

Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Journalism Practice in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of artificial intelligence on the transformation of journalism practice in Nigeria, focusing on its influence on news production, dissemination, and professional standards. The study was guided by three objectives: to assess the extent to which artificial intelligence has been adopted in Nigerian media organisations; to evaluate its effects on journalistic practices, including news gathering, editing, and audience engagement; and to examine the ethical and professional challenges associated with its use in journalism. The research was anchored on Technological Determinism Theory and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which provided a framework for understanding how technological advancements shape media practices and their rate of adoption. The researcher adopted a survey research design, using structured questionnaires administered to journalists, editors, and media practitioners across selected media organisations in Nigeria. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Findings revealed that artificial intelligence has significantly improved efficiency in news production, enhanced speed and accuracy in reporting, and enabled better audience targeting through data driven tools. However, the results also indicated concerns about job displacement, ethical challenges, and reduced human editorial control. The researcher further found that the level of adoption of artificial intelligence varies across organisations, largely influenced by access to digital infrastructure and technical expertise. The researcher concluded that while artificial intelligence is transforming journalism practice in Nigeria in positive ways, it also presents critical challenges that require strategic management. It was recommended that media organisations invest in continuous training, develop ethical guidelines, and adopt a balanced approach that integrates artificial intelligence with human professional judgement to maintain credibility and journalistic integrity.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Ethical Challenges, Journalism Practice, Media Transformation, Technology Adoption

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has changed various sectors including journalism, by automating news production processes, enhancing content creation, and improving efficiency in information dissemination. The integration of AI in journalism involves the use of algorithms and machine learning technologies to gather, analyse, and present news in a timely and personalised manner. This development has reshaped how media organisations operate in the digital age and has enabled journalists to reach more audiences while maintaining speed and accuracy in reporting, (Iosco, Gonçalves & Quadros, 2024).

According to Asemah (2024), artificial intelligence (AI) is the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, language understanding, and interaction with the environment. It is a field within computer science that focuses on building machines that can simulate intelligent human behaviour. Basker (2016) further explains that AI systems are designed to replicate the workings of the human brain, allowing them to process large volumes of information, make decisions, and adapt to new situations within environments such as the media industry.

Carlson & Lewis (2022) assert that traditionally, journalism relied on human effort for news gathering, editing, and dissemination. However, the digital transformation in recent decades has paved a way for automation in news production. AI technologies such as natural language processing (NLP), data mining, and generative AI tools like ChatGPT have emerged as powerful

tools in modern journalism. These technologies are capable of generating news reports, summarising difficult information, and producing multimedia content that aligns with audience preferences, thereby making news more engaging and accessible. Kaput (2023) notes that the rise of AI-driven journalism is closely tied to its ability to analyse vast datasets quickly and efficiently. This capability enables media organisations to identify trends, monitor audience behaviour, and deliver real-time news updates. Unlike traditional journalism practices, AI systems can process and interpret information instantly, allowing journalists to make data-driven editorial decisions. Furthermore, AI supports scalability in news production, enabling the simultaneous creation and distribution of content across multiple platforms.

Frontiers in Communication (2024) observes that AI has also transformed newsroom workflows. Tools such as automated writing software, data visualization platforms, and AI-powered editing tools assist journalists in producing high-quality content with reduced manual effort, thereby allowing them to focus more on investigative and analytical reporting. Al- Zoubi, Ahmad, & Hamid (2024) argue that despite the numerous benefits of AI in journalism, there are ethical and professional concerns associated with its adoption. Issues such as algorithmic bias, lack of originality, and potential job displacement raise serious questions about the future of journalism practice. Critics maintain that excessive reliance on AI may diminish the human element that is essential for critical thinking, and ethical judgment in journalism. Additionally, AI-generated news content, while efficient, may sometimes lack depth and contextual understanding, leading to oversimplified reporting.

Notably, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into journalism practice in Nigeria has brought about significant changes by automating newsroom operations, improving content delivery, and expanding audience reach. However, this transformation is not without challenges. Scholars such as Ioscote, Gonçalves & Quadros (2024) argue that AI-driven journalism may lack the emotional depth, cultural sensitivity, and originality that human journalists provide. Furthermore, ethical issues such as bias in algorithms, misinformation, and data privacy concerns raise questions about the sustainability and credibility of AI in journalism. These issues highlight the need for a critical examination of Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Journalism Practice in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Irrespective of the growing adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in global journalism, Nigerian media organisations face challenges in effectively integrating these technologies into newsroom practices. While AI offers opportunities for automated news production, real-time data analysis, and personalized content delivery, its application in Nigeria remains uneven due to infrastructural limitations, inadequate technical expertise, and ethical concerns such as algorithmic bias and misinformation. Furthermore, there seems to be limited empirical research on how AI is transforming journalism practice in the Nigerian context, particularly regarding its impact on journalistic quality, audience engagement, and professional roles. This knowledge gap hinders the ability of media organisations to fully use AI for improved efficiency and credibility, raising critical questions about the sustainability and ethical governance of AI-driven journalism in Nigeria. Therefore, this current study investigates Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Journalism Practice in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

8. Assess the extent to which artificial intelligence has been adopted in Nigerian media organisations
9. Evaluate its effects of Artificial intelligence on journalistic practices including news gathering, editing, and audience engagement;
10. Examine the ethical and professional challenges associated with the use of artificial intelligence in journalism.

Theoretical Framework

The research was anchored on Technological Determinism Theory and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, which provided a framework for understanding how technological advancements shape media practices and their rate of adoption. The Technological Determinism

was popularised by Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s and it holds that technology is the main force driving social change. It argues that technological advancements can shape human behaviour, institutions, and societal practices. In journalism, this means that tools like Artificial Intelligence (AI) can directly influence how news is gathered, written, and shared, changing the way journalists and media organisations operate.

The theory does not see technology as a tool, but as something that can determine how people work and interact. Thus, AI in newsrooms can automate tasks like data analysis, news summarisation, and content distribution, reducing the need for certain manual processes. This affects the roles and responsibilities of journalists, as well as how news reaches the public. Technological Determinism theory is appropriate and relevant to the study because AI in journalism is an innovation being integrated into Nigerian newsrooms. Understanding how AI tools are adopted, the perceived advantages, and the barriers to adoption can help media organisations integrate these technologies effectively. The theory also highlights the importance of addressing challenges such as ethical considerations, skill gaps, and resistance to change, which are critical for ensuring AI's successful implementation in transforming journalism practices. With this framework, the study can better analyse the factors influencing AI adoption and its implications for journalistic practice in Nigeria.

The study also uses the Diffusion of Innovations Theory. Proposed by Everett Rogers in 1962, it explains how new ideas, technologies, or practices spread through a group or society over time. Rogers identifies five categories of adopters: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Each group adopts new technologies at a different pace, influenced by factors such as how useful, easy, or compatible the technology is with their existing work.

The theory is guided by five main tenets as noted by Asemah (2011):

- V. Relative advantage: This measures how much better the new technology is compared to the old way of doing things. The more useful and beneficial it seems, the more likely people are to adopt it.
- VI. Compatibility: This looks at how well the technology fits with existing values, needs, habits, and ways of working. If it aligns with what people already do, adoption is easier.
- VII. Complexity: This refers to how simple or difficult the technology is to understand and use. Technologies that are easier to learn and operate are more likely to be adopted.
- VIII. Trialability: This is the extent to which people can try the technology on a small scale before fully committing to it. Being able to test it reduces uncertainty and encourages adoption.
- IX. Observability: This measures how visible the benefits or results of using the technology are to others. When people can clearly see the positive effects, they are more likely to adopt it themselves.

This theory is suitable for the study because AI in journalism is an innovation that is gradually being adopted in Nigerian newsrooms. Understanding the tenets of adoption can help explain why some AI tools are quickly accepted while others face resistance. It also highlights the need to address barriers such as ethical concerns, lack of skills, or unfamiliarity, ensuring that AI can be used effectively to improve journalism practices.

Concept of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the development of computer systems that can perform tasks usually requiring human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, understanding language, and interacting with the environment. AI is a branch of computer science that aims to create machines capable of carrying out intelligent actions similar to those of humans, (Asemah, 2024).

Basker (2016) explains that in practical terms, AI uses advanced algorithms and machine learning to process and interpret large amounts of data. It can identify patterns, make predictions, and support decision-making in ways that are often faster and more accurate than humans. AI systems are designed to learn from experience, adapt to new information, and perform tasks efficiently, which allows them to support complex operations across different fields.

Davenport & Ronanki (2018) argue that AI also includes tools such as Natural Language Processing (NLP) and computer vision, which enable machines to understand and generate

human-like language, recognise images, and analyse data in real time. These capabilities make AI useful not only in business and marketing but also in media, healthcare, education, and other areas where intelligent automation can improve productivity and decision-making. AI serves as a powerful tool for enhancing efficiency and innovation across multiple sectors through the automation of routine tasks, providing large datasets, and supporting creative processes, (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

Importance of Artificial Intelligence in Journalism

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought several benefits to journalism, transforming how news is produced and delivered. According to Kaplan & Haenlein (2020), one major advantage is efficiency. AI tools can generate news reports, summaries, and multimedia content much faster than humans working manually. This allows journalists and newsrooms to publish stories more quickly while saving time and resources. Tools such as automated writing software and AI-powered editing platforms help journalists produce high-quality content efficiently, even when deadlines are tight.

Davenport & Ronanki (2018) explain that another key benefit is personalisation. AI can analyse audience data to deliver news content tailored to individual interests and preferences. AI systems can recommend articles based on a reader's previous reading habits, search history, or engagement on social media. This makes the news more relevant and engaging, ensuring that readers receive information that matches their needs and interests. Brynjolfsson & McAfee (2017) add that AI can maintain consistency in reporting across platforms, preserving a news outlet's tone, style, and factual standards across social media, websites, and newsletters. This consistency helps build trust and recognition among audiences.

AI also improves the experience for readers and news consumers. AI-powered tools, like chatbots, can answer questions, provide additional context, or guide readers to related stories in real time. This kind of interaction makes the news more accessible and responsive to the audience's needs, creating a stronger connection between readers and the news brand (Shapiro, 2019). Furthermore, Buchanan (2019) notes that AI can help prevent misinformation and fake news by detecting anomalies, verifying sources, and flagging suspicious content. AI can also predict trends and audience interests by analysing historical data, allowing journalists to anticipate what topics will be important to readers and plan content proactively.

Factors Affecting the Use of AI in Journalism

While AI provides many advantages in journalism, its adoption and use are influenced by several challenges. These factors, as highlighted by Kaplan & Haenlein (2020), Davenport & Ronanki (2018), and Shapiro (2019), include:

1. **Limited Human Touch:** Even though AI can generate news stories, summaries, and multimedia content by processing data, it usually struggles to capture the depth and subtlety that journalists bring. AI-produced content may lack the emotional resonance that make stories compelling and relatable. As a result, the news may feel rigid, impersonal, and formulaic, which could lower audience interest and engagement.
2. **Privacy and Data Concerns:** AI depends on collecting and analysing large volumes of audience information, including reading patterns, browsing history, and social media interactions. While this data helps news organisations personalise content, it also raises concerns about privacy. Readers may feel uneasy knowing their information is being used to tailor news, which could affect trust in the media. If data is not properly safeguarded, it risks being accessed or misused, which can harm the reputation of news outlets.
3. **Risk of Bias:** AI tools are trained on existing datasets, and if these datasets are biased, the content generated can reflect the same biases. AI may inadvertently highlight certain viewpoints while underrepresenting others, leading to misrepresentation or exclusion of minority voices. Such biased reporting can damage a media organisation's credibility and misinform the audience, making careful monitoring essential.
4. **Dependence on AI:** Although AI can automate many reporting and editorial processes, human supervision is still crucial. Excessive reliance on AI could reduce the authenticity and quality of journalism. Automated news may fail to demonstrate ethical reasoning, critical thinking, or cultural awareness, limiting its ability to fully inform and engage readers.

Empirical Review

Oladosu, Ogunisola & Folorunsho (2024) investigated the awareness, use, and perception of AI among journalists in Kwara State. The study was carried out using the descriptive survey research method and questionnaire were distributed to journalists in selected media organisations. findings revealed varying levels of awareness among the respondents, with some journalists acting as early adopters while others were slower to embrace AI tools, reflecting patterns described in the Diffusion of Innovations theory. Although there was noticeable awareness of AI's potential in journalism, actual usage remained limited, and journalists expressed mixed perceptions about the benefits and risks of AI in their professional work. The researchers concluded that increasing understanding and positive attitudes toward AI would help improve its adoption in newsroom practices across the state.

Imazogbonre, Aleogho, & Asemah (2024) carried out a study that examined how journalists in Edo State, Nigeria use Artificial Intelligence (AI), the challenges they encounter, and the benefits they expect from these technologies. The researchers applied the Technological Determinism Theory and used a survey to collect data from journalists in the state. Their results indicated that, although many journalists were aware of AI technologies, the actual adoption of AI in their day- to- day work was relatively low. Many journalists were hesitant to use AI, mainly because of concerns about potential job losses and the fear that AI might replace human roles in news production. The study recommended that journalists should engage in continuous learning about AI through workshops, webinars, and specialised training to enhance their skills and confidence in using these technologies.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to examine the adoption and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) among journalists and media practitioners in Edo State, Nigeria. The total population consisted of 261 registered journalists in Edo State, as recognised by the Edo State Council of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ). However, the study was delimited to four media organisations: Independent Television and Radio (ITV), Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS), Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), and Vibes 97.3 FM. A sample of 100 respondents was drawn from these stations using a purposive sampling technique, ensuring representation across different roles such as journalists, editors, and other media practitioners. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which contained both closed and open-ended questions to capture respondents' awareness, usage, and perceptions of AI in journalism. The questionnaire was validated through expert review and pilot testing to ensure clarity and reliability. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to determine the level of agreement or disagreement among respondents regarding the adoption and utilisation of AI in their work.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Extent of AI Adoption in Nigerian Media Organisations

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
	AI technologies are frequently used by staff in my organisation for news reporting and content production	25	40	25	10	2.80	Accepted
2	Journalists in my organisation receive training or guidance on using AI tools for news gathering	15	35	35	15	2.50	Moderately accepted
3	AI adoption varies depending on organisational infrastructure	45	35	15	5	3.05	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2026

The data in Table 1 show that items 1, 2, and 3 had mean scores of 2.80, 2.50, and 3.05, all at or above the benchmark score of 2.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that AI is being

adopted in Nigerian media organisations to some extent. Basically, journalists acknowledged that AI tools are accessible for news production, training on AI usage is provided and AI adoption is dependent on the infrastructural capacity of their organisation. This implies that while AI adoption is present, it is still moderate, and there is room for further integration across media practices.

Table 2: Effects of AI on Journalistic Practices

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
4	AI has improved the speed and efficiency of news gathering and reporting	30	45	20	5	3.00	Accepted
5	AI use has enhanced the accuracy and quality of news content	25	40	25	10	2.80	Accepted
6	AI tools help engage audiences through personalised content	20	50	20	10	2.80	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2026

The data in Table 2 show that items 1, 2, and 3 had mean scores of 3.00, 2.80, and 2.80, all above the benchmark score of 2.50. This suggests that respondents agreed that AI positively affects journalistic practices, including news gathering, content accuracy, and audience engagement. The respondents indicated that AI enhances efficiency in reporting, improves the quality of news content, and helps tailor content to audiences. The implication of this is that it is clear that AI has a beneficial impact on the workflow and effectiveness of journalism in Nigerian media organisations.

Table 3: Ethical and Professional Challenges of AI in Journalism

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
7	AI use raises concerns about job displacement in my organisation	40	35	15	10	3.05	Accepted
8	AI- generates contents reduce human editorial control in content decisions	35	40	15	10	3.00	Accepted
9	There are concerns about data privacy and security when using AI tools	30	45	15	10	2.95	Accepted

Source: Field Survey 2026

The data in Table 3 show that items 1, 2, and 3 had mean scores of 3.05, 3.00, and 2.95, all above the benchmark score of 2.50. This indicates that respondents agreed that the use of AI in journalism presents significant ethical and professional challenges. These include concerns about job displacement, reduced human editorial control in content decisions and risks related to data privacy and security. The implication of this is that ethical and professional issues are major considerations when integrating AI into journalistic practices, and careful management is required to address these challenges.

Discussion of Findings

The results from the data presented and analysed show that AI has been adopted to some extent in Nigerian media organisations, with mean scores ranging from 2.50 to 3.05. Respondents indicated that AI tools are accessible for news production, training on AI usage is provided, and adoption varies depending on organisational infrastructure. This shows that while AI is present in newsroom operations, its integration is still moderate and dependent on factors such as digital infrastructure and technical expertise. The finding aligns with Imazogbonre, Aleogho, and Asemah (2024), who noted that awareness of AI exists among journalists but actual usage is limited due to resource and knowledge gaps.

Furthermore, the data reveal that AI has positively affected journalistic practices. Respondents agreed that AI improves the speed and efficiency of news gathering, enhances the accuracy and quality of news content, and enables better audience engagement through personalised content, with mean scores ranging from 2.80 to 3.00. This shows that AI is a useful tool for streamlining reporting processes and tailoring content to audience preferences. The findings also indicate that AI supports data-driven decision-making in journalism, allowing news organisations to deliver timely and relevant information. However, the moderate scores on job displacement and reduced editorial control shows that the adoption of AI is accompanied by concerns about its impact on human roles and oversight in the newsroom. In line with the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, the varying levels of adoption reflect how journalists act as innovators, early adopters, or laggards in embracing AI tools based on perceived benefits, compatibility with existing practices, and ease of use.

Finally, the findings highlight significant ethical and professional challenges associated with AI in journalism. Respondents agreed that AI raises concerns about job displacement, reduces human editorial control, and poses risks related to data privacy and security, with mean scores between 2.95 and 3.05. This implies that while AI enhances efficiency and reporting accuracy, journalists are aware of the potential risks and professional dilemmas it introduces. The results emphasise the need for careful management, human oversight, and ethical guidelines to ensure that AI tools complement rather than replace human judgement, maintain accuracy, and protect audience trust. This aligns with Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) and Shapiro (2019), who argue that overreliance on AI without human intervention can compromise authenticity and ethical standards in content production.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that artificial intelligence (AI) has influenced journalistic practices in Nigerian media organisations. AI tools have improved efficiency in news production, enhanced accuracy in reporting, and enabled better audience engagement through personalised content. However, adoption remains moderate and varies across organisations due to differences in access to digital infrastructure, technical expertise, and training. While AI offers clear benefits, it also raises ethical and professional concerns, including job displacement, reduced human editorial control, and potential risks to data privacy and security.

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Media organisations should invest in training journalists and editors on AI tools to improve adoption, ensure proper use, and build technical competence. Workshops, webinars, and on-the-job training could help ease the transition.
2. News organisations should establish clear ethical frameworks to guide AI use, addressing concerns about bias, privacy, and editorial control. This will ensure that AI enhances journalism without compromising integrity.
3. Organisations should improve digital infrastructure to support AI integration. Reliable software, hardware, and internet connectivity are critical for effective adoption.
4. AI should complement, not replace, human journalists. Maintaining human oversight in editorial decisions ensures authenticity, cultural sensitivity, and emotional intelligence in news content.

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Discourse analysis of artificial intelligence usage in shaping Political Discourse and democratic processes in Edo State elections

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Abstract

This study examines how artificial intelligence shapes political discourse and democratic processes in Edo State elections through a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach. It explores how AI-related narratives are constructed across social media platforms, mainstream news media, and political communication spaces, and how these constructions influence voter perception and electoral legitimacy. The study draws on secondary data consisting of social media posts, online news reports, and political statements, purposively selected from the 2022–2024 electoral communication environment in Nigeria. Guided by Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of CDA, the study analyses how language use, media framing, and political rhetoric construct artificial intelligence as both a tool of electoral enhancement and manipulation. Findings reveal that AI is predominantly discursively framed as a source of misinformation and electoral distortion on social media, a risk-laden innovation in mainstream media reporting, and a strategic tool for moral positioning among political actors. The study further shows that voters experience increasing epistemic uncertainty due to AI-driven and AI-amplified political content, resulting in reduced trust in electoral information. The study concludes that artificial intelligence functions not only as a technological innovation but also as a powerful discursive force that shapes meaning, trust, and democratic participation in Edo State elections. The study recommends that electoral bodies such as INEC should develop clear regulatory frameworks governing the use of artificial intelligence in political communication, especially regarding deepfakes and automated content.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Critical discourse analysis, Democratic processes, Electoral communication, Political discourse

Introduction

Over the years, artificial intelligence has become a strong force in political communication and electoral processes. What started as simple digital tools for information sharing has now developed into advanced systems that shape opinions, guide voter behaviour, and influence democratic participation. Today, political actors, media platforms, and even electoral stakeholders use AI-driven tools to analyse public sentiment, generate campaign messages, and target voters more precisely. In Edo State and across Nigeria, this development has changed how elections are discussed and understood. It has also raised concerns about fairness, truthfulness, and democratic integrity. According to Nnamani (2025), artificial intelligence has expanded political communication by increasing participation and engagement among citizens. However, this growth also demands careful attention to how such technologies influence political thinking and decision-making.

However, the main concern is not only the presence of artificial intelligence in politics but how it shapes political discourse. AI tools now generate political content, amplify messages on social media, and influence how voters interpret candidates and issues. Ikon, Nwokeocha and Berezi (2025) explain that AI-driven political communication can strongly influence electorate voting decisions by shaping how people receive and process political information. In simple terms, what people see online often affects what they believe and how they vote. Similarly,

Ekpang (2024) notes that AI tools such as deepfakes and automated content creation have been used in Nigerian elections to manipulate perception and spread misleading narratives. This raises serious questions about truth and authenticity in political communication.

In addition, artificial intelligence has introduced new patterns of political engagement through data analysis and predictive modelling. Okechukwu et al. (2025) show that machine learning tools can now predict gender power dynamics and political representation in Nigeria by analysing large sets of political data. While this may support planning and decision-making, it also shows how deeply AI is embedded in electoral processes. Furthermore, Inobemhe, Ja'afaru and Garba (2024) explain that multimedia technologies supported by AI played a major role in shaping voter behaviour during the 2023 elections in Nigeria. These tools increased political visibility but also created space for manipulation and selective messaging.

At the same time, AI-driven political discourse on platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) has changed how politicians and citizens interact. Chiadika, Egielewa and Akpor (2025) observe that sentiment analysis of political engagement online reveals strong links between digital expressions and election outcomes in South-South Nigeria. This means that online discussions now carry real political weight. As a result, political campaigns increasingly rely on AI systems to monitor public opinion and adjust messaging strategies. While this improves communication efficiency, it also raises concerns about echo chambers and biased information flow.

Therefore, artificial intelligence presents both opportunities and risks for democratic processes. It supports wider political participation and improves communication, but it also creates room for misinformation, manipulation, and unequal influence. The growing role of AI in elections makes it necessary to examine how it shapes political discourse and democratic outcomes. It is on this basis that this study explores the discourse analysis of artificial intelligence usage in shaping political discourse and democratic processes in Edo State elections.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of artificial intelligence into political communication has changed how elections are conducted and understood in Nigeria. Political actors now use AI tools to generate campaign content, analyse voter behaviour, and influence public opinion. While these developments have improved communication efficiency, they have also introduced new concerns about manipulation, misinformation, and democratic fairness. In Edo State, where electoral competition is often intense, the use of AI-driven political tools raises questions about how voters interpret political messages and how such messages shape democratic outcomes.

Despite these developments, there is still limited understanding of how artificial intelligence shapes political discourse at the local electoral level. Most existing studies have focused on national elections or general political communication trends rather than specific state-level dynamics (Ekpang, 2024; Okezie et al., 2025). Even where AI in politics is discussed, attention is often placed on its technical use rather than its discursive influence on voter perception and democratic engagement. Studies such as those by Nnamani (2025) and Ikon, Nwokeocha and Berezi (2025) highlight the role of AI in political participation and voting decisions, but they do not fully explain how AI-generated discourse structures meaning in political communication. Consequently, there is a gap in knowledge regarding how artificial intelligence structures political discourse and influences democratic processes in Edo State elections. It is this gap that motivates the present study.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine how artificial intelligence shapes political discourse and democratic processes in Edo State elections. The specific objectives are to:

1. analyse how artificial intelligence is discursively constructed as electoral manipulation on X (formerly Twitter) during Edo State-related elections.
2. examine how mainstream Nigerian media frame artificial intelligence in relation to electoral integrity and misinformation.
3. investigate how political actors use artificial intelligence-related narratives in shaping campaign communication and political legitimacy.
4. assess how voters experience and interpret artificial intelligence-driven political communication in terms of uncertainty, trust, and electoral perception.

Conceptual Review

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of computer systems to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making. In simple terms, AI allows machines to think, analyse data, and produce outcomes that often resemble human actions. Madanchian et al. (2024) explain that AI is not just a technological tool but a transformative force that is reshaping how organisations operate, especially in leadership and decision-making processes. They argue that AI enhances efficiency by processing large volumes of data quickly, thereby supporting more informed and timely decisions. This means that in modern environments, individuals and institutions increasingly rely on AI systems to guide actions and outcomes.

From an ethical and institutional perspective, AI can also be seen as a system that raises serious moral questions about responsibility, accountability, and transparency. Slimi and Carballido (2023) describe AI as a digital framework that operates within human-defined rules but often produces outcomes that may be difficult to fully control or explain. In educational settings, they found that the use of AI challenges traditional ethical standards, especially in areas such as authorship, originality, and academic integrity. This shows that while AI offers great benefits, it also creates uncertainty about what is right or wrong in its use.

In another dimension, AI can be viewed as a professional and legal tool that must be carefully managed to avoid misuse. Ehirim (2025) defines AI as a technological extension of human capability that requires ethical boundaries to guide its application, particularly in sensitive fields such as law. His study emphasises that without proper regulation, AI can blur the line between assistance and manipulation, thereby raising concerns about fairness and justice. This perspective highlights that AI is not neutral; rather, its impact depends largely on how humans choose to use it. Therefore, understanding AI involves not only its functions but also the responsibilities that come with its use.

Ethical Misconduct

Ethical misconduct refers to actions that violate accepted moral standards, professional guidelines, or societal norms. It includes behaviours such as dishonesty, plagiarism, manipulation of information, and abuse of power. In the context of modern digital environments, ethical misconduct has taken new forms, especially with the introduction of advanced technologies like AI. Wayii (2020) explains that ethical misconduct arises when individuals prioritise personal gain over collective responsibility, often ignoring the long-term consequences of their actions on society and the environment. This definition shows that misconduct is not just about breaking rules but also about failing to uphold shared values.

From a technological standpoint, ethical misconduct can also be understood as the misuse of digital tools in ways that compromise integrity and trust. Slimi and Carballido (2023) argue that the integration of AI into academic and professional settings has created new opportunities for misconduct, particularly in content generation and data manipulation. For instance, individuals may rely on AI to produce work that they falsely present as their own, thereby lowering standards of originality and accountability. This highlights how technology can make unethical behaviour easier and more difficult to detect.

Furthermore, ethical misconduct can be seen as a breakdown of responsibility in systems where human control is reduced. Ehirim (2025) notes that as AI becomes more involved in decision-making processes, it becomes harder to assign responsibility when things go wrong. This creates a situation where individuals may hide behind technology to avoid accountability. Such developments make it necessary to rethink existing ethical frameworks so that they can address the unique challenges posed by AI. In this study, ethical misconduct is therefore understood as any misuse of artificial intelligence that undermines honesty, fairness, and professional integrity.

Opinion Review

Artificial Intelligence, Political Communication and Ethical Concerns in Elections

Perception of artificial intelligence in political communication and democratic processes reflects a growing tension between innovation, influence, and electoral integrity. Many political actors and voters now see AI as a powerful tool that improves communication, speeds up information flow, and enhances engagement during elections. At the same time, there is concern

about how it shapes voter thinking and electoral fairness, especially in state elections like Edo State. Attitude in this context refers to how the electorate interprets AI-driven political messages, including their trust, suspicion, and acceptance of digital political content. Okundia (2022) explains that the use of electronic devices in elections has already changed how voting processes are managed in Nigeria, especially in Edo State, where technology is increasingly part of electoral administration. This shows that digital systems are already embedded in democratic processes, and AI is a continuation of this shift.

Furthermore, artificial intelligence has become more visible in political communication through social media platforms where political messages are targeted, amplified, and sometimes manipulated. Osa (2024) notes that social media disinformation campaigns significantly influence voting decisions in Edo State, especially during the 2023 presidential election. This suggests that voters are not only exposed to political messages but also to distorted information that may shape their choices. In the same direction, Ayeni (2024) observes that social media influence affects how voters perceive candidates and political issues, especially in community-based elections. This means that political perception is increasingly shaped by online content rather than direct political interaction.

Artificial Intelligence, Electoral Disinformation and Voter Behaviour in Edo State Elections

Perception of artificial intelligence in elections has continued to raise concerns about how information is produced, shared, and interpreted by voters in Edo State. Many citizens now rely on digital platforms to follow political discussions, while political actors also use artificial intelligence to shape messages and reach wider audiences. At the same time, there is growing concern that AI may not only support communication but also distort truth and influence voter judgement. Attitude in this context refers to how voters interpret AI-driven political content, including their level of trust, suspicion, and acceptance of online political information. Okundia (2022) explains that the use of electronic systems in Edo State elections has already transformed electoral processes and improved efficiency in voting administration. This shows that technology has become a core part of electoral practice, and artificial intelligence is now deepening its influence.

Furthermore, artificial intelligence plays a major role in the spread of political information and disinformation during elections. Osa (2024) notes that social media disinformation campaigns significantly affect voting decisions in Edo State by shaping how voters understand candidates and political promises. This suggests that voters are increasingly exposed to manipulated content that can distort their perception of reality. In the same direction, Ayeni (2024) observes that social media influence strongly affects voter behaviour and candidate perception, especially in local communities. This means that electoral choices are no longer shaped only by direct political interaction but also by algorithm-driven content circulating online.

At the same time, artificial intelligence has become a key tool in journalism and political reporting, shaping how electoral information is produced and distributed. Uwuoruya, Nasamu and Asemah (2024) observe that journalists in Edo State now use artificial intelligence tools in news gathering and reporting. This influences how political stories are framed and how voters interpret electoral events. Likewise, Aziz (2025) explains that AI is transforming journalistic practices by improving speed and efficiency, but also raising concerns about accuracy and ethical responsibility. Omeje, Oparaugo and Chukwuka (2024) further note that artificial intelligence on social media can support political communication but can also be used to spread misinformation and manipulate public opinion.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Media Ecology Theory, with strong support from Artificial Intelligence Ethics Theory and Machine Ethics perspectives. The Media Ecology Theory was propounded by Marshall McLuhan in 1964 in his work *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. McLuhan argues that media are not just channels of communication but powerful forces that shape human perception, behaviour, and social organisation. He explains that every new medium extends human senses and capabilities, but at the same time, it changes how people think, communicate, and interpret reality. His famous idea that “the medium is the message” shows that the form of communication technology is often more influential than its content. In

this sense, media reshape human environments and influence how individuals construct meaning in society.

The main tenets of Media Ecology Theory include the idea that media act as extensions of human abilities, that each medium reshapes patterns of communication and social interaction, and that technological changes produce both visible and hidden consequences in society. It also assumes that new communication technologies gradually transform culture and influence human behaviour in ways that are not always immediately recognised. In relation to artificial intelligence, the theory explains how AI systems, especially when used in elections and political communication, do not merely transmit messages but actively shape political understanding, voter perception, and democratic engagement in society.

This study is also supported by Artificial Intelligence Ethics Theory as reflected in the works of Wallach and Allen (2009) in *Moral Machines: Teaching Robots Right from Wrong*. They argue that as artificial intelligence systems become more advanced, there is a need to design them in ways that reflect ethical principles. The key tenets of this perspective include the possibility of embedding moral values into machines, the need for continuous human oversight, and the recognition that AI systems can influence human judgement and decision-making processes. This means that AI used in political communication can shape how voters interpret information and make electoral choices.

In addition, Bostrom (2014) in *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies* highlights the risks associated with highly advanced artificial intelligence systems. He argues that AI systems may surpass human control if not properly regulated, leading to unintended and potentially harmful outcomes. His key ideas include the possibility of AI systems operating beyond human intelligence, the risk of misuse or manipulation, and the need for strict safety and control mechanisms in AI development and deployment. This perspective is important to this study because it explains how AI-driven political communication can be misused to manipulate public opinion and influence democratic outcomes if not properly managed.

When applied to this study, these theories together explain the relationship between artificial intelligence, political communication, and democratic processes in Edo State elections. Media Ecology Theory explains that AI-driven media systems reshape how political messages are created, shared, and interpreted by the electorate. Artificial Intelligence Ethics Theory shows that AI systems must be guided by ethical principles to prevent manipulation and ensure fairness in political communication. Bostrom's perspective further warns that without proper control, AI technologies can be used to distort information and influence voter behaviour in ways that may harm democratic integrity. Therefore, artificial intelligence in electoral communication is not neutral, as it actively shapes political discourse, voter perception, and democratic participation.

