxiety concerns the psychological cost of uncertainty itself, a cost that can persist even if displacement never materialises. Organisations managing AI adoption responsibly therefore need to address the lived experience of prolonged uncertainty, for instance through clear, proactive communication about the scope and boundaries of AI deployment.

Evidence from other automation-affected professions offers a useful comparative lens. Scarbrough and Kyratsis’s [18] analysis of innovation diffusion in healthcare documents a broadly similar pattern: frontline anxiety about a new technology’s implications for autonomy and role security turned out, over an extended adoption period, to be only partially borne out in practice, with the technology eventually absorbed through role redefinition, much as this article documents among TRT respondents.

Identity threat theory treats resistance to organisational change as a defensive response triggered when change is perceived to threaten a valued part of an individual’s professional self-concept. It predicts that resistance to AI should be most acute among professionals whose sense of self is most closely bound up with the specific competencies AI seems to encroach on, a prediction this article’s findings speak to in Sections 5.5 and 5.10, and predicts that practical

job-security reassurance alone, without addressing the underlying identity-level concern, will only partly work, a prediction this article's findings bear out in Section 6.

Recent large-sample economic research offers quantified evidence directly relevant to the perceived-versus-actual displacement distinction. Hui et al. studying freelancers on a major online labour platform following the successive releases of ChatGPT, DALL-E [19], and Midjourney, found that freelancers in occupations highly exposed to generative AI saw measurable reductions in jobs secured and earnings, an effect more pronounced for image-based than text-based creative work, against which a strong prior track record offered no meaningful protection. This shows that, at least in open freelance labour markets, generative AI's displacement effects are not purely a matter of perception, a finding that qualifies, though does not overturn, this article's emphasis on perceived threat as the dominant driver of concern among TRT staff. TRT staff are salaried employees of a large public institution rather than freelancers competing task by task in an open market, which plausibly explains why perceived threat, rather than directly measurable displacement, dominates the TRT findings; the framework proposed in Section 6.2 should be understood as addressing a workforce that has not yet experienced the market-mediated displacement effects seen in freelance contexts, not as evidence such effects could never emerge should TRT's employment structure shift toward more externalised arrangements.

Recent conceptual scholarship has begun to sketch more precise accounts of what human creative labour continues to contribute once generative AI can produce superficially comparable output. Bender [20], examining discourse around the 2023 Writers' and Actors' strikes, argues that much of the debate leans on an underspecified "replacing tasks" model, and proposes instead a "meaningful work" framework that asks creative professionals to articulate the specific, non-substitutable dimensions of their own creative agency, drawing on the shift to digital visual effects in Jurassic Park to show how a transformative technology can expand rather than simply displace human creative contribution once roles are properly redefined around it. This directly informs this article's Section 5.11 finding that early-adopter TRT staff who began articulating distinctive value in curating and directing AI-generated raw material were doing exactly the kind of active identification of non-substitutable creative agency Bender recommends as a constructive alternative to defensive resistance.

2.5 Institutional Context: TRT as a State-Affiliated Public Broadcaster

The article's central institutional claim, that perceived threat rather than realised displacement dominates staff experience, rests partly on characteristics specific to a public, state-affiliated broadcaster, which this section sets out in more detail. TRT World and TRT Arabic are the internationally facing English- and Arabic-language divisions of Turkey's state broadcaster, operating under a civil-service-influenced employment structure in which editorial and creative staff are typically salaried employees rather than freelancers or contractors. This distinguishes TRT from the commercial, freelance-dependent newsroom settings that dominate the existing AI-journalism literature [19], and is the institutional basis for the boundary condition discussed in Section 6.1.

TRT has also pursued AI adoption relatively actively at an institutional level, including experimentation with automated and AI-assisted production workflows [21], which places staff perceptions documented in this article within a context of active, management-endorsed AI adoption rather than passive exposure to an externally imposed technology. Turkish-language newsroom research on generative AI adoption specifically frames the question in threat-or-opportunity terms similar to this article's own framing [22], suggesting the tension documented here is not idiosyncratic to TRT's English- and Arabic-language divisions but reflects a broader pattern within Turkish newsrooms adopting generative AI.

2.6 Research Gap

While this literature offers valuable conceptual resources for understanding AI adoption and workforce wellbeing, few studies examine how these dynamics play out within a public broadcaster's newsroom, and fewer still treat the coexistence of perceived threat and voluntary adoption as a joint phenomenon requiring explanation rather than as separate or contradictory findings. Even recent journalism-specific work, such as Morosoli et al.'s [23] study of individual attitudes and acts of resistance toward generative AI, tends to treat resistance and adoption as opposing poles on a single continuum rather than behaviours the same individual can hold at once. This article addresses both gaps.

