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Artificial Intelligence and Journalism Practice in Nigeria: A Scholarly Discussion

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Abstract

This study examined artificial intelligence and journalism practice in Nigeria. Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a viable role in journalism practice, transforming various aspects of the industry. AI generates reports on routine topics, such as sports scores, weather, and financial updates. AI recommends headlines, summaries, and keywords to improve article discoverability. The study was anchored on the Technology Adoption Model (TAM) theory, while the researchers employed a library research approach. The researchers opine that AI offers numerous opportunities in journalism practice in Nigeria, such as improved content creation, automated reporting, content optimisation, research and data analysis, fact-checking and verification, audience engagement, and innovative storytelling, among others. The researchers also note that adopting AI in journalism practice also poses some challenges such as ethical and privacy, technical challenges, societal challenges, infrastructure and accessibility, and regulatory and policy issues. The researchers suggest that there is a need to combine AI's capabilities with human judgment and ensure AI training data reflects diverse perspectives. There should be the development of AI ethics frameworks.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Journalism, Practice, Nigeria.



Introduction

Journalism practice in Nigeria spans over 165 years (1859-2024) hinged on the emergence of the first newspaper in Nigeria (*IweIrohin*), educational pedagogies that produced journalists aligned with traditional news production processes. The journalism practice lately has experienced extensive innovation, largely due to the initiation of new technologies that have utterly modified human interaction and activities worldwide. The coming of AI-generated smart templates has appeared as an essential component within the media landscape, fundamentally changing the process of news gathering, editing, and reporting. This innovation signals a major switch in how journalists operate on a fundamental level (Makinde, 2024)

Through artificial intelligence (AI), algorithms can now autonomously compile and disseminate news reports across a spectrum of topics. Notably, this transformative development has empowered robots to write authentic news pieces, while algorithms translate complex information into easily digestible news stories accessible to the public (Guanah et al., 2020). AI is equipped to track news stories, social media trends, and other online content in real-time, assisting journalists in getting a thorough rundown of the most recent happenings. The main players in the news are platform corporations like Microsoft, Google, Amazon, and Meta. They also control the majority of artificial intelligence research, development, and application (Simon, 2023).

More so, news production is being automated, which is one of the biggest ways AI is affecting journalism. These days, news articles, summaries, and even video content can be produced by AI-powered algorithms with little assistance from humans. This not only expedites the news production process but also makes it possible to allocate resources more effectively because journalists can concentrate on telling more intricate and in-depth stories. For example, the BBC has been experimenting with AI-generated video summaries of news events, and the Associated Press has been using AI to automatically generate financial news stories (Frąckiewicz, 2023).

The notion of "artificial intelligence," as it is currently understood, dates back to the mid-1900s. The British mathematician Alan Turing developed the Turing test, a thought experiment that serves as the cornerstone of artificial intelligence philosophy, to address the question of machine intelligence in his 1950 paper *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*. The age-old query, "Can machines think?" (p. 433), is becoming more and more relevant. The machines were capable of independent learning and development. In reality, a lot of Turing's predictions have come to pass. As an illustration, consider the fact that machines will compete with humans in almost every intellectual endeavour, including chess! The fact that the computer programme AlphaGo defeated the best human player is compelling evidence of what artificial intelligence is capable of (Yu, et al 2020).

However, journalists in Nigeria are increasingly acknowledging the integration of artificial intelligence into news production processes (Udoh, et al, 2022). These AI-driven writing tools are gaining traction within newsrooms, with several Nigerian news organisations beginning to explore their capabilities. AI writing tools are being experimented with for various tasks, including content creation, fact-checking, and editing. Their adoption is on the rise among journalists who are aiming to streamline their writing process and deliver high-quality content more efficiently (*This Day*, 2023). In light of the growing integration of AI in journalism across the world, it is essential to examine artificial intelligence and journalism practice in Nigeria from a scholarly point of view.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into various sectors is revolutionising industries worldwide, and journalism is no exception. AI encompasses a range of technologies that enable machines to mimic human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, and problem-solving (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2019). Globally, AI's adoption in journalism is transforming news gathering, reporting, and dissemination processes, promising efficiency and innovation (Marconi & Siegman, 2020). Nigeria is a country with a



very vibrant media landscape, whereas the prospects of AI's potential in journalism remain largely untapped, presenting both significant opportunities and formidable challenges.

Moreover, available studies show that scholars have carried out studies regarding AI and journalism. For instance, Oyedele and Uthman (2024) carried out a study on opportunities and challenges of adopting AI in journalism in Nigeria, Adjin-Tettey, et al, (2024) looked at the role of artificial intelligence in contemporary journalism practice in two African countries. While Radoli, (2024) carried out a study on shifting mageries: Artificial intelligence and journalism in African legacy media. Thus, it appears that much is needed in the area of AI and journalism practice, especially in Nigeria. This study attempts to fill that lacuna by carrying out a scholarly review of AI and journalism practice in Nigeria. The questions that bothers this study are; What are the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence in journalism practice in Nigeria? What are the challenges associated with the use of AI in journalism practice in Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

The study was hinged on the Technology Adoption Model (TAM). TAM was propounded by Davis (1989). The theory was used to explain user adoption of technology and how it is used in various environments. Wixom and Todd (2005 cited in Ezegwu, et al, 2021) posit that the basis of the theory was built on the premise that when users are presented with a new technology, (in this case artificial intelligence) three major factors are considered as determinants of key predictors that influences users' decision on how to and when they use it. These are perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and Attitude towards user (ATU).