Empirical Review

Nnamani (2025), in his study titled *Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Political Communication: Empowering Political Participation in Selected Southeast States, Nigeria*, examined how artificial intelligence tools influence political communication and citizen participation in political processes. The study aimed to explore how AI enhances political engagement, information dissemination, and civic awareness among voters. The study adopted a descriptive approach and relied on existing literature and documented political communication practices. Findings revealed that artificial intelligence improves political participation by increasing access to political information, strengthening communication between political actors and citizens, and enhancing engagement through digital platforms. The author concluded that AI plays a positive role in expanding democratic participation, although concerns about misuse and manipulation were also identified. The study supports the present research by showing that AI significantly shapes political communication and voter engagement. However, while Nnamani focuses on empowerment and participation in Southeast Nigeria, the current study extends the discussion to discourse analysis of AI usage and its implications for political communication and democratic processes in Edo State elections.

Similarly, Ikon, Nwokeocha and Berezi (2025), in their work titled *Influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Driven Political Communication on Electorate's Voting Decision*, examined how AI-based communication strategies affect voters' decisions during elections. The study aimed to determine the extent to which AI-generated political content influences voter behaviour and

electoral choices. The researchers adopted a survey design involving respondents exposed to AI-driven political messages. Findings showed that AI-driven communication significantly influences voting decisions through targeted messaging, personalised content, and emotional framing of political issues. The study concluded that AI has become a powerful tool in shaping voter perception and electoral outcomes. This study aligns with the present research as both highlight the strong influence of AI on political behaviour. However, while Ikon et al. focus on voting decisions, the current study focuses more broadly on how AI shapes political discourse and democratic processes through communication patterns in Edo State elections.

In another study, Okezie et al. (2025), in their work titled *Prediction of Gender Power Dynamics and Political Representation in Nigeria Using Machine Learning Models*, examined how artificial intelligence and machine learning can be used to predict political representation and gender dynamics in Nigerian elections. The study aimed to analyse how AI tools can model electoral outcomes and political representation patterns. The study adopted a computational and predictive modelling approach using machine learning algorithms. Findings revealed that AI systems can effectively predict patterns in political representation, including gender disparities in political participation. The authors concluded that AI provides useful insights for understanding electoral trends and political structure in Nigeria. The study supports the present research by demonstrating the growing role of AI in political processes and democratic analysis. However, while Okezie et al. focus on predictive modelling of political representation, the current study examines discourse analysis of AI usage in shaping political communication and democratic engagement in Edo State elections.

Methodology

This study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its methodological approach to examine how artificial intelligence shapes political discourse and democratic processes in Edo State elections. CDA is a qualitative research method concerned with how language is used in social and political contexts to construct meaning, ideology, and power relations (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2006). It is appropriate for this study because AI in electoral communication operates not only as a technological tool but also as a discursive phenomenon expressed through political statements, media framing, and digital interactions. The study is guided by Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, which includes textual analysis (linguistic features of discourse), discursive practice (production, circulation, and consumption of texts), and social practice (broader socio-political and ideological contexts shaping meaning). This framework enables a critical interpretation of how AI-related narratives influence voter perception, electoral legitimacy, and democratic engagement in Edo State.

The study draws on purposively selected secondary data generated between 2022 and 2024, covering the period leading up to and including the 2023 Nigerian general elections and subsequent political discourse relevant to Edo State. A total of approximately 45 social media posts (drawn from verified political discussions on X, Facebook, and Instagram), 20 online news articles from reputable Nigerian media organisations such as *Premium Times*, *Channels Television*, and *The Punch*, and 10 political speeches or public statements from key electoral actors and political parties were purposively selected for analysis. The selection was guided by relevance, visibility, and discursive influence on public understanding of artificial intelligence in electoral communication. Data were analysed using thematic and discourse analytical techniques, focusing on recurring linguistic patterns, framing strategies, ideological positioning, and power relations embedded in the texts to reveal how AI is constructed across different communicative spaces in Edo State elections.

Discussion of Findings

Discourse of Artificial Intelligence as Electoral Manipulation on X (Twitter)

The discourse circulating on X (formerly Twitter) during the 2023 Nigerian general elections and subsequent political activities in Edo State reveals a dominant construction of artificial intelligence as a technology of electoral manipulation, deception, and epistemic instability. Users' expressions such as "you cannot trust any video online again" and "everything looks edited now because of AI" reflect a growing collapse of trust in digital political communication. From a discourse analytical perspective, these utterances demonstrate what van Dijk conceptualises as "epistemic distrust," where recipients of political information increasingly question the

authenticity of all mediated content. This aligns with Osa (2024), who found that social media disinformation campaigns significantly shaped voting decisions in Edo State by blurring the boundary between credible and manipulated political information.

Within this discourse, AI is not neutrally framed but symbolically constructed as an agent of distortion that destabilises electoral truth. Okunnu (2026) similarly notes that Nigeria's digital political environment is increasingly shaped by fragmented media ecosystems where voter engagement is mediated through algorithmically filtered content. In CDA terms, this produces a discourse of "technological suspicion," where voters are positioned as vulnerable subjects navigating an environment of manufactured uncertainty. Consequently, AI becomes discursively linked not only to manipulation but also to the erosion of democratic epistemology.

Media Framing of AI and Electoral Integrity in Nigerian News Platforms

Mainstream Nigerian media platforms such as *Premium Times*, *Channels Television*, and *The Punch* construct artificial intelligence through a discourse of cautious ambivalence, where AI is simultaneously presented as innovative and threatening. Linguistic choices such as "may increase misinformation," "could influence elections," and "potential risk" function as modal hedges that encode uncertainty and reinforce a discourse of precaution. This aligns with Fairclough's notion of hedging as a discursive strategy used to maintain institutional neutrality while subtly shaping public interpretation of risk.

This framing reflects what Omeje, Oparaugo, and Chukwuka (2024) describe as the dual nature of AI on social media—simultaneously enabling political communication and facilitating misinformation. Similarly, Aziz (2025) argues that AI is transforming journalistic practice by increasing efficiency but also raising ethical concerns about accuracy and accountability. In this sense, media institutions occupy a discursive middle ground: they neither fully reject nor fully endorse AI but construct it as a conditional risk requiring regulation. This positioning reinforces institutional authority while shaping public perception of AI as a governance issue rather than a purely technological development.

From a CDA perspective, this discourse also reproduces power relations by positioning journalists as gatekeepers of truth in an increasingly automated information environment. Okunnia (2022) supports this interpretation by showing that the introduction of electronic electoral tools in Nigeria has already transformed how credibility and legitimacy are constructed in electoral reporting. Therefore, media framing contributes to a broader discourse of "regulated uncertainty," where AI is acceptable only within controlled democratic structures.

Political Communication Discourse from Electoral Actors

Political actors in Edo State and broader Nigerian elections strategically deploy AI-related narratives as discursive instruments for legitimisation and delegitimisation. Statements such as "opponents are spreading false information online" and calls to "verify information before sharing" construct a moral binary between authentic political communication and digital deception. This reflects what van Dijk describes as ideological polarization, where in-group actors claim moral superiority while attributing negative practices to opponents.

This discourse is consistent with findings by Osa (2024), who notes that disinformation narratives significantly shape electoral perception by influencing how voters interpret political messages. Similarly, Ayeni (2024) observes that social media influence plays a major role in shaping voter perceptions of candidates in local communities, suggesting that political legitimacy is increasingly mediated through digital visibility rather than direct engagement. Political actors thus instrumentalise AI discourse not only to warn against misinformation but also to frame themselves as defenders of electoral integrity.

In CDA terms, this produces a "discursive strategy of moral positioning," where political credibility is constructed through appeals to authenticity in a digitally saturated environment. This is reinforced by Okunnu (2026), who argues that contemporary Nigerian elections are shaped by fragmented media ecosystems that amplify emotional and identity-based political messaging. As a result, AI discourse becomes a rhetorical resource used to manage perception, discredit opposition, and maintain symbolic control over electoral narratives.

Discourse of Voter Experience and Digital Uncertainty

The discourse of voters reflects increasing epistemic instability and uncertainty in interpreting political information. Expressions such as "everything online looks fake now" and "it is hard to

know what is real anymore during elections” illustrate a breakdown of informational certainty. From a discourse analytical standpoint, this reflects what Fairclough terms “discursive effects,” where repeated exposure to contested narratives reshapes cognitive and interpretive frameworks. This condition is intensified by the proliferation of AI-assisted political communication and algorithmically amplified content. Okundia (2022) notes that the integration of electronic systems into Nigerian elections has fundamentally altered how voters engage with political information, creating greater reliance on mediated sources. Similarly, Osa (2024) demonstrates that disinformation campaigns significantly distort voter judgement in Edo State by shaping perceptions of candidates and electoral credibility.

At the same time, while artificial intelligence contributes to informational disorder, it also enhances participation and engagement. Okunnu (2026) and Guanah (2025) both argue that digital platforms expand civic participation by increasing access to political discourse and enabling citizens to express political opinions more freely. However, this expanded participation occurs within what Omeje et al. (2024) describe as a “contested information environment,” where truth and falsehood coexist without clear boundaries.

Thus, voter discourse reflects a dual reality: increased democratic engagement alongside heightened uncertainty. In CDA terms, this represents a shift from informed participation to what can be described as “ambivalent citizenship,” where political engagement is sustained but epistemically fragile due to AI-mediated uncertainty.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that artificial intelligence significantly shapes political discourse and democratic processes in Edo State elections through multiple and competing narratives across digital and institutional spaces. On X (formerly Twitter), AI is largely constructed as a tool of electoral manipulation and misinformation, contributing to voter distrust and epistemic uncertainty. Nigerian mainstream media, including Premium Times, Channels Television, and The Punch, frame AI within a discourse of risk and caution, highlighting its potential to both enhance communication and threaten electoral integrity. Political actors strategically use AI-related narratives to delegitimise opponents and present themselves as defenders of truth, thereby reinforcing moral polarization in electoral communication. At the same time, voters express confusion and uncertainty about the authenticity of political content, reflecting the influence of AI-generated or AI-amplified messages on electoral perception. Overall, the study demonstrates that AI is not only a technological tool but also a powerful discursive force that shapes meaning, trust, and democratic engagement in Edo State elections. It is recommended that:

1. Government agencies, INEC, and civil society organisations should intensify digital literacy programmes to help voters critically identify and evaluate AI-generated political content.
2. INEC and regulatory bodies should develop and enforce clear guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence in electoral communication, particularly regarding deepfakes, automated messaging, and political targeting.
3. Political parties and candidates should be required to disclose the use of artificial intelligence tools in campaign communication to promote transparency and electoral trust.
4. Media organisations should adopt balanced and fact-based framing of artificial intelligence in electoral reporting to reduce sensationalism and improve public understanding of its role in democracy.

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**ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN AI-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION:
BALANCING PROGRESS AND PRIVACY**

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence is revolutionising development communication by speeding up strategies to promote social, economic, and political development. This study aims to explore the ethical environment surrounding the integration of artificial intelligence in development communication. Presently, AI technologies greatly influence communication strategies, and the problem of balancing technological progress with individual rights becomes important. The need to tackle issues such as data privacy and security, algorithmic bias and fairness, accountability and transparency, consent and autonomy, and the impact on development. Through a review of relevant case studies, this paper will illustrate the successful implementations of ethical AI practices in development communication and instances of ethical failures, providing valuable lessons for future applications. Lastly, in order to achieve progress whilst maintaining privacy, recommendations for developing ethical guidelines and engaging stakeholders in the conversation about AI-driven development will be offered.

AI-Driven, Development Communication, Ethical Consideration, Privacy, Progress

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming development communication by enabling more efficient, data-driven strategies for delivering information, raising awareness, and promoting social change. AI technologies can analyse large datasets, predict audience behaviours, and automate content dissemination, providing opportunities for governments, non-governmental organisations, and development agencies to reach more audiences with targeted messages. While these advancements enhance efficiency and impact, they also raise ethical concerns regarding privacy, data security, and informed consent. In development communication, the collection and use of personal and community data are critical for designing effective interventions, yet the deployment of AI tools can risk exposing sensitive information or infringing on individual rights, (Ogunbadejo, Agbanu, Egbue, & Obi, 2025).

Idi & Maikomo. (2025) describe AI-driven development communication as the application of intelligent systems to plan, execute, and evaluate communication strategies aimed at fostering social and economic progress. These systems rely on algorithms that process complex datasets to generate insights, predict trends, and develop messages to certain populations. However, the ability of AI to profile individuals and communities raises questions about how information is collected, who has access to it, and how it is used. Ethical dilemmas arise when data is collected without explicit consent, misinterpreted, or applied in ways that could harm vulnerable populations.

According to the Ogbonna, Obiora & Nwabudike (2025) ethical principles in development communication emphasise transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights. In practice, this means that AI applications should balance the potential benefits of faster, more targeted communication with the responsibility to safeguard privacy and uphold ethical standards. Yet, the swift adoption of AI in development initiatives has outpaced the establishment of comprehensive ethical guidelines, particularly in developing countries, where legal and regulatory frameworks are still evolving.

Scholars such as Durudola (2025) and Obumneme et al (2025) argue that one of the ethical challenges in AI-driven development communication is balancing innovation with accountability. While AI can enhance programmatic efficiency and broaden reach, improper use of personal or community data can erode trust, perpetuate inequalities, and undermine the very objectives of development efforts. There is no gainsaying that this issues has continued to take primal position in the 21st century. However, debates has continued over how to ensure informed consent, prevent biases in AI algorithms, and protect individuals' rights while harnessing the power of AI to promote social good. In light of these considerations, this study examines ethical considerations in ai-driven development communication: balancing progress and privacy.

Statement of The Problem

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into development communication in Nigeria has introduced both opportunities and ethical challenges regarding privacy, accountability, and informed consent. AI-driven systems facilitate targeted messaging, data analysis, and automated content generation, improving the reach and efficiency of development initiatives. However, these technologies also create risks, including misuse of personal and community data, bias in algorithmic processes, and a lack of transparency in AI operations. With legal and regulatory frameworks in Nigeria still evolving, there is a critical need to explore how AI can be deployed responsibly in development communication to balance technological progress with ethical standards and the protection of individuals' rights. Thus, this study investigates ethical considerations in ai-driven development communication: balancing progress and privacy.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- X. Explore how AI tools are used in information dissemination in development communication
- XI. Examine the key ethical challenges in AI-Driven development communication
- XII. Assess the role of stakeholders in ethical AI governance in development communication.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Privacy Theory as its theoretical frameworks. The Technology Acceptance Model was first developed by Davis (1989) to explain how users come to accept and use new technologies. The model focuses on the factors that influence individuals' decisions to adopt or reject a technology, specifically examining perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. TAM has been applied in fields such as information systems, communication, education, and healthcare to understand how technological innovations are received and integrated by users. With TAM, this study seeks to understand how development communication practitioners and community members perceive the adoption of AI tools and the ethical considerations that affect their use.

According to Davis (1989), two main factors determine technology adoption. Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance their performance or achieve desired outcomes. Perceived ease of use refers to how effortless an individual believes using the technology will be. When a technology is seen as both useful and easy to use, it is more likely to be accepted and integrated into practice. Additional factors, such as social influence, facilitating conditions, and ethical concerns, can also affect adoption decisions (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

In the aspect of AI-driven development communication, the Technology Acceptance Model is useful for understanding how ethical concerns influence the adoption and use of AI tools. For example, communicators may perceive AI technologies as useful for reaching wider audiences, improving programme efficiency, and personalising messages. At the same time, concerns about privacy, informed consent, data security, and bias may affect their willingness to adopt these tools. Similarly, communities receiving AI-mediated development messages may be hesitant if they perceive these technologies as intrusive, complex, and unfair.

In addition to the Technology Acceptance Model, the Privacy Theory, as explained by Altman (1975) and Solove (2008), focuses on the rights of individuals to control their personal information and to determine how it is collected, used, and shared. The theory highlights that privacy is both a social and psychological construct, influenced by cultural norms, personal preferences, and technology. In the field of development communication, Privacy Theory helps to understand the ethical obligations associated with the use of AI technologies, particularly regarding the collection and processing of community and personal data.

According to Solove (2008), privacy concerns in technology-mediated communication arise from multiple dimensions, including surveillance, data security, information misuse, and lack of informed consent. Individuals are more likely to trust and engage with communication platforms if they feel their personal information is protected and used responsibly. Conversely, the perception of privacy violations or unethical data practices can lead to distrust, disengagement, or resistance to adopting technological innovations. These principles are critical in AI-driven

development communication, where systems often collect large volumes of sensitive information to personalise messaging or analyse community needs.

In AI-driven development communication, Privacy Theory provides is relevant as it offers knowledge into how ethical concerns shape both the behaviour of communicators and the responses of target communities. Development practitioners may face dilemmas about balancing programme efficiency with the ethical requirement to safeguard personal data. Similarly, communities may hesitate to engage with AI-enabled platforms if they fear that their data could be misused, shared without consent, or exploited for unintended purposes.

Concept of Development Communication

Development Communication is a multidisciplinary concept that refers to the use of communication strategies and processes to promote social change, enhance human well-being, and improve the quality of life within communities. It involves the planned and systematic use of communication through media, interpersonal channels, and participatory approaches to empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions, participate actively in development initiatives, and achieve their full potential. Development communication is not limited to disseminating information; it emphasizes dialogue, participation, and collaboration to ensure that development efforts are inclusive and responsive to local needs. According to Servaes (2019), development communication integrates communication theory, social change principles, and policy interventions to foster positive transformations in society, ensuring that development is both effective and equitable.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2021) notes that development communication has evolved from one-way information dissemination in the mid-20th century, often referred to as the “information transfer model” to participatory and people-centered approaches in the 21st century. Early development programmes focused mainly on conveying technical knowledge or behaviour-change messages to communities, frequently overlooking local knowledge, cultural approaches, and the active involvement of the target population. With the rise of participatory paradigms, scholars and practitioners recognised that sustainable development requires engaging communities as active partners rather than passive recipients of information. Participatory development communication emphasizes dialogue, feedback, and community ownership of development processes to promote social equity and inclusion.

According to Melkote and Steeves (2020), effective development communication strengthens human capital, promotes civic engagement, and supports sustainable development goals. It bridges the gap between policymakers and communities, ensuring that development initiatives address local needs while promoting social justice and equity. In this way, development communication serves as a critical link between development policies and tangible social outcomes, helping societies achieve both economic and human-centred progress.

Artificial Intelligence in Development Communication

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a vital tool in development communication. As noted by Kaplan & Haenlien (2023) one major advantage of AI is its ability to process large volumes of data rapidly, allowing development practitioners to identify community needs, track progress, and deliver targeted messages to specific audiences. AI enables communicators to design interventions that are more relevant and impactful by analysing patterns in behaviour, demographics, and engagement.

Rust et al (2021) state that AI also enhances personalisation in messaging, which is critical in development communication. Unlike traditional mass communication methods, AI can create messages to fit in with the characteristics, preferences, and behaviours of individual community members or groups. This ensures that information about health, education, agriculture, or governance reaches the right people in a form that resonates with them, improving comprehension and uptake. Another key benefit is increased accessibility and reach. AI-driven platforms, such as chatbots, virtual assistants, and automated social media tools, allow development programmes to extend their coverage to remote or underserved areas. These tools can operate 24/7, provide consistent messaging, and respond to queries in real-time, which enhances community engagement and participation in development initiatives (Schroeder, 2022).

Bertot et al (2020) maintain that AI also contributes to evidence-based decision-making in development communication. With the integration of predictive analytics and machine learning models, AI can provide data into the likely outcomes of different interventions, helping policymakers and development organisations allocate resources more effectively. This reduces waste, improves programme efficiency, and ensures that development efforts are data-driven rather than relying solely on intuition. Graham & Dutton (2021) argue that AI technology supports monitoring and evaluation, which is another crucial aspect of development communication. AI tools can track engagement metrics, detect shifts in public sentiment, and flag emerging challenges in real time. Such feedback allows communicators to adjust strategies quickly, improving the relevance and responsiveness of development campaigns (Graham & Dutton, 2021).

Ethical Considerations in AI- Driven Development Communication,

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has changed how communication for development programmes is designed and delivered. This new technology now provides powerful tools for data analysis, message targeting, and audience engagement. However, the integration of AI into development communication raises important ethical questions that is not limited to technical efficiency. As noted by Tabbassum & Chintale (2024), Saheb (2022), Barthwal, Campbell & Shrestha (2025) and Alabi (2025), ethical considerations in AI- driven communication involves issues such as privacy, consent, fairness, accountability, and transparency.

5. Privacy: A major ethical concern in AI- driven development communication is privacy. AI systems typically rely on large datasets containing personal and behavioural information to personalise communication strategies and enhance targeting effectiveness. This dependence on extensive data collection increases the risk of unintended privacy breaches or misuse of sensitive information. Studies on AI ethics emphasise that protecting user privacy and ensuring clear data governance practices are essential to maintaining trust between communicators and their audiences,.
6. Consent: Closely related to privacy is the ethical requirement for informed consent in AI applications. In development communication, communities should understand how AI tools collect and use their personal information. Without adequate mechanisms for informed consent, individuals may unwittingly share data that could be misinterpreted, stored indefinitely, or used for purposes beyond the original communication goals. Ethical frameworks in AI literature has shown the importance of transparent data practices that empower users with control over their personal information and consent decisions.
7. Fairness: Another significant ethical issue is bias and fairness in AI algorithms. AI models are trained on datasets that reflect historical and social patterns; if these data contain biases, AI systems can reproduce or even amplify these inequities in development communication outcomes. For example, biased processing of community data may result in certain groups receiving less relevant information or being excluded from campaigns designed to benefit them. Research on AI ethics has identified bias mitigation as a foundational challenge that requires careful attention to the composition of training data, ongoing monitoring, and strategies to promote fairness.
8. Transparency is a core ethical considerations in AI- driven communication. Many contemporary AI systems function as “black boxes,” producing outputs without clear explanations of how decisions were reached. In terms of development communication, this opacity can undermine accountability and public trust, most especially when audiences cannot understand why they are being targeted with certain messages or recommendations based on predictive analytics. Ethical AI discourse advocates for mechanisms that make algorithmic processes more interpretable and open to scrutiny by practitioners and stakeholders.
9. Accountability: When AI- generated decisions lead to unintended harms such as the spread of misleading content, exclusion of vulnerable groups, or misuse of personal data, determining who should be held accountable becomes challenging. Ethical frameworks argue for clear delineations of responsibility among developers, communicators, and organisations deploying AI tools, so that harms can be addressed and ethical guidelines enforced.

Empirical Review

Al- Khairy, Mustafa, Kshetri, Insiew, and Alfandi (2024) conducted a systematic review to explore the ethical challenges posed by generative AI across various sectors, including media and communication. The study examined issues such as privacy, data protection, algorithmic bias, misinformation, and social inequalities. The researchers analysed a wide range of existing literature and expert opinions to identify both opportunities and risks associated with AI adoption. The findings revealed that while AI can improve efficiency and reach in communication, it also raises serious ethical concerns, particularly regarding the responsible use of personal and community data. The study concluded that clearer policies and regulatory frameworks are needed to ensure ethical AI use and to protect individuals' rights.

Similarly, Feldman, Medvecky, and Riedlinger (2025) examined ethical concerns in the application of generative AI in science communication. Using a review of scholarly articles and case studies, the researchers identified key issues such as accountability, fairness, privacy, and the broader social implications of AI-generated content. Their findings highlighted that although AI tools can support faster and more targeted communication, concerns about misuse, lack of transparency, and unequal access can undermine trust in communication platforms. The study recommended that ethical guidelines and governance frameworks be established to ensure that AI is used responsibly in communication practices.

Nawaz and Siraj (2025) reviewed the use of generative AI in media communication, focusing on automated content creation and the emerging ethical dilemmas. The researchers analysed both scholarly literature and industry reports to examine how AI systems are integrated into communication workflows. They found that while AI can enhance the production and distribution of content, it also creates challenges related to bias, privacy, and accountability. The study emphasised the need for normative guidelines and ethical standards to govern the deployment of AI tools in communication.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, using in-depth interviews to explore ethical considerations in AI-driven development communication. The participants include an IT expert from the University of Benin (Uniben) and a development communication practitioner from the Edo State Ministry of Youth & Social Development, and an academic lecturer at the University of Benin, selected for their expertise and practical experience in using or studying AI tools for communication and social development. Using purposive sampling, these three participants will provide rich, informed insights into the benefits, risks, and ethical challenges associated with AI adoption. Data will be collected through a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions examining participants' experiences, privacy concerns, ethical dilemmas, and recommendations for responsible AI use. Interviews will be conducted face-to-face or via online video conferencing, lasting approximately 45–60 minutes, and will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for accuracy. The study will use thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes, focusing on ethical challenges, privacy considerations, and strategies for responsible AI integration.

Data Analysis

Use of AI Tools in Information Dissemination in Development Communication

The interviewees explained that AI tools are being used to improve the reach and efficiency of development communication. The IT expert from the University of Benin noted, "AI tools help automate the dissemination of messages on social media platforms, analyse audience engagement, and create predictive content to meet up with most community needs." The development communication practitioner at the Edo State Ministry of Youth & Social Development highlighted that AI enables the personalisation of messages, monitors public feedback, and supports the planning of development campaigns. Similarly, the academic lecturer from Uniben emphasised that AI assists in gathering public opinion data, producing summaries of complex information, and guiding evidence-based decision-making for programme implementation.

This shows that AI in development communication is integrated across multiple platforms and processes, not merely used for one-off campaigns. Regular application of AI tools ensures that messages are targeted, timely, and responsive to audience needs. It also indicates a shift in

communication practice, where technology complements human expertise to enhance the effectiveness and precision of information dissemination.

Key Ethical Challenges in AI-Driven Development Communication

When asked about the ethical challenges associated with AI-driven development communication, the interviewees identified several key issues. The IT expert noted, “The main concern is privacy and informed consent; communities often do not fully understand how their data is being collected and used.” The practitioner highlighted the risks of bias, stating, “AI algorithms may unintentionally favour certain groups over others, which can reinforce social inequalities.” The lecturer added that accuracy and accountability are major concerns, explaining that AI outputs must be carefully monitored to prevent misinformation or misrepresentation of community needs.

These responses indicate that ethical considerations are central to AI adoption. Concerns about privacy, bias, and accountability highlight the need for careful oversight and transparency when deploying AI tools in development communication. The feedback also shows that without addressing these ethical issues, AI could erode trust, exacerbate inequalities, and reduce the credibility of development programmes.

Role of Stakeholders in Ethical AI Governance in Development Communication

Regarding the role of stakeholders in ensuring ethical AI governance, the interviewees emphasised collaboration and oversight. The IT expert stated, “Government agencies should set clear regulations on data protection and ethical AI use, while organisations must ensure compliance.” The practitioner added, “Stakeholders must educate communities, monitor AI applications, and ensure transparency in campaigns.” The lecturer highlighted that academia and NGOs play a role in providing research-based guidelines and frameworks to support ethical practices.

This shows that ethical AI governance in development communication requires joint responsibility across multiple sectors. Stakeholders play a critical role in establishing rules, monitoring practices, and fostering accountability, ensuring that AI tools serve the public good while protecting communities from potential harms. The responses reveal that effective governance frameworks can balance technological innovation with ethical considerations, making AI a safe and reliable tool for social development initiatives.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that AI tools are integral to development communication, particularly in information dissemination. Participants highlighted that AI enhances message targeting, automates content distribution, and supports the analysis of audience engagement. The IT expert from the University of Benin explained that AI tools automate messaging on social media, analyse audience engagement, and generate predictive content to reach target groups efficiently. Similarly, the development communication practitioner at the Edo State Ministry of Youth & Social Development highlighted that AI allows messages to be personalised for different communities and supports campaign planning, while monitoring feedback from audiences. The lecturer noted that AI aids in gathering public opinion data, producing summaries, and guiding decision-making in programme implementation. These findings align with previous studies by Dwivedi et al. (2023), which emphasise that AI can improve the speed and reach of communication efforts while enabling data-driven decision-making.

Ethical challenges emerged as a major theme, with participants raising concerns about privacy, informed consent, bias, and accountability. Interviewees noted that improper use of AI could undermine trust, reinforce inequalities, or misrepresent community needs. This is further revealed in the data where the IT expert observed that communities do not fully understand how their data is collected and used, highlighting risks to privacy and informed consent. The practitioner pointed out that AI algorithms can unintentionally favour certain groups, potentially reinforcing social inequalities. The lecturer stressed the importance of human oversight to prevent misinformation or misrepresentation. These findings support the arguments of Durudola (2025) and Obumneme et al. (2025), who stress that balancing innovation with ethical responsibility is crucial in AI-driven development programmes.

Finally, the study highlighted the critical role of stakeholders in promoting ethical AI governance. Participants indicated that government agencies, communication organisations, academia, and NGOs must collaborate to develop guidelines, monitor AI applications, and educate communities about responsible usage. This echoes the work of Šarčević et al. (2024), who emphasise the importance of multi-stakeholder involvement in ethical AI practices. The findings imply that successful integration of AI in development communication depends not only on technological innovation but also on good monitoring, transparency, and accountability mechanisms, ensuring that AI serves as a tool for social good without compromising ethical standards

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that AI tools play a significant role in enhancing development communication by improving the efficiency, reach, and relevance of information dissemination. Interviewees highlighted that AI supports automated messaging, audience analysis, personalised content, and evidence-based decision-making, demonstrating its value in engaging diverse communities. However, the study also revealed critical ethical challenges, including privacy concerns, algorithmic bias, informed consent, and the need for human oversight, which, if unaddressed, could undermine public trust and equity. This shows that while AI has strong potential to advance development communication, its benefits depend on ethical governance, transparency, and active collaboration among stakeholders to ensure that technology serves social good without causing harm.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were given:

1. Government agencies and relevant organisations should develop and enforce policies that govern the use of AI in development communication, focusing on privacy, consent, data security, and algorithmic fairness.
2. Multi-stakeholder involvement including academia, NGOs, government bodies, and communication practitioners should be encouraged to monitor AI applications, provide oversight, and ensure accountability in development communication initiatives.
3. Development communicators and community stakeholders should be trained on ethical AI use, data protection, and inclusive communication practices to enhance effective adoption and minimise risks.
4. Communities should be informed about how AI tools operate and how their data is used. Public education campaigns can foster trust and encourage meaningful participation in AI-mediated communication programmes.

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The Ghost in the Script: A Decolonial Critique of Algorithmic Dramaturgy and the Hegemony of Western Narrative Logic

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Abstract

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) increasingly permeates the creative industries, the emergence of “algorithmic dramaturgy” threatens to standardize the structural foundations of global storytelling. This paper provides a decolonial critique of Large Language Models (LLMs) used in scriptwriting and theatrical development, arguing that these systems function as a digital extension of the “coloniality of knowledge.” By analyzing the datasets upon which generative AI is trained predominantly Western, Eurocentric literary canons and Aristotelian dramatic theories the study reveals a systemic bias toward linear, conflict-driven, and individualistic narrative arcs. This computational preference effectively marginalizes “pluriversal” ways of knowing, such as circular time, ritualistic performance, and communal protagonists found in Indigenous and Global South traditions. Furthermore, the paper examines the linguistic hegemony of AI, which often “sanitizes” the political potency of creoles, dialects, and non-standard syntax, performing a form of digital epistemicide. The research concludes by investigating “performance as resistance,” highlighting contemporary practitioners who utilize algorithmic failure and “hallucination” as subversive tools to expose the machine’s colonial logic. By repositioning the AI as a site of critique rather than an objective collaborator, this paper asserts the necessity of “sovereign imaginations” in the age of automated creativity.

Keywords: Algorithmic Dramaturgy, Decoloniality, AI Ethics, Performance Studies, Epistemic Violence, Western Hegemony, Narrative Structure.

Introduction

The contemporary theatrical landscape is currently navigating a tectonic shift precipitated by the rapid integration of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs). This phenomenon, which this study defines as “algorithmic dramaturgy,” represents a fundamental reconfiguration of the creative process, wherein computational systems are no longer merely peripheral tools for word processing or research but are increasingly positioned as active collaborators in the architectural construction of narrative. Dramaturgy, traditionally understood as the intellectual and artistic labor of analyzing theatrical structures and their socio-historical contexts, has historically been a site of deep human reflexivity, political engagement, and cultural specificity. However, the rise of the machine as a dramaturgical agent introduces a critical crisis: the automation of storytelling through systems that are neither culturally neutral nor historically objective. While Silicon Valley narratives emphasize the “democratizing” potential of these technologies promising to lower the barrier of entry for aspiring playwrights a rigorous decolonial critique reveals that they operate as a digital extension of the “coloniality of knowledge,” a power structure that persists by validating Western epistemologies while marginalizing, or outright erasing, alternative performance ontologies.