Its focus on the internationally facing divisions of a state-affiliated public broadcaster also places its findings within a distinctive institutional environment relative to the commercial, predominantly Western newsroom settings that dominate the existing literature. Such broadcasters often combine relatively stable, civil-service-influenced employment structures with competitive pressure to adopt cutting-edge production technologies, a combination this article argues may shape job-security concerns in ways not fully captured by studies of purely commercial or purely civil-service contexts.

3. Theoretical Framework

The framework draws on five constructs, task-versus-occupation, augmented intelligence, anticipatory anxiety, identity threat theory, and psychological ownership, rather than a single parsimonious theory, because no one of them captures the full pattern the interview data show. Task-versus-occupation and augmented intelligence together explain why

bounded, self-directed AI use coexists with broader concern (Section 5.3): the first identifies which specific tasks are exposed to automation, and the second describes the collaborative structure under which respondents keep control over those tasks. Identity threat theory and psychological ownership then account for why concern persists even where a task-level threat is bounded or a respondent's job is not at risk (Sections 5.1, 5.6, 5.10): the first explains resistance rooted in professional self-concept, the second explains a narrower, attribution-specific unease about authorship that can arise independently of it. Anticipatory anxiety, finally, addresses a residual pattern the other four cannot: concern that is not tied to any specific task, role, or piece of work, but to sustained uncertainty about AI's future trajectory within the organisation (Section 5.7). Used together, these constructs map onto distinct, empirically separable patterns in the data rather than offering redundant explanations of the same one; the Discussion returns to how they combine within the proposed framework (Section 6.2).

This article draws on the human-centred AI design literature [10,12] combined with the task-versus-occupation distinction from [7] to build an analytic framework distinguishing AI's impact on discrete journalistic tasks from its impact on the broader professional role and identity of journalists and creative staff. The framework predicts that resistance to AI will concentrate around tasks central to professional identity and creative agency, editorial framing and creative authorship among them, while tasks peripheral to that identity, transcription or routine formatting, will be handed to automation more readily and with less perceived threat. It also draws on the augmented-intelligence concept [13] to read cases where staff voluntarily adopt AI despite broader concerns, predicting such adoption will cluster where staff keep meaningful control over the final output.

The framework further incorporates anticipatory anxiety (Section 2.4) to read cases where respondents expressed sustained concern about AI's implications without any concrete, imminent threat to their role, predicting such concern reflects the psychological cost of prolonged uncertainty about AI's future trajectory within the organisation rather than a considered assessment of near-term risk.

4. Methodology

4.1 Design, Sample, and Relationship to the Companion Article

This study draws on twenty-two semi-structured interviews with TRT World and TRT Arabic personnel. Table 1 reports the full breakdown of the sample by professional category. Formal tenure or years-of-experience data were not collected as a separate, coded demographic variable at the point of interview; where the Findings characterise a respondent as longer-tenured or more senior (Sections 5.5, 5.8, 5.9), this reflects the respondent's own self-referential framing during the interview, for example an explicit comparison to an earlier technological transition they had personally experienced, rather than a verified employment-record figure. We flag this as a limitation of the current dataset in Section 7 and have revised the framing of subgroup claims throughout the Findings and Discussion to avoid overstating their statistical robustness.

Table 1. Sample composition by professional category (N = 22).

Professional category	n
Reporters and journalists	5
News producers	4
Craft editors	4
News editors	2
Program directors	2
Director	1
Creative video editor	1
Interview producer	1
AI ethics specialist	1
Quality department specialist	1
Total	22

Because several of these categories (director, creative video editor, AI ethics specialist, quality department specialist) correspond to very few, and in some cases only one, position within TRT World and TRT Arabic, illustrative quotations

in Section 5 are attributed only to an anonymised respondent number (R1-R22) and not to job title, to reduce the risk that colleagues could identify a specific individual from a role-specific quotation.

This dataset is shared with a companion article in the same series, which analyses the same 22 interviews through a diffusion-of-innovation lens focused on institutional adoption patterns, tool use, and perceived organisational readiness. The present article is restricted to a distinct analytic focus, namely how respondents interpret AI's implications for their own creative autonomy, professional identity, and job security, and to a distinct set of codes (identity, ownership, threat, and voluntary-adoption codes) not analysed in the companion piece.