- **Perceived Usefulness (PU)** is the degree to which a user believes that using a particular system would enhance his/her work or job performance. Davis (1989, p.320 cited Onyike, et al, 2018) considers what the users perceive and how easily their work will be improved when a new technology is used. It is the subjective probability that there will be improvement in the way users carry out their work when using a particular technology.

- **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)** "is the degree to which a user believes that using a particular technology or system would be free of effort." It considers how a user perceives a system to be better than its substitute (Davis, 1989, p. 320 cited Onyike, et al 2018).

- **Attitude towards Use (ATU):** Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, p.216 cited in Ezegwu, et al, 2021) describe ATU as "an individual's positive or negative feeling about performing the target behaviour (e.g., using a system)."

This theory agrees with the fact that when users are presented with a new technology, they do not just automatically accept it and get carried away using it. Several factors influence their decision on whether to accept it and how and when they will use it. The model aims not only to explain key factors of user acceptance of ICTs but also to predict the relative importance of such factors. Davis (1989, cited Onyike, et al, 2018) states that TAM explores the factors that affect behavioural intention to use a particular technology, and that, the information or computer systems have a causal linkage with how easily they find the usability of that system. Matching this side by side, this theory is relevant to this study because it agrees with the fact that Journalists will develop a positive intention of using artificial intelligence if they find it easy to use and if the technology will enhance their job. This means that, similarly, users' (in this case, Journalists) positive attitude toward a specific technology leads them to develop an intention to use the technology.

Method



The library research method was utilised for this study and is justified by several reasons. First, the library research method allows for an extensive and comprehensive examination of existing literature, theories, and empirical studies related to AI and journalism practice across the world. This method enables researchers to access a wide range of scholarly resources, including academic journals, books, conference papers, and reports, which provide valuable insights and theoretical foundations for the study. Second, this method allows researchers to identify gaps, trends, and patterns in the literature, providing a basis for developing a theoretical framework and research questions and the library research method offers a cost-effective and time-efficient approach to data collection.

Brief on the Concept of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence refers to the various processes involved in the programming of machines that enable them to act like humans and mimic their actions. These activities may include carrying out tasks, processing information, and making decisions based on past events (Mahomed, 2018). According to technological advancements, artificial intelligence may be classified into various systems, including artificial narrow intelligence and artificial general intelligence. Artificial narrow intelligence, also called “weak” artificial intelligence, refers to systems that perform a single unique task with human-like proficiency; they have a limited range of capabilities (Harwood et al., 2019).

Vinuesa, et al, (2020) define AI as any software technology with at least one of the following capabilities: perception, including audio, visual, textual, and tactile (e.g., face recognition), decision-making (e.g., medical diagnosis systems), prediction (e.g., weather forecast), automatic knowledge extraction and pattern recognition from data (e.g., the discovery of fake news circles in social media), interactive communication (e.g., social robots or chatbots), and logical reasoning (e.g., theory development from premises). They submit that it encompasses a large variety of subfields, including machine learning. Drawing from some of the foregoing definitions of AI, it can be concluded that machines can be empowered with intelligence to perform some acts maximally, even better, and faster than humans, with little or no human input.

Opportunities Offered by Artificial Intelligence in Journalism Practice in Nigeria

The use of AI in journalism practice offers great opportunities. Some of them are:

- 1. Data-Driven Journalism:** AI can empower journalists with the ability to gather, process, and visualize data on an unprecedented scale. This, in turn, enables data-driven journalism, where insights, trends, and stories can be extracted from complex datasets. AI algorithms can quickly identify correlations, anomalies, and emerging issues, facilitating more informed reporting (OpenAI, 2023).
- 2. Personalized News Delivery:** AI can play a vital role in creating personalized news experiences for readers. By analysing a user's preferences and behaviour, AI can recommend content tailored to individual interests. This not only enhances the reader's experience but also encourages increased engagement with news outlets.
- 3. Fact-Checking and Verification:** Fake news and misinformation are significant concerns in the digital age. AI can be employed for real-time fact-checking and content verification. By cross-referencing information against trusted sources and databases, AI algorithms can swiftly identify inaccuracies and flag potential misinformation (OpenAI, 2023).
- 4. Multilingual Reporting:** In a diverse country like Nigeria with numerous languages and dialects, AI-powered translation tools can aid in breaking down language barriers. This can broaden the audience reach of Nigerian news outlets, enabling them to communicate effectively with a more diverse demographic.