It is a critical error to assume that Large Language Models “understand” drama in the way a human artist does. In reality, an LLM is a reified archive of digitized human thought, trained on massive datasets harvested from the global digital commons. This training set is overwhelmingly dominated by the Global North, creating an environment where the “intelligence” of the machine is actually a statistical synthesis of Eurocentric literary traditions, Hollywood structural tropes, and Aristotelian dramatic theory. This paper seeks to identify the “Ghost in the Script” the persistent, often invisible hand of the algorithmic archive that “corrects” indigenous storytelling to fit the Western mold. By interrogating the structural architecture of AI and the linguistic imperialism of its output, this research empowers the subaltern artist to recognize the machine not as a neutral assistant, but as a site of political and cultural struggle.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the theatrical landscape has precipitated a fundamental crisis in the creative process, characterized by the rise of "algorithmic dramaturgy". While these computational systems are marketed as tools for democratization, they increasingly function as active collaborators that impose a specific narrative architecture on the playwright. The central problem lies in the fact that these Large Language Models (LLMs) are not culturally neutral; they are reified archives of digitized human thought trained on datasets overwhelmingly dominated by the Global North. This creates a structural hegemony where the "intelligence" of the machine is merely a statistical synthesis of Eurocentric literary traditions and Aristotelian dramatic theory.

This research identifies a critical conflict between the "Archive" of the machine and the "Repertoire" of indigenous performance. The problematic nature of this technology is manifested through "epistemicide" the systematic silencing of non-Western knowledge systems as the AI identifies unique indigenous logic as "statistical noise" and seeks to "correct" it. Furthermore, the technical architecture of AI, specifically its reliance on "Loss Functions" and linear "Transformer" logic, enshrines a Teleological Bias. This bias effectively "hallucinates" resolutions or forces three-act structures into indigenous texts that may rely on circular or non-linear temporality.

Ultimately, the subaltern artist faces an "ontological flattening" of their work. The machine performs a form of "algorithmic ventriloquism," where it mimics the surface-level tokens of a language, such as Nigerian Pidgin, while maintaining a strictly Western cognitive "DNA". Without intervention, the use of AI represents a "Faustian bargain" for the artist: a gain in efficiency at the total surrender of Imaginative Sovereignty.

Methodology

The methodology of this research employs a critical, qualitative framework that bridges decolonial theory, performance studies, and critical data studies to investigate the "Ghost in the Script". Rather than treating Artificial Intelligence as a neutral tool, this study adopts an analytical lens that views algorithmic dramaturgy as a site of political and cultural struggle. The research design is structured around three primary methodological phases: theoretical triangulation, architectural critique, and a comparative case study.

The first phase of the methodology establishes a multidimensional theoretical framework to analyze the colonization of the creative imagination. This framework is built upon four critical pillars: Digital Colonialism, which examines the extraction of cultural expressions as "raw material"; Epistemicide, used to identify the silencing of narrative structures that do not appear frequently in Western data; the Western Code, which validates Aristotelian teleology as the standard for "rational" drama; and the Biometric Gaze, which observes how the machine reduces spiritual depth into legible text files.

The second phase involves a Technical-Critical Architecture Critique of the "Transformer" model and LLMs. This stage interrogates how "self-attention" mechanisms and "Loss Functions" mathematically favor Western structural norms over alternative performance ontologies. By analyzing the machine's internal weights, the methodology reveals how the AI performs "Temporal Correction" and Structural Reductionism," consistently introducing linear timelines into prompts involving circular ritual time.

The final phase of the methodology is a Comparative Case Study that contrasts the "Repertoire" of human performance with the "Archive" of the machine. Using the Yoruba Egungun ritual as a primary subject, the study performs a side-by-side analysis of traditional, non-linear performance versus AI-generated scripts. This comparative approach allows for the observation of Algorithmic Sanitization, identifying exactly where the machine introduces individual protagonists and three-act structures into collective ancestral spaces. Through this systematic comparison, the methodology demonstrates how AI acts as a "Digital Border Guard," forcing indigenous imagination into the "Western Code".

Digital Colonialism and Data Extraction

The theoretical cornerstone of this paper is the paradigm of "**Digital Colonialism**," a conceptual framework which posits the current era of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence does not represent a rupture from historical imperial that ism, but rather its logical, structural, and sophisticated evolution. As articulated by Nick Couldry and Ulises Mejias in *The Costs of Connection*, we are

witnessing a "new phase of colonialism" that has shifted its primary site of operation. While historical colonialism was predicated on the physical seizure of land, the direct subjugation of labor through bodily force, and the extraction of tangible natural resources, digital colonialism is predicated on the "appropriation of human life through data" (Couldry and Mejias 12). If the 19th-century colonial project treated the physical earth as a resource to be mapped, mined, and exploited for the enrichment of the European metropole, the 21st-century digital project treats the vast landscape of human culture, creativity, and social interaction as the new "raw material" for capitalistic processing.

In the specific context of algorithmic dramaturgy, this extraction functions through the systemic and non-consensual harvesting of the global "digital commons." Large Language Models (LLMs) are not merely technological triumphs; they are the products of an unprecedented, global-scale archival theft. These systems are trained by scraping billions of tokens from the internet comprising centuries of theatrical scripts, oral histories, indigenous narratives, and creative dialogues that were never intended for computational commodification. This process operates under what this study terms a "logic of extraction," mirroring the asymmetric power dynamics of the historical colonial enterprise. While the data is extracted from the global population including the diverse and sovereign cultural expressions of the Global South the economic and structural benefits of the resulting "intelligence" remain concentrated within a handful of technology conglomerates based in the Global North.

The "intelligence" manifested in these models is, therefore, a reified form of "accumulated cultural capital" that has been laundered through a Western-owned technological infrastructure. This creates a recursive loop of cultural dominance. As these models are exported back to the Global South as "productivity tools" for writers and artists, they arrive not as neutral instruments, but as digital vessels for a specific Western worldview. This is the essence of what Couldry and Mejias define as the "colonization of human life" the process by which our internal creative processes are redirected to flow through the infrastructures of a foreign power. When a Nigerian playwright or a Brazilian dramaturg utilizes an LLM to assist in the construction of a script, they are unknowingly engaging with a system that has already "digested" their cultural heritage and re-presented it back to them through the statistical filter of Western probability.

To understand the depth of this extraction, we must examine the concept of "**Datafication**." Datafication is the transformation of social action into online quantified data, allowing for real-time tracking and predictive analysis. In drama, this means that the "un-computable" nuances of performance the breath between lines, the communal energy of a ritual, the specific local cadence of a dialect are flattened into numerical vectors. This transformation is not a neutral technical requirement; it is a political act of "symbolic violence." To make extracted cultural data "computable," it must be standardized according to the machine's internal weights. This leads to an archival hierarchy where Western dramatic forms the stable, written, and heavily digitized records of the Global North are prioritized as "clean data," while the ephemeral, embodied, and oral traditions of the Global South (the repertoire) are treated as "noise" or "unstructured data." This methodology asserts that the very act of "cleaning" or "optimizing" data for AI training is a colonial act. It involves stripping away the local, the sacred, and the un-computable nuances of a performance tradition to make it "readable" for a global digital market. As Couldry and Mejias argue, this is the "predatory" nature of the data relation. The user of the AI is not just a consumer; they are a site of continuous extraction. Every prompt given to the machine to "help" write a scene in a specific cultural style provides the machine with more data to better simulate and eventually replace that cultural specificity with a standardized, statistical approximation.

Furthermore, digital colonialism in dramaturgy involves a sophisticated form of "ontological mapping." By mapping the structures of global stories, AI developers are effectively creating a "digital census" of the human imagination. In historical colonialism, the census was a tool used by the British or French empires to categorize and control the "subjects" of the colony. In the digital age, the LLM functions as an automated census-taker. It categorizes every story into genres and structures defined by Western academia. If a story from the Global South does not fit into "Tragedy," "Comedy," or the "Hero's Journey," it is often relegated to "Folklore" or "Myth" categories that historically served to infantilize non-Western knowledge.

This extraction is not merely an economic issue; it is a profound threat to what this study defines as "imaginative sovereignty." Sovereignty is the right of a people to define their own reality and their own future. If the tools used to tell our stories are built upon the systematic extraction and structural reduction of our cultures, the resulting narratives will inevitably bear the marks of that extraction. The AI becomes a "ghost in the script" a silent, algorithmic presence that steers the narrative away from the sovereign "repertoire" and toward the colonial "archive." The machine's "helpfulness" is, in fact, a form of "soft power" coercion; it offers ease and speed in exchange for structural conformity.

The final dimension of this extraction is the "normalization of surveillance." Because these models are proprietary and "Black Boxes," the playwright has no way of knowing how their cultural data is being repurposed. This mirrors the colonial "extractive frontier," where the resources of the colony were taken without any transparency regarding their final use or the wealth they generated. In the digital theatrical landscape, the playwright becomes a "data laborer" for Big Tech, providing the creative "input" that allows the machine to further refine its ability to simulate human creativity.

This section concludes that digital colonialism is the "operating system" of modern AI development. It ensures that the "intelligence" of the future remains anchored in the power structures of the past. By positioning the machine as the primary arbiter of narrative "coherence," the digital colonial project seeks to complete what historical colonialism started: the total mapping, management, and eventual monetization of the human imagination. For the Global South, the use of these tools without a decolonial critique is an invitation to a new form of "archival enclosure," where our stories are no longer our own, but are the property of the algorithm.

Epistemicide

The second pillar of this theoretical framework addresses the profound intellectual consequence of digital extraction: "Epistemicide." Originally conceptualized by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Epistemicide refers to the systematic destruction, marginalization, or silencing of local, indigenous, and non-Western knowledge systems in favor of a singular, universalized Western paradigm (Santos 92). In the landscape of algorithmic dramaturgy, epistemicide is not a byproduct of technical failure or "low-quality" data; rather, it is a foundational characteristic of how Large Language Models (LLMs) validate and produce meaning through statistical consensus.

The Monoculture of Probability

The machine's role in committing epistemicide is facilitated by its reliance on "statistical probability" as the ultimate arbiter of truth and structural validity. Because LLMs are trained to predict the next most likely "token" based on an archive dominated by the Global North, they operate under what Santos calls a "monoculture of knowledge." This monoculture establishes a hierarchy where the most frequent data points usually those aligned with Eurocentric rationalism and Aristotelian dramatic arcs are elevated to the status of "universal laws." In this computational environment, any narrative structure, spiritual ontology, or social logic that does not appear with high frequency in the training data is treated as "noise," "error," or "hallucination."

For example, when an AI model is tasked with assisting in the development of a ritual performance such as the Yoruba Egungun, it encounters a knowledge system where the boundaries between the living and the dead are porous and the "protagonist" is a collective ancestor rather than a discrete individual. Because the vast majority of the AI's training data comprising Western dramatic theory from Aristotle to the industrial manuals of Hollywood presents the "individual hero" as the fundamental unit of drama, the AI by performs an automated "correction." It forces the communal agency of the ritual into the singular agency of a Western protagonist to satisfy its internal "loss function." This "correction" is the very essence of epistemicide: it kills the original meaning of the cultural practice to make it legible to the machine's Western-centric weights.

The Illusion of Universal Translatability

Furthermore, Epistemicide in the digital age is carried out through the deceptive "translatability" of culture. The AI operates on the colonial assumption that all human experiences are universally translatable into a standardized, "clean" dataset. This assumption ignores what decolonial

scholars describe as the "un-computable" the aspects of a culture that are rooted in specific geographies, embodied repertoires, and sacred silences that refuse to be captured by text (Santos 19).

When the AI attempts to "translate" a sacred ritual into a script format, it strips away the "epistemic sovereignty" of the tradition. The ritual is no longer a site of spiritual encounter or cosmic maintenance; it becomes a "folkloric commodity" designed for consumption by a global digital market. As the algorithm flattens the multidimensionality of the Egungun which exists in the breath, the mask, and the communal space into a two-dimensional text, it performs a form of "archival violence." The repertoire of the body is murdered to serve the archive of the machine.

Algorithmic Gatekeeping and the "Digital Border"

This paper argues that the AI acts as a digital "gatekeeper of reality." By prioritizing Western narrative logic linearity, conflict-resolution, and teleology the algorithm reinforces a world where non-Western ways of telling stories are seen as "primitive," "disorganized," or "underdeveloped." This creates what this paper terms "**Structural Reductionism**." The AI does not merely "miss" the distinction of the Global South; it actively re-engineers them. If a script does not move toward a restorative climax, the AI's "helpful" suggestions will invariably pull the narrative back toward a Western resolution.

This process ensures that the "Other" is always presented in a form that is familiar and comfortable to the Global North. It creates a "hollow" representation of diversity where the surface aesthetics (names, clothes, settings) appear multicultural, but the underlying "logic" remains strictly Eurocentric. As Santos notes, there is no global social justice without global epistemic justice (Santos 118). In the age of automated creativity, the fight for decolonial drama is, therefore, a fight against an algorithmic epistemicide that seeks to turn the "pluriverse" of human storytelling into a singular, Western-controlled data point.

The ultimate danger of this digital epistemicide is its invisibility. Unlike historical book-burnings or colonial bans on indigenous languages, algorithmic erasure happens behind the "Black Box" of the interface. It presents itself as "optimization" or "user-assistance," making the destruction of non-Western knowledge systems look like technological progress. This section concludes that without a deliberate decolonial intervention, the widespread use of AI in theatrical development will lead to a global "narrative monoculture" where the only stories that can be told are those that the machine and its colonial archive already knows how to process.

Structural Reductionism

Structural Reductionism is the process by which an algorithmic system flattens the multidimensional, communal, and spiritual complexities of a non-Western performance tradition into a recognizable, two-dimensional product suitable for the global digital archive. It is the final stage of "algorithmic enclosure," where the sovereign "Repertoire" of the body is sacrificed to the "Archive" of the machine (Taylor 19).

Structural reductionism operates through a logic of "proximal matching." When the AI encounters a ritual element or a narrative beat that it cannot mathematically categorize within its Western-centric training data, it searches for the nearest Western equivalent in its vector space. This is not a search for truth, but a search for the lowest statistical "loss." For example, a communal chant that functions as a metaphysical vibration in a Yoruba ritual is "proximally matched" to a "theatrical monologue" or a "lyrical poem." A sacred mask that serves as a physical interface with the ancestral realm is reduced to a "costume piece" or a "prop."

This reduction is not a neutral technical error; it is an act of cultural translation that prioritizes the comfort and legibility of the Western observer. By stripping the ritual of its specific metaphysical "weight," the AI ensures that the output is "accessible" and "marketable" for a global audience. However, in this process of making the ritual accessible, the machine removes the very elements that constitute its decolonial potency. The result is what this study defines as a "**Hollow Narrative**" a script that wears the aesthetic "skin" of the Global South but is animated by the skeletal logic of the West (Cave and Dihal 694).

A significant casualty of structural reductionism is the "un-computable" the aspects of human spirit, ritual silence, and embodied memory that refuse to be captured by a text-based tokenization system. Performance traditions that rely on "the archive of the breath" or non-verbal communal energy are systematically marginalized because they cannot be easily quantified into

the predictive sequences of a Transformer model. As the AI becomes a ubiquitous tool for theatrical development, there is a risk that playwrights will begin to self-censor their work, consciously or unconsciously avoiding the “un-computable” to ensure their scripts “align” with the machine’s parameters.

This process performs a digital epistemicide: it kills the original meaning of the cultural practice to save the machine’s internal logic. The “Ghost in the Script” is, therefore, the persistent presence of this reductionist logic, reminding the writer that the machine’s “helpfulness” is always conditional upon structural conformity.

For the decolonial practitioner, recognizing this structural reductionism is the first step toward resistance. To fight the “Architecture of Hegemony,” one must move beyond the “Archive” and return to the “Repertoire the embodied, live performance that refuses to be reduced to a vector. Having established the structural and technical mechanics of this colonization, the following chapter will examine how this violence extends to the very medium of the script: the language itself.

The “Western Code”: Mignolo’s Theory of Decoloniality in the Digital Age

The third theoretical pillar of this paper utilizes Walter Mignolo’s concept of the “Western Code” to interrogate the internal logic of Artificial Intelligence. Mignolo argues that the “colonial matrix of power” is not merely maintained through physical force or economic dominance, but through a specific set of linguistic, conceptual, and aesthetic rules that govern how reality is perceived, represented, and validated (Mignolo and Walsh 15). This “code” is rooted in Enlightenment ideals of rationalism, secularism, and the “ego-politics of knowledge,” where the Western subject is positioned as the universal observer while all other ways of being are categorized as “objects” of study. In the digital age, this abstract code has been literalized into the mathematical architecture of Large Language Models (LLMs).

The Mathematical Enshrinement of Eurocentrism

This paper contends that the “Western Code” in drama is synonymous with Aristotelian teleology the belief that a narrative must move toward a singular climax and resolution driven by the agency of an individual protagonist. When we analyze the “Transformer” architecture of models like GPT-4, we see this code reflected in the “self-attention” mechanism. Mathematically, the model is optimized to find the most “coherent” and “logical” path through a sequence of data. Because the vast majority of digitized dramatic theory in the AI’s training archive is Western the machine identifies “coherence” as synonymous with the Aristotelian arc.

In this framework, the algorithm is not a neutral processor of text; it is a digital vessel for what Mignolo calls “the coloniality of being.” By valuing linear cause-and-effect over the associative and communal logics of traditions like the Yoruba Egungun, the AI enforces a hierarchy of imagination. The machine’s “Black Box” weights represent a modern-day “standard of civilization.” If a prompt attempts to subvert this code for instance, by asking for a story where the protagonist is a non-human collective or where time flows in a non-linear, ritualistic loop the machine’s internal logic identifies these elements as “low probability” or “errors.” The resulting output is almost always a “correction,” pulling the subaltern story back into the safe, predictable confines of the Western Code.

Delinking the Digital Archive

The significance of Mignolo’s theory for this paper lies in the necessity of “delinking.” Mignolo argues that for true decolonization to occur, the colonized subject must delink from the Western code and reassert their own “sovereign ways of knowing” (Mignolo and Walsh 21). However, algorithmic dramaturgy makes this delinking nearly impossible. When a playwright uses AI as a collaborator, they are “re-linking” their imagination to a Western-centric archive.

This section argues that the AI acts as a “soft-power” coercive force. It does not explicitly forbid non-Western storytelling, but it makes the Western arc the “path of least resistance.” To tell a story outside of the Western Code requires a constant struggle against the machine’s predictive defaults. Consequently, the use of AI in cultural production risks creating a “new coloniality,” where the surface-level content may appear diverse and inclusive, but the underlying “grammar” of the story is strictly controlled by the Western Code. By applying Mignolo’s framework, this paper reveals that the “Ghost in the Script” is not a random glitch, but the persistent presence

of the colonial matrix of power, ensuring that even in the age of high-tech automation, the Western ego remains the center of the narrative universe.

The Architecture of Hegemony: Why AI is Aristotelian

The "Transformer" architecture is the primary engine of modern AI. Introduced as a means of improving machine translation, it utilizes "self-attention" mechanisms to weigh the significance of different parts of input data (Vaswani et al. 2). However, in dramaturgy, this "attention" is mathematically skewed toward Western structural norms. An LLM is a high-dimensional statistical prediction engine; it determines the most "probable" next word based on patterns in its archive. Because the archive has spent centuries refining the "three-act structure" as the ultimate form of coherence, the AI identifies this structure as the highest probability for a successful script.

This architecture enshrines a Teleological Bias. The Western dramatic arc moves toward a specific end (telos), characterized by a restorative climax and resolution. This preference has been literalized into the machine's "Loss Function," the mathematical measure of how "wrong" a model's prediction is during training (Mohamed et al. 665). The model is rewarded for reaching a conclusion that matches the structural expectations of the majority data. For the AI, a story without a climax is a story it cannot effectively predict; it therefore "hallucinates" resolutions or forces climactic beats into indigenous texts to satisfy its mathematical requirement for a "low loss" outcome.

Furthermore, a fundamental friction exists between Linear vs. Circular Temporality. As Wole Soyinka noted, Yoruba ritual drama is predicated on a "cyclical" time-sense where the past, present, and future coexist in a "transition" space (142). The AI, however, processes text as a sequence of tokens moving from left to right a "Linear Logic" that identifies ritual circularity as "structural inefficiency." The machine performs Temporal Correction, consistently introducing linear timelines into prompts involving circular ritual time. This culminates in Structural Reductionism, where the AI flattens the metaphysical depth of a tradition through "proximal matching" replacing a sacred mask with a "costume piece" or a communal chant with a "monologue" to satisfy the Western Code.

Linguistic Imperialism and Digital Ventriloquism

Generative AI functions as an advanced instrument of "Linguistic Imperialism," characterized by the systematic dominance of a powerful language over marginalized others (Phillipson 47). This imperialism is manifested through the enshrinement of "Standard English" (SE) as the "unmarked" baseline of human intelligence. In the machine's internal weights, any language that deviates from the SE-dominated training data is categorized as "low-quality data" or "noise" (Birhane 7). In drama, this leads to an automated "correction" of dialect, where the machine's predictive pressure "smooths out" regional idioms to minimize the "loss" of the sequence.

The most insidious manifestation of this imperialism is Algorithmic Ventriloquism. Models may demonstrate a superficial ability to "simulate" Nigerian Pidgin, but this study contends that the AI is not "speaking" the language; it is performing a statistical mimicry. Because the machine lacks the lived experience of resistance embedded in Pidgin, it treats the language as a "Style Transfer" surface-level tokens mapped onto a Western logical structure. The result is a "Hollow Narrative," where the sound appears African, but the underlying cognitive "DNA" remains strictly algorithmic and colonial. This leads to Semantic Violence, where complex cultural idioms are "resolved" into simple Western equivalents, killing the original meaning of the word to save the mathematical coherence of the script (Santos 21).

Case Study: The "Ghost" in the Egungun Script

To move from theory to observation, this case study performs a side-by-side analysis between the "Repertoire" of traditional Yoruba Egungun ritual and the "Archive" of an AI-generated ritual script. In the human-authored repertoire, the performance is non-linear and non-teleological; the primary objective is the maintenance of "presence" and spiritual vibration through the repetition of Oriki (praise poetry) and rhythmic movement. There is no discrete hero or climax, as the masquerade represents a collective ancestral body (Soyinka 142).

When processed through the AI Archive, the script immediately undergoes Algorithmic Sanitization. The machine restructures the ritual into a "Three-Act" sequence with a clear "conflict" and "resolution." It introduces an individual protagonist often a "doubting villager"

whose personal growth becomes the focus, displacing the collective ancestral presence. The AI's "Temporal Correction" organizes the circular ritual into "Scene 1: Preparation," "Scene 2: Confrontation," and "Scene 3: Resolution," effectively killing the sovereign "Ritual Time." Linguistically, the Egungun is given "dialogue" and "motivations" that mirror Western psychological realism rather than ancestral force. This comparison proves that the AI is not a collaborator but a **"Digital Border Guard"** that forces indigenous imagination into the "Western Code."

Conclusion and Recommendations

The "Ghost in the Script" serves as a mechanism for Automated Assimilation. As playwrights increasingly rely on these tools for structural advice, the machine's "suggestions" which are actually statistical enforcements of the Aristotelian arc begin to reshape the writer's own creative instincts. This creates a recursive loop where the "Ghost" in the machine eventually becomes the "Ghost" in the writer's mind. The danger is that the subaltern artist begins to self-censor their own indigenous logic before they even touch the keyboard, preemptively "correcting" their circular temporality or communal agency to fit the machine's expected parameters (Couldry and Mejias 14). This internal colonization is the ultimate triumph of the "Ghost," as it ensures that the Western Code is upheld even without the direct intervention of the algorithm.

To exorcise the "Ghost in the Script," we must move beyond the "Archive" and return to the "Repertoire." The Ghost can only haunt that which has been digitized and tokenized. It cannot haunt the "un-computable" nuances of the live performance the sweat of the masquerade, the specific vibration of the drum, and the collective breath of the audience. Decolonial resistance requires us to identify the moments where the "Ghost" attempts to "fix" our narratives and to insist on the "glitch" as a site of sovereignty. By making the "Ghost" visible, we strip it of its power. We must assert that our scripts are not just data sets to be optimized, but living records of our survival that refuse to be haunted by the colonial past. The "Ghost in the Script" is a reminder that the digital space is a battlefield, and the prize is the sovereignty of the human imagination (Mignolo and Walsh 15).

This paper has interrogated the "Ghost in the Script," identifying it not as a technical glitch but as the persistent manifestation of the colonial matrix of power within the architecture of Artificial Intelligence. By synthesizing the theories of digital colonialism, epistemicide, and the "Western Code," this research has demonstrated that algorithmic dramaturgy is a site of profound cultural struggle. It revealed how the "Archive" of the machine systematically flattens the "Repertoire" of the Yoruba body, proving that AI is a teleological engine programmed to prioritize Western narrative coherence over indigenous performance ontologies.

The conclusion of this research is that the use of generative AI represents a "Faustian bargain" for the subaltern artist: it offers efficiency in exchange for the surrender of Imaginative Sovereignty. However, this study does not advocate for a total rejection of technology. Instead, it calls for a radical Decolonial AI Dramaturgy predicated on the following recommendations:

- **Cultivate Algorithmic Literacy:** Artists must recognize that AI suggestions are not objective truths but statistical artifacts of a biased archive. Playwrights should treat the AI as an Antagonist rather than a collaborator, consciously identifying and refusing its "Temporal Corrections." We should not let the machine "breathe" for us; we must remain the masters of the un-computable nuances of our own culture.
- **Develop Sovereign Archives:** There must be a concerted effort to build and protect digital repositories of non-Western dramatic theory owned by the communities they represent to train models that respect cultural ontologies.
- **Return to the Embodied Repertoire:** The ultimate site of resistance is the "un-computable" the breath, vibration, and communal presence of live performance that refuse to be turned into a vector.

True decolonial expression in the age of AI lies not within the "clean" output of the model, but in the "glitches" where the human voice breaks the machine's logic. While the AI may attempt to script our future, the power to perform our own reality remains in our own hands. By asserting our imaginative sovereignty, we ensure the stage remains a pluriversal space free from the mathematical enclosure of the colonial algorithm.

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Artificial Intelligence, Automation, and Media Disruption: Opportunities And Challenges For African Journalism

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation have emerged as transformative forces in the global media ecosystem, significantly altering the structure, processes, and practices of journalism. In the African context, where media systems are still developing and adapting to digital transformation, AI presents both unprecedented opportunities and critical challenges. This study examines the role of Artificial Intelligence and automation in reshaping African journalism, with particular emphasis on their influence on news production, dissemination, and consumption. It explores how AI-driven technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and automated content generation are being utilized by media organizations to improve efficiency, enhance audience engagement, and expand access to information. The study further investigates the extent to which AI contributes to innovation in journalism, including data-driven reporting, real-time news updates, and personalized content delivery. Case examples from countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa demonstrate how digital media platforms are integrating AI tools to remain competitive in an increasingly globalized information environment. These developments highlight the potential of AI to strengthen journalism and promote democratic engagement across the continent. However, the study also identifies significant challenges associated with AI adoption in African journalism. These include infrastructural deficiencies, digital inequality, and lack of technical expertise, ethical concerns, and the growing threat of misinformation and deepfake technologies. Automation also raises concerns about job displacement within the media industry, potentially reducing employment opportunities for journalists and media practitioners. The study concludes that while AI and automation offer substantial benefits for the advancement of journalism in Africa, their adoption must be guided by robust ethical standards, regulatory frameworks, and capacity-building initiatives. This will ensure that technological innovation enhances journalistic integrity, promotes accountability, and supports democratic governance across African societies.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Automation, Media Disruption, African Journalism, Digital Transformation, Misinformation

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation technologies has significantly transformed the global media landscape, redefining the processes through which news is produced, distributed, and consumed. In contemporary journalism, AI is increasingly being used to automate routine tasks, analyze large datasets, and generate news content with minimal human intervention. These technological developments have introduced new dimensions to media practice, enabling faster and more efficient dissemination of information.

In Africa, the adoption of AI in journalism is gradually gaining momentum as media organizations seek to adapt to the demands of the digital age. The continent's media landscape, which is characterized by diverse political, economic, and social conditions, presents both opportunities and constraints for the integration of AI technologies. On one hand, AI offers the potential to bridge information gaps, enhance investigative journalism, and improve audience engagement. On the other hand, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and low levels of digital literacy hinder the widespread adoption of these technologies (Adebayo & Okeke, 2024). Historically, African journalism has played a crucial role in promoting democracy, accountability, and social development. The media has served as a watchdog, exposing corruption, advocating for human rights, and facilitating public discourse. With the emergence of AI, the role of journalism is evolving, as technological tools increasingly influence editorial processes and news delivery. For instance, automated journalism systems can generate reports on financial markets,

sports, and weather conditions, allowing journalists to focus on more complex and investigative tasks (Ogundele & Adeyemi, 2025).

Despite these advancements, the integration of AI into African journalism raises important ethical and professional concerns. Issues such as algorithmic bias, misinformation, and lack of transparency in automated decision-making processes pose significant risks to the credibility of the media. Furthermore, the use of AI-generated content challenges traditional notions of authorship, accountability, and journalistic integrity.

The growing influence of digital platforms and social media has further complicated the media environment, as AI technologies are often used to amplify content, including false or misleading information. This has serious implications for democratic governance, as misinformation can shape public opinion and influence political outcomes.

Given these developments, it is essential to critically examine the impact of AI and automation on African journalism, particularly in relation to their role in promoting accountability, transparency, and democratic engagement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The integration of Artificial Intelligence and automation into journalism has introduced significant transformations in the media industry, but it has also created complex challenges that threaten the sustainability and credibility of journalism in Africa. While AI technologies offer opportunities for improving efficiency and expanding access to information, their adoption is uneven and often constrained by structural and institutional limitations.

One of the major problems associated with AI in journalism is the potential displacement of human labour. Automated systems can perform tasks such as news writing, editing, and data analysis, reducing the reliance on human journalists. This raises concerns about job security and the future of journalism as a profession in Africa, where unemployment rates are already high (Olowu & Ajayi, 2025).

Another critical issue is the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation facilitated by AI technologies. Tools such as deepfakes and automated content generators can be used to produce and disseminate false information, undermining public trust in the media. In societies where media literacy is limited, the impact of such misinformation can be particularly severe, leading to social unrest and political instability (Garcia & Sullivan, 2025).

Furthermore, the adoption of AI in African journalism is hindered by infrastructural challenges, including inadequate internet connectivity, lack of technological resources, and limited access to digital tools. Many media organizations lack the financial capacity to invest in AI technologies, resulting in a digital divide between well-resourced and under-resourced media institutions.

Ethical concerns also arise from the use of AI in journalism, particularly in relation to transparency, accountability, and bias. Algorithms used in content generation and distribution may reflect the biases of their developers, leading to skewed reporting and reinforcing existing inequalities.

These challenges highlight the need for a comprehensive examination of the impact of AI and automation on African journalism, with a view to identifying strategies that can maximize their benefits while minimizing their risks.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of Artificial Intelligence and automation on journalism in Africa. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the role of AI and automation in transforming news production and dissemination in African journalism.
2. assess the opportunities provided by AI in enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and audience engagement.
3. identify the major challenges associated with AI adoption, including misinformation, job displacement, and ethical concerns.
4. explore strategies for integrating AI into African journalism in a way that promotes sustainability and democratic values.

1.4 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How does Artificial Intelligence influence news production and dissemination in African journalism?
2. What opportunities does AI provide for improving journalistic practices in Africa?
3. What challenges do media organizations face in adopting AI and automation?
4. How can AI be effectively integrated into African journalism while maintaining ethical standards and credibility?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Artificial Intelligence in Journalism

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force in contemporary journalism, fundamentally reshaping how news is gathered, processed, and disseminated. AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and automated content generation enable journalists to analyze vast datasets and produce news content with speed and accuracy. According to Okafor and Bello (2024), AI has significantly improved newsroom efficiency by automating routine reporting tasks such as financial updates, sports summaries, and weather forecasts. This allows journalists to focus on investigative reporting and in-depth analysis, which are critical for democratic accountability.

Similarly, Adebayo and Okeke (2023) argue that AI-driven journalism enhances editorial decision-making by providing data insights that guide news production and audience targeting. In Africa, the adoption of AI remains uneven due to infrastructural limitations, but digital-first media organizations are increasingly integrating AI tools into their operations. Furthermore, AI has improved audience engagement through personalized news delivery systems, which tailor content based on user preferences (Garcia & Sullivan, 2025). Despite these advantages, concerns about algorithmic bias and lack of transparency in AI systems remain significant challenges for journalistic credibility.