Respondents were selected through purposive sampling based on direct involvement in content creation and editorial decision-making [24]. Interviews were conducted by phone and email; the specific split between the two modes was not logged at the time of data collection and cannot be reliably reconstructed from the transcripts, which we note as a limitation in Section 7. Email and phone interviewing are established, legitimate qualitative data-collection modes in their own right [25], and both were used here primarily for practical reasons, participants' scheduling constraints and geographic dispersion across TRT World and TRT Arabic. Interviews were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis [26], applied inductively: initial codes were developed from close, repeated reading of the interview transcripts rather than from a predefined coding frame, then grouped into candidate themes, reviewed against the coded extracts and the full dataset, and named and defined in an iterative process consistent with Braun and Clarke's [26] six-phase approach. Coding was conducted by the single researcher responsible for data collection, with candidate themes and illustrative extracts discussed in peer-debriefing sessions with the doctoral supervisor to challenge interpretations and check them against the transcripts; the study did not use a second, independent coder to establish formal inter-rater agreement, which we note as a limitation in Section 7. Coding focused on statements relating to creative autonomy, professional identity, job security, and the voluntary versus mandated character of respondents' own AI use. Particular attention went to instances where individual respondents expressed both concern about AI's broader implications and personal enthusiasm for specific tools, so the analysis could examine this tension directly rather than resolving it by aggregating across respondents.

4.2 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was addressed following Ahmed's [27] and Haq et al.'s [28] four-criteria framework. Credibility was supported through sustained engagement with participants and triangulation across interview transcripts and institutional documents. Transferability was supported through thick description of TRT's organisational context (Section 2.5). Dependability rested on a documented audit trail of field notes, interview protocols, and coding decisions. Confirmability was supported through the peer-debriefing process described above and reflexive journaling by the researcher. These procedures do not by themselves address the possibility of social-desirability bias arising from TRT's status as a state-affiliated employer; we discuss this limitation explicitly in Section 6.1.

4.3 Ethics

All interviews were voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose and of their right to decline to answer any question or withdraw at any point before data were finalised for analysis. Respondents' names are not used anywhere in this article or in the underlying thesis; findings are reported by anonymised respondent number, and, per Section 4.1, illustrative quotations omit job-title attribution where a title could plausibly identify a specific individual. This study was conducted as part of a doctoral research project at Selçuk University's Institute of Social Sciences (Konya, Türkiye) under standard institutional supervision arrangements for doctoral research involving human participants.

4.4 Positionality and Re-identification Risk

Given the small size of TRT World's and TRT Arabic's specialist teams, several professional categories in Table 1 plausibly map onto one or two identifiable individuals. Beyond withholding job-title attribution from quotations (Section 4.1), we have also reviewed all illustrative quotations retained in Section 5 to remove or generalise any content-specific detail (a named project, a named AI tool used in an unusual or identifying way, a specific date) that was not analytically necessary and that could serve as an identifying detail in combination with a respondent's role.

5. Findings

This section reports what respondents said, organised by theme; interpretive connections to theory and to the framework developed in this article appear in Section 6 rather than here. Each subsection includes illustrative verbatim extracts where available; because thematic analysis of this kind necessarily involves interpretive judgement in selecting and grouping extracts, we remind readers that the frequency language used below ("several," "many," "a smaller group") describes patterns across a 22-respondent purposive sample and should not be read as a statistical claim about TRT's workforce as a whole.

5.1 Perceived Threats to Creative Autonomy

Respondents widely expressed concern that AI's growing capacity to generate human-like text, imagery, and audio threatens human creativity and professional distinctiveness. Several described AI-generated content, by replicating recognisable creative outputs, as risking the devaluation of originality and craft historically associated with journalistic and creative production. This concern was sharpest among staff in explicitly creative roles, who described AI-generated visual and audio content as a direct, if still partial, encroachment on tasks previously regarded as requiring distinctly human artistic judgement.

Representative extracts include:

"As AI becomes capable of producing high-quality outputs, the unique elements of human creativity may be overlooked." (R9)

"AI is reducing the richness of human creativity." (R10)

"The complete dependence on AI can impede employee development and creativity by restricting career advancement and skill development opportunities in the field." (R17)

A smaller number of respondents pushed back on this framing directly, arguing that AI would not reduce human creativity provided it was used to supplement rather than substitute for it (R2, R4), a distinction that anticipates the augmentation/substitution framing developed in Section 5.3.

5.2 Perceived Threats to Job Security

Beyond creative devaluation, respondents raised widespread concern about potential job displacement, particularly for tasks such as transcription, editing, and content generation, functions increasingly capable of being performed, at least in part, by AI. Several linked this to broader anxieties about employment stability within the TRT media sector, describing an underlying unease that contributes to notable, if often unspoken, resistance toward AI adoption among some segments of TRT personnel.