5. Improved Audience Engagement: AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can enhance audience engagement. These chatbots can answer user queries, guide them through news content, and even facilitate real-time interaction during live events or broadcasts.

6. AI serves to enhance journalists' capabilities, enabling them to concentrate on creating valuable content and dedicating more time to their reporting expertise (Nnamdi & Nwanyanwu, 2021). Similarly, as noted by Guanah et al. (2020), the integration of AI alongside journalists' manual skills results in expedited news-gathering and reporting processes, granting journalists more time for higher-level tasks and enabling them to deliver content more efficiently and cost-effectively. Transcription tools powered by speech-to-text technology, such as Trint or Recordly, can rapidly transcribe interview recordings, eliminating the need for hours spent on manual transcription (Stanescu, 2023).

7. Fact-Checking and Verification: Fake news and misinformation are significant concerns in the digital age. AI can be employed for real-time fact-checking and content verification. By cross-referencing information against trusted sources and databases, AI.

Challenges Associated with the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Journalism Practice in Nigeria

There are numerous challenges associated with the use of AI for journalism practice in Nigeria. some of them include:

1. **Interrupted Power Supply:** The interrupted and erratic power supply in Nigeria has affected every segment of the economy. Just in 2025 alone, the Nigerian National Grid has collapsed several times, putting almost all parts of Nigeria in darkness. One of the most fundamental challenges faced by newsrooms in Nigeria is the erratic supply of electricity. A consistent power supply is critical for effectively powering the AI applications that are becoming increasingly essential in modern journalism. AI relies heavily on computational processes, and frequent power outages disrupt the seamless operation of AI tools, making them unreliable in a newsroom setting.
2. **Lack of adequate infrastructure to support the integration of AI into newsrooms:** AI systems require substantial computing power, storage, and network capabilities. Without the necessary infrastructure, implementing AI tools becomes a daunting task. The lack of investment in these critical areas hinders the progress of AI adoption. (Nnamdi, &Nwanyanwu, 2021).
3. **Cultural and socio-economic factors also play a substantial role in inhibiting the adoption of AI in newsrooms:** These factors can encompass resistance to change, traditional work practices, and the perception that AI might replace human jobs. This resistance to change can further slow-down the integration of AI tools into the journalistic process (Nnamdi &Nwanyanwu, 2021).
4. **Ethical and Privacy Concerns:** The adoption of AI in journalism raises significant ethical and privacy concerns. The use of AI tools to collect and analyse data can lead to privacy violations if not properly managed (Zuboff, 2019). In Nigeria, where data protection laws are still evolving, there is a risk of misuse of personal data collected through AI systems (Oyewole, 2020). Moreover, the ethical implications of AI-generated content, which may lack the nuance and context provided by human journalists, need careful consideration (Floridi, 2018). The deployment of AI in journalism involves handling vast amounts of data, which often includes personal information. Without robust data protection measures, there is a risk that this data could be misused or accessed by unauthorized parties. This could lead to privacy breaches and erosion of public trust in news organizations (Zuboff, 2019).
5. **Regulatory and Policy Issues:** The regulatory environment in Nigeria poses challenges to the adoption of AI in journalism. There is a lack of clear regulations and guidelines for the use of AI in the media, creating uncertainty for news organisations (Oyewole, 2020). Additionally, enforcing AI-related policies can be difficult due to the rapid pace of technological advancements and the complexity of AI systems (Binns, 2018). Clear and comprehensive regulations are



essential to ensure the ethical and responsible use of AI in journalism. However, the current regulatory framework in Nigeria is insufficient, leading to uncertainty and potential misuse of AI technology (Oyewole, 2020). Developing robust policies that address issues such as data privacy, bias, and accountability is crucial to ensure that AI is used responsibly in the media sector. Enforcing these regulations can also be challenging, given the rapid pace of technological advancements and the complexity of AI systems.

6. **The cost of an internet connection poses yet another obstacle:** AI often requires a high-speed and stable internet connection for data retrieval, analysis, and sharing (Ndiemewese (2017)). In Nigeria, where internet infrastructure is still developing and access can be costly, this poses a significant challenge. Moreover, there is a shortage of skilled individuals who can effectively handle AI tools. The training of AI handlers is an expensive and time-consuming process, and it can be challenging to find professionals with the necessary expertise in AI and journalism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The integration of AI into journalism practice has taken root, with many media houses across Africa, and is an enriching part of the technological shift. AI offers evolutionary opportunities for intensifying journalistic efficiency, combating misinformation, and fostering audience engagement. By embracing responsible AI implementation and robust ethical frameworks, Nigerian journalists can navigate these challenges and capitalise on the opportunities presented by AI. Moreover, AI opens avenues for innovation, collaboration, and educational advancement within the industry. Overall, our study adds significantly to the body of knowledge on AI adoption in journalism practice in Nigeria. The study recommends that Nigerian journalists should embrace the new technology and acquaint themselves with AI. Also, there is a need to combine AI's capabilities with human judgment and ensure AI training data reflects diverse perspectives. There should be the development of AI ethics frameworks.

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