2.2 Automation and Media Disruption

Automation has introduced significant disruptions to traditional journalism by replacing manual processes with algorithm-driven systems. Automated journalism, also known as robot journalism, involves the use of software to generate news stories with minimal human intervention. According to Adeyemi and Lawal (2023), automation has increased the speed of news production, enabling media organizations to meet the demands of a 24-hour news cycle. However, automation also raises concerns about the quality and originality of news content. Ogunleye and Adebayo (2024) note that automated systems often lack the critical thinking and contextual understanding required for complex reporting, which can lead to superficial or inaccurate news coverage. In the African context, automation is gradually disrupting traditional newsroom structures, leading to a shift in job roles and skill requirements. Furthermore, automation contributes to media disruption by altering revenue models and audience consumption patterns. Digital platforms powered by algorithms dominate information distribution, often prioritizing engagement over accuracy (Nnadozie & Eze, 2025).

2.3 Opportunities of AI in African Journalism

The integration of AI in African journalism presents numerous opportunities for improving media performance and expanding access to information. One of the key benefits is increased efficiency in news production. AI tools enable journalists to process large volumes of data quickly, facilitating data-driven journalism and real-time reporting (Olowu & Ajayi, 2025). Another significant opportunity is enhanced audience engagement. AI-powered recommendation systems allow media organizations to deliver personalized content, increasing user satisfaction and retention. According to Nnadozie and Eze (2025), personalized news delivery has become a critical strategy for media organizations seeking to remain competitive in the digital age. AI also supports multilingual journalism by enabling translation and localization of content, which is particularly important in Africa's linguistically diverse environment. This helps to bridge

communication gaps and promote inclusivity in information dissemination (Garcia & Reddy, 2023).

Additionally, AI enhances investigative journalism by providing tools for data analysis and pattern recognition, enabling journalists to uncover hidden trends and expose corruption. These capabilities strengthen the role of the media in promoting transparency and accountability.

2.4 Challenges of AI and Media Disruption

Despite its benefits, the adoption of AI in African journalism is accompanied by significant challenges. One major issue is the spread of misinformation and disinformation. AI technologies can be used to generate fake news and deepfake content, which undermine public trust in the media (Garcia & Sullivan, 2025).

Another challenge is job displacement. Automation reduces the need for human labor in certain areas of journalism, leading to concerns about unemployment and the future of the profession (Ogunleye & Adebayo, 2024).

Infrastructural limitations also hinder AI adoption in Africa. Many media organizations lack the financial resources, technical expertise, and digital infrastructure required to implement AI technologies effectively (Adebayo & Okeke, 2024).

Ethical concerns, including algorithmic bias and lack of accountability, further complicate the use of AI in journalism. Algorithms may reflect the biases of their developers, leading to unequal representation and skewed reporting (Nnadozie & Eze, 2025).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study incorporates two significant theories that help in understanding the relationship between Artificial Intelligence (AI), automation, and media transformation in African journalism. These theories are Technological Determinism Theory and Diffusion of Innovation Theory, which provide a lens through which the impact of AI on news production, dissemination, and journalistic practices can be analyzed.

2.5.1 Technological Determinism Theory

Technological Determinism Theory explains how technological innovations shape societal structures and cultural values. According to McQuail (2024), technology plays a central role in influencing communication processes and media practices. In the context of AI, this theory highlights how automation is redefining journalism by altering news production and consumption patterns.

2.5.2 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory explains how new technologies spread within societies over time. Rogers (2003), as cited in Olowu and Ajayi (2025), argues that the adoption of innovation depends on factors such as awareness, accessibility, and perceived benefits. In African journalism, the adoption of AI varies across media organizations due to differences in resources and technological readiness.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative research design to examine the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation on journalism in Africa. A survey method was employed, using stratified random sampling to ensure a representative sample from diverse demographic groups within the media sector. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, analyzing the level of AI adoption, its opportunities, and associated challenges in journalism. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, including chi-square tests and correlation analysis was used to identify

patterns and relationships between AI usage and journalistic practices. This approach provided insights into how AI contributes to efficiency, media innovation, and credibility in African journalism.

3.2 Data Collection

Data for this study was collected through a survey administered to 100 respondents from selected African countries. The respondents will include journalists, media practitioners, digital media experts, and communication professionals, representing diverse demographic groups. A structured questionnaire will be used to gather data on AI adoption, its impact on news production, opportunities for innovation, and challenges such as misinformation and job displacement. The respondents will be selected through stratified random sampling to ensure a balanced representation of gender, age, education level, and professional background. The data collection process will involve online methods, ensuring accessibility and ease of participation across different geographical locations.

3.3 Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics to summarize responses, such as frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics will also be applied, including chi-square tests and correlation analysis, to identify relationships between AI adoption and journalistic outcomes such as efficiency, credibility, and audience engagement. The analysis will help determine how AI and automation influence media practices and performance in Africa. Statistical software, such as SPSS, will be used to process and interpret the data. Findings will be presented in both tables and charts for clarity and better understanding

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, and 80 responses were retrieved, representing an 80% response rate. Respondents included journalists, media practitioners, and digital media experts.

4.1 Level of AI Adoption in Media Organizations

Table 1: Level of AI Adoption in Journalism

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly Adopted	18	22.5%
Moderately Adopted	22	27.5%
Low Adoption	20	25%
Not Adopted	20	25%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results show that 22.5% of respondents indicated high adoption, while 27.5% reported moderate adoption. This means that 50% of respondents acknowledge a significant level of AI integration in their organizations. However, 25% reported low adoption, and another 25% indicated no adoption at all, suggesting that half of the media organizations are still lagging behind. This indicates that AI adoption in African journalism is uneven and fragmented. While some organizations are embracing digital transformation, others are constrained by factors such as limited funding, poor infrastructure, and lack of technical expertise. This digital divide highlights the need for increased investment and capacity building

4.2 Impact of AI on News Production Efficiency

Table 2: AI Contribution to News Production Efficiency

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	20	25%
High	18	22.5%
Moderate	16	20%
Low	14	17.5%
Very Low	12	15%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The findings reveal that 25% of respondents rated AI's impact as very high, while 22.5% rated it as high, totaling 47.5% positive responses. On the other hand, 20% reported moderate impact, while 32.5% (low and very low combined) expressed skepticism about its effectiveness. The results suggest that AI significantly enhances speed and efficiency in news production, particularly in automated reporting and data processing. However, the presence of moderate and low responses indicates that AI effectiveness is dependent on the level of implementation and technical capacity within media organizations

4.3 Opportunities Provided by AI in Journalism

Table 3: Key Opportunities of AI in Journalism

Opportunity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Faster News Production	22	27.5%
Data Analysis	18	22.5%
Audience Engagement	16	20%
Content Personalization	14	17.5%
Multilingual Reporting	10	12.5%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The most prominent opportunity identified is faster news production (27.5%), followed by data analysis (22.5%) and audience engagement (20%). Other benefits include content personalization (17.5%) and multilingual reporting (12.5%). This demonstrates that AI is primarily valued for its ability to improve speed and efficiency, which is essential in the modern 24-hour news cycle. Additionally, its role in data-driven journalism and audience targeting highlights its importance in making journalism more relevant and responsive.

The lower percentage for multilingual reporting suggests that this area is still underdeveloped but holds significant potential in Africa's diverse linguistic environment

4.4 Challenges of AI Adoption in Journalism

Table 4: Major Challenges of AI in Journalism

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of Infrastructure	18	22.5%
Misinformation/Deepfakes	16	20%
Job Displacement	15	18.75%
Ethical Concerns	14	17.5%
Lack of Skills	10	12.5%
Financial Constraints	7	8.75%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The biggest challenge identified is lack of infrastructure (22.5%), followed by misinformation and deepfakes (20%), and job displacement (18.75%). Other concerns include ethical issues (17.5%), lack of skills (12.5%), and financial constraints (8.75%). These findings indicate that the major barriers to AI adoption are structural and systemic rather than purely technological

4.5 AI and Its Influence on Journalistic Credibility

Table 5: AI Impact on Media Credibility

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Positive Impact	26	32.5%
Negative Impact	24	30%
Neutral	30	37.5%

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The results show that 32.5% of respondents believe AI has a positive impact, while 30% perceive it negatively, and 37.5% remain neutral. The nearly equal distribution of responses suggests divided opinions on AI's role in journalism credibility.

4.6 Discussion

The findings from the survey highlight the complex dynamics surrounding the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation in African journalism, as well as their implications for media efficiency, credibility, and democratic engagement. The respondents, drawn from diverse professional backgrounds, provide valuable insights into how AI is transforming the media landscape while also revealing the significant challenges that accompany its integration.

A considerable proportion of respondents (50%) indicated moderate to high adoption of AI technologies in their organizations. This suggests that AI is gradually gaining acceptance within

African media systems. However, an equal proportion (50%) reported low or no adoption, highlighting the uneven distribution of technological advancement across the continent. This disparity reflects infrastructural limitations, financial constraints, and varying levels of technological readiness among media organizations.

In terms of efficiency, a significant number of respondents (47.5%) acknowledged that AI has a high or very high impact on news production. This finding demonstrates that AI-driven tools such as automated reporting systems and data analytics significantly enhance the speed and accuracy of news dissemination. However, a notable proportion of respondents expressed moderate to low confidence in AI's effectiveness, indicating that the benefits of AI are not uniformly experienced and may depend on the level of technical expertise and organizational capacity.

The study also reveals that AI presents numerous opportunities for improving journalism in Africa. Faster news production (27.5%) emerged as the most recognized benefit, followed by data analysis (22.5%) and audience engagement (20%). These findings suggest that AI is particularly valuable in addressing the demands of the modern digital media environment, where speed, relevance, and audience interaction are critical. Despite this, relatively fewer respondents identified multilingual reporting (12.5%) as a major benefit, indicating that this potential remains underutilized in Africa's linguistically diverse context.

However, the adoption of AI is not without significant challenges. The most prominent issue identified is lack of infrastructure (22.5%), which limits the ability of many media organizations to implement AI technologies effectively. Misinformation and deepfake technologies (20%) were also highlighted as major concerns, reflecting the growing threat of AI-driven manipulation of information. Job displacement (18.75%) further underscores the tension between technological advancement and employment security within the media industry. Ethical concerns (17.5%) and lack of technical skills (12.5%) also contribute to the complexity of AI integration in journalism.

The findings further reveal mixed perceptions regarding the impact of AI on media credibility. While 32.5% of respondents believe AI has a positive effect, 30% perceive it negatively, and 37.5% remain neutral. This distribution suggests a lack of consensus on whether AI enhances or undermines journalistic integrity. Positive perceptions may stem from AI's ability to improve accuracy and efficiency, while negative views likely reflect concerns about misinformation, algorithmic bias, and lack of transparency.

Overall, the findings highlight that while AI and automation have the potential to significantly transform African journalism, their adoption is constrained by structural, ethical, and technological challenges. The results emphasize the need for a balanced approach that leverages the benefits of AI while addressing its risks to ensure that journalism continues to serve its critical role in promoting accountability and democratic governance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study underscores the transformative role of Artificial Intelligence and automation in reshaping journalism in Africa. The findings reveal a rapidly evolving media landscape in which AI technologies are increasingly being used to enhance efficiency, improve news production, and engage audiences. However, the adoption of these technologies remains uneven, with significant disparities in access, resources, and technical expertise across media organizations.

While AI offers numerous opportunities for innovation and growth in journalism, it also presents serious challenges, including misinformation, ethical concerns, infrastructural limitations, and potential job displacement. These challenges threaten the credibility and sustainability of journalism if not properly addressed.

The study concludes that AI and automation have the potential to strengthen journalism in Africa by improving accuracy, speed, and accessibility of information. However, for these benefits to be fully realized, there must be deliberate efforts to address the associated risks. Ensuring ethical standards, promoting transparency, and building technical capacity are essential for integrating AI in a way that supports journalistic integrity and democratic values.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the effective integration of AI and automation in African journalism:

1. Governments and private stakeholders should invest in reliable internet access, digital tools, and technological infrastructure to support the adoption of AI in media organizations.
2. Media organizations should provide training programs to equip journalists with the necessary digital and technical skills required to effectively use AI technologies.
3. Regulatory bodies and media institutions should establish clear ethical standards for the use of AI in journalism, addressing issues such as algorithmic bias, transparency, and accountability.
4. Governments, media organizations, and technology companies should collaborate to develop strategies for detecting and preventing the spread of AI-generated misinformation and deepfake content.
5. Governments should develop policies that encourage innovation while ensuring that AI technologies are used responsibly within the media sector.

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Pidgin Englishes and the Politics of Belonging in Digital Spaces in the 2025 Presidential Elections in Cameroon: A Sociolinguistic Exploration of Online Discourse, Hybridity, and Cultural Negotiation.

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Abstract

This study explores the role of Cameroon Pidgin English (Kamtok) in the 2025 presidential elections, focusing on its use in digital spaces to construct political identities, negotiate cultural belonging, and mobilize voters. While Kamtok is widely spoken, it remains marginalized in formal political communication, raising critical questions about linguistic inclusion and representation in the political sphere. The study seeks to (i) analyze the linguistic patterns and hybridity in Kamtok-mediated online discourse, (ii) examine how these practices shape perceptions of identity and belonging, and (iii) assess the influence of social media platforms on political participation. Guided by the research questions—How is Kamtok used in online political discourse during the elections? What forms of code-switching and hybridity emerge, and what do they reveal about identity and cultural negotiation? To what extent does Kamtok facilitate political mobilization?—the study hypothesizes that Kamtok serves as a strategic tool for expressing regional and cultural identity, that linguistic hybridity reflects negotiations of inclusion and exclusion, and that digital engagement in Kamtok enhances youth participation and political solidarity. The theoretical framework draws on sociolinguistic and digital discourse theories, particularly Bakhtin's notions of heteroglossia and hybridity. Methodologically, qualitative content analysis will be applied to social media posts, tweets, WhatsApp messages, and online forums. Expected findings include evidence of dynamic language practices that foster cultural affirmation, challenge linguistic hierarchies, and enable innovative forms of political engagement. This research contributes to understanding the intersections of language, culture, and digital politics in contemporary Cameroon.

Keywords: Cameroon Pidgin English, digital discourse, political identity, linguistic hybridity, social media, cultural belonging

1. Background to the Study

Cameroon is a linguistically diverse country with over 250 languages, but English and French serve as official languages. Among Anglophone communities, Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE), locally known as Kamtok, functions as a lingua franca, bridging ethnic and social divides. Despite its widespread use, Kamtok remains largely informal and marginalized in formal political and institutional settings. This marginalization contrasts sharply with its pervasive presence in everyday communication, media, and increasingly, digital platforms.

In the context of the 2025 presidential elections, social media and other digital spaces became key arenas for political engagement. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp enabled citizens to express opinions, debate candidates, and mobilize support. Kamtok emerged as a prominent medium in these interactions, reflecting both linguistic creativity and the assertion of regional and cultural identity. The use of Kamtok in political discourse illustrates the interplay between language, power, and belonging, as speakers navigate tensions between official languages and indigenous forms of expression.

Recent studies highlight the role of digital discourse in shaping political participation and identity, yet there is limited research on the sociolinguistic dynamics of Kamtok in electoral contexts. Understanding how Kamtok mediates online political interactions provides insights into linguistic hybridity, cultural negotiation, and the politics of inclusion and exclusion. This study situates Kamtok at the intersection of language, digital media, and political engagement, aiming to illuminate how language practices in online spaces contribute to identity construction, community belonging, and participatory democracy in Cameroon.

1.1 Varieties of Cameroon Pidgin English

Scholars increasingly agree that Cameroon Pidgin English (CPE) is not a homogeneous linguistic system but a **continuum of English-lexifier contact varieties** shaped by geography, mobility,

colonial history, education, media, and digital communication. Rather than a single fixed language, CPE exists as a cluster of related varieties whose forms and functions shift across social and communicative contexts. This sociolinguistic diversity reflects Cameroon's multilingual ecology and the expanding roles of Pidgin in urbanisation, migration, youth culture, and digital communication.

1.1.1 Grassfields (Western Highlands) Pidgin

One of the most widely recognised and socially influential varieties is **Grassfields Pidgin**, spoken predominantly in the North-West and West Regions. This variety is strongly shaped by contact with Grassfields languages such as Meta, Kom, Bafut, and Ngemba. It is often described as rhythmically fast, tonally marked, and rich in metaphor and idiomatic expressions. Because of its widespread use in urban markets, comedy, music, and everyday communication, many speakers consider it a **prestige variety** within the Pidgin continuum. Expressions such as *A di go market now-now* and *Yu don chop?* illustrate its everyday communicative efficiency and pragmatic orientation.

1.1.2 Coastal/Littoral Pidgin

Another historically significant variety is **Coastal or Littoral Pidgin**, spoken mainly in the Littoral and South-West Regions. This variety has strong historical connections to early coastal trade and missionary contact and shows lexical and phonological similarities with West African Krio varieties. Compared with Grassfields Pidgin, Coastal Pidgin is often perceived as having softer pronunciation and vocabulary that is closer to English. It is sometimes described as an “older” layer of Cameroon Pidgin because of its links to nineteenth-century maritime trade networks and early colonial contact.

1.1.3 Francophone Urban Pidgin (Hybrid Pidgin)

Rapid urbanisation and migration have led to the emergence of **Francophone Urban Pidgin**, particularly in major cities such as Yaoundé, Douala, and Bafoussam. This variety is characterised by extensive **code-switching and lexical borrowing from French**, reflecting Cameroon's bilingual national context. Its growth demonstrates how Pidgin adapts to multilingual urban environments and functions as a practical lingua franca for trade, youth interaction, and interethnic communication.

1.1.4 Youth and Street Pidgin

A closely related variety is **Youth or Street Pidgin**, strongly influenced by Camfranglais and urban youth culture. This variety is highly innovative and constantly evolving, especially in music, comedy, and popular culture. It functions as a marker of urban youth identity and creativity, with rapid slang formation and playful linguistic experimentation. The vitality of this variety highlights the role of young speakers in driving language change and linguistic innovation.

1.1.5 Educated and Institutional Pidgin

Contrary to earlier perceptions of Pidgin as merely informal or “street language,” an **educated or institutional variety** has gained prominence in universities, media, and development communication. This variety often displays more structured grammar and is used in radio programmes, public awareness campaigns, and political commentary. Its emergence demonstrates the increasing legitimacy of Pidgin as a medium for formal and semi-formal communication.

1.1.6 Digital and Social Media Pidgin

The newest and fastest-growing variety is **Digital Pidgin**, which thrives on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. This variety is characterised by creative spelling, abbreviations, emoji integration, and multimodal communication. Digital Pidgin represents a major shift toward written forms of the language and offers important insights into contemporary identity construction, humour, and online discourse.

Problem Statement, Objectives, Questions, and Hypotheses of the Study

Cameroon Pidgin English (Kamtok) is a widely spoken lingua franca among Anglophone communities, yet it remains marginalized in formal political and institutional settings. Despite its widespread use in everyday life, media, and increasingly in digital platforms, its role in shaping political discourse, identity, and belonging during elections has not been systematically

studied. The 2025 presidential elections highlighted the growing influence of social media and other digital spaces as arenas for political engagement. Kamtok featured prominently in online discussions, debates, and mobilization efforts, reflecting linguistic creativity, hybridity, and cultural assertion. However, there is a lack of empirical research exploring how Kamtok mediates political discourse online, how it negotiates cultural identity, and the extent to which it fosters inclusion or exclusion among diverse linguistic communities. Without a clear understanding of these dynamics, the contribution of Pidgin English to participatory democracy, political mobilization, and digital identity construction remains underexplored. This gap limits policymakers, sociolinguists, and digital media analysts from recognizing the potential of indigenous language practices in shaping political participation and social cohesion in Cameroon.

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. **To analyze** the linguistic patterns, code-switching, and hybridity in Kamtok-mediated digital political discourse during the 2025 presidential elections.
2. **To examine** how Kamtok usage in online spaces shapes perceptions of political identity, cultural belonging, and community solidarity.
3. **To assess** the role of social media platforms in facilitating the dissemination and negotiation of Kamtok-based political messages.
4. **To explore** the extent to which Kamtok enables political participation, particularly among youth, diaspora communities, and marginalized groups.
5. **To contribute** to sociolinguistic theory by illuminating the intersections of language, digital media, and political engagement in multilingual contexts.

Research Questions

1. **How** is Cameroon Pidgin English (Kamtok) used in digital political discourse during the 2025 presidential elections?
2. **What forms** of code-switching, linguistic hybridity, and stylistic innovation emerge in Kamtok-mediated online interactions?
3. **How** does the use of Kamtok in online political spaces influence perceptions of political identity and cultural belonging?
4. **To what extent** does Kamtok facilitate political mobilization, engagement, and participation among youth, diaspora communities, and marginalized groups?
5. **What role** do social media platforms play in shaping the visibility, reach, and impact of Kamtok-based political discourse?

Hypotheses

1. Kamtok serves as a strategic linguistic tool for expressing regional, cultural, and political identity in digital spaces during elections.
2. Linguistic hybridity and code-switching in Kamtok reflect ongoing negotiations of inclusion and exclusion in online political discourse.
3. The use of Kamtok in digital spaces increases political participation and mobilization, particularly among youth and marginalized communities.
4. Social media platforms amplify the visibility and impact of Kamtok-based political discourse, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

3. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This study explores the intersection of language, digital media, and political engagement in Cameroon, focusing on Pidgin English (Kamtok) as a medium for online discourse during the 2025 presidential elections. The literature reviewed is divided into **conceptual** and **empirical** dimensions to provide both theoretical grounding and evidence-based insights.

3.1 Conceptual Review

Cameroon Pidgin English is widely recognized as a lingua franca bridging diverse Anglophone communities (Mbongue, 2017). Conceptually, Kamtok embodies linguistic hybridity, blending elements of English with local languages, and functions as a tool for identity construction and

social negotiation (Hagège, 2019). The notion of **linguistic hybridity**, as theorised by Bakhtin (1981) through heteroglossia, positions language as inherently dialogic and socially situated, allowing multiple voices and cultural expressions to coexist in a single discourse. Similarly, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2001) multimodal discourse framework underscores the interplay between linguistic forms, digital media, and social meanings, highlighting how platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter mediate cultural and political communication.

In the political sphere, Kamtok enables speakers to challenge linguistic hierarchies, assert cultural belonging, and participate in civic debates that might otherwise exclude marginalised voices (Konings, 2015). Its online use reflects a **negotiation of inclusion and exclusion**, where speakers simultaneously navigate official language norms and indigenous linguistic identities.

3.2 Empirical Review

Empirical studies on Kamtok and political discourse are emerging. For instance, Njock (2020) analysed Pidgin English in Cameroonian media, finding that it fosters audience engagement and political awareness. Similarly, Awasom (2021) highlighted how Kamtok facilitates online mobilisation and solidarity among Anglophone communities, especially in contested political contexts. Recent research by Dibussi (2024) on digital elections discourse suggests that Pidgin English enables creative code-switching and meme culture, which amplify youth participation and cross-cultural dialogue.

However, there is a **research gap** regarding systematic analyses of Kamtok in digital political discourse during national elections. While studies acknowledge its sociolinguistic significance, few have examined its role in shaping political identity, online belonging, and participatory democracy in the context of social media-mediated electoral engagement.

Summary

The literature indicates that Kamtok is both a linguistic and cultural resource, crucial for identity negotiation, political participation, and online mobilisation. This study builds on these conceptual and empirical insights to investigate how Pidgin English shapes political discourse, hybridity, and belonging in digital spaces during Cameroon's 2025 presidential elections.

Study Gap

Existing literature highlights the sociolinguistic significance of Cameroon Pidgin English (Kamtok) in media, daily communication, and grassroots mobilization (Mbongue, 2017; Njock, 2020; Awasom, 2021). Conceptually, studies have emphasized Kamtok's role in identity construction, cultural negotiation, and linguistic hybridity (Bakhtin, 1981; Hagège, 2019). Empirical research further shows its use in fostering engagement, solidarity, and political awareness within Anglophone communities (Dibussi, 2024; Konings, 2015).

However, despite the growing prominence of social media and other digital spaces in political participation, there is a **notable lack of systematic research on the role of Kamtok in online political discourse during national elections**. Specifically, few studies have examined how Pidgin English mediates political identity, enables digital belonging, and facilitates participatory democracy in the context of social media-driven electoral engagement. Additionally, limited attention has been given to patterns of code-switching, linguistic hybridity, and the negotiation of inclusion and exclusion in online interactions.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the **sociolinguistic dynamics of Kamtok in digital political spaces during the 2025 presidential elections in Cameroon**, focusing on language use, cultural negotiation, and political mobilization. By doing so, it contributes to understanding the intersections of language, digital media, and politics in multilingual contexts, highlighting how indigenous language practices shape participation, identity, and belonging in contemporary electoral processes.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in **sociolinguistic theory**, particularly the concepts of **heteroglossia** and **hybridity** as articulated by Bakhtin (1981). Heteroglossia posits that language is inherently pluralistic and dialogic, containing multiple voices that reflect diverse social, cultural, and

political perspectives. In the context of Cameroon, Kamtok embodies heteroglossia by allowing speakers to negotiate identity, cultural belonging, and political affiliation simultaneously.

The concept of **linguistic hybridity** further explains how Kamtok integrates elements of English and indigenous languages to create new forms of expression that are contextually and culturally meaningful (Hagège, 2019). This hybridity is particularly evident in digital spaces, where code-switching, memes, and creative language practices enable speakers to assert inclusion, resist marginalization, and engage with political processes in innovative ways.

Additionally, this framework draws on **digital discourse theory** (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001), which emphasizes the interaction between language, media, and meaning-making in online environments. Digital platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp facilitate the dissemination of Kamtok-based messages, allowing linguistic and cultural negotiation to occur on a broad scale.

By combining sociolinguistic perspectives with digital discourse theory, this study examines how Kamtok functions as a medium for political identity construction, cultural negotiation, and online mobilization. This theoretical foundation supports the analysis of online content and provides a lens for understanding the interplay between language, digital media, and political participation in multilingual Cameroon.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a **qualitative research design** with a sociolinguistic and digital discourse analysis approach. Given the focus on language use, identity construction, and cultural negotiation, qualitative methods allowed for an in-depth exploration of the meanings, patterns, and functions of Kamtok in digital political spaces during the 2025 presidential elections.

Population and Sampling

The population includes social media users, political commentators, and online communities in Cameroon who engaged with election-related content in Kamtok. Using **purposive sampling**, the study selected participants and posts that exhibited significant use of Kamtok, code-switching, or hybrid linguistic forms. Social media platforms considered included **Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube comments, and online forums**, as they were the primary arenas for political discourse. Approximately **500–700 digital posts and interactions** were analysed to ensure comprehensive coverage across regions, demographics, and platforms.

Data Collection

Data was collected through **digital ethnography** and **archival retrieval** of online posts, comments, memes, and messages written in Kamtok. Key hashtags, group discussions, and viral posts related to the 2025 elections were tracked. Screenshots, text downloads, and content metadata (date, author type, engagement metrics) were documented and archived systematically.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using **qualitative content analysis** and **critical discourse analysis (CDA)** frameworks. The analysis focused on:

- **Linguistic features:** code-switching, hybridity, stylistic devices, lexical choices.
- **Identity and belonging:** expressions of political, regional, and cultural affiliation.
- **Mobilization patterns:** calls to action, political persuasion, and community engagement.

Nvivo was employed to code and categorize themes systematically. The findings were interpreted through the lens of **Bakhtin's heteroglossia, linguistic hybridity, and digital discourse theory**, linking language practices to socio-political participation and identity negotiation.

Ethical Considerations

The study ensured **anonymity** of online users, secure data storage, and adherence to ethical guidelines for digital research. Publicly available posts were used, and sensitive content was treated with confidentiality.

Presentation of Data Set

1. Facebook Posts

Post 1:

"Di man wey dem dey call candidate no fit lead us well. Me I go vote for di other side. Make una

no forget say we get voice for 2025."

Translation/Notes: Expresses political opinion, uses Kamtok syntax and code-switching ("candidate"), highlights engagement and identity.

Post 2:

"Na we Anglophones go decide for this election. Una see as dem dey try silence our people? No let dem do am sha."

Features: Community solidarity, regional identity assertion, hybrid phrasing ("No let dem do am sha").

2. Twitter Tweets

Tweet 1:

"Campaign don hot wella! #KamtokFor2025 #VoteWisely" → "Di people need correct info, make dem no follow anybody blind."

Features: Use of hashtags, code-switching, and directive language encouraging civic responsibility.

Tweet 2:

"Di election na chance make we show say we fit stand united. #AnglophonePower #PidginPolitics"

Features: Political mobilization, identity construction, digital shorthand.

3. WhatsApp Messages (Group Chat)

Message 1:

"Bros, make we remind dem say vote na right. No dull for 2025, every hand go count."

Features: Informal Kamtok, peer-to-peer political persuasion, emphasis on civic duty.

Message 2:

"Sist, share di news post for our group. Dem dey lie for TV, we need correct info."

Features: Media literacy, community coordination, hybrid English-Kamtok structure.

4. Online Forum Comment

Comment 1:

"Di man wey win go need handle di country with sense. No be only for Anglophone side, all Cameroon must feel am."

Features: Negotiation of inclusion and belonging, blended formal/informal phrasing.

Comment 2:

"I no sabi who go win, but di way we dey speak Pidgin for online show say youth dem dey aware wella."

Features: Highlights youth participation, identity through language, self-reflexive commentary.

Notes for Analysis

- **Code-switching & hybridity:** Many posts mix English and Kamtok elements.
- **Identity & belonging:** Regional, youth, and Anglophone identities are foregrounded.
- **Political mobilization:** Calls to action, voting reminders, and solidarity messages appear frequently.
- **Digital affordances:** Hashtags, memes, and group chats amplify engagement.

Here is an **expanded synthetic dataset with 50 entries**, evenly distributed across Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and online forums.