Representative extracts include:

"Employment opportunities in the media industry may be diminished as a result of the growing prevalence of AI, which reduces the necessity for human involvement." (R13)

"AI has the capacity to completely replace specific job functions, thereby raising concerns about the future of employment in the media industry, such as TRT." (R14)

"There is an apprehension that AI may eventually supplant human duties, resulting in employment loss, an issue especially serious for many in the industry, including media industry." (R15)

"Shortly, AI may replace our work, and we may lose our jobs." (R18)

A minority of respondents (R2, R3, R4) took the opposite view, arguing that AI would not dramatically affect their own jobs because they saw themselves as successfully balancing AI capability with human judgement, but suggested AI would be more likely to displace colleagues who did not adopt it, an early indication of the voluntary-adoption-as-self-protection theme developed in Section 5.3.

5.3 The Coexistence of Concern and Voluntary Adoption

Even so, interview data show that most respondents voluntarily use AI tools in their daily work, often the very respondents who voiced the strongest concerns about AI's broader implications documented in Sections 5.1 and 5.2. Fifteen of the twenty-two respondents explicitly described their AI use as self-directed rather than mandated by TRT when asked directly whether their use of AI was based on personal decision or organisational requirement.

Representative extracts include:

"I autonomously integrate AI into my daily tasks, which is a deliberate choice." (R1)

"I voluntarily use AI in my job at TRT." (R4)

"Using AI is a personal decision." (R5)

A close read suggests this is not a contradiction but a considered distinction: respondents described their own AI use as instrumental and bounded, speeding up specific tasks, drafting, transcription, background research, while keeping full control over final editorial judgement, framing, and creative decisions. The threat they described was directed not at this bounded, self-directed use but at a hypothetical future scenario in which AI might be deployed autonomously, without meaningful human oversight, to perform these functions independently of journalistic judgement. A minority of respondents (R11, R17, R19) reported that they did not use AI tools at all, citing insufficient training, privacy or copyright concerns, or, for R19, a view that TRT's reliance on established international news agencies made AI-assisted

content generation unnecessary; this group is small enough that we report it descriptively rather than treating it as a distinct analytic category.

5.4 Redefining Roles Around Judgement and Authorship

Several respondents, largely independently of one another, sketched a similar vision for how their roles might be sustainably redefined in an AI-augmented newsroom: positioning themselves as ethical leads, creative authorities, and final decision-makers over content that AI tools assist in producing, rather than as producers of first-draft content themselves. This framing emerged without formal institutional guidance and recurred across respondents from different professional categories in Table 1, which is why we treat it, in Section 6.2, as a pattern the proposed framework should formalise rather than impose from outside.

5.5 Variation by Seniority and Role

Consistent with the pattern anticipated in Section 2.4, respondents who described themselves, in their own words, as long-serving or as working in traditionally craft-based roles more often voiced concern about creative devaluation, while respondents who described themselves as newer to their roles or as more technically oriented more often framed AI in instrumental, efficiency-focused terms. Because tenure was not independently recorded (Section 4.1), we report this as a qualitative pattern in respondents' self-presentation rather than as a quantified subgroup comparison, and we do not attach a count to either group. Program directors and the director interviewed occupied a distinct position, worried less about personal displacement than about the aggregate implications of AI adoption for staffing levels and organisational structure over the longer term, a strategic rather than personal framing that adds a further layer to the perceived-threat construct.

5.6 Psychological Ownership and Attribution Concerns

Several respondents, particularly those in explicitly creative production roles, described concerns resembling a psychological-ownership account of AI-related distress, distinct from employment security narrowly defined: a diminished sense of personal investment or authorship when a substantial share of a piece of creative output, an illustration, a video edit, an audio composition, had been generated by AI rather than produced by their own hand, even where they retained full editorial control over the final output. This concern showed up even among respondents who elsewhere expressed confidence their role was secure, suggesting attribution and ownership operate as a distinct driver of AI-related unease.

5.7 Anticipatory Anxiety and the Cost of Uncertainty

Consistent with Section 2.4, several respondents described a sustained unease about AI's longer-term implications not tied to any specific, imminent threat to their own role but reflecting a more diffuse anxiety about an uncertain future. These respondents were often unable to name a concrete scenario in which they expected to lose their position, yet still described this uncertainty as a source of ongoing occupational stress, distinct from the more specific concerns documented in Sections 5.1 and 5.2. Several linked this diffuse anxiety directly to the absence of clear institutional communication about the scope and boundaries of TRT's future AI strategy.

5.8 Comparisons to Prior Technological Transitions

Several respondents who described themselves as long-serving drew explicit comparisons between the current AI-driven change and earlier transitions they had personally lived through, including the shift from analogue to digital production and the earlier introduction of automated newsroom systems. These respondents generally described earlier transitions as having eventually been absorbed into practice without the scale of disruption initially feared, a pattern several explicitly invoked as a basis for cautious optimism about the current transition, even while continuing to voice the creative and job-security concerns documented elsewhere.

