

HARNESSING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN NIGERIAN BROADCASTING: OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

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Abstract

This study investigated the harnessing of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Nigerian broadcasting, focusing on opportunities, challenges, and policy implications for national development. Despite the global shift toward automated newsrooms, Nigerian media organisations face unique socio-technical hurdles. The adoption of AI tools by Nigerian broadcasters has been fragmented. The research was anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Utilising a qualitative research design and phenomenological approach, the study purposively sampled 20 broadcast professionals across Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentary analysis, then analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Findings revealed that Nigerian broadcasters are significantly aware of the adoption of AI in broadcasting. The study recommended the development of localised Natural Language Processing (NLP) models and the implementation of a state-supported AI policy framework.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Nigerian Broadcasting, National Development, Digital Divide, Media Policy.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is defined as a constellation of technologies, primarily encompassing Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language

Processing (NLP), and Generative AI that enable computer systems to perform tasks traditionally requiring human cognition. In the broader media landscape, this represents a shift from media digitisation to intelligent automation. AI is viewed not merely as a tool for efficiency, but as an architect of the information ecosystem, influencing everything from the news agenda-setting process to the global attention economy through algorithmic recommendation systems.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of Nigerian media, broadcasting organisations are increasingly integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) to address systemic inefficiencies and operational bottlenecks. AI is providing critical solutions in the areas of operational inefficiency and news turnaround. In broadcasting organisations, AI refers to the integration of intelligent software and hardware systems across the entire value chain: production, distribution, and transmission. While Artificial Intelligence offers a transformative pathway for the Nigerian broadcast industry, the transition from awareness to meaningful adoption is fraught with structural and ethical complexities including infrastructural deficits, high costs, and the absence of a robust regulatory framework unique to the Nigerian context.

Statement of the Problem

The adoption of AI-driven automated editing and news script generators has significantly lowered operational costs and reduced production errors, allowing broadcasters to stay competitive in a digital-first market (Aondover et al., 2025). Despite the recognised benefits of AI in automating news production and enhancing audience analytics, broadcast organisations in Nigeria face a fragmented and inconsistent adoption landscape characterised by significant technical knowledge gaps and a lack of structured organisational support. However, only few studies have attempted investigation on the technical, economic and organisational barriers that impede the full-scale integration of AI tools in Nigerian broadcast newsroom.

Research Questions

1. What is the current level of awareness and technical knowledge of AI tools among Nigerian broadcasters?
2. What specific AI tools are currently integrated into the news gathering, programme production, and content distribution workflow of Nigerian broadcasters?
3. What are the technical, economic and organisational barriers that impede the full-scale integration of AI tools in Nigerian broadcast newsroom?

4. How do concerns regarding job displacement, algorithm bias, and erosion of editorial integrity influence the level of resistance to AI adoption among Nigerian broadcast professionals?
5. What are the ethical challenges to AI adoption by Nigerian broadcasters?

Review of Related Literature

National Development

At its core, national development encompasses the structural transformation of a country aimed at improving the living standards of its citizens through economic growth, social welfare, political stability, cultural advancement, and technological progress (Todaro & Smith, 2020). In the Nigerian and wider African context, the term is often tied to post-colonial aspirations for modernisation, industrialisation, and inclusive growth (Rodney, 2018). Contemporary scholarship views national development as multidimensional and holistic. It includes economic diversification, political accountability, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and technological innovation (Sachs, 2015). The United Nations Development programme (UNDP) reinforced this broader view by introducing the human development index (HDI), which incorporates health, education, and standard of living indicators (UNDP, 2022).

Overview of AI in Broadcasting

Artificial intelligence (AI), especially generative AI machine learning (ML), automated transcription, and audience analytics, is rapidly reshaping global broadcasting. Broadcasters worldwide are experimenting with AI to automate routine tasks (e.g. transcription, editing, personalised content, and scale production). In Nigeria, these shifts intersect with a media ecosystem characterised by a mix of state, private, and community broadcasters, uneven digital infrastructure, and a regulatory framework undergoing modernisation. Recent statements from the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and emerging case studies from state broadcasting corporations indicate both growing interest in AI and a recognition of attendant risks such as misinformation and job displacement (Okorie et al., 2025).

Media companies globally, including Nigeria, are actively considering and increasingly incorporating AI technologies similar to TV's use of AI. TVC Communications introduced Nigeria's first AI-powered news anchors in May 2025, marking a historic milestone in the country's

broadcasting history. Between 2024 and 2026, traditional broadcasting in the South-South has begun to shift automation using generative AI such as ChatGPT in broadcasting (Chin, 2024).

Challenges to AI Adoption in Developing Countries

Developing nations, particularly