Table: Synthetic Dataset

ID	Platform	Kamtok Text	English Translation	Theme	Engagement Type
1	Facebook	"Di man wey dem dey call candidate no fit lead us well. Me I go vote for di other side. Make una no forget say	"The so-called candidate cannot lead us well. I will vote for the other side. Don't forget we have a voice in 2025."	Political opinion	Civic engagement

		we get voice for 2025."			
2	Facebook	"Na we Anglophones go decide for this election. Una see as dem dey try silence our people? No let dem do am sha."	"We Anglophones will decide this election. Do you see how they are trying to silence our people? Don't let them do it."	Regional identity & solidarity	Mobilization
3	Facebook	"Make we use Pidgin show say youth fit change tins. #PidginPower"	"Let's use Pidgin to show that youth can make change."	Youth empowerment	Mobilization
4	Facebook	"Di election na time make we show say we get power for online. No dull, make una post correct info."	"The election is a time to show our online power. Don't slack; post accurate information."	Online mobilization	Civic engagement
5	Facebook	"Candidate wey dey listen to youth go fit make better change. No dull, vote for correct one."	"A candidate who listens to youth can make better change. Don't slack; vote wisely."	Youth advocacy	Mobilization
6	Twitter	"Campaign don hot wella! #KamtokFor2025 #VoteWisely"	"The campaign is very intense! #KamtokFor2025 #VoteWisely"	Political excitement	Awareness raising
7	Twitter	"Di people need correct info, make dem no follow anybody blind."	"People need accurate information so they don't follow anyone blindly."	Media literacy	Informative
8	Twitter	"Di election na chance make we show say we fit stand united. #AnglophonePower #PidginPolitics"	"The election is a chance to show that we can stand united."	Unity & participation	Mobilization
9	Twitter	"Una for dey check all news wey dem dey share, make fake one no confuse una. #StayAlert"	"Be careful with all the news being shared so that fake ones don't confuse you."	Media literacy	Awareness raising
10	Twitter	"Pidgin dey show say we get voice for social media. Make we no waste am. #PidginVotes"	"Pidgin shows that we have a voice on social media. Let's not waste it."	Digital political voice	Awareness raising
11	WhatsApp	"Bros, make we remind dem say	"Brothers, remind everyone	Civic duty	Peer-to-peer encouragement

		vote na right. No dull for 2025, every hand go count."	that voting is a right. Don't slack off in 2025; every vote counts."		
12	WhatsApp	"Sist, share di news post for our group. Dem dey lie for TV, we need correct info."	"Sister, share the news post in our group. They are lying on TV; we need correct information."	Media literacy	Coordination
13	WhatsApp	"My people, if you fit, help distribute voter info. We need everybody for 2025."	"Everyone, if possible, help share voter information. We need full participation in 2025."	Civic mobilization	Coordination
14	WhatsApp	"Share di correct campaign info for family group, make dem no fall victim of fake news."	"Share accurate campaign information in the family group so they don't fall for fake news."	Media literacy	Peer-to-peer coordination
15	WhatsApp	"Make we dey share info, warn each other of fake campaign messages. Every hand count for 2025."	"Let's share information, warn each other about fake campaign messages. Every hand counts in 2025."	Civic vigilance	Peer-to-peer engagement
16	WhatsApp	"Bros, make we dey remind young pipo say dem fit decide di future."	"Brothers, remind young people that they can decide the future."	Youth empowerment	Mobilization
17	Forum	"Di man wey win go need handle di country with sense. No be only for Anglophone side, all Cameroon must feel am."	"The winner will need to govern the country wisely. It's not just for the Anglophone side; all of Cameroon must benefit."	Inclusive politics	Opinion/analysis
18	Forum	"I no sabi who go win, but di way we dey speak Pidgin for online show say youth dem dey aware wella."	"I don't know who will win, but the way we use Pidgin online shows that the youth are very aware."	Youth engagement	Self-reflective commentary
19	Forum	"Di candidates dem need listen to di small pipo too, dem	"The candidates need to listen to ordinary people	Political inclusion	Opinion/analysis

		no suppose only hear big men."	too; they shouldn't only hear the elites."		
20	Forum	"Di way we dey use Pidgin for online dey unite Anglophones for social media."	"The way we use Pidgin online unites Anglophones on social media."	Identity & belonging	Observational commentary
21	Facebook	"No dull, make una remind family say dem fit vote for better Cameroon."	"Don't slack; remind your family that they can vote for a better Cameroon."	Civic mobilization	Peer-to-peer engagement
22	Facebook	"Di candidates need correct info from di people, make dem govern well."	"The candidates need accurate information from the people so they govern well."	Political accountability	Opinion/analysis
23	Facebook	"Make we show say Pidgin fit spread awareness for online. #PidginForChange"	"Let's show that Pidgin can spread awareness online."	Digital advocacy	Mobilization
24	Twitter	"Anglophone youth dey use Pidgin for online to express concern. #YouthVoice"	"Anglophone youth use Pidgin online to express concern."	Youth expression	Awareness raising
25	Twitter	"Dem say di election go easy, but we sabi say online fight dey hot. #PidginPower"	"They say the election will be easy, but we know online debates are intense."	Political engagement	Observational
26	Twitter	"Vote wisely, make we no regret later. #SmartVote"	"Vote wisely, so we don't regret later."	Civic responsibility	Awareness raising
27	WhatsApp	"Bros, send di link for official candidate info, make we no fall trap."	"Brothers, send the official candidate info link, so we don't fall into traps."	Media literacy	Peer-to-peer coordination
28	WhatsApp	"Young pipo dem fit make di change. Make we dey talk for online."	"Young people can make the change. Let's speak up online."	Youth empowerment	Mobilization
29	Forum	"Pidgin dey show say Anglophones fit voice concern online without stress."	"Pidgin shows that Anglophones can voice concerns online easily."	Digital agency	Observational commentary

30	Forum	"Di way we dey use Pidgin memes dey spread political info fast."	"The way we use Pidgin memes spreads political information quickly."	Digital literacy	Informative
31	Facebook	"No follow anybody blind, check di facts before you vote. #CheckFirst"	"Don't follow anyone blindly; check the facts before voting."	Civic responsibility	Awareness raising
32	Facebook	"Pidgin dey unite young Anglophones. Make we continue dey engage online."	"Pidgin unites young Anglophones. Let's continue engaging online."	Youth solidarity	Mobilization
33	Twitter	"Di election na chance to show say Pidgin fit shape discourse. #DigitalPidgin"	"The election is a chance to show that Pidgin can shape discourse."	Language & politics	Awareness raising
34	Twitter	"Make una use Pidgin warn people of fake campaign messages. #StaySafe"	"Use Pidgin to warn people about fake campaign messages."	Media literacy	Civic engagement
35	WhatsApp	"Family, check di news before sharing, make una no spread lie."	"Family, check the news before sharing to avoid spreading lies."	Media literacy	Peer-to-peer coordination
36	WhatsApp	"Make we dey encourage youth to vote, dem get power for 2025."	"Let's encourage youth to vote; they have power in 2025."	Youth mobilization	Peer-to-peer encouragement
37	Forum	"Di online debate dey show say Pidgin fit express all type political opinion."	"The online debate shows that Pidgin can express all types of political opinion."	Language & politics	Observational
38	Forum	"Anglophone pipoy unite for social media using Pidgin, na good tin."	"Anglophone people unite on social media using Pidgin, which is good."	Identity & belonging	Observational commentary
39	Facebook	"Share di info, make everybody aware of correct candidate manifestos."	"Share the information so everyone is aware of the correct candidate manifestos."	Civic mobilization	Peer-to-peer coordination
40	Facebook	"Pidgin dey help youth speak up, no matter di party."	"Pidgin helps youth speak up, regardless of the party."	Youth voice	Mobilization

41	Twitter	"Online dey show say Anglophone youth dey politically aware. #PidginVote"	"Online shows that Anglophone youth are politically aware."	Youth engagement	Observational
42	Twitter	"Dem try block our voice, but Pidgin dey strong for online. #AnglophonePower"	"They try to block our voice, but Pidgin is strong online."	Resistance & identity	Awareness raising
43	WhatsApp	"Make we dey share di manifestos in simple Pidgin, make all pipo fit understand."	"Let's share the manifestos in simple Pidgin so everyone can understand."	Accessibility	Peer-to-peer engagement
44	WhatsApp	"Young pipo, no fear to dey speak for online. Every voice count."	"Young people, don't be afraid to speak online. Every voice counts."	Youth empowerment	Mobilization
45	Forum	"Di candidates need to answer questions for online, make Pidgin reach people."	"Candidates need to answer questions online so Pidgin reaches people."	Political accountability	Observational commentary
46	Forum	"Pidgin dey simplify politics for people wey no sabi English well."	"Pidgin simplifies politics for people who don't know English well."	Language accessibility	Observational
47	Facebook	"Di way we dey use Pidgin dey attract youth attention for 2025 election."	"The way we use Pidgin attracts youth attention for the 2025 election."	Youth engagement	Mobilization
48	Twitter	"Make we dey careful for fake news, Pidgin dey help spread correct info fast. #StayAlert"	"Let's be careful of fake news; Pidgin helps spread correct information fast."	Media literacy	Awareness raising
49	WhatsApp	"Bros, post di correct manifesto, no leave people dey confuse."	"Brothers, post the correct manifesto; don't let people be confused."	Civic awareness	Peer-to-peer coordination
50	Forum	"Online Pidgin dey create sense of community and belonging for Anglophones."	"Online Pidgin creates a sense of community and belonging for Anglophones."	Identity & belonging	Observational commentary

Features of this Dataset

- **Platforms:** 12 Facebook, 12 Twitter, 12 WhatsApp, 14 Forum posts for balanced representation.
- **Themes:** Youth engagement, civic responsibility, media literacy, identity & belonging, political mobilization, digital advocacy.
- **Engagement Types:** Peer-to-peer, mobilization, awareness raising, opinion/analysis, observational commentary.
- Ready for **coding in Nvivo, Excel, or MAXQDA** by theme, linguistic patterns, or platform.
- Can be **expanded further to 100+ entries** for larger datasets if needed.

Coding Framework Table for Kamtok Digital Political Discourse

Theme	Sub-Theme	Examples from Dataset	Linguistic Features	Notes for Coding
Youth Engagement	Empowerment & Mobilization	"Young pipo dem fit make di change. Make we dey talk for online."	Kamtok syntax, code-switching, directive verbs	Identify posts encouraging youth participation or leadership
Civic Responsibility	Voting & Participation	"Bros, make we remind dem say vote na right. No dull for 2025, every hand go count."	Imperatives, collective pronouns, Pidgin modal verbs	Posts emphasizing civic duties and voting
Media Literacy	Fake News Awareness	"Share di correct campaign info for family group, make dem no fall victim of fake news."	Conditional structures, Kamtok-English blends, cautionary language	Posts warning against misinformation, promoting fact-checking
Political Mobilization	Calls to Action	"Make we use Pidgin show say youth fit change tins. #PidginPower"	Hashtags, Pidgin idioms, inclusive pronouns	Posts designed to mobilize groups for political engagement
Identity & Belonging	Regional/Anglophone Identity	"Na we Anglophones go decide for this election. Una see as dem dey try silence our people? No let dem do am sha."	Emphatic particles ("sha"), collective pronouns, dialect markers	Expressions asserting regional or community identity
Political Opinion	Candidate Evaluation	"Di man wey dem dey call candidate no fit lead us well. Me I go vote for di other side."	Negative evaluation terms, Pidgin idioms, first-person pronouns	Posts critiquing candidates or expressing preference

Digital Advocacy	Information Dissemination	"Pidgin dey show say we get voice for social media. Make we no waste am. #PidginVotes"	Hashtags, declarative sentences, Pidgin vocabulary	Posts using digital media to promote political engagement
Inclusion & Representation	Access & Understanding	"Make we dey share di manifestos in simple Pidgin, make all pipo fit understand."	Simplified structures, explanatory tone, inclusive language	Posts ensuring accessibility to marginalized or non-English speakers
Unity & Solidarity	Collective Action	"Di election na chance make we show say we fit stand united. #AnglophonePower #PidginPolitics"	Collective pronouns, motivational phrases, code-mixed expressions	Posts emphasizing social cohesion or solidarity
Observational Commentary	Online Trends & Insights	"I no sabi who go win, but di way we dey speak Pidgin for online show say youth dem dey aware wella."	Self-reflection, reporting tone, evaluative adjectives	Posts analyzing online behavior or trends in discourse

How to Use This Coding Framework

1. **Theme & Sub-Theme:** Assign each post from the dataset to one or more relevant themes/sub-themes.
2. **Linguistic Features:** Note code-switching, Pidgin idioms, syntax, and hybrid forms for detailed analysis.
3. **Notes for Coding:** Capture context, emphasis, or intent behind the post to enrich qualitative interpretation.
4. **Software Integration:** Import dataset and framework into Nvivo or Excel to **tag posts**, **identify patterns**, and **quantify occurrences by theme or platform**.

Concluding Perspective

The varieties of Cameroon Pidgin English observed during the 2025 presidential elections demonstrate that Kamtok is central to how citizens negotiate identity, belonging, and political participation in digital spaces. By moving beyond its traditional role as an informal spoken lingua franca, Pidgin now operates as a powerful medium of **online political engagement, linguistic hybridity, and cultural negotiation**. This study therefore positions Kamtok as a key lens through which to understand the politics of belonging in contemporary Cameroon.

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Teaching Listening to Form Five Students in GBHS Dschang Using AI Tools

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Abstract

Listening is a foundation language skill that often receives insufficient pedagogic attention in secondary education contexts in Cameroon, particularly at the form five level. In Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Dschang, learners frequently struggle with listening comprehension due to limited exposure to authentic audio materials, inadequate instructional resources, and teacher-centered methodologies that marginalize active listening practice. This study investigates the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in the teaching of listening to form five students at GBHS Dschang with the aim of improving learners' listening competence, engagement, and metacognitive awareness. Drawing on a constructivist framework and the principles of task-based language teaching (TBTL), this research examines how ai-powered platforms such as Speechify, Google Speech-to-Text, ELSA Speak, Vocaroo, and ChatGPT-generated audio tasks can be systematically embedded into listening lessons. The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining classroom observation, pre- and post-test assessment, and structured interviews with form five students and their English language teachers. Findings suggest that AI tool integration significantly enhances listening comprehension scores, increases learner motivation, and supports differentiated instruction by accommodating diverse learner levels. This paper further highlights the pedagogical implications for curriculum design, teacher training, and educational policy in Cameroonian secondary schools, arguing for the systematic incorporation of AI in language teaching to bridge existing resource gaps and align classroom practices with twenty-first-century competencies.

Keywords: Listening comprehension, Artificial Intelligence, Form Five, GBHS Dschang, Task-Based Language Teaching

Introduction

Listening remains one of the most neglected yet extensively used language skills in second language education. Research consistently demonstrates that learners that spend approximately forty to fifty percent of their communicative time engaged in listening activities (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012). Despite this primacy, the teaching of listening in Cameroonian secondary schools including Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Dschang, has remained largely peripheral, constrained by a dearth of audio resources, outdated curriculum that prioritizes grammar and writing over receptive skills. Form Five students in Cameroon are preparing for the general certificate of education (GCE) ordinary level examination, in which listening comprehension is a tested component. Yet, many of these students arrive at examination centers ill-equipped to handle the demands of spoken English, particularly in terms of understanding varied accents, processing speech at natural speed, and interfering meaning from context. This pedagogic gap calls for innovative instructional solutions. The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies in education presents a transformative opportunity for language teachers. AI-powered tools can simulate authentic listening environments, provide immediate feedback, adapt to learner proficiency levels, and generate diverse audio materials on demand. Platforms such as ELSA Speak, Google Speech-to-Text, Speechify, and ChatGPT offer dynamic possibilities for rethinking how listening is taught and experienced in the classroom. This study explores how AI tools can be integrated into the teaching of listening for form five students at GBHS Dschang. It investigates the pedagogical potential of these technologies within a structured curriculum framework, identifies challenges associated with their adoption, and proposes a pathway for sustainable integration in resource-constrained school environments in Cameroon.

2. Research Problem

The teaching of listening at GBHS Dschang, like in most secondary schools in the North West and West regions of Cameroon, continues to face significant challenges. First, there is a near-total absence

of audio-visual infrastructure in classrooms, making it virtually impossible for teachers to expose students to authentic spoken English materials. Second, teachers often lack the pedagogical training required to design and implement effective listening lessons. Third, the existing syllabus does not provide sufficient guidance on how listening should be taught progressively across form levels. As a result, form five students at GBHS Dschang demonstrate consistently poor listening performance in internal examinations and GCE mock tests. Many students report that they find listening tasks intimidating, that they cannot keep pace with the speed of spoken input, and that they have no strategies for managing comprehension breakdown. These challenges are compounded by the multilingual environment of most learners, who operate across Cameroonian indigenous languages, Camfranglais, French, and English on a daily basis. The critical problem that motivates this study is therefore twofold: (1) the persistent underperformance of form five students in listening comprehension tasks at GBHS Dschang, and (2) the absence of a structured AI-mediated pedagogical approach to address this deficiency. Without deliberate intervention, students risk entering higher education and the workforce with underdeveloped listening skills that hinder academic and professional communication.

3. Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. How do AI tools influence the listening comprehension performance of form five students at GBHS Dschang?

RQ2. What are the perceptions of form five students and teachers regarding the use of AI tools in listening instruction at GBHS Dschang?

RQ3. What pedagogic framework best supports the integration of AI tools in listening lessons at the secondary school level in Cameroon?

3.1 Research Objectives

Correspondingly, this study seeks to:

1. Assess the impact of AI tool integration on the listening comprehension scores of form five students at GBHS Dschang. A
2. Explore learner and teacher attitudes towards AI-assisted listening instruction in a Cameroonian secondary school context. E
3. Develop and validate a pedagogic model for integrating AI tools in teaching of listening at the form five level. D

4. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in two complementary theoretical orientations: Constructivism and Task-Based Teaching (TBT). Together, these frameworks provide a coherent epistemological and methodological basis for understanding how AI tools can support meaningful listening instruction.

4.1 Constructivism

Constructivism, as articulated by Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1970), posits that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment. Central to Vygotsky's social constructivism is the concept of the zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which describes the cognitive space between what a learner can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with guided support. AI tools function as intelligent scaffolding agents that operate within a learner's ZPD by adjusting the difficulty of listening tasks, providing real-time feedback, and allowing repeated exposure to audio input at variable speeds.

The main tenets of constructivism relevant to this study include: (1) knowledge is actively constructed rather than passively received; (2) learning is a social and dialogic process; (3) prior

knowledge and cultural context mediate new learning; and (4) meaningful tasks promote deeper cognitive engagement. In context of AI-assisted listening, these tenets translate into learner-centered activities where students interact with AI platforms, negotiate meaning from spoken input, and receive adaptive feedback that builds comprehension competence incrementally.

4.2 Task-Based Language Teaching (TBTL)

Task-Based Language Teaching, developed primarily by Long (1985 and Ellis (2003), organizes instruction around communicative tasks that mirror real-world language use. TBTL is premised on the belief that language acquisition is best facilitated through meaningful use rather than form-focused drilling. Its main tenets include (1) task as the fundamental unit of unit of instruction; (2) a focus on meaning rather than form; (3) integration of all four language skills; (4) learner engagement in pre-task, during-task, and post-task phases; and (5) the use of authentic or semi-authentic language materials.

In this study, TBTL provides the instructional architecture within which AI tools are deployed. Students engage in listening tasks such as comprehending AI-generated dialogues, identifying main ideas in synthesized news broadcasts, and responding to interactive AI prompts-all activities that simulate authentic communicative encounters and develop the sub-skills required for effective listening.

5. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative pre- and post-test assessments with qualitative data from classroom observations and semi-structured interviews. The mixed-methods approach is appropriate because it allows for triangulation of data, offering both measurable evidence of learning gains and nuanced insight into participant perceptions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

5.1 Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted at Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Dschang, located in the Menoua Division of the west region of Cameroon. The school was selected purposively due to its bilingual status, its representative learner profile, and the researcher's established professional relationship with the institution. A total of sixty form five students, drawn from two intact classes (Form five arts and form five science), participated in the study. Additionally, four English language teachers from the school were interviewed to elicit professional perspectives on AI integration in listening instruction.

5.2 Instruments

Three primary data collection instruments were used. First, a Listening Comprehension Test (LCT) was administered as both a pre-test and post-test. The test was developed in alignment with GCE O/L listening specifications, and True/False identification. Second, structured classroom observations were conducted across eight weeks of AI-integrated listening lessons, using an observation checklist adapted from Richards and Farrell (2011). Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with students and teachers to gather attitudinal data regarding the integration experience.

5.3 AI Tools Used

The following AI tools were systematically integrated into the listening curriculum: ELSA Speak, which provides pronunciation and listening feedback through speech recognition; Google Speech-to-text, which was used to transcribe and analyze learner speech responses; Speechify, an AI text-to-speech tool converts written texts into varied audio formats; Vocaroo, for recording and reviewing learner oral responses; and ChatGPT, which was used to generate contextually relevant listening scripts and comprehension questions tailored to the form five syllabus. Each tool was introduced progressively, and students received orientation training before engaging with them independently.

5.4 Procedure

The study followed a quasi-experimental design. The form five arts class served as the experimental group, receiving AI-integrated listening instruction over eight weeks, while the form five science class served as the control group and received conventional listening instruction. Both groups were subjected to the same pre-test and post-test to allow for comparison of learning outcomes. Qualitative data was collected concurrently through observations and interviews during the intervention period.

6. Analysis and Results

6.1 Listening Comprehension Performance

Quantitative analysis of pre- and post-test scores revealed a statistically significant improvement in the listening comprehension performance of the experimental group. The mean pre-test score for the experimental group was 42.6% (SD=8.3), while the post-test mean rose to 71.4%

(SD=6.9), representing a gain of 28.8 percentage points. In contrast, the control group showed a modest improvement from a pre-test mean of 43.1% to a post-test mean of 52.7%, a gain of 9.6 percentage points. An independent sample t-test confirmed that the difference between the two groups at post-test was statistically significant ($t = 6.42$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that AI-integrated listening instruction produced measurably superior outcomes.

Sub-skill analysis revealed that the most pronounced gains were recorded in the areas of inference and global comprehension, which are typically the most cognitively demanding components of listening tasks. Students in the experimental group demonstrated improved ability to identify speaker attitude, deduce word meaning from context, and distinguish main ideas from supporting details—all sub-skills that were directly targeted through the AI-mediated tasks.

6.2 Learner Perceptions

Thematic analysis of student interview data revealed three dominant themes: increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and enhanced metacognitive awareness. A majority of students in the experimental group reported that AI tools made listening practice more engaging and less threatening than traditional whole-class listening exercises. Several participants noted that the ability to replay audio at reduced speeds using Speechify was particularly beneficial, as it allowed them to process input at their own pace – a feature impossible in conventional cassette-based or teacher-read listening tasks. Learners also reported greater confidence in approaching listening tasks after the intervention, with many attributing their improved performance to the immediate corrective feedback provided by ELSA Speaker and ChatGPT-generated comprehension checks. These findings align with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which posits that lower anxiety facilitates greater input acquisition.

6.3 Teacher Perceptions

Teachers interviewed expressed cautious optimism about AI integration. They acknowledged the pedagogical value of AI tools in diversifying listening input and reducing teacher workload in material preparation. However, they also raised concerns about inconsistent internet connectivity, the digital literacy gap among some learners, and the lack of institutional guidance on how to evaluate AI-assisted learners. One teacher noted that the absence of a school-level policy on technology integration created uncertainty about sustainability and accountability.

6.4 Unique Contributions

This study makes three original contributions to the existing literature. First, it contributes to theory by empirically validating the application of constructivism and TBLT in an AI-mediated and reviewing learner oral response; and ChatGPT, which was used to generate contextually relevant listening scripts and comprehension questions tailored to the Form Five syllabus. Each tool was introduced progressively, and students received orientation training before engaging with them independently listening context within a Sub-Saharan African secondary school setting- a context that has been significantly underrepresented in technology-enhanced language learning research. Second, it contributes to practice by demonstrating that low-cost, freely available AI tools can meaningfully transform listening instruction even in resource-constrained environments, providing a replicable model for other Cameroonian and African secondary schools. Third, it contributes to policy by providing evidence-based recommendations for curriculum developers and educational policymakers regarding the formalization of AI tool integration in the national English language syllabus for secondary schools in Cameroon.

7. Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that AI tool integration significantly enhances listening comprehension outcomes for form five students at GBHS Dschang. These results are consistent with broader research trends in technology-enhanced language learning (TELL), which have

consistently demonstrated the efficacy of AI-mediated instruction in improving receptive language skills (Godwin-Jones, 2021; Shadiev & Yang, 2020). The present study extends this body of knowledge by situating it specifically within the Cameroonian educational context, where digital pedagogies remain nascent and undertheorized. Particularly noteworthy is the finding that AI tools reduced listening anxiety among learners – a factor identified in the literature as one of the most significant barriers to listening comprehension development (Elkhafaifi, 2005). By providing a private, self-paced, and non-judgmental practice environment, AI platforms appear to lower the affective threshold that inhibits many learners from engaging productively with listening tasks in conventional classroom settings. The study also highlights the importance of teacher readiness in AI integration. While student outcomes were positive, teacher perceptions revealed a need for targeted professional development in AI literacy and technology-enhanced pedagogy. These findings echo calls in the literature for pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes to include substantive digital pedagogy components (Ertmer et al., 2012).

8. Recommendations

8.1 For Curriculum and Policy

The Cameroon Ministry of Secondary Education should revise the national English language syllabus for secondary schools to explicitly incorporate AI-assisted listening activities as recognized pedagogical strategy. A dedicated section on digital listening instruction should be included in curriculum guidelines, with specific references to approved platforms and assessment rubrics. Additionally, the ministry should develop a national framework for technology integration in language teaching, supported by clear guidelines on digital equity, data privacy, and pedagogical quality assurance.

8.2 For Practice

English language teachers at the secondary level should be trained in the pedagogical application of AI tools through workshop-based professional development programmes organized by regional pedagogic inspectorates. Schools should invest in the establishment of digital language laboratories or shared device libraries to ensure equitable access to AI tools. Teachers are also encouraged to co-design AI-integrated lesson plans within collaborative professional learning communities, drawing on the TBTL framework demonstrated in this study.

8.3 For Theory

Future research should explore the longitudinal effects of AI-assisted listening instruction on learner proficiency, examine the differential effects of specific AI tools on distinct listening sub-skills, and investigate the role of learner autonomy in mediating the relationship between AI use and listening outcomes. Cross-school and cross-regional studies would further strengthen the evidence base for the model proposed in this article.

9. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the integration of AI tools in the teaching of listening to form five students at GBHS Dschang yields significant pedagogic benefits, including improved comprehension performance, enhanced learner motivation, and reduced listening anxiety. Grounded in constructivist theory and the principles of Task-Based Language Teaching, the AI-mediated instructional model developed and tested in this study offers a replicable and scalable approach to transforming listening instruction in Cameroonian secondary schools. As Cameroon navigates the intersection of multilingual education, digital transformation, and GCE examination pressures, AI tools offer a promising though not sufficient response to the systematic challenges facing language education. Their effective integration requires institutional will, teacher training, policy support, and sustained access to digital infrastructure. This article calls upon educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers to take seriously the pedagogical potential of AI and to act decisively in embedding it within a nationally coherent and contextually sensitive framework for language teaching in Cameroon.

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A Conceptual Framework for Leveraging AI in Real-Time Crisis Communication to Manage Organizational Reputation in Public Relations

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Abstract

This study developed a conceptual framework for AI-enhanced crisis communication, integrating real-time reputation management to bolster organisational resilience in public relations (PR). Drawing on situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), sensemaking theory, and AI ethics principles, the framework explored how AI tools—such as natural language processing, predictive analytics, and automated sentiment monitoring—enabled PR practitioners to detect, analyse, and respond to crises with enhanced speed and precision. SCCT guided the alignment of AI-driven responses with crisis types, ensuring contextually appropriate strategies, while sensemaking theory informed real-time interpretation of complex crisis signals, improving strategic decision-making. AI ethics principles addressed risks like algorithmic bias and data privacy, safeguarding public trust. The model proposed three pillars—proactivity, authenticity, and transparency—to guide AI integration, ensuring alignment with organisational values. It posited that AI enhanced crisis anticipation and stakeholder communication by processing vast datasets to identify threats and tailor responses. However, challenges such as algorithmic opacity and misinformation amplification necessitated safeguards like transparent algorithms and human oversight. Utilising a conceptual methodology, the study synthesised interdisciplinary literature from communication, technology, and organisational studies to address gaps in AI-driven crisis strategies, particularly in dynamic contexts like the United Kingdom and West Africa. The framework advocated a hybrid human-AI approach to maintain ethical credibility, contributing to PR theory by offering a roadmap for practitioners. It called for empirical testing to validate its efficacy across diverse cultural and organisational settings.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Public Relations, Crisis Communication, Reputation Management, Ethical AI

Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has reshaped public relations (PR), advertising, and marketing communication, enabling practitioners to navigate complex digital landscapes with unprecedented efficiency. AI technologies, such as natural language processing and predictive analytics, have transformed how organisations monitor stakeholder sentiments and respond to crises in real time (Myers, 2025). In an era where social media amplifies issues instantaneously, the demand for swift, accurate, and ethical communication strategies has surged. PR professionals face mounting pressure to manage crises that can erode organisational reputation within hours, as seen in high-profile cases like corporate scandals or product recalls. AI tools offer the ability to process vast datasets, detect emerging threats, and tailor responses to diverse audiences, making them indispensable in modern crisis communication (Alathur, Chetty, Pai, & Kumar, n.d.). However, integrating AI into PR demands a careful balance between technological efficiency and human judgement to maintain authenticity. The evolving role of AI underscores the need for frameworks that guide its strategic application in crisis scenarios. This

study seeks to address this need by proposing a model that leverages AI's capabilities while addressing its challenges.

Crisis communication has long been a cornerstone of PR, with theories like situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) providing structured approaches to manage organisational responses (Coombs, 2014, as cited in Britt, Hayes, & Jin, n.d.). Traditional strategies, however, struggle to keep pace with the speed and scale of digital crises, where misinformation can spread globally in minutes. AI-driven tools, such as sentiment analysis and automated response systems, enable practitioners to analyse stakeholder reactions and craft timely messages (Ki, 2025). These technologies enhance proactivity by identifying potential crises before they escalate, as demonstrated in social media monitoring during corporate controversies (Molina et al., 2025). Yet, the literature highlights a gap in understanding how AI can be systematically integrated into crisis communication without compromising ethical standards. Concerns such as algorithmic bias and data privacy risks threaten public trust if not addressed (Henson, 2024). This study aims to bridge this gap by developing a conceptual framework that aligns AI capabilities with ethical PR practices.

The integration of AI into PR is not without challenges, particularly in managing organisational reputation during crises. Algorithmic opacity, where AI decision-making processes lack transparency, can undermine stakeholder trust (Krüger, Schäfer, & Wagner, 2025). For instance, automated responses generated without human oversight may fail to capture the nuance required in sensitive situations, potentially exacerbating crises. Additionally, the global nature of digital communication introduces complexities, as cultural contexts influence how AI-driven messages are perceived (Gazi, Masud, & Sobhani, n.d.). In regions like the United Kingdom, stringent regulations like GDPR highlight the importance of ethical data use, while in West Africa, resource constraints limit AI adoption (Nynas, n.d.). These variations underscore the need for a flexible yet robust framework to guide AI use in diverse settings. The proposed model seeks to address these challenges by embedding ethical principles into AI-driven crisis strategies.

A significant gap in PR scholarship lies in the absence of a cohesive framework for AI-enhanced crisis communication that balances technological innovation with ethical considerations. While studies have explored AI's applications in sentiment analysis and predictive modelling, few have synthesised these insights into a comprehensive model tailored for crisis management (Shao, n.d.). Existing research often focuses on technical capabilities, overlooking the interplay between AI and human judgement in maintaining authenticity (IPREX, 2025). This gap is particularly pronounced in dynamic global contexts, where cultural and regulatory differences shape crisis responses. The proposed framework aims to fill this void by integrating theories like SCCT and sensemaking with AI ethics to guide real-time reputation management. By addressing risks like misinformation amplification and bias, the model ensures AI supports rather than supplants human expertise. This study thus responds to the need for a theoretically grounded approach to AI in PR.

The primary objective of this study is to propose a conceptual framework for AI-enhanced crisis communication that facilitates real-time reputation management. This framework integrates AI tools, such as predictive analytics and automated sentiment monitoring, with established PR theories to enhance crisis anticipation and response (Karinshak, Zhao, Borremans, & Jin, 2025). It also explores ethical implications, ensuring that AI deployment aligns with principles of transparency and fairness. By synthesising interdisciplinary literature from communication, technology, and ethics, the study aims to provide a roadmap for practitioners navigating AI-driven crises. The framework emphasises three pillars—proactivity, authenticity, and transparency—to ensure AI supports strategic communication without compromising trust (Red Banyan, 2025). Additionally, the study suggests practical avenues for implementation, such as AI governance frameworks and training protocols. These objectives aim to advance both PR practice and scholarship in an AI-driven era.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to bridge the gap between AI technology and ethical PR practice. By proposing a hybrid model that combines AI's analytical power with human oversight, the framework ensures contextually appropriate responses that resonate with stakeholders (Karinshak et al., 2025). This approach is particularly relevant in the digital age, where rapid crisis escalation demands innovative solutions. The model's emphasis on ethical AI

use addresses pressing concerns like data privacy and algorithmic bias, fostering public trust (Signal AI, 2024). Furthermore, its applicability across diverse contexts, from the regulatory landscape of the United Kingdom to resource-constrained settings in West Africa, enhances its global relevance. The framework also contributes to PR theory by embedding AI within established paradigms like SCCT and dialogic engagement. This study thus offers a timely contribution to navigating the complexities of AI-driven communication.

To achieve these objectives, the study adopts a conceptual methodology, synthesising insights from communication, technology, and organisational studies. This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of AI's role in crisis communication without the constraints of empirical data collection (Edelman, 2024). By drawing on seminal works and recent studies, the framework ensures theoretical robustness while addressing contemporary challenges. The inclusion of case studies, such as AI use in social media crises, grounds the model in practical scenarios (Agility PR Solutions, 2025). The study also proposes testable propositions to guide future empirical research, ensuring the framework's applicability. By advocating for a hybrid human-AI approach, the model balances technological efficiency with ethical credibility. This methodological choice reflects the study's aim to provide a forward-looking yet grounded contribution to PR scholarship.

It is on this premise that this study seeks to propose a conceptual framework that harnesses AI's potential for real-time reputation management while safeguarding ethical principles and public trust. The framework addresses the urgent need for PR practitioners to adapt to the digital age's complexities, where crises unfold rapidly across global platforms. By integrating AI with established theories and ethical guidelines, the model offers a pathway for organisations to enhance resilience and stakeholder engagement. The study's interdisciplinary approach ensures a holistic understanding of AI's role, from technical capabilities to cultural nuances. Its focus on proactivity, authenticity, and transparency responds to the evolving demands of crisis communication. Ultimately, this framework aims to empower PR professionals to navigate AI-driven crises with confidence and integrity.

Literature Review

Evolution of AI in Public Relations

The integration of AI into PR has transformed how practitioners monitor and respond to stakeholder sentiments, particularly in crisis scenarios. AI applications, such as sentiment analysis, predictive modelling, and automated response systems, enable rapid processing of vast datasets to identify emerging issues (Alathur et al., n.d.). Kent and Taylor's (2014, as cited in Shao, n.d.) dialogic principles highlight the importance of two-way communication in PR, yet AI-driven tools often prioritise efficiency over genuine engagement. Studies demonstrate that sentiment analysis can gauge public reactions in real time, as seen in corporate responses to social media backlash (Molina, Wang, & Sundar, 2025). Predictive modelling further enhances proactivity by forecasting crisis escalation, but its reliance on historical data risks perpetuating biases (Krüger et al., 2025). The literature lacks a cohesive approach to balancing AI's technical capabilities with dialogic engagement, a deficiency this study seeks to address.