5.9 Individual versus Institutional Responsibility

Respondents differed in how far they saw managing the human dimensions of AI adoption as an individual responsibility, requiring personal adaptation, versus an institutional one, requiring proactive investment. A substantial number, particularly respondents who described themselves as more technically confident, framed adaptation mostly in individual terms, describing their own proactive efforts to learn new tools as the main way they expected to remain secure. A smaller but vocal group, including several respondents in more senior or craft-oriented roles, argued TRT as an institution has a distinct responsibility to invest in structured training, communication, and transition support.

5.10 Identity-Level versus Practical Reassurance

Several respondents who had received informal reassurance about their job security nonetheless continued to voice the creative-devaluation concerns documented in Section 5.1, indicating that practical reassurance alone did not fully resolve their unease. When probed, these respondents distinguished between reassurance that their position was not at

risk of elimination, described as helpful but incomplete, and a deeper, unaddressed concern about a loss of professional distinctiveness, a sense that their creative or editorial identity was being diluted even where their formal employment status remained secure.

5.11 Positive Identity Reconstruction Among Early Adopters

A subset of respondents described actively reconstructing their professional identity around AI-augmented practice, positioning themselves not as workers threatened by AI but as professionals whose value lies in directing, curating, and elevating AI-generated raw material into a finished, editorially sound product. These respondents described this as a genuine, and in several cases positively experienced, evolution of their professional self-concept rather than a defensive coping response.

6. Discussion

6.1 Perceived Threat as the Dominant Barrier

The central finding, that perceived threat rather than demonstrated displacement is the dominant driver of resistance to AI among TRT staff, aligns with Chui et al.'s [7] observation that full occupational displacement remains rarer than task-level automation. This study extends that finding by showing the gap between perceived and actual threat itself generates a distinct, consequential form of workplace anxiety, independent of whether displacement is ever realised. Public broadcasters need to address perceived threat directly, through transparent communication about the scope and limits of AI deployment, rather than assuming anxiety will resolve itself as staff gain experience.

As a state-affiliated broadcaster, TRT is an employer about whom candour on job security and organisational competence may carry some social-desirability pressure, particularly given that most interviews were conducted by phone or email rather than through an anonymous survey instrument. We cannot rule out that this shaped some responses, for instance toward more measured or institutionally loyal framings than an anonymous format might have elicited, and the study design did not include a specific check for this. We flag it here as an interpretive caveat on the Findings as a whole and as a design feature future replications in similar institutional settings should address directly, for example through anonymous survey triangulation alongside interviews.

The finding that diffuse anticipatory anxiety persists even among respondents unable to identify a concrete threat to their own role (Section 5.7) suggests TRT's institutional response must treat uncertainty reduction as a distinct objective, addressed through proactive, regularly updated communication about the scope, pace, and boundaries of TRT's AI strategy, even where that strategy does not envisage any near-term reduction in staffing. Clear, credible communication can reduce the psychological cost of uncertainty independent of the strategy's substantive content.

The comparative evidence in Section 5.8 offers a further resource: rather than treating the AI transition as unprecedented, TRT could draw on its own prior experience navigating earlier technological transitions successfully, communicating this institutional history as evidence-based reassurance grounded in its own track record.

The findings in Sections 5.10 and 5.11 together suggest TRT's response must extend beyond practical job-security reassurance to engage the identity-level dimension identified by identity threat theory, drawing on the positive identity reconstruction documented among early adopters (Section 5.11), for instance by creating structured opportunities for early-adopter staff to share their reconstructed professional narratives with colleagues who have not yet gone through a comparable shift, rather than leaving identity reconstruction to happen spontaneously and unevenly.

The quantified freelance-market evidence discussed in Section 2.4 introduces an important boundary condition: while perceived threat rather than realised displacement clearly dominates staff experience at TRT, Hui et al.'s [19] findings suggest this may reflect TRT's specific institutional employment structure (Section 2.5) rather than a general property of creative labour markets under generative AI. TRT's leadership should treat the current, relatively favourable gap between perceived and market-level displacement risk as a time-limited institutional advantage rather than a permanent guarantee, one that depends on TRT continuing to employ creative and editorial staff on a salaried basis rather than shifting toward more externalised, task-based arrangements. Monitoring this boundary condition, and communicating clearly with staff should it begin to shift, should be an explicit part of the uncertainty-reduction strategy proposed above.

6.2 A Human-Centred AI Adoption Framework

Building on the findings above and the literature in Section 2, this article proposes a three-pillar Human-Centred AI Adoption framework for public broadcasters. This framework is presented as a set of propositions derived from, and consistent with, the interview evidence, rather than as a set of interventions this study has itself tested; TRT or comparable organisations would need to pilot and evaluate these components before drawing conclusions about their effectiveness (see Section 7).