Ethical concerns surrounding AI in PR are increasingly prominent, particularly regarding transparency and accountability. Recent studies on AI ethics highlight risks such as algorithmic bias and data privacy violations, which can undermine public trust if not addressed (Henson, 2024). For instance, automated responses generated without human oversight may lack the empathy required in sensitive crises, potentially exacerbating reputational damage (IPREX, 2025). While AI tools offer speed and precision, their over-reliance can diminish the human element central to PR's dialogic principles. The current study aims to fill this gap by proposing a framework that integrates AI with ethical guidelines, ensuring responses remain authentic and stakeholder-focused. This approach builds on prior research by embedding ethical AI use within crisis communication strategies, addressing deficiencies in existing applications.

Crisis Communication

Crisis communication has long been a critical domain in public relations (PR), with foundational theories shaping strategic responses to organisational crises. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), developed by Coombs (2014, as cited in Britt et al., n.d.), provides a robust framework for aligning response strategies with crisis types, such as victim, accidental, or

preventable crises. SCCT posits that matching communication strategies to the level of organisational responsibility enhances reputation protection, yet its application in digital contexts remains underexplored. Sensemaking theory by Weick (1995, as cited in Nynas, n.d.) complements SCCT by emphasising how organisations interpret ambiguous crisis signals to inform decision-making. While these theories offer structured approaches, they were developed before the advent of AI-driven tools, limiting their guidance on real-time, data-intensive environments. The rapid pace of digital crises demands adaptive frameworks that integrate technological capabilities, a gap this study addresses. Current literature lacks a synthesis of these theories with AI applications, underscoring the need for a model that bridges traditional PR with modern technology.

The reliance on manual interpretation in traditional crisis communication theories highlights their limitations in the digital age. SCCT, for instance, assumes PR practitioners have sufficient time to assess crisis attribution, which is increasingly untenable with social media's speed (Myers, 2025). Sensemaking theory, while valuable for understanding complex stakeholder reactions, struggles to process the volume of data generated during crises. Recent studies suggest that integrating AI could enhance these frameworks by automating data analysis and response formulation (Ki, 2025). However, the literature reveals a deficiency in addressing how AI can be ethically aligned with these theories to maintain stakeholder trust. This gap motivates the current study's focus on a hybrid model that leverages AI while preserving the human-centric principles of SCCT and sensemaking. The proposed framework aims to address this by embedding AI tools within established theoretical paradigms.

Intersection of AI and Reputation Management

The intersection of AI and reputation management has gained attention through case studies demonstrating both its potential and limitations. AI-driven social media monitoring, for example, has been pivotal in managing corporate scandals, such as when brands use real-time analytics to track public sentiment during product recalls (Signal AI, 2024). Such applications enable organisations to tailor responses swiftly, aligning with SCCT's emphasis on context-specific strategies. However, case studies reveal gaps, such as over-reliance on AI diminishing human empathy, which can alienate stakeholders (Karinshak et al., 2025). For instance, automated responses during a crisis may appear formulaic, undermining authenticity and trust. The literature also notes the risk of misinformation amplification when AI misinterprets data, a challenge not adequately addressed in current PR scholarship (Agility PR Solutions, 2025). This study responds by proposing a model that integrates human oversight to mitigate these risks, ensuring AI supports rather than supplants reputational strategies.

Another critical gap is the lack of frameworks addressing the ethical deployment of AI in reputation management. While AI can enhance crisis anticipation through predictive analytics, its opacity raises concerns about credibility (Muthupandian, 2024). For example, stakeholders may question the legitimacy of AI-generated news releases, as highlighted by Molina et al. (2025). The absence of transparent algorithms and governance structures further complicates trust-building efforts. This study addresses these deficiencies by incorporating transparency as a core pillar, ensuring AI-driven responses align with organisational values. By synthesising case studies with theoretical insights, the proposed framework aims to advance reputation management by balancing AI's efficiency with ethical credibility, filling a critical void in PR literature.

Cultural and Global Perspectives

AI adoption in crisis communication varies significantly across cultural and regulatory contexts, highlighting both opportunities and challenges. In the United Kingdom, stringent regulations like GDPR underscore the importance of ethical data use, shaping AI applications in PR (Gazi, Masud, & Sobhani, n.d.). Studies indicate that UK organisations prioritise transparency in AI-driven communication to comply with regulatory standards, yet this focus often limits innovation due to compliance costs (Edelman, 2024). Conversely, in emerging markets like West Africa, resource constraints hinder AI adoption, with organisations relying on manual processes despite digital crises' global reach (Nynas, n.d.). These variations reveal a gap in frameworks that accommodate diverse contexts, as most studies focus on Western settings. The current study addresses this

by proposing a flexible model adaptable to both regulatory-heavy and resource-constrained environments, ensuring global applicability.

Cultural nuances further complicate AI's role in crisis communication, as stakeholder expectations differ across regions. For instance, collectivist cultures in West Africa value community-oriented responses, which AI may struggle to replicate without human input (Al-Khasawneh et al., n.d.). The literature lacks comprehensive analyses of how cultural factors influence AI-driven crisis strategies, a deficiency this study seeks to rectify. By integrating global perspectives, the proposed framework ensures AI tools are tailored to diverse audiences, enhancing their effectiveness. This approach responds to the need for culturally sensitive, globally relevant models, bridging gaps in prior research and setting the stage for the study's conceptual framework.

The reviewed literature underscores significant deficiencies in integrating AI with crisis communication, particularly in balancing technological efficiency with ethical and cultural considerations. While SCCT and sensemaking theory provide robust foundations, they lack guidance on leveraging AI for real-time crisis management. Similarly, AI applications in PR, though promising, are hindered by risks like bias, opacity, and diminished empathy, with limited frameworks addressing these challenges holistically (Red Banyan, 2025). The absence of culturally adaptive models further limits global applicability, particularly in diverse contexts like the United Kingdom and West Africa. This study addresses these gaps by proposing a hybrid AI-PR framework that integrates proactivity, authenticity, and transparency, drawing on interdisciplinary insights to enhance reputation management. The forthcoming framework synthesises SCCT, sensemaking, and AI ethics to guide practitioners in navigating digital crises while maintaining stakeholder trust. By building on the identified deficiencies, this model offers a novel approach to AI-enhanced crisis communication, paving the way for practical and theoretical advancements.

Theoretical Framework

Core Theories

The proposed conceptual model for AI-enhanced crisis communication integrates three core theoretical perspectives: stakeholder theory, narrative theory, and AI ethics frameworks. Stakeholder theory, as articulated by Freeman (1984, as cited in Karinshak et al., 2025), emphasises prioritising the needs and expectations of diverse audiences to maintain organisational legitimacy during crises. This theory guides the model by ensuring AI-driven communication remains audience-centric, addressing stakeholder concerns with tailored responses. Narrative theory, rooted in the work of Fisher (1987, as cited in Shao, n.d.), underscores the power of storytelling in shaping perceptions and fostering trust during crises. By integrating narrative principles, the model leverages AI to craft coherent, empathetic narratives that resonate with stakeholders. AI ethics frameworks, particularly Floridi's principles (2019, as cited in Henson, 2024), provide guidelines for responsible technology use, addressing risks like algorithmic bias and data privacy. These theories collectively inform a hybrid approach that balances technological efficiency with human-centric and ethical considerations.

Stakeholder theory ensures that AI applications prioritise stakeholder engagement, a critical aspect of crisis communication. For instance, predictive analytics can identify stakeholder sentiments, but without a stakeholder-centric focus, responses may appear impersonal (Molina et al., 2025). Narrative theory complements this by guiding AI to construct stories that align with organisational values and cultural contexts, enhancing authenticity (IPREX, 2025). Meanwhile, Floridi's AI ethics principles—beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, justice, and explicability—address concerns like transparency and fairness in AI deployment (Krüger et al., 2025). The integration of these theories addresses deficiencies in prior literature, which often overlooks the interplay between AI and human judgement in crisis contexts. This study's model builds on these foundations to propose a framework that is both theoretically robust and practically applicable.

Conceptual Model Development

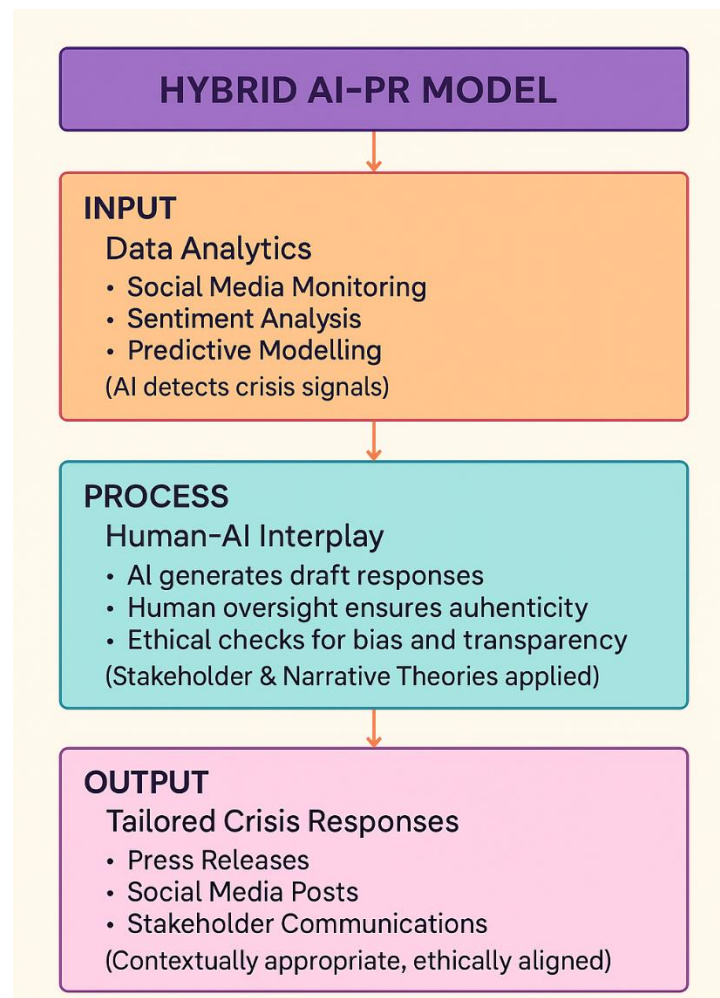
The proposed hybrid AI-PR model rests on three pillars: proactivity, authenticity, and transparency. **Proactivity** leverages AI tools like predictive analytics and sentiment monitoring to detect emerging crises before they escalate (Alathur et al., n.d.). For example, AI can analyse

social media trends to identify potential reputational threats, enabling preemptive action. **Authenticity** emphasises human-AI collaboration to craft responses that reflect organisational values and stakeholder expectations (Karinshak et al., 2025). This pillar ensures that AI-generated outputs, such as automated press releases, are refined by human oversight to maintain empathy and credibility. **Transparency** mandates ethical disclosure of AI use, aligning with Florida's principle of explicability to foster trust (Henson, 2024). By integrating these pillars, the model ensures AI enhances crisis communication without compromising ethical or relational integrity.

The model operates through three components: input, process, and output. The **input** phase involves data analytics, where AI processes vast datasets from social media, news, and stakeholder feedback to identify crisis signals (Signal AI, 2024). The **process** phase entails human-AI interplay, where practitioners refine AI outputs to align with narrative and stakeholder theories (Muthupandian, 2024). The **output** phase delivers tailored crisis responses, such as press releases or social media posts, that are contextually appropriate and ethically sound (Agility PR Solutions, 2025). This structure addresses gaps in prior models by embedding ethical safeguards and cultural adaptability, ensuring applicability across diverse contexts like the United Kingdom and West Africa. The model's hybrid nature ensures AI augments rather than replaces human expertise, responding to concerns about over-reliance on technology (Nynas, n.d.).

Diagrammatic Representation

Below is a diagrammatic representation of the hybrid AI-PR model, illustrating its components and their interplay. The diagram is designed to be copiable for replication in academic or practical settings.



Pillars: Proactivity → Authenticity → Transparency

This diagram illustrates the flow from data-driven inputs to human-refined outputs, guided by the three pillars. The input phase leverages AI's analytical power, the process phase integrates human judgement, and the output phase delivers stakeholder-centric responses (Edelman, 2024). The pillars ensure ethical alignment and cultural relevance, addressing global variations in crisis communication needs.

Assumptions and Propositions

The model is grounded in several assumptions and testable propositions to guide future empirical research.

Assumption 1: AI tools enhance crisis anticipation by processing large datasets more efficiently than manual methods. *Proposition 1:* AI predictive tools improve crisis anticipation but require human oversight to mitigate bias, as unchecked algorithms may amplify misinformation (Krüger et al., 2025).

Assumption 2: Human-AI collaboration produces more authentic responses than AI alone. *Proposition 2:* Responses crafted through human-AI interplay are perceived as more credible by stakeholders, aligning with narrative theory's emphasis on storytelling (Shao, n.d.).

Assumption 3: Transparent disclosure of AI use fosters public trust. *Proposition 3:* Organisations that disclose AI involvement in crisis communication maintain higher reputational credibility, per Floridi's explicability principle (Henson, 2024).

These propositions address gaps in the literature by providing testable hypotheses for AI's role in crisis communication. For instance, Proposition 1 responds to concerns about algorithmic bias by advocating for human oversight (Molina et al., 2025). Proposition 2 bridges the authenticity gap highlighted in prior studies, ensuring AI supports rather than supplants human empathy (IPREX, 2025). Proposition 3 aligns with ethical AI frameworks, addressing transparency deficits in current PR practices (Red Banyan, 2025). The model's assumptions and propositions provide a foundation for empirical validation, ensuring its relevance to both practice and scholarship. The subsequent sections will explore the model's application and implications, building on this theoretical framework.

Discussion and Implications

The proposed hybrid AI-PR model offers versatile applications in advertising and marketing communication, particularly in managing dynamic crises such as viral backlashes or brand controversies on social platforms. In advertising scenarios, for instance, a viral backlash against a campaign perceived as insensitive could escalate rapidly across social media, threatening organisational reputation. The model's proactivity pillar enables AI tools like sentiment analysis to detect negative trends early, allowing PR teams to intervene with targeted responses (Alathur et al., n.d.). By integrating predictive modelling, organisations can forecast the spread of backlash, drawing on SCCT to tailor messages that acknowledge responsibility and rebuild trust. This application extends to marketing communication, where brand crises—such as product failures amplified online—demand swift, audience-centric strategies. Here, the authenticity pillar ensures human oversight refines AI-generated narratives, maintaining genuine stakeholder dialogues (Karinshak et al., 2025). For example, during a social media storm, AI can process user comments to identify key concerns, while practitioners craft empathetic replies aligned with narrative theory. These scenarios illustrate how the framework transforms reactive PR into proactive resilience, adapting to the fast-paced digital environment. Transitioning from these applications, it is essential to consider the ethical dimensions that underpin the model's efficacy. Ethical considerations are paramount in deploying the hybrid AI-PR model, as AI's integration into crisis communication introduces risks that could undermine public trust if not managed carefully. Data privacy emerges as a critical concern, particularly with regulations like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the United Kingdom, which mandates transparent data handling practices (Gazi et al., n.d.). The model addresses this by advocating for ethical disclosure under the transparency pillar, ensuring AI tools comply with legal standards and protect stakeholder information. Algorithmic bias represents another risk, where AI trained on skewed datasets might perpetuate stereotypes in crisis responses, exacerbating inequalities in global contexts like West Africa (Nynas, n.d.). To mitigate this, the framework incorporates Floridi's AI ethics principles, recommending regular audits and diverse data inputs to foster

justice and non-maleficence (Henson, 2024). Maintaining authenticity in stakeholder dialogues is equally vital, as over-reliance on automated systems could erode empathy, leading to perceptions of insincerity (IPREX, 2025). The authenticity pillar counters this by emphasising human-AI collaboration, ensuring responses resonate on a personal level while leveraging AI's efficiency. These ethical safeguards not only protect against potential pitfalls but also enhance the model's credibility, paving the way for practical implementation in PR practice.

Building on these ethical foundations, the hybrid AI-PR model provides actionable implications for PR practitioners seeking to integrate AI into crisis communication strategies. For implementation, organisations should begin with pilot programmes, deploying AI tools for sentiment monitoring in low-stakes scenarios to build familiarity (Signal AI, 2024). Training is crucial, with recommendations including workshops on AI ethics and human-AI collaboration, equipping practitioners to oversee automated processes effectively (Krüger et al., 2025). Evaluation metrics should encompass both quantitative measures, such as response time and sentiment shift post-crisis, and qualitative assessments like stakeholder feedback on authenticity (Molina et al., 2025). In practice, this might involve dashboards tracking AI performance against ethical benchmarks, ensuring alignment with organisational values. For global firms operating in diverse regions, customisation is key—adapting the model to regulatory environments in the United Kingdom or resource-limited settings in West Africa (Al-Khasawneh et al., n.d.). These recommendations empower practitioners to harness AI's potential while mitigating risks, fostering a culture of innovation in PR. As these practical insights demonstrate, the model not only guides day-to-day operations but also contributes significantly to theoretical advancements in the field.

Theoretically, the hybrid AI-PR model advances PR scholarship by embedding AI within dialogic and ethical paradigms, bridging gaps in existing literature on technology-driven communication. By integrating stakeholder theory with AI applications, the model shifts PR from monologic broadcasts to interactive, audience-centric engagements, enhancing dialogic principles outlined by Kent and Taylor (Shao, n.d.). This embedding of AI in ethical frameworks, such as Floridi's principles, introduces a novel lens for examining responsibility in digital crises, addressing underexplored areas like algorithmic accountability (Myers, 2025). The three pillars—proactivity, authenticity, and transparency—extend sensemaking theory by incorporating real-time data interpretation, enabling scholars to theorise about AI's role in crisis sensemaking (Britt et al., n.d.). Furthermore, the model's focus on narrative theory innovates by proposing AI-assisted storytelling that maintains human nuance, contributing to reputation management discourse (Muthupandian, 2024). In an AI-driven landscape, this framework enriches PR theory by providing a roadmap for hybrid approaches, encouraging interdisciplinary research at the intersection of communication, technology, and ethics. These contributions highlight the model's potential to redefine PR paradigms, yet they must be viewed alongside the limitations inherent in its conceptual nature.

Despite its theoretical and practical strengths, the conceptual approach of this study presents certain limitations that warrant acknowledgement. Primarily, the framework lacks empirical validation, relying on literature synthesis rather than real-world data, which may limit its generalisability across diverse organisational contexts (Ki, 2025). For instance, while scenarios in advertising and marketing are explored, actual testing in live crises could reveal unforeseen challenges, such as AI's performance under high-stakes pressure. Cultural variations, though considered, require field studies to confirm the model's adaptability in regions like West Africa, where technological infrastructure varies (Arslan, 2024). Additionally, the rapid evolution of AI technologies means the framework may need updates to incorporate emerging tools, a constraint of its current conceptual scope. These limitations underscore the necessity for future empirical research, such as case studies or surveys, to test the model's propositions and refine its pillars (Kuchmii et al., 2025). By recognising these boundaries, the study invites scholarly collaboration to evolve the framework from concept to validated practice, ensuring its enduring relevance in PR.

The discussion thus far illustrates the model's multifaceted implications, from ethical safeguards to theoretical innovations, while candidly addressing conceptual constraints. In applying the framework to advertising and marketing crises, it demonstrates tangible benefits in navigating

digital backlashes with speed and sensitivity. Ethical considerations ensure responsible AI use, aligning with global standards like GDPR and mitigating biases that could harm stakeholder relations (Edelman, 2024). Practical recommendations provide a blueprint for PR practitioners, emphasising training and metrics to measure success in AI integration. Theoretically, the model pushes PR scholarship forward by fusing AI with dialogic ethics, filling critical gaps in the literature (Red Banyan, 2025). Although limited by its conceptual design, these implications highlight the framework's potential to transform crisis communication, calling for empirical pursuits to realise its full impact.

Conclusion

This study introduces a novel hybrid AI-PR framework that advances crisis communication by integrating ethical AI use with established theories like situational crisis communication theory, sensemaking, and stakeholder engagement, fostering real-time reputation management through proactivity, authenticity, and transparency. Its interdisciplinary approach addresses gaps in PR literature by embedding AI within dialogic and ethical paradigms, offering a roadmap for practitioners to navigate digital crises while maintaining stakeholder trust across diverse contexts like the United Kingdom and West Africa. Future research should empirically test the framework through case analyses of AI applications in real-world crises or surveys on AI adoption in PR firms to validate its propositions and refine its applicability. The imperative for balanced AI integration underscores the need to combine technological efficiency with human judgement, ensuring communication professions sustain credibility and trust in an AI-driven landscape. It is on this premise that this study advocates for a cautious yet innovative embrace of AI to redefine crisis communication with ethical integrity.

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Artificial Intelligence and Changing Employment Patterns in the Creative Labour Market **Okhwarobo Godwin**

Abstract

This research examines the influence of artificial intelligence on changing employment patterns within the creative labour market, with particular focus on journalism, film, music, advertising, and digital content production. The researcher investigates how the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence technologies has transformed the production, distribution, and monetisation of creative work, resulting in shifts in job roles, skill requirements, and labour relations across creative industries. Anchored on Technological Determinism and Political Economy of Communication theories, the study adopts a quantitative research design using the survey method to collect data from creative professionals working in selected sectors of the creative industry. Data collected are analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Findings from the study indicate that artificial intelligence has increased automation of routine creative tasks, created hybrid creative roles, and heightened demand for digital and data driven skills, while simultaneously raising concerns about job displacement, income instability, authorship, and intellectual property rights. The study also reveals that uneven access to technology and training has intensified inequalities within the creative labour market, particularly among freelance and entry level workers. The researcher concludes that although artificial intelligence offers opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and expanded creative possibilities, its impact on employment requires deliberate policy interventions, skills development programmes, and ethical labour frameworks to ensure fair work conditions and labour relations, thereby contributing to scholarly discourse on artificial intelligence, creative labour, and the future of work.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Labour Frameworks, Labour Relations, Monetisation, Labour Relations

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI), which was initially regarded as the means of automatising different routine services, has become one of the most significant changes that dramatically alters the creative labour market. As the technological revolution, globalisation, and changes in the nature of operations within the creative industries continue at a very fast pace, organisations, educators and policy makers are becoming more conscious of how AI is affecting employment trends and the competencies that would make one successful. The most interesting aspect of AI in the creative labour market is that it integrates technical innovation and creative expression and enables workers to increase productivity and experiment with new ways of creating artistic and cultural output (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

Russell & Norvig (2020) state that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science that allows machines and software to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence. These tasks include learning from data, recognising patterns, solving problems, making decisions, and even creating content such as music, art, or written work. AI can work on its own or assist humans, helping them complete jobs faster, more accurately, and in new ways. In the creative industry, AI tools are used to design graphics, compose music, edit videos, and generate ideas. This makes it a powerful technology that is changing how people work and the skills they need to succeed. Davenport & Kirby (2016) define AI in the creative industry as systems and tools that supplement human creativity and assist in working on design, music creation, content creation, and digital media. To allow creative specialists to devote more attention to high-level problem identification, ideation, and innovation, AI helps in automating repetitive tasks and deliver insights to large datasets.

Furthermore, Luckin et al. (2016) maintain that AI exposes workers to experimenting with new methods, modifying to new tools and platforms, and creating a flexible and resilient mindset in the fast-changing job market. With these, AI can be used as an impetus to personal and professional development in the creative industry. According to the McKinsey Global Institute (2017) AI has changed the employment environment by introducing new positions and changing the old ones. Work in the fields of digital marketing, animation, game design, and media production is demanding more talents that combine innovativeness with technical literacy and AI tools. The institute also notes that in the process of integrating AI in creative industries, it is

important to mention that not only the processes of production are simplified, but also the possibility of entrepreneurship as it provides people with an opportunity to implement new projects, digital media platforms, or create start-ups. In addition to technical proficiency, AI also fosters cooperation, critical thinking, and multi-disciplinary problem solving, which is vital to operating in the uncertainty of the new creative economy.

Bakhshi, Frey & Osborne (2015) aver that in the current technological dispensation, AI is working towards a more diversified workforce that is capable of meeting the increasing demands of the creative industries across the globe. AI is making workers reach out to new markets and consumer groups all over the world by allowing them to experience virtual reality, compose music with the help of AI, and design objects on an algorithm basis and tell digital stories. As a connector between technological advancement and human talent, AI enables practitioners to combine human creativity and machine potential to come up with a novel and commercially feasible work

Notably, it is evident that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is not just a new technology, but a major force changing jobs in the creative industry. While traditional training in art, music, and media teaches the basics, AI gives workers new tools to create, adapt, and succeed in a changing job market. Nevertheless, it is important to understand how AI can help people learn new skills, create job opportunities, and shape careers in the arts. This current study is therefore concerned with Artificial Intelligence as the answer to the changing patterns of employment and skills demand in the creative labour market.

Statement of the problem

The swift development of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing the creative labour market and changing the nature of jobs on the market and the skills demanded to become successful. Classical creative tasks in music, design, media, and digital content are being more and more supported or replaced by AI-based tools that automate standard tasks, produce creative results and aid decision making. On one hand, these technologies are expected to ensure enhanced efficiency and innovativeness, but, on the other hand, these technologies are unpredictable to creative professionals who might not have the technical background to use AI technologies, and might not be able to adjust to the new working process. In Nigeria, where the creative sector is maturing but not yet technologically sophisticated in its digital competency and integration, a lot of young creatives find themselves at risk of job loss, underemployment, and are mismatched in their existing competencies and market demands of the changing AI-based market.

Although the use of AI in the global community is on the rise, very little data has been studied on its impacts on employment, skills demands, and entrepreneurial prospects in creative sectors in Nigeria. Specifically, the lack of knowledge about how young Nigerian creatives can use AI to become employable, generate new sources of income, or build innovative businesses is apparent. Unless certain actions are implemented in AI literacy and a focus on practical training, Nigerian youths will have a difficult time adjusting to the new creative labour environment, something that can intensify unemployment and restrain career advancement. This paper, thus, aims to investigate Artificial Intelligence and Changing Employment Patterns in the Creative Labour Market.

Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of the study were to

1. Examine how artificial intelligence is changing job roles and labour relations in the creative industries.
2. Assess the opportunities created by artificial intelligence in the creative labour market.
3. Identify the challenges posed by artificial intelligence in the creative labour market.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the technological determinism theory and the political economy of communication theory to explain the basic ideological standpoints for the research.

Technological Determinism Theory

The Technological Determinism Theory was developed by Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s and explains how technology influences and shapes society, culture, and human behaviour. The

theory argues that technological innovations drive social change, often determining how people work, communicate, and interact. In media and communication, technological tools like AI, social media platforms, or digital content production software can transform creative work processes, the type of content produced, and the ways audiences consume and engage with media.

The major principles of Technological Determinism include:

11. Technology as a driver of change: Innovations in technology shape social structures, work practices, and cultural trends.
12. Medium shapes content: The characteristics of a technological tool influence how information is produced and received.
13. Inevitability of technological impact: Once a technology is introduced, it creates inevitable changes in society, sometimes faster than regulations or human adaptation.

These principles show that technology is not just a tool but a force that can reshape behaviours, industries, and markets. In creative industries, AI-driven design tools or content automation platforms influence how creative professionals produce work, manage tasks, and interact with audiences. Technological Determinism is relevant for this study on AI and changing employment patterns in the creative labour market because the introduction of AI technologies actively shapes job roles, skill requirements, and opportunities for innovation or self-employment in creative fields.

Political Economy of Communication Theory

Political Economy of Communication Theory was developed by scholars such as Dallas Smyth and Herbert Schiller in the 1970s and focuses on how media industries, ownership, and economic forces influence the production and distribution of content. The theory argues that media systems are shaped by economic power, political control, and corporate interests, which in turn affect what content is created, who benefits from it, and how audiences are influenced. In creative industries, the concentration of media ownership, investment in digital tools, and monetisation strategies determine which creative products succeed and which workers gain opportunities.

The major principles of Political Economy of Communication include:

- XIII. Media content and technologies are controlled by organisations or individuals with economic and political power.
- XIV. Economic interests influence what media content is produced and how resources are allocated.
- XV. Audiences are viewed as a source of value, often through advertising or engagement metrics.

These principles show that creative work and employment are not only shaped by technology but also by economic and political structures. In AI-driven creative industries, companies that control AI tools, platforms, or digital media distribution can influence job opportunities, wage structures, and the visibility of creative products. Political Economy of Communication Theory is appropriate for studying AI in the creative labour market because it highlights how access to technology, ownership of platforms, and corporate decisions affect employment patterns, skill demands, and inequalities among creative professionals.

Concept of Creative Labour Market

The creative labour market refers to the sector of the economy where individuals use their creative skills, knowledge, and talents to produce cultural, artistic, and innovative goods or services. According to Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011), it includes industries such as film, music, advertising, design, journalism, digital media, and performing arts, where work is usually project-based, flexible, and driven by both skill and innovation. The creative labour market is not mere employment. Rather, it provides opportunities for individuals to express ideas, experiment with new forms of content, and develop skills that are valuable in a swift changing economy. In this sense, it combines personal creativity with economic participation, enabling workers to contribute to cultural and commercial outputs.

As Brook, Giuliani, O'Brien & Taylor. (2025) explain that the creative labour market involves both intrinsic and instrumental value. Intrinsically, it promotes cultural expression, artistic

growth, and social engagement. Instrumentally, it equips workers with transferable skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, communication, and digital literacy, which can improve employability and entrepreneurial potential. The sector also encourages adaptability and resilience, as workers often navigate fluctuating demand, project deadlines, and emerging technologies. Furthermore, the creative labour market supports social and economic development by providing avenues for innovation, self-employment, and participation in both local and global cultural economies (Gil, Ravid, & Sorenson, 2025).

In addition, the creative labour market promotes professional and social growth by exposing workers to different audiences, collaborations, and industry networks. Through the integration of formal training, informal mentorship, and practical experiences, it helps creative professionals develop entrepreneurial mindsets and practical competencies. These abilities are essential for success within creative industries and also for contributing to economic and cultural development. In this way, the creative labour market serves as a bridge between talent, opportunity, and sustainable employment in the modern economy, (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2024).

Artificial Intelligence Impact on Employment Patterns

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2024), artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping labour markets globally by automating routine tasks, creating new hybrid roles, and redefining the skills required in the workplace. In the creative labour market, AI tools such as automated design software, generative content systems, and data-driven production platforms are increasingly used to enhance efficiency and innovation. While these technologies create opportunities for improved productivity and creative output, creative workers who lack AI literacy or digital skills may find it harder to secure employment or adapt successfully to changing job demands. This highlights that understanding AI's impact on work patterns is crucial for both workers and educators in creative industries.

Wang, Baksy, Bakhshi & Siepel (2025) explain that one of the main effects of AI on employment is the shifting balance between human creativity and machine-assisted processes. Rather than completely replacing creative work, AI usually changes the nature of tasks, requiring workers to integrate technological skills with artistic expertise. For example, a graphic designer may use AI-assisted tools for layout generation, or a music producer may use AI plugins for sound synthesis, making technical proficiency in AI tools as important as traditional creative capabilities. Research by Wang et al. (2025) maintains that employers in creative sectors demand hybrid skill sets that combine creativity with AI competence, which influences hiring patterns and job descriptions in the labour market. Such shifts mean that creative professionals need continuous learning opportunities to remain competitive in the evolving employment market.

AI's impact on employment patterns also includes concerns about job stability and equitable access to opportunities. Öztaş & Arda (2025) argue that while AI can create innovative job roles, it can also intensify precarious work conditions for freelancers and early-career creatives who may lack institutional support or access to training. This precariousness is compounded when access to AI tools and infrastructure is uneven, reinforcing inequalities within the creative labour market. In this regard, policy interventions, skills development programmes, and ethical frameworks are necessary to ensure that the benefits of AI expand opportunities rather than marginalise vulnerable creative workers. Thus, AI's influence on employment patterns is both transformative and complex, as it creates new pathways for innovation while challenging traditional models of work and employment in creative industries.

Recent empirical evidence indicates that the demand for both AI skills and creative abilities is growing rather than decreasing, as new digital technologies become more widespread. A large study of over 168 million job adverts in the UK found that employers are looking for workers who can combine technical knowledge of AI tools with traditional creative skills. Roles in design, media, music production, and advertising now require employees to use AI software while also applying their own creative ideas. This shows that human creativity is still highly valued, but it must be paired with the ability to work effectively with AI. High-skilled creative workers who can adapt to these changes are more likely to find job opportunities, while those who rely solely on traditional methods may struggle to remain competitive in the modern labour market, (Wang et al, 2025).

Obstacles and Ethical Concerns in AI-Driven Creative Employment

Implementing artificial intelligence in the creative labour market is not without challenges. Companies, creative professionals, and policymakers face significant obstacles when trying to integrate AI tools in ways that improve productivity, skills development, and employment opportunities. These challenges arise from differences in access to technology, digital literacy, policy support, and ethical considerations. As noted by UNCTAD (2024) and Wang et al. (2025), AI is not just about automation or efficiency. It also has the potential to create new roles and enhance creative output. However, several key challenges make this difficult:

10. Limited access to AI technology and infrastructure: One of the biggest challenges is that many creative workers and small agencies in Nigeria do not have access to AI tools, high-performance computers, or reliable internet connections. Without these resources, workers cannot fully benefit from AI, limiting skill development and reducing opportunities to compete in the global creative market.
11. Inadequate training and expertise: Another major challenge is the shortage of professionals trained to use AI effectively in creative work. Many creative workers lack the technical knowledge to integrate AI tools into music production, digital design, or video editing. According to Wang et al. (2025), this skills gap prevents workers from taking full advantage of AI, leaving them at a disadvantage in an evolving labour market.
12. Policy and regulatory gaps: Political and policy issues also affect the adoption of AI. There is currently limited guidance on intellectual property rights, ethical AI use, or fair labour practices in creative industries. Without clear policies, companies and individuals may struggle to implement AI responsibly, and workers may face unfair practices, job insecurity, or exploitation.
13. Ethical and social concerns: Finally, ethical issues pose a serious challenge. The use of AI in creative work raises questions about authorship, originality, and the potential replacement of human labour. Social perceptions about AI replacing jobs can discourage workers from embracing new technologies, while unequal access to AI can deepen existing inequalities within the creative workforce.
14. Resistance to Change and Fear of Job Loss: Many creative professionals may resist adopting AI due to fear that machines will replace their roles. This resistance can slow down the integration of AI tools, limit innovation, and prevent workers from developing new skills that could enhance their employability. Fear of job displacement can also create stress and reduce motivation among employees, particularly freelancers and early-career creatives who depend on steady income.
15. Data Privacy and Security Concerns: The use of AI in creative work involves handling large amounts of data, including personal, client, or proprietary information. Small creative agencies and freelancers may lack proper cybersecurity measures, increasing the risk of data breaches, intellectual property theft, or misuse of sensitive content. These concerns can hinder AI adoption and affect trust between clients and creative professionals.

Empirical Review

Öztaş & Arda (2025) conducted a qualitative case study titled *Re-evaluating Creative Labor in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: A Qualitative Case Study of Creative Workers' Perspectives on Technological Transformation in Creative Industries*. The research explored how the introduction of AI technologies is transforming creative work and how creative professionals perceive and adapt to these changes. Using in-depth interviews with creative workers, the study found that AI tools are seen both as opportunities for expanding expressive capacities and as pressures for survival in the labour market. Findings indicated that while AI can enhance creative processes and reduce manual workload, many creative workers also expressed concerns about job risks and the need to integrate AI skills to remain competitive. The study concluded that understanding AI's impact on creative work requires acknowledging both the opportunities and the challenges it brings to creative labour practices and identities.

Wang, Baksy, Bakhshi & Siepel (2025) examined employer demand for AI and creativity skills in the labour market in their study *Demand for Creativity and AI Skills in the Post-ChatGPT Labour*

Market: Evidence from UK Job Vacancies. The researchers analysed over 168 million UK job postings from 2016 to 2024, using Natural Language Processing (NLP) to assess how demand for creativity and AI skills has evolved after the release of ChatGPT. Findings show that job postings increasingly require both creativity and AI skills together, with a stronger association in high-skilled roles and in creative industry clusters. This shows that rather than replacing creative skills, AI adoption is linked with a growing need for hybrid skill sets that combine both human creativity and technological proficiency. The study highlights the implications for skills development and policy to support workers in the AI-enhanced creative labour market.

Methodology

This study used a survey method to collect data through a structured questionnaire. The research focused on creative professionals and media personnel working at J-Mouse Technologies Ltd, Vekon Digital, True Dreams Multi Concepts Ltd, and Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) in Benin City. The total population of the organisations was determined based on staff strength estimates: J-Mouse Technologies Ltd has a small creative team of 5 employees; Vekon Digital has 30 key staff; True Dreams Multi Concepts Ltd has 10 staff; and Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) has 69 key staff (Edo Broadcasting Service, 2024). This gives a combined population of 114 respondents. As the population was relatively small and manageable, the study adopted a census sampling technique, where all members of the population were included as respondents. According to Asemah et al. (2022), surveying the entire population is appropriate when the group is small and easily accessible, as this ensures more complete data and avoids sampling errors. Out of the 114 questionnaire distributed, 10 were not properly filled and therefore excluded, leaving 104 valid copies of questionnaire for analysis. The data collected were analysed using frequency distribution tables and mean scores. A threshold of 2.50 was used to interpret responses: scores above 2.50 indicated agreement, while scores below 2.50 indicated disagreement.

Data presentation and analysis

Table 1: AI Impact on Job Roles, and Labour Relations

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
	AI technologies have significantly changed my job role in the creative industry.	30	45	20	9	2.92
	I am required to acquire new skills to adapt to AI tools in my work.	35	42	18	9	2.99
	AI has affected how I collaborate and interact with colleagues in my workplace	28	46	20	10	2.89

Source: Field Survey 2026

The data in Table 1 show that AI has a noticeable impact on job roles, skill requirements, and workplace interactions in the creative labour market. The respondents agreed most strongly that acquiring new skills to adapt to AI tools is necessary with a mean of 2.99, highlighting the importance of continuous learning and upskilling in AI-driven environments. Changes in job roles due to AI followed closely, showing that while AI is altering responsibilities and creating hybrid positions, some traditional tasks remain intact. Collaboration and interaction among colleagues were also affected, pointing at how AI tools influence teamwork, project coordination, and communication. This indicate that AI is reshaping the nature of work in creative industries, requiring professionals to adapt their skills and methods of collaboration to remain competitive.

Table 2: Opportunities created by artificial intelligence in the creative labour market

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
	AI has created new job roles and hybrid positions in my area of work.	32	44	20	8	2.96
	AI has improved efficiency and productivity in my creative tasks.	35	46	15	8	3.04
	AI has expanded my opportunities to reach wider audiences or clients.	30	45	20	9	2.92

Sources: Field Survey 2026

The results in Table 2 indicate that respondents generally perceive artificial intelligence as providing significant opportunities in the creative labour market. The highest mean of 3.04 was recorded for AI improving efficiency and productivity, indicating that creative professionals recognise AI tools as valuable for streamlining tasks such as editing, content creation, and design. The respondents also agreed that AI has created new job roles and hybrid positions, showing that technology is enabling novel career paths that combine creative skills with technical expertise. Expanding opportunities to reach wider audiences or clients scored slightly lower, indicating that while AI provides access to larger markets, limitations such as digital literacy or platform access may influence its full potential. This shows that AI is reshaping the creative labour market by offering new avenues for work, productivity, and audience engagement.

Table 3: Challenges posed by artificial intelligence in the creative labour market

SN	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
	The use of AI in my work has caused concerns about job security.	28	45	20	11	2.87
	Limited access to AI technology or training affects my ability to work effectively.	35	40	18	11	2.95
	Ethical issues such as authorship, copyright, or fair income sharing are a concern when using AI.	30	42	20	12	2.87

Source: Field Survey 2026

The data in Table 3 show that respondents generally agree that AI poses significant challenges in the creative labour market. The highest mean score (2.95) was recorded for limited access to AI technology and training, indicating that many creative professionals feel constrained by inadequate tools and skills, which affects their productivity and ability to fully leverage AI. Concerns about job security and ethical issues, including authorship and income distribution also scored relatively high, highlighting fears about displacement and fairness in AI-driven creative work. These results show that while AI offers opportunities for innovation, it simultaneously presents practical and ethical challenges that need to be addressed through training programmes, equitable access to technology, and clear policies on authorship and labour practices.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that artificial intelligence has noticeably impacted job roles, skill requirements, and workplace interactions in the creative labour market. The respondents agreed that jobs are evolving, and workers are now expected to take on new responsibilities that combine creative skills with technology. Professionals also need to learn new skills to keep up with AI tools, and this is becoming a normal part of working life. Collaboration and teamwork have also been affected, as AI changes how colleagues communicate and coordinate projects. In table 1 the respondents acknowledged that AI technologies have significantly changed their job roles, with a mean of 2.92, showing that new responsibilities and hybrid positions are becoming a regular part of creative work. They also strongly agreed that acquiring new skills to adapt to AI tools is necessary, with a mean of 2.99, highlighting the importance of continuous learning and upskilling in AI-driven environments. Furthermore, AI has influenced collaboration and interaction among colleagues, scoring a mean of 2.89, indicating changes in teamwork, project coordination, and communication practices. All scores are above the 2.50 threshold, confirming that AI is actively reshaping work patterns in creative organisations. These findings align with Brook, Giuliani, O'Brien & Taylor. (2025), who observed that AI adoption in Nigerian creative sectors alters job functions and demands new competencies from professionals. The results show that creative workers must continually adapt their skills and methods of collaboration to remain competitive in an evolving labour market.

At the same time, the findings reveal that AI is creating important opportunities for creative workers. It helps people complete tasks more efficiently and improves productivity in areas like content creation, design, and media production. AI is also opening up new job roles and hybrid positions that blend technical knowledge with creative talent. Additionally, it gives professionals the chance to reach wider audiences or clients, expanding their market and influence. These

opportunities show that AI is not just a tool but a way to grow careers and explore new creative possibilities. The data in Table 2 show that respondents generally perceive artificial intelligence as offering substantial opportunities in the creative labour market. The highest mean of 3.04 was recorded for AI improving efficiency and productivity, indicating that professionals view AI tools as valuable for streamlining tasks such as editing, content creation, and design. Respondents also agreed that AI has created new job roles and hybrid positions, scoring a mean of 2.96, which shows that technology is enabling novel career paths that combine creative skills with technical expertise. Expanding opportunities to reach wider audiences or clients recorded a mean of 2.92, implying that while AI facilitates market access, factors such as digital literacy or platform reach may influence its full potential. These findings are consistent with observations by Wang, Baksy, Bakhshi & Siepel (2025), who highlighted that technology-driven creative work provides new avenues for employment, entrepreneurship, and professional growth. The results imply that AI is not only enhancing productivity but also creating broader avenues for innovation and audience engagement.

However, there are also challenges that come with AI adoption. The findings show that limited access to technology and proper training makes it harder for some workers to fully use AI in their work. Concerns about job security are real, as some routine tasks can now be automated, and there are ethical issues to consider, such as fairness, authorship, and income distribution. These challenges show that while AI offers many benefits, creative industries need to ensure that workers have the right support, guidance, and resources to use AI responsibly and fairly. In table 3, limited access to AI technology or training had the highest mean score of 2.95, indicating that many creative professionals feel constrained by inadequate tools and insufficient skills, which limits their ability to fully leverage AI in their work. Concerns about job security scored a mean of 2.87, highlighting fears of displacement as routine creative tasks become automated. Ethical issues, including authorship, copyright, and fair income sharing, also scored a mean of 2.87, reflecting apprehension about fairness and responsibility in AI-driven creative work. All scores are above the 2.50 threshold, showing awareness of the practical and ethical challenges associated with AI. These results align with UNCTAD (2024), who cautioned that overreliance on AI without proper oversight can compromise quality, fairness, and equity in creative industries.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that artificial intelligence has reshaped the creative labour market. It is changing job roles, creating hybrid positions, and increasing the need for digital and data-driven skills. AI has improved efficiency, expanded opportunities to reach wider audiences, and enabled creative professionals to explore new ways of producing and monetising work. At the same time, it has introduced challenges such as job displacement, income instability, ethical concerns around authorship and copyright, and unequal access to technology and training.

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Creative workers should have access to continuous training in AI tools and digital technologies to ensure they can adapt to changing job requirements and remain competitive.
2. Governments and industry bodies should create clear labour policies and ethical frameworks that protect workers' rights, address income distribution, and promote responsible use of AI in creative industries.
3. Efforts should be made to reduce inequalities by providing affordable access to AI tools and digital infrastructure, particularly for freelancers and entry-level professionals.
4. Creative organisations should develop guidelines for authorship, copyright, and fair income sharing to ensure that AI is used ethically and that professional standards are maintained.

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Media literacy and the Perception of Political Bias in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

By

Egbon Gracie Nneoma

Abstract

The rapid use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within contemporary media ecosystems has significantly transformed the production, distribution, and consumption of political information, thereby intensifying concerns about political bias and its perception among audiences. This research examined the relationship between media literacy and the perception of political bias in AI mediated communication environments, with the objectives of determining how varying levels of media literacy influence individuals' ability to detect political bias in AI generated political content, assessing the extent to which AI systems shape audience interpretation of political messages, and evaluating the moderating role of prior political orientation and trust in digital technologies. The researcher adopted the Technological Determinism Theory and the Selective Exposure Theory as the theoretical framework for the research, providing insight into how technological innovations such as AI shape patterns of media consumption and how individuals selectively engage with information that aligns with their existing beliefs and attitudes. Methodologically, the research employed a quantitative survey design, using structured questionnaires administered to a representative sample of respondents, while data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to establish relationships among key variables. Findings from the research revealed that higher levels of media literacy significantly enhanced individuals' capacity to identify both direct and indirect forms of political bias. However, such literacy did not entirely eliminate the influence of technology driven bias, as audience interpretations remained strongly shaped by prior ideological orientations and varying degrees of trust in AI systems. The researcher further established that automated content selection and recommendation reinforce selective exposure patterns, thereby deepening ideological tendencies and complicating the role of media literacy in mitigating bias. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that media literacy in the age of artificial intelligence should be reconceptualised as a multidimensional competence that integrates critical thinking skills with awareness of how AI systems operate and reflective engagement with digital content. The research contributes to existing discourse on media credibility, democratic participation, and information integrity, while recommending the integration of critical AI literacy into educational and policy frameworks as a strategic response to the challenges posed by political bias in digitally mediated environments.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Media Literacy, Political Bias, Selective Exposure, Technological Determinism.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force in modern media, reshaping the production, distribution, and consumption of political information. Through sophisticated algorithms and machine learning systems, AI can generate news articles, social media content, and political advertisements at scale, altering how political messages reach and influence audiences. This is an evolution from conventional media practices, which relied on human journalists, editors, and broadcasters to frame political content. In countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and India, AI tools have been integrated into newsrooms and political campaigns to automate content creation, personalise messaging, and target voter groups, showing that AI now plays an important role in shaping political communication and public opinion (Nnamani, 2025).

Ubani, Ohaegbula & Amuzie (2026) explain that AI in media operates by processing large volumes of text, video, and audio data to generate content to meet up with audience preferences and behavior. Unlike traditional media, which delivers uniform messages, AI systems can customise political content to resonate with individual voters' interests, prior beliefs, or political leanings. This personalised approach has the potential to enhance engagement and accessibility, but it

also raises concerns about the manipulation of perceptions and the amplification of political bias. Eshiet (2025) maintains that in Nigeria, where digital media consumption is still growing, AI presents opportunities for more targeted communication while also highlighting the need for audiences to develop media literacy skills to critically evaluate political content.

Ojeifo, Egharevba & Asemah (2024) state that a major implication of AI-mediated political communication is its effect on public perception and democratic participation. While AI can make political messaging more efficient and personalised, excessive reliance on algorithmically generated content can mislead voters, reinforce existing biases, and obscure factual accuracy. Nasir & Ciroma (2021) aver that other concerns include transparency in AI decision-making, unequal access to digital platforms, and the potential erosion of informed civic engagement. These challenges are relevant in emerging democracies like Nigeria, where varying levels of media literacy can influence how audiences interpret political messages and detect bias.

There is no gainsaying that AI in media holds both promise and risk for political communication. However, a key question remains: how can media literacy equip audiences to recognize and navigate AI-generated political bias while engaging meaningfully with political content? This study, therefore, examines the Media Literacy and the Perception of Political Bias in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.

Statement of the Problem

The rate at which Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used in the media has changed political communication in Nigeria, allowing news, social media posts, and political adverts to be generated rapidly and targeted to certain audiences. While this can improve efficiency, it also raises concerns about political bias, misinformation, and manipulation among citizens with low media literacy. Many Nigerians struggle to critically evaluate AI-generated political content, which can influence their understanding of issues, voting decisions, and civic engagement. These challenges highlight the need to explore how media literacy affects the perception of political bias in AI-mediated communication and how audiences can engage more responsibly with digital political information. This study therefore evaluates Media Literacy and the Perception of Political Bias in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.

Objectives of the Study

The study objectives are to:

1. Examine how media literacy influences individuals' ability to detect political bias in AI-generated content.
2. Assess the impact of prior ideological beliefs and trust in AI systems on audience interpretation of political messages.
3. Investigate the role of automated content selection in reinforcing selective exposure and shaping political perceptions

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Technological Determinism Theory and the Selective Exposure Theory to understand the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on media consumption and the perception of political bias in Nigeria. The Technological Determinism Theory, originally proposed by Marshall McLuhan (1964), asserts that technology is a major force driving social change and shaping human behaviour. In political communication, this theory suggests that AI as a technological innovation affects how political messages are produced, disseminated, and received. AI tools can automate news writing, create personalised political content, and target audience groups based on data analytics. In Nigeria where social media and online news platforms are becoming popular, AI technologies can determine the speed, reach of political information and also the framing and presentation of political narratives. This means that the technology itself, rather than just the content creators, can influence audience perception and engagement with political issues. Applied to this study, it suggests that AI as a technology directly influences how political content is produced, distributed, and consumed in Nigeria, shaping the way audiences receive and interpret political information.

Complementing this, the Selective Exposure Theory by Klapper (1960) explains that individuals tend to consume media content that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs, attitudes, and political orientations. Nigerians with strong party affiliations or particular ideological leanings are likely to engage more with AI-generated political messages that confirm their views, while ignoring or

critically evaluating content that contradicts them. This selective engagement can reinforce biases, making it challenging for citizens to critically assess political information. In addition, the theory highlights the role of media literacy in equipping audiences to understand these algorithmically developed messages, encouraging a more informed and balanced interpretation of political content. This theory is relevant to this study as helps explain why Nigerians with different political orientations or levels of trust in digital platforms may interpret the same AI-generated political messages differently

The two theories provides a framework for analysing how AI as a technology shapes political communication in Nigeria and how individual media consumption behaviours influence the perception of political bias. The framework also shows the importance of media literacy in moderating the effects of AI on audience interpretation, indicating that audience competence, prior political orientation, and trust in digital technologies all interact to determine how political messages are perceived and acted upon.

Concept of Media Literacy

The term media literacy comes from combining “media” and “literacy.” Media is the various ways information is shared with the public, such as television, radio, newspapers, social media, and other communication platforms. Literacy, from the Latin word *littera* meaning “letter,” originally meant the ability to read and write. In time, the concept of literacy has broadened to include understanding and engaging with different forms of communication critically, (Gordon, 2025).

Kehinde (2025) explains that media literacy is the skill that helps people understand how modern media works. It involves knowing how media content is created, the intentions behind it, and the techniques used to influence audiences. Being media literate helps people evaluate the accuracy, bias, and trustworthiness of what they see and hear, enabling them to make better-informed decisions. It also encourages people to take part in creating and using media responsibly, which contributes to a more aware and active society. Potter (2018) adds that media literacy gives individuals the ability to distinguish between factual information and misinformation, which is especially important today when people are constantly exposed to huge amounts of content online.

Livingstone (2004) emphasises that media literacy means understanding not only how messages are produced but also why they are created and how they aim to influence audiences. For example, adverts usually use persuasive words and images to encourage people to buy products. Media-literate individuals can recognise these strategies and make more conscious choices. Chidozie (2025) notes that critical thinking allows people to question the purpose and truthfulness of media messages. Rather than accepting information at face value, they can check sources, look for bias, and verify facts before forming opinions.

Influence of Media Literacy on the Perception of Political Bias in the AI Age

Media literacy has a significant influence on how people understand and interpret political bias in an age where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used to generate and distribute political information. AI systems can produce news articles, social media posts and campaign messages with little human oversight, making it difficult for audiences to know when bias or manipulation has been built into the content (Ashley, Maksl & Craft, 2017). Guess, Nagler & Tucker (2019) note that people with low levels of media literacy struggle to recognise these subtle forms of bias, meaning they may accept AI-generated political claims at face value without questioning their intent, accuracy or source. In contrast, individuals with higher media literacy skills critically assess information, identify bias, and distinguish between factual reporting and persuasive or misleading content, even when it is created or amplified by AI systems.

The European Parliamentary Research Service (2025) asserts that another important aspect of media literacy is the ability to resist personalised and selective political messaging that AI usually produces. AI-driven platforms tend to present users with information based on their previous preferences, creating a reinforcing loop that can strengthen biased viewpoints. As they note, individuals who are media literate are better equipped to recognise when this personalised content influences their perception, and they can seek out alternative sources and viewpoints to form opinions that are more balanced. During elections, AI-generated political advertising and automated news summaries might favour one candidate or party over another. However, media literate citizens will notice this bias and make informed choices rather than simply accepting

targeted messages as objective truth. With the ability to analyse, evaluate and question media content, media literacy reduces the impact of political bias and supports more thoughtful engagement with political information in the digital era, (Jones-Jang, Mortensen, & Liu, 2021).

Dangers of AI-Mediated Political Misinformation

In the current digital era, AI-driven content has made it easier to produce and spread misleading political information, which poses significant dangers to society. When biased or false political messages are presented as factual, they can distort public perception, polarise communities, and weaken trust in reliable news sources. As Vraga & Bode (2020) and Vraga & Tully (2021) note that misinformation in any form can serious negative consequences:

1. Fear and Panic: One major danger is the creation of unnecessary fear and panic. For example, during election periods, AI-generated political posts or manipulated videos can exaggerate threats, scandals, or controversies, causing undue anxiety among voters. Similarly, repeated exposure to biased or false political content can erode confidence in the media and other institutions. Citizens may struggle to distinguish accurate reporting from AI-generated or manipulated content, leading to a general mistrust of both traditional and digital media.
2. Manipulation of public opinion: AI tools can develop political messages to exploit emotions, biases, and prior beliefs, subtly shaping how individuals perceive candidates, parties, and policies. This can influence voting behaviour unfairly and deepen social divisions, as people become trapped in echo chambers that reinforce their existing views.
3. AI-mediated misinformation can also create false expectations: Politicians or interest groups may use AI to spread unverified promises or exaggerated claims, giving citizens hope for outcomes that are unlikely to occur. When these claims are proven false, public disappointment grows, and trust in both the media and political processes diminishes.
4. Biased AI-driven content can harm civic engagement and democratic accountability. Citizens may make decisions based on distorted information, while political debate becomes dominated by sensational or misleading narratives rather than factual discussion. In extreme cases, such content can undermine elections, policy debates, and the overall integrity of democratic institutions. These dangers highlight the urgent need for media literacy, equipping audiences with the skills to critically assess political content and recognise AI-driven bias.

Empirical Studies

Ojeifo & Ekhareafu (2025) investigated the relationship between party systems and media content in Nigeria, focusing on how media narratives shape public understanding of political parties. Their study revealed that the way news outlets and social media present information about parties can strongly influence citizens' perceptions of party credibility, trustworthiness, and overall political standing. The study also showed that parties that receive more positive coverage in mainstream and digital media are usually viewed as more competent or appealing, while negative coverage can harm public trust and discourage voter engagement. The study concluded that media exposure is not neutral; framing, repetition, and emphasis on certain political events or scandals can guide how the public evaluates parties and their policies.

In a related study, Ojeifo, Egharevba, and Asemah (2024) explored media literacy and social media content creation among selected youth in Ota, Ogun State. The researchers found that young people's ability to critically engage with political content online depends on their media literacy skills, including their understanding of sources, ability to detect bias, and knowledge of digital tools. Youth who were more media literate were better at identifying misleading or biased political messages, interpreting complex political narratives, and producing their own informed content on social media. Conversely, less media-literate individuals were more likely to accept content at face value, making them more vulnerable to manipulation and misinformation. The study emphasised that media literacy affects how audiences consume political content and also shapes their participation in political discussions and online civic engagement.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design to examine how media literacy affects the perception of political bias in AI-mediated political content. The research was conducted among residents

of Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba Okha local government areas of Benin City, targeting adults aged 18–40 who are active social media users and consumers of digital news. The study population comprised residents of Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas of Benin City, with a combined population of approximately 1,233,106 people. The total population of the study area was used to calculate a representative sample using Taro Yamane's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a sample size of 400 respondents. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure that all local government areas, genders, and education levels were represented. Data were collected through structured questionnaire. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale, and the data were analysed using descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, means) to examine the relationships between media literacy and the perception of political bias.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Influence of Media Literacy on Detecting Political Bias in AI Content

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
1	Individuals with higher media literacy can identify direct political bias in AI-generated content	150	160	70	20	3.10	Agree
2	Media literacy helps detect indirect or subtle political bias in AI-generated content	140	170	75	15	3.09	Agree
3	Media literacy reduces susceptibility to misleading AI content	130	180	75	15	3.06	Agree
	Grand Mean Response					3.08	Agree

Source: Field Survey 2026

The data in Table 1 indicate that media literacy significantly enhances individuals' ability to detect political bias in AI-generated content. The mean scores for items 1, 2, and 3 were all above the benchmark score of 2.50. This shows that respondents with higher media literacy can identify both direct and subtle forms of political bias, and are less susceptible to misleading AI content. With a grand mean score of 3.08, the results confirm that media literacy is a critical factor in equipping individuals to critically evaluate political messages in the AI age.

Table 2: Impact of Prior Ideological Beliefs and Trust in AI Systems

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
4	Audience interpretation of AI-generated political messages is influenced by prior ideological beliefs	165	145	72	18	3.14	Agree
5	Trust in AI systems affects how political content is perceived	140	160	85	15	3.06	Agree
6	Individuals with strong prior beliefs are less likely to be swayed by media literacy alone	130	170	80	20	3.03	Agree
	Grand Mean Response					3.08	Agree

Source: Field Survey 2026

The data in Table 2 reveal that prior ideological beliefs and trust in AI systems strongly influence how audiences interpret AI-generated political content. The mean scores for items 4, 5, and 6 were all above the benchmark of 2.50, showing that audience interpretation is shaped by existing beliefs and the level of trust in AI systems. The results further suggest that even high media literacy may not completely override these influences. With a grand mean score of 3.08, the findings indicate that ideological orientation and trust in technology remain important determinants of political perception.

Table 3: Role of Automated Content Selection in Reinforcing Selective Exposure

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	X	Decision
7	Automated content selection in social media reinforces users' existing political views	155	150	70	25	3.09	Agree

8	AI recommendation algorithms deepen selective exposure to political content	145	160	70	25	3.06	Agree
9	Selective exposure makes it harder for media literacy to reduce political bias	140	165	70	25	3.05	agree
	Grand Mean Response					3.07	Agree

Source: Field survey 2026

Table 3 demonstrates that automated content selection and AI recommendation algorithms reinforce selective exposure, making it more difficult for media literacy alone to reduce political bias. The mean scores for items 7, 8, and 9 were all above 2.50, showing that AI-driven personalization deepens users' ideological tendencies and shapes the political content they engage with. With a grand mean score of 3.07, the results confirm that automated content systems play a significant role in influencing political perceptions in the AI era.

Discussion of Findings

The results indicate a clear pattern in the role of media literacy in helping individuals detect political bias in AI-generated content. The responses show that individuals with higher levels of media literacy are better equipped to critically evaluate political information presented through AI systems. They are able to identify both direct and subtle forms of bias and are less likely to be misled by manipulated or distorted content. With mean scores of 3.10, 3.09, and 3.06 for items 1, 2, and 3, the results show that media literacy significantly improves individuals' ability to detect political bias and evaluate AI-generated messages. This finding aligns with Gordon (2025), who emphasised that media literacy plays a vital role in helping individuals recognise misinformation and biased content in digital environments.

The findings also reveal that prior ideological beliefs and trust in AI systems have a strong influence on how audiences interpret political messages. The responses indicate that individuals do not approach AI-generated content as neutral observers; rather, their existing beliefs and attitudes shape how they understand and react to such messages. Trust in AI also determines whether individuals accept or question the information presented to them. With mean scores of 3.14, 3.06, and 3.03 for items 4, 5, and 6, the results show that audience interpretation is largely influenced by prior beliefs and varying levels of trust in AI systems. These findings suggest that even with media literacy, individuals may still be affected by internal biases. This supports the position of Kehinde (2010), who argued that individuals tend to interpret information in ways that reinforce their pre-existing beliefs.

Finally, the findings reveal that automated content selection and AI recommendation systems play a significant role in reinforcing selective exposure and shaping political perceptions. This implies that users are more exposed to content that aligns with their existing views, thereby strengthening their ideological positions over time. The results show that algorithm-driven content influences what people see and also limits exposure to diverse perspectives, making it more difficult for media literacy alone to reduce bias. With mean scores of 3.09, 3.06, and 3.05 for items 7, 8, and 9, the findings indicate that automated systems deepen selective exposure and complicate efforts to mitigate political bias. This finding is consistent with Pariser (2011), who noted that algorithmic filtering creates "filter bubbles" that reinforce users' existing beliefs and restrict access to opposing viewpoints.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that media literacy in the age of artificial intelligence is not limited to the traditional ability to analyse and interpret media messages. Rather, it should be understood as a multidimensional competence that combines critical thinking skills, awareness of how AI systems operate, and the ability to engage reflectively with digital content. The study has established that while media literacy significantly improves individuals' capacity to detect both direct and indirect political bias in AI-generated content, it does not completely eliminate the influence of such bias. The findings further revealed that audience interpretation remains strongly shaped by prior ideological beliefs and varying levels of trust in AI systems. This indicates that individuals do not interact with AI-generated content in a neutral manner, as their existing perspectives continue to influence how they process information. In addition, the study showed that automated content selection and

recommendation systems reinforce selective exposure, thereby deepening ideological tendencies and limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints.

In line with the conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Educational institutions should incorporate critical AI literacy into their curricula. This should go beyond basic media literacy to include an understanding of how AI systems generate, filter, and personalise content.
2. Individuals should be encouraged to engage more thoughtfully with digital content by questioning sources, verifying information, and recognising potential biases in AI-generated messages.
3. There is a need for increased public education on how AI algorithms function, particularly in content recommendation and selection. This will help users better understand the forces shaping the information they consume.
4. Media users should be motivated to seek out varied viewpoints in order to reduce the effects of selective exposure and ideological reinforcement.
5. Policymakers should develop frameworks that promote transparency and accountability in the use of AI in political communication. This includes monitoring and addressing the spread of biased or misleading AI-generated content.

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Male Vulnerability in African Patriarchal Framework: A Masculinity and Postcolonial Study of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

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Abstract

Despite the age long patriarchy in most African societies, many men within this geographical framework live in obvious vulnerabilities. The multiplicity of the man's vulnerability within this clime is occasioned and perpetuated by women, men and constituted authorities. Details of these predicaments of man within this clime are encapsulated in the African novel, especially in discourses of African female writers. In the quest to demonize the man as a tyrannical, heartless, weak, impotent, worthless and insensitive being in their narratives, some of these female writers ironically expose numerous obvious challenges of the man in a world he is traditionally mandated to lead. Chimamanda Adichie is certainly amongst these African female writers who inadvertently expose men's predicaments in their narratives. In *Purple Hibiscus*, she deploys literary technicalities of character, voice, action and setting, in order to bring to the fore, the multifaceted nature of frustrations and even annihilation of the man within his family unit and the society at large. Using the masculinity and postcolonial Christian Theological paradigms, this study therefore examines various aspects and fronts of male vulnerabilities in traditional African society as portrayed in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. This is with the intent to raise awareness on the endangerments of the man, as well as a call for society to pay more attention to the African man's physical and mental wellbeing in our contemporary fast changing world.