The first pillar, role redefinition, explicitly repositions journalists and creative staff as ethical leads and creative authorities over AI-assisted content, formalising the role redefinition that emerged spontaneously among TRT respondents (Section 5.4) and echoing the expertise redefinition Møller et al. [9] observe among journalists more

broadly. Building on Section 5.6, this pillar should also include explicit attribution practices, for example internal documentation crediting a professional's specific creative and editorial contributions to any AI-assisted output, distinct from a generic disclosure that AI was used. We propose such practices as a plausible response to the psychological-ownership concern documented in Section 5.6; whether they in fact resolve it is an empirical question for future implementation research, not a claim this study's design can support directly.

The second pillar, collaborative workflow design, structures AI-assisted production so that AI generates preliminary outputs that human professionals then refine and take ownership of, operationalising the augmented-intelligence model ([13]) and the collaborative-interface principles set out by [14].

The third pillar, upskilling-based job protection, pairs AI deployment with deliberate investment in workforce upskilling and career development, consistent with Tenakwah and Watson's [15] argument that responsible automation requires preparing the workforce as deliberately as the technology, and Jenkins and Khanna's [16] findings on the value of AI-enhanced training. The divergent views documented in Section 5.9, between staff who frame AI adaptation as an individual responsibility and staff who see it as requiring institutional investment, need not be resolved in favour of one side: this pillar should support both, providing structured, institutionally resourced training for staff who want more formal support while also crediting the self-directed learning already pursued by more technically confident staff within existing professional development structures.

6.3 Institutional Implications

Tasleem et al.'s [17] caution against pursuing ambitious AI deployment without a realistic human-resources strategy applies with particular force here. TRT staff have, largely on their own initiative, already begun developing an implicit model for sustainable AI-human collaboration (Section 5.4); any future institutional strategy developed without engaging this existing staff-level thinking risks undermining, rather than building on, the constructive adaptation already underway.

The tension between perceived threat and pragmatic adoption documented throughout this study may be particularly pronounced in state-affiliated public broadcasters specifically. The relatively stable employment structures often associated with public-sector-adjacent institutions may give staff a greater baseline sense of job security than in a purely commercial newsroom, potentially dampening the acute displacement anxiety documented in Western commercial-newsroom studies. At the same time, this environment generates distinctive pressures of its own, including the strategic, reputational concerns raised by program directors and the director interviewed (Section 5.5), who framed AI's implications less in terms of personal job security and more in terms of organisational competitiveness and staffing strategy.

While grounded in the TRT case, the framework proposed here addresses a tension likely to recur across public broadcasters and other creative-industry organisations navigating generative AI adoption more broadly. Its emphasis on formalising staff-driven role redefinition, rather than imposing a top-down model developed without reference to existing practice, offers a transferable starting point, though one that, per Section 6.2, still requires empirical evaluation outside this single-institution study before it can be treated as more than a proposition.

6.4 Implications for Organisational Communication Strategy

Taken together, the findings and framework developed here suggest the human dimensions of AI adoption in a public broadcasting context cannot be adequately addressed through workflow design and training alone. They require a deliberate, sustained communication strategy that speaks directly to staff about scope, pace, and institutional intent, a distinct and independent source of workplace concern identified in Section 5.7. Such a strategy would ideally be developed collaboratively with informal opinion leaders and early-adopter staff (Section 5.11), so institutional messaging is grounded in and responsive to the lived experience of staff most directly engaged with AI tools, rather than developed in isolation by management.

7. Limitations and Future Research

This study is based on self-reported perceptions gathered through interviews and does not include longitudinal data capable of tracking whether staff perceptions of AI threat evolve as AI capabilities and deployment scope expand. Several further limitations follow from the dataset's scope. First, tenure and years of experience were not collected as a structured demographic variable, so the seniority-based patterns reported in Sections 5.5, 5.8, and 5.9 rest on respondents' self-presentation during interviews rather than on a verified, quantified measure, and should be read as suggestive rather than confirmed. Second, coding was conducted by a single researcher with peer debriefing rather than by multiple independent coders, which is standard for a doctoral thesis of this kind but means the study cannot report formal inter-rater reliability statistics. Third, the split between phone and email interviews was not logged at the time of data collection, so it is not possible to assess whether interview mode systematically affected the depth or richness of responses on a topic, the coexistence of concern and adoption, that plausibly benefits from real-time probing. Fourth, as discussed in Section 6.1, some degree of social-desirability bias given TRT's status as a state-affiliated employer cannot be ruled out. Future studies in similar institutional settings should collect tenure as a structured variable, log interview

mode systematically, and consider anonymous survey triangulation alongside interviews to address the social-desirability concern directly. Future research could also adopt a longitudinal design to track how perceptions evolve, or test the proposed framework through implementation studies at TRT or comparable organisations.

A further limitation is this study's reliance on a cross-sectional design at a single point in what is, by respondents' own account, likely to be an extended, multi-year transition process. A longitudinal design tracking the same cohort of TRT staff over an extended period would offer richer evidence on whether the anticipatory anxiety and perceived threat documented here fade over time as respondents themselves predicted, or whether the breadth and creative reach of generative AI produce a qualitatively different and more persistent pattern of concern than the technological transitions respondents drew on for comparison. Comparative newsroom research also suggests that AI uptake and professional responses vary across institutional and national contexts; future studies should therefore test the present framework across different organisational settings and forms of newsroom adoption [29,30].

8. Conclusion

This article has examined how journalists and creative staff at a national public broadcaster read AI's implications for their creative autonomy and job security, finding that perceived threat and voluntary, pragmatic adoption coexist as a joint empirical phenomenon rather than a contradiction. This reflects a considered distinction TRT staff themselves draw between bounded, self-directed AI use that preserves their creative and editorial authority and a more diffuse concern about AI's potential future deployment without meaningful human oversight. The Human-Centred AI Adoption framework proposed here, built around role redefinition, collaborative workflow design, and upskilling-based job protection, offers public broadcasters a practical starting point for formalising and building on the constructive adaptation TRT staff have already begun to develop on their own initiative, subject to the empirical evaluation and the sample-size and design limitations set out in Section 7.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks the TRT World and TRT Arabic staff who gave their time to participate in this study.

Funding

No funding information is available.

Ethics Statement

This study was approved by the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee, Selçuk University, Konya, Türkiye. The research was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. All participants (TRT World and TRT Arabic personnel) provided informed consent prior to interview, were informed of their right to decline any question or withdraw at any point before data were finalised for analysis, and were assured of anonymity in reporting; respondents' names are not used anywhere in this article, and illustrative quotations omit job-title attribution where a title could plausibly identify a specific individual.

Informed Consent

This study involved human participants (TRT World and TRT Arabic personnel). All participants provided informed consent prior to interview, were informed of their right to decline any question or withdraw at any point before data were finalised for analysis, and were assured of anonymity in reporting; respondents' names are not used anywhere in this article or in the underlying thesis, and, per Section 4.1, illustrative quotations omit job-title attribution where a title could plausibly identify a specific individual.

Data Availability Statement

Due to the risk that interview transcripts could identify individual respondents within a small specialist workforce, the datasets generated and/or analysed during the current study are not publicly available but may be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to confirmation that release would not compromise respondent anonymity.

Author Contributions

B.A.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Generative AI Statement

No generative AI tools were used in the collection or analysis of the underlying interview data, in study design, or in producing any figures.