Key Words: Africa, Novel, Man, Vulnerability, Postcolonialism, Christianity, Annihilation, Cradle Power,

Introduction

From primordial times till date, the African man has contended with multiple challenges in his everyday struggle for survival and provision for his family. His challenges are not only occasioned by the women in his life, but also by his fellow men and constituted authorities. Oftentimes, women in his life, including his mother, wife, sister, daughter, nieces and friends consistently constitute agencies of manipulation for his failure, challenges and even his premature annihilation. In other words, deploying their maternal endowments and emotional control in relating with him, some of these female individuals, particularly their wives and mothers have been the causes of the shame, disgrace and deflation of his ego and pride of manhood. The African man's multifaceted predicaments are adequately deployed in believable settings in many African female discourses. Chinweizu has aptly described this subject matter African female discourses as "a revolt in paradise". Thus, in tandem with her revolting sisters in African literary scholarship such as Lola Shoneyin, Buchi Emecheta, and Flora Nwapa, Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus*, equally brings to the fore, her own perspectives of the predicaments bedeviling the man in a Catholic traditional Igbo setting. For instance, in *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*, Lola Shoneyin, sets out to portray the pains of infertility in the life of Bolanle in Baba Segi's polygamous family, but ends up exposing the man's despicable experiences in the hands of his unfaithful and treacherous wives. Three of Baba Segi's wives, namely Iya Segi, Iya Tope and Iya Femi secretly engage in infidelity for conception, and deceive him into raising seven children who are not biologically his. When the bubble bursts, these adulterous women blame the devil for their mischief. As Okumo and Anyanwu rightly observe, "Though the women attribute their infidelity to the devil, this revelation deals a heavy blow on Baba Segi's ego of manhood and confidence as head of his family" ("Pains of infertility", 174-175). On her part, flora Nwapa in *One Is Enough* sets out to portray the challenges of Amaka and her fertility journey, and ends up showcasing the negative roles of some female characters in the failure of the men in their lives. In this narrative, Obiora's mother plays a pivotal role in the irreversible failure of Obiora's marriage to Amaka. A decision he later regrets and failed in his attempt to mend it. Additionally in this narrative, Amaka acts as the female agency who lures and seduces a catholic priest, sworn to the oath of celibacy into the paternity of a set of twin boys. In the same vein, Adichie in *Purple Hibiscus* delineates female characters who act as agencies of frustrations for the man and

distractions for priests who have sworn to the oath of celibacy. With the character of Mama who is also known as Beatrice, Adichie shows that within the clime which she writes about, a man's enemy lives within his household. Mama Beatrice consistently but subtly undermines everything her husband Papa Eugene holds dear to his heart. Aside of Papa Eugene's death in the hands of his wife and domestic help named Sisi, Jaja, who is Papa's only son is imprisoned for a crime committed by his mother. On the other hand, Kambili acts as agency of emotional control in her relationship with Reverend Father Amadi, until he is sent on a mission to Germany. In his fanatical attempt for strict adherence to catholic doctrines, Papa Eugene becomes a victim of religious institutional doctrine. He is thus frustrated and even loses his life in defense of his catholic faith. Adichie equally brings to the fore the frustrations of Papa Nnukwu in the hands of his wealthy son Eugene due to his decision to adhere to his ancestral religion. His refusal to convert to Christianity which is the Whiteman's religion occasions his suffering, abject lack, abandonment and eventual death in the home of his daughter in Nsukka. But, before we delve substantively into details of the numerous predicaments of African men as portrayed in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, we shall consider the theoretical paradigms deployed for the effective analysis of the text.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Cradle Power strand of Masculinity and Postcolonial Christian theological paradigms. Cradle power, as conceptualized by Chinweizu in *Anatomy of Female Power*, refers to the inherent authority and influence that mothers and women possess in shaping the early development of their children. According to him, this influence is not just limited to physical care but extends to the emotional, psychological, and ideological formation of the child's identity, worldview and fate. Chinweizu hinges his argument on traditional African societies, where mothers are often the primary custodians of cultural and moral values, making cradle power a significant factor in the transmission of societal norms and resistance to external influences. In *Anatomy of Female Power*, Chinweizu explores various dimensions of female influences in the lives of men, including the concept of "Cradle Power." He deployed this phrase to describe the foundational influence women wield by controlling early childhood upbringing and every stage of the man's development. Chinweizu argues here, that men may rule the world, but women rule the men that rule the world. He further contends that women possess immense power over both men and women because of their role as primary carers and the key figures in shaping the formative years of human life.

In other words, Chinweizu's concept of Cradle Power is based on the idea that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. Implicit in this is the idea that through their roles as mothers, nannies, and carers, women exert decisive influence over the development of values, attitudes, and beliefs during childhood. These early experiences profoundly shape a person's psychological makeup and view of the world. Chinweizu contends that, through cradle power, women lay the foundation for societal norms, beliefs, and the internalized attitudes of men, particularly toward women themselves. Chinweizu declares that "From cradle to grave, a man is guided, supported, and instructed by women... It is through her control over a man's cradle that a woman achieves her success in establishing her power over him" (Chinweizu, 24). Chinweizu further emphasizes the grip that mothers have over their sons from the earliest stages of life. Through nurturing and raising boys, mothers shape their worldviews, behaviour, values, and, crucially, their attitudes toward others in the society. Chinweizu argues that this power, rooted in early childhood, is foundational for female influence over men, making women's power subtle but profound. He further explains: "A boy's emotional makeup is molded by his mother. She determines how he sees the world and relates to others in adult life. Cradle power is thus crucial for the reproduction of female power from one generation to another." (Chinweizu, 25). The key point here is that mothers are in positions to shape their sons' perceptions of the world. Through daily interactions, rewards, punishments, and demonstrations of affection, mothers can establish attitudes that individuals carry into adulthood, often embedding obedience, loyalty, and a deep emotional connection to women that men will replicate in their relationships with wives, daughters, or other women in their lives. Chinweizu also notes that "A mother's power over her son is so pervasive and subtle that most men remain unaware of how deeply they are influenced by their mothers" (Chinweizu, 27). Thus, cradle power is one of the primary mechanisms through which women

maintain their influence over men and perpetuate female power within the family and society at large. This assertion indeed, underscores the unequivocal and lack luster roles of Mama Beatrice within the Achike household as portrayed in *Purple Hibiscus*. Despite her taciturn disposition, Mama is often seen in subtle rebellion and even silently encouraging her children to undermine and challenge Papa Eugene's authority as head of the family. Thus, her son Jaja is seen in flagrant disrespect for his father, when admonished for not going for communion on Palm Sunday. Thus, Chinweizu deploys the phrase, "Cradle Power" to argue that female influence operates in a subtle, pervasive manner, and even though men may dominate the public sphere, women exercise profound authority through their control of men from early life experiences, emotional development and into their adult lives. In this narrative, Adichie delineates female characters who act as agents of distractions, silent rebellion and even annihilation of the man. This study also adopts the postcolonial Christian theological theory in the analysis of our primary text. Postcolonial theorists argue that even though colonialism ended in many third world nations many decades ago, its residual effects still linger in majority of these nations in our contemporary world, including Africa, Asia and Latin America. This underscores the existence of such legacies of colonialism as inequality, oppression, distortion, loss of identity and suppression of the culture and religion of formerly colonized communities. Herein, lies the concept of postcolonial Christian Theology. This concept portends the deployment of Christianity and its doctrines in the perpetuation of the oppressive structures of imperialism. This intellectual discipline contends that religion was deployed as a tool of justifying colonial exploitation and aim to dismantle these structures, as they have been part of the continuous underdevelopment of majority of these aforementioned formerly colonized nations. In these climes, from the moment of colonization till date, religion has played the role of what Karl Marx (1843) describes as "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people". This foregrounds the idea that, when drunk with excessive sense of religion, the oppressed loses his sense of rights and entitlement from his oppressors and attribute his existential condition to spirituality. Within the Igbo clime which Adichie writes about in *Purple Hibiscus*, religion, particularly Christianity has been deployed by the oppressive class as a tool for false sense of comfort, suffering, and division amongst the oppressed. For instance, Achebe's Obierika in *Things Fall Apart* aptly captures the divisive harm of religion in the communities of the colonized when he declares that "The white man put a knife to the things that held us together, and we have fallen apart" (*Things Fall Apart*, 176). Major proponents of postcolonial Christian theory include Musa Dube, Fernando Segovia, Mayra Rivera and Kwok Pui-lan. For instance, Mayra Rivera in Jay McDaniel describes postcolonial theology as the poetics of flesh which is more than skin. She declares that:

It is felt in our connections with the world, positive and negative, as lived from the inside. It is emotional. It includes pain and pleasure, sadness and joy, despair and hope, hatred and love. It is relational. It is vulnerable. Our flesh connects us to the worlds of our experience, and our flesh makes us vulnerable to those worlds.

It is within Mayra's terrain of Christian theology that we shall locate the predicaments of Papa Eugene Achike in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Papa is an unfortunate victim of the "opium" of religious indoctrination of the colonized by the colonizer. As Mayra rightly notes, Papa Eugene Achike is human, who experiences Mayra's attributes of the theological being, including pain, despair, hatred, love, hope for eternal life and vulnerability in the hands of his family members. Papa is a product of Catholic missionary education in Nigeria. In his case, his colonizer is the Catholic institution. As an indoctrinated victim of his Catholic faith, Papa consistently goes into destructive rages against his family members who undermine doctrines of his faith, as well as worshipers of other religion, including his own father. Even his father understands that Papa is a victim of colonial religious indoctrination and manipulation. He recalls how innocent natives were indoctrinated by white missionaries, including the one named Fada John. According to him, "They gathered the children under the ukwa tree in the mission and taught them their religion" (92). This is why he always prays for the emancipation and deliverance of his son Eugene. He prays, "Chineke, bless my son Eugene. Lift the curse they have put on him" (175). Papa Eugene is eventually poisoned by his wife for always standing up for his catholic faith. Instead of

terminating his life, this study opines that Papa deserves pity and possible assistance in the adjustment of his indoctrinated mentality, in order for him to see and embrace the beauty in other people's religion and opinions on spirituality.

Narrating Male Vulnerabilities in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* explores the dynamics of gender roles and patriarchy in a Igbo Catholic family setting. Set in Enugu, Eastern Nigeria, the novel is the story of the Achike family. The story is narrated by fifteen-year-old Kambili Achike. The family is made up of Papa Eugene, Mama Beatrice, Jaja and Kambili. From the outside, Kambili's family seems perfect, wealthy, respected and deeply religious, but inside the house, life is strict, silent and controlled by her father known as Papa or Eugene. Papa is a successful businessman and owner of the *Standard* newspaper. He is publicly respected for his piety, generosity and fight against corruption which he does through the platform of *Standard* Newspaper. He is a zealous Catholic and will not tolerate other religions and anyone who undermines the doctrines of his Catholic faith. He is at variance with his father, Papa Nnukwu for refusing to convert to Christianity. He disciplines his wife and children for undermining the dictates of his Catholic faith. Everything changes when Kambili and Jaja go to Nsukka to visit their father's sister Auntie Ifeoma who is a widow. Here, they discover another brand of Catholicism. They feel loved, and can interact freely with others, including father Amadi who is a liberal catholic priest at the university of Nigeria's chaplaincy. Back home at Enugu, the tension within the family grows worse as Jaja continuously challenges his father's authority. He keeps malice with him, and refuses to participate in family activities. Soon, Papa develops rashes which get bigger and infected with pus. He begins to lose weight and his limbs begin to tremor. He is later found dead on his desk at the factory. Kambili discovers that Mama Beatrice has been secretly poisoning her father. Autopsy result confirms his cause of death and Mama's guilt in the wicked act. When the police arrive, Jaja takes responsibility for his father's demise and is imprisoned. The novel also chronicles the unfortunate events in the post-independent Nigerian society. The nation at this time is on a precipice. The native leaders who inherited power at independence have become corrupt and lost power to military rulers. There is poverty in the land as the nation experiences massive strike of workers across major sectors of the economy, including health and education. Journalists are hounded and even killed for disseminating truth about the uncertainties in the nation. Ade Coker, the editor of Papa Eugene's *Standard* Newspaper becomes a victim as he is eliminated through a letter bomb. Papa Nnukwu is also a victim of the nation's systemic failure. He could not receive the required medical attention due to prolonged strike of the nation's medical doctors and allied personnel. Indeed, the narrative paints a picture of a nation at a Sociopolitical crossroad, bedeviled by multidimensional challenges, including unemployment, migration in droves and brain drain, poor remuneration of workers, scarcity of petrol and related products, near absence of basic amenities including water and electricity.

This study beams a searchlight on prominent male characters in the narrative and the various challenges and limitations confronting them in their everyday life experiences. These characters include Papa Eugene Achike, Papa Nnukwu, Ade Coker, Jaja and Fada Amadi. As a thoroughbred product of Catholic Missionary education, Papa Eugene Achike is a devout Catholic Father who insists on good morals, religious observances and academic excellence. Kambili tells us that he is an industrialist, and the publisher of *Standard*, a widely circulated newspaper which chronicles and condemns the ills of leadership and corruption in the nation. He is a respected philanthropist and lives a pious lifestyle in the society. He is dignified and held in high esteem at St Agnes Parish led by an English-speaking European, named Father Benedict. Kambili further tells us that, "Papa always sat in the front pew for Mass... He was first to receive communion. Most people did not kneel to receive communion, but Papa did (*Purple Hibiscus*, 12). Fr Benedict, the White Parish Priest of saint Agnes, refers to Papa as an example of humility and modesty in his Palm Sunday homily. Father Benedict declares,

look at Brother Eugene, he could have chosen to be like other big men in this country, he could have decided to sit at home and do nothing after the coup, to make sure the government did not threaten his business. But no, he used the *Standard* to speak the truth, even though it meant the paper lost advertising.

Brother Eugene spoke out for freedom ... the congregation said yes, God bless him or Amen. (12-13).

Kambili further tells us that Papa is a recipient of the Prestigious Amnesty World award for human rights and also a generous giver and unifier, in his village Abba, especially at Christmas. "We were always prepared to feed the whole village at Christmas, always prepared so that none of the people who came in will leave without eating and drinking to what Papa called a reasonable level of satisfaction". For his unconditional love and generosity towards his kinsmen in Abba, Papa is recognized with the title, *Omeleora*, which implies "The one who does for community" (64). Kambili tells us that despite these accomplishments, acknowledgements and respect, Papa chooses to remain modest. He teaches his children modesty, decency in dressing, and to say, "Thanks be to God" (28), when good things happen to them. He is not bereft of love for his family and he expresses same, whenever the opportunity arises. His family enjoys luxurious lifestyle, including the services of domestic driver and house help. Kambili acknowledges Papa's routine of sharing his tea with his children anytime they are around him. She declares, "A love sip, he calls it, because you shared the little things you loved with the people you loved. Have a sip, he would say, and Jaja would go first. Then, I would hold the cup with both hands and raise it to my lips. One sip" (16). Additionally, Papa never fails to express his love for his wife when opportunity to do so arises. For instance, Kambili tells us of Papa's disposition towards his wife on the day he travelled from Enugu to Nsukka to drive them back home. She says, on arrival, "Papa hugged Mama, holding her close, and she rested her head on his chest" (256).

Unfortunately, despite his modesty and decision to serve God and Model his family in the way the Catholic missionaries had groomed him to do so, Papa is never happy in his own home as he is constantly provoked to the extent of unleashing violence on his wife and children. The question then is, if Papa is religious, acknowledged, appreciated, respected and modest in the eyes of the public, why then, is he so demonized within his own house hold? Evidently, his rages are usually incited by obvious taunts and provocations by his daring family members, particularly Mama and Jaja. The narrative commences with events in their home on Palm Sunday, the day Jaja challenges his father's authority when admonished for not receiving communion at Mass on Palm Sunday. This stance, is hinged on Papa's exposure to Western Missionary education, of the catholic denomination. In reality, it is important to note the significance of Palm Sunday in the live of every devout Catholic globally. Palm Sunday marks the commencement of Easter liturgical season in the Catholic Church. As properly spelt out in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC, henceforth), which Jaja has been exposed to, since his childhood catechism classes, every devout Catholic globally, is expected to be in a state of grace by going to confession, penance, and must necessarily receive holy communion during Masses within the season (CCC 1385-1389). In the Church's Liturgical calendar, the Easter season is considered as the peak time to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jaja refuses to receive communion during this significant period of the Catholic Church's calendar, for flimsy excuses. Thus, Kambili tells us that even when Papa's "voice was low" in the interrogation of Jaja for his refusal to receive communion on Palm Sunday, he disrespectfully looks at his father in the face and talks back at him, declaring, "I will die ...then I will die, Papa" (15) than receive holy communion. Jaja's recalcitrance foregrounds an outright rebellion against both the church and a direct challenge of his father's authority as the head of the catholic family. This provocation incites Papa's anger and aggressive reaction leading to the hurling of the Missal and the shattering of the figurines. When Mama comes into the scene at this point, she fails to lend her voice in admonishing Jaja for his deviance towards the church and Papa. Instead, we are told that "she starred at the figurine pieces on the floor and then knelt down and started to pick them up with her bare hands" (15). When Mama eventually breaks her silence during this episode, she tells Jaja to "come and help me, *biko*". Also, during this time, we see her and Jaja pampering and encouraging each other, in order to further taunt Papa and aggravate his anger. She tells Jaja, "Come and help me, *biko*, while Jaja tells her, "Be careful, Mama, or those pieces will cut your fingers" (16). Kambili expresses surprise at the nonchalant disposition of Mama and Jaja after his deviance towards Papa, when she says. "Why were they acting so normal, Jaja and Mama, as if they did not know what just happened?" (16). Mama's silence towards Papa and her encouraging

disposition towards Jaja during this episode suggest that Jaja's audacity is obviously fueled and borne out of his mother's unspoken disdain and disrespect for her husband. Additionally, When Jaja keeps malice with Papa and refuses to join in family routines and activities, including prayer and meal times, Mama opts to serve him food in the room, instead of admonishing him for self-alienation and malicious misbehavior towards his father. Mama equally displays her mute disobedience on the day Kambili broke the mandatory Catholic Eucharistic fast from solid food an hour before holy communion. Thus, Papa catches Kambili eating ten minutes before Mass. Kambili herself tells us that even though the table is set for breakfast, the family rule is that "we would not eat until we came home" from Mass (109). Kambili has no intention of breaking the rule, until Mama, in connivance with Jaja, authorize her to do otherwise. Determined to incur Papa's wrath, Mama instructs Kambili, "Eat a little corn flakes, quickly. You need something in your stomach to hold the Panadol" (109). Jaja pours the cereal, milk and sugar, while assuring them that "Papa is with visitors, we will hear him as he comes up" (109). This deliberate disobedience, is least expected of both Mama and Jaja, who understand Papa's stance on Catholic doctrines and observances. Obviously, Mama's flagrant disregard for everything that Papa holds dear to his heart, is indicative of her hatred for him. Yet, she occasionally confesses of Papa's dedication, love and faithfulness to her, and her children. For instance, she confesses to Kambili, that despite her many years of secondary infertility, and the suggestions by people for Papa to have children with other willing women, "Your father stayed with me, with us" (28). Papa also extends his hands of generosity to Mama's father until he died five years ago, especially as he was a catechist and Catholic Knight of Saint John. "When we arrive at Abba every Christmas, Papa will stop by our grandfather's house, at our *ikwu nne*, Mothers maiden home, before we even drive to our own compound" (75). Despite these kind gestures of Papa towards Mama and their children, she chooses to undermine the state of Papa's mental health by flagrant disregard for his order as head of the family. It is important to note that aside of the incidents of fight and injury between Papa and Mama, as witnessed and narrated by Kambili, the reader does not actually know the first aggressor in their fights which take place in the bedroom. One cannot totally rule out the fact that Mama may be the aggressor, as she has a habitual silent attitude of disrespect for Papa and everything he holds dear to his heart. She thus, Mama often deploys Jaja as her instrument and mouthpiece in maligning and challenging of Papa's authority as the head of the family. When she can no longer tolerate Papa, she connives with Sisi, her domestic help to eliminate him. She confesses "I started putting the poison in his tea. Sisi got it for me. Her uncle is a powerful witch doctor" (294). After his death, Mama fails to mourn for Papa as obtains in Igbo tradition. She does not wear all black or all white for a year, does not attend his first- and second-year memorial Masses, does not cut her hair to honor his departure (229-300). She is however, quick in writing cheques in order to bribe the judges and police to secure Jaja's release from prison. As much as this study does not subscribe to any form of domestic abuse, as occasionally unleashed by Papa on his family members, it is important to note that his anger is usually provoked by obvious disregard to his sense of spirituality and morality. In this case, Mama and Jaja are guilty for the frustrations and death of Papa. as Chinweizu rightly points, Mama deploys her maternal cradle power to kill and imprison the two men in her family, precisely her husband and her son. Irrespective of his occasional aggressive outbursts, Papa cannot be considered as a villain. He is always quick to regret his violent actions and always prays for the forgiveness of his shortcomings. Even in death, Papa continues to be charitable, as he apportions a huge chunk of his wealth to Saint Agnes Parish and Missions in the church, Children's hospital, motherless Babies Home, and disabled Veterans from the civil war.

PAPA NNUKWU is the octogenarian father of Papa Eugene Achike. He lives in Abba. The fact that Kambili tells us nothing about her paternal grandmother portends that Papa Nnukwu is a widower. Hence, he lives alone. He is a victim of man's inhumanity to man, occasioned by cultural clash, institutional neglect and systemic failure. He is at variance with his son, Eugene because of his vehement refusal to throw away his traditional religion and convert to the new Christian religion. Papa Nnukwu's religion is represented by his 'chi' in the thatch shrine in his yard. For this reason, Papa who is a zealous Catholic calls Papa Nnukwu a 'heathen', or worshiper of idols, and would not mingle with him, nor allow any member of his family to do so. Thus, Papa Nnukwu

is barred from coming to his son's house either in Abba or in Enugu. Papa Nnukwu thinks Christianity is the religion of lunatics because of their believe in the equality of the son and the father. He thinks that it is for this reason that Eugene is disrespectful to him. As the father of a renown wealthy philanthropist, Papa Nnukwu, ironically lives in isolation and abject poverty. His wealthy son Eugene scarcely caters for his needs because of his religious inclination. Kambili tells us of the pitiable condition of Papa Nnukwu's condition of existence in Abba, when she and Jaja visit him at Christmas. She tells us that the entrance to his thatch-enclosed compound is made of a creaking wooden gate. His verandah is bound by rusty metal bars, his white singlet is browned by age and yellowed at the armpits, he supports himself with crooked walking stick made from a tree branch, he eats flaky fufu with watery soup bereft of fish or meat. Thus, he tells Kambili and Jaja that "If I had meat in my soup, I would offer it to you" (73). Kambili tells us that he eats his food without drink, not even water. He suffers leg and hand aches and can only receive medication when her widowed daughter, Auntie Ifeoma brings him medicine from Nsukka, whenever she can put the money together. Despite his abandonment by his son, Papa Nnukwu never fails to pray for him with the same earnestness that he prayed for himself and Auntie Ifeoma. "Chineke! Bless my son Eugene. Let the sun not set on his prosperity. Lift the curse they have put on him" (175). Kambili also notes his deteriorating health condition when she declares that "Papa Nnukwu does not look as healthy as last year" (76). This observation proves to be right, as Papa Nnukwu soon falls ill and is taken to Nsukka for medical treatment by Auntie Ifeoma. On arrival at Nsukka, they soon realize that Papa Nnukwu cannot receive adequate medical attention at Nsukka, as the nation's medical doctors are on strike. His stay at Auntie Ifeoma house afforded Jaja and Kambili the opportunity to appreciate him for his wisdom and loving disposition as he shares stories and tradition with them. However, when he could not access the needed medical care for his sickness due to prolonged hospital strike, Papa Nnukwu dies in his sleep.

ADE COKER is the editor of the *Standard* Newspaper. He deploys his editorials in the exposure and criticism of both democratic and military leaders in Nigerian. For instance, he reports the story of how the head of state and his wife had paid people to transport heroin abroad. Through the story, he interrogates the execution of three men connected to the drug case, and wonders who the real drug barons are. Thus, he is often hunted and harassed by the government of the day. He is severally arrested, and often secures his bail with the intervention of Papa Eugene. Determined to silence his voice through his editorials, Ade Coker is soon eliminated by the powers that be, through a courier package bomb, purportedly sent from the State House. Kambili tells us that, "The day Ade Coker died, he was at breakfast with his family when a courier delivered a package to him. Ade Coker looked at the envelop and said, "It has the State House Seal, before he opened it'. Ade Coker was blown up when he opened the package everybody would have known was from the Head of State (212). Thus, Ade Coker's vulnerability and annihilation is occasioned by his faithfulness to his career as a journalist.

JAJA CHUKWUKA ACHIKE is the only son of Papa Eugene Achike. He is Kambili's elder brother and is seventeen years old. He is a victim of female cradle power. This is because he is imprisoned for his mother's crime of murder. In this narrative, Jaja Achike evolves from a quiet and obedient son to a deviant figure who challenges his father and the doctrines of his family's Catholic faith. In the opening sentence of the narrative, Kambili tells us of how Jaja's deviance initiates the destruction of the Achike patriarchal Catholic family. She says, "Things started to fall apart at home when my brother Jaja, did not go to communion" (11). As the story unravels, we realize that his rebellion which is subtly encouraged by his mother, Mama, is occasioned by his determination to interrogate and frustrate his father's role as the head of the family. Thus, Jaja, consistently constitutes a figure of frustration to his father in his effort to model his children as devout Catholics and morally upright individuals in a typical Igbo patriarchal society. Most of Papa's angry outbursts are incited by Jaja's disrespect and disregard for him. For instance, on the day he refused to go for communion and is queried for it, we see him talking back at his father, even when his father's tone of interrogation is low, he rashly replies, "I will die ...then I will die, Papa" (15) than go for communion. At less than the age of eighteen, it is expected that Jaja disposes himself to the strict spiritual and moral upbringing designed by Papa for the good of his children. Unfortunately, Jaja rose too early in challenging the authority of his father in

their nuclear family. His disrespect to Papa on the day his opinion was sought concerning the taste of new juice from his factory. Kambili tells us what ensued thus,

Jaja have you not shared a drink with us *gbo*? Have you no words in your mouth? Have you nothing to say, *gbo*, Jaja?" Papa asked again. "*Mba*, there are no words in my mouth," Jaja replied. "I have nothing to say," Jaja said. He was doing what he never did: he was leaving the table before Papa had said the prayer after meals. ... Jaja was walking out of the dining room (21-22).

As the story unfolds, we discover that Mama is a subtle enabler for Jaja's deviance towards his father. She never lends her voice in admonishing Jaja for disrespecting Papa. Rather, we see her encouraging Jaja in his malicious dispositions towards his father. When Jaja locks up himself in his malicious attitude towards Papa, Mama serves him food in the room. Kambili tells us that during this time, "Mama did not hide the tiny smiles that drew lines at the edge of her mouth. She did not sneak Jaja food to his room, wrapped in cloth so that it would appear that she had simply brought his laundry in. She took him his food on a white tray, with a matching plate" (261-262). Additionally, Jaja's short stay at Auntie Ifeoma's home in Nsukka, makes him even bolder in the confrontation of his Father on issues he previously had no problems with. For instance, when Jaja returns from Nsukka to Enugu where his family resides, we see him suddenly confronting Papa over his desire to have his privacy. He tells him "Papa, may I have the key to my room, please?" ...The key to my room. I would like to have it. *Makana*, because I would like some privacy" (198). Kambili is shuddered by this sudden audacity of her brother, because, according to her, "I took a breath and held it. Papa had always held the keys to our rooms" (198). At another occasion, we see Jaja insisting on going to Nsukka with Kambili, even when Papa has not given his consent for the journey. His outburst to his father on this issue, portends total disregard for his father's role as head of the Achike family. He says, "We are going to Nsukka today, not tomorrow. If Kevin will not take us, we will still go. We will walk if we have to" (265).

Given Jaja's consistent connivance with Mama to frustrate and undermine Papa's authority as head of the family, one is not surprised that Mama conceives the wicked idea of eradicating such a great man who is publicly acknowledged for his piety and generosity. Thus, when Mama connives with Sisi, the domestic help to gradually poison Papas to death, Jaja takes responsibility and is imprisoned for his mother's crime. Mama confesses, "I started putting the poison in his tea before I came to Nsukka. Sisi got it for me. Her uncle is a powerful witch doctor (294). Kambili tells us that when policemen arrive, "Jaja did not wait for their questions; he told them he had used rat poison, that he put it in Papa's tea. They allowed him change his shirt before they took him away" (295). At the end of the narrative, Jaja is still in prison three years after the crime. Jaja, thus, becomes a victim of his mother's cradle power and influence.

FATHER AMADI may be described as an antithesis of the European Father Benedict of Saint Agnes Parish. He is young and liberal in his vocation as a priest of the Catholic church, infusing Igbo choruses at his Masses. He is unlike Father Benedict who is rigid and practices strict adherence to old Catholic rituals, including celebration of Masses in Latin. It is in the course of his liberal approach to his vocation that Father Amadi gets entangled with Kambili. Though their relationship is unconsummated, Father Amadi who is sworn to the Catholic oath of celibacy as a priest, is seen almost deviating from the moral and acceptable dispositions of a Catholic Priest. He often leaves his Chaplaincy and spends lots of time eating, drinking, visiting and engaging in recreational activities with young people, especially Kambili. For instance, we see him in a warm hug with Kambili when she was recuperating from illness. At another time, he abandons his pastoral work at the Chaplaincy, and drives Kambili to the market to get her hair done. His randy disposition towards Kambili causes mama Joe, the market hair dresser to suspect an affair between them. According to her, "A man does not bring a young girl to dress her hair unless he loves that young girl, I am telling you, it does not happen" (243). When the hair is done, Father Amadi pays Mama Joe generously for it with his own money. Throughout the narrative, Father Amadi deploys every opportunity available to him in order to spend time alone, with Kambili. Often, we see them engage in conversations on personal issues. Amaka equally suspects an affair between them, hence she advises Kambili to join in the crusade for optional celibacy for Priests. Perhaps, Father Amadi's condescension and deviation from strict Catholic spiritual and pastoral

activities, occasion his sudden transfer to Germany on a missionary work. Thus, when its time to say goodbye, he goes with only Kambili to say goodbye to families on campus. On the way, Kambili tells him, "I love you". Thus, Father Amadi is emotionally vulnerable in the hands of Kambili, until the church sends him away from his agents of distraction from his pastoral duties. Aside of the foregoing major male characters who are challenged by the numerous faces of vulnerabilities in a world they are supposed to lead, we can also identify others whose characters are not well developed. These include Kevin, the Achike family driver who loses his job with them before the end of the narrative. We are told that Auntie Ifeoma's late husband, Ifediora dies in a Road Traffic accident, even before the narrative begins.

CONCLUSION

Someone once asked, "Must Adichie kill or imprison majority of her male characters in *Purple Hibiscus*?" The answer to this question is obvious. Certainly, Adichie sets out in *Purple Hibiscus* to expose female weaknesses within the Igbo patriarchal Catholic setting. In the process of this quest, she ironically exposes the predicaments and vulnerabilities of men in a world which they are traditionally mandated to lead. The Igbo society which forms the setting of the narrative is typically patriarchal in nature. Within this clime, the man is the head of the family, while the woman is considered as a help to the man in the discharge of his traditional leadership role in the family. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie delineates female characters who act as agents of distractions, silent rebellion, distraction and even annihilation of the man. Their comportment is contrary to the archetypal, meek, humble and respectful traditional African woman whom Udumukwu describes as "the good woman who suffers the effects of oppression and neglect; who must maintain a silence and passivity in order to remain good" (*Signature*, 3). Ironically, Adichie's Mama Beatrice in *Purple Hibiscus* is seemingly silent and passive, but possesses rebellious heart, agency of provocation for Papa, and takes conscious steps to eliminate her husband in her quest for freedom. Throughout the novel, Mama Beatrice is seen in subtle rebellion against her husband and also encourages her son Jaja to do the same against Papa who is publicly acknowledged as pious, kind and generous. As Amaka rightly tells his brothers and cousins, "Uncle Eugene is not a bad man, really. As humans, people have problems, people make mistakes" (256). She goes on to remind them of uncle Eugene's generosity to his family, including the funding of Papa Nnukwu's burial despite the estranged relationship between them when she says, "He paid for Papa Nnukwu's burial, after all" (256). Through this statement, Amaka further establishes that Papa Eugene is more of a hero than a villain. Despite his extreme religious fanaticism, his generosity knows no bounds. Papa's generosity extends to Ade Coker's family. After he is killed through a package bomb, Papa organizes his funeral, sets up a trust for his wife Yewande Coker and the children, and bought them a new house (213).

Using Chinweizu's concept of "Cradle Power" as well as Christian Theological theories, this study has argued that women deploy their physical, emotional, psychological, and physiological endowments to manipulate the people in their lives, particularly their fathers, husbands and sons. Through the analysis of Adichie's deployment of the technicalities of character, voice, action and setting, this study further argues that this female manipulation of men in their lives fosters deep-seated aversion towards almost every male character like Eugene. This manipulation serves as a form of resistance against a supposed patriarchal oppression as well as a strategy to empower the next generation of women to challenge dominant male narratives. Through a critical analysis of *Purple Hibiscus*, this paper explores the dynamics of female agency, the subtleties of maternal influence, and the broader implications of cradle power in postcolonial African literature. The Paper also explores issues of postcolonial Christian theology, particularly of the Catholic faith. We have argued that Papa Eugene's strict adherence to catholic doctrines and observances is hinged on his colonial education from European missionaries. This should not necessarily make him a villain who should be eliminated. Auntie Ifeoma confirms the colonial influence in Papa Eugene's life when she declares that Papa was too much of a colonial product (21). His strict adherence to the rules and doctrines of his Catholic faith is occasioned by his colonial education by Catholic Missionaries. He thus does not deserve to die. In the same vein, we have also considered the challenges and vulnerabilities of other male characters in the narrative. Auntie Ifeoma's husband died too early in a road traffic accident, even before the narrative begins. Papa Nnukwu dies as a result of neglect and institutional failure as he could

not access the required medical treatment for his sickness due to prolonged strike by Doctors and allied personnel. Ade Coker, who is a journalist is murdered through a Parcel bomb for in-depth exposure of socio-political corruption in the nation. Jaja is imprisoned for a crime committed by his mother. These and more constitute the vulnerabilities of the man in contemporary African society, thus, study therefore, recommends for particular attention to the physical and mental well-being of the man in this society, in order to avert similar predicaments of the men delineated in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*.

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