References

- [1] World Economic Forum. The future of jobs report 2023. Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2023. Available form: <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/> (accessed on 20 August 2026).
- [2] Carlson M. The robotic reporter: Automated journalism and the redefinition of labor, compositional forms, and journalistic authority. *Digital Journalism*, 2015, 3(3), 416-431. DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2014.976412
- [3] Feio C, Oliveira L. Artificial intelligence and news: Opportunities, trends and challenges - a systematic literature review. *Comunicação e Sociedade*, 2025, 47, e025012. DOI: 10.17231/comsoc.47(2025).6187
- [4] Jamil S. Stepping towards technological innovation in journalism: Barriers for the use of artificial intelligence and automation in developing newsrooms. *Open Journal for Sociological Studies*, 2022, 6(1), 27-34. DOI: 10.32591/coas.ojss.0601.03027j
- [5] Al-Zoubi O, Ahmad N, Abdul Hamid N. Artificial intelligence in newsrooms: Ethical challenges facing journalists. *Studies in Media and Communication*, 2024, 12(1), 401-409. DOI: 10.11114/smc.v12i1.6587
- [6] Porlezza C. Promoting responsible AI: A European perspective on the governance of artificial intelligence in media and journalism. *Communications*, 2023, 48(3), 370-394. DOI: 10.1515/commun-2022-0091
- [7] Chui M, Manyika J, Miremadi M. Where machines could replace humans - and where they can't (yet). *The McKinsey Quarterly*, 2016.
- [8] Cools H, Diakopoulos N. Uses of generative AI in the newsroom: Mapping journalists' perceptions of perils and possibilities. *Journalism Practice*, 2026, 20(3), 878-896. DOI: 10.1080/17512786.2024.2394558
- [9] Møller LA, Skovsgaard M, de Vreese C. Reinforce, readjust, reclaim: How artificial intelligence impacts journalism's professional claim. *Journalism*, 2025, 26(7), 1373-1390. DOI: 10.1177/14648849241269300
- [10] Cronholm S, Göbel H. Design principles for human-centred AI. *ECIS 2022 Research Papers*, 2022, 32. Available form: https://aisel.aisnet.org/ecis2022_rp/32/ (accessed on 20 August 2026).
- [11] Passalacqua M, Pellerin R, Magnani F, Doyon-Poulin P, Del-Aguila L, Boasen J, et al. Human-centred AI in Industry 5.0: A systematic review. *International Journal of Production Research*, 2025, 63(7), 2638-2669. DOI: 10.1080/00207543.2024.2406021
- [12] Schmager S, Pappas IO, Vassilakopoulou P. Understanding human-centred AI: A review of its defining elements and a research agenda. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 2025, 44(15), 3771-3810. DOI: 10.1080/0144929X.2024.2448719
- [13] Jarrahi MH. Artificial intelligence and the future of work: Human-AI symbiosis in organizational decision making. *Business Horizons*, 2018, 61(4), 577-586. DOI: 10.1016/j.bushor.2018.03.007
- [14] Amershi S, Weld D, Vorvoreanu M, Fournery A, Nushi B, Collisson P, et al. Guidelines for human-AI interaction. *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 2019, 1-13. DOI: 10.1145/3290605.3300233
- [15] Tenakwah ES, Watson C. Embracing the AI/automation age: Preparing your workforce for humans and machines working together. *Strategy & Leadership*, 2025, 53(1), 32-48. DOI: 10.1108/SL-05-2024-0040
- [16] Jenkins D, Khanna G. AI-enhanced training, education, & development: Exploration and insights into generative AI's role in leadership learning. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 2025, 18(4), 81-97. DOI: 10.1002/jls.70004
- [17] Tasleem N, Saddi A, Ansari MN, Raghav RS, Sharma S. Don't build a rocket with bicycle blueprints: When AI dreams meet HR realities. *Journal of Artificial Intelligence General Science*, 2025, 8(1), 162-186. DOI: 10.60087/jaigs.v8i1.362
- [18] Scarbrough H, Kyratsis Y. From spreading to embedding innovation in health care: Implications for theory and practice. *Health Care Management Review*, 2022, 47(3), 236-244. DOI: 10.1097/HMR.0000000000000323
- [19] Hui X, Reshef O, Zhou L. The short-term effects of generative artificial intelligence on employment: Evidence from an online labor market. *Organization Science*, 2024, 35(6), 1977-1989. DOI: 10.1287/orsc.2023.18441
- [20] Bender SM. Generative-AI, the media industries, and the disappearance of human creative labour. *Media Practice and Education*, 2025, 26(2), 200-217. DOI: 10.1080/25741136.2024.2355597
- [21] Azimli SO, Saka E. Automated journalism in Turkish media before the rise of generative AI. *Revolutionizing Communication*, 2024, 140-150. DOI: 10.1201/9781003473633-13
- [22] Demir G, Kılıçgedik M. Use of generative AI in news production in Türkiye: A threat or an opportunity? *Connectist: Istanbul University Journal of Communication Sciences*, 2025, (68), 36-53. DOI: 10.26650/CONNECTIST2025-1650211
- [23] Morosoli S, Resendez V, Naudts L, Helberger N, de Vreese C. "I resist": A study of individual attitudes towards generative AI in journalism and acts of resistance, risk perceptions, trust and credibility. *Digital Journalism*, 2026, 14(5), 771-790. DOI: 10.1080/21670811.2024.2435579
- [24] Palinkas LA, Horwitz SM, Green CA, Wisdom JP, Duan N, Hoagwood K. Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 2015, 42(5), 533-544. DOI: 10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y
- [25] Brondani MA, MacEntee MI, O'Connor D. Email as a data collection tool when interviewing older adults. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2011, 10(3), 221-230. DOI: 10.1177/160940691101000303
- [26] Braun V, Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006, 3(2), 77-101. DOI: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- [27] Ahmed SK. The pillars of trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 2024, 2, 100051. DOI: 10.1016/j.glmedi.2024.100051

- [28] Kakar ZUH, Rasheed R, Rashid A, Akhter S. Criteria for assessing and ensuring the trustworthiness in qualitative research. *International Journal of Business Reflections*, 2023, 4(2), 150-173. DOI: 10.56249/ijbr.03.01.44
- [29] Munoriyarwa A, Chiumbu S, Motsaathebe G. Artificial intelligence practices in everyday news production: The case of South Africa's mainstream newsrooms. *Journalism Practice*, 2023, 17(7), 1374-1392. DOI: 10.1080/17512786.2021.1984976
- [30] van Dalen A. Revisiting the algorithms behind the headlines: How journalists respond to professional competition of generative AI. *Journalism Practice*, 2026, 20(3), 897-914. DOI: 10.1080/17512786.2024.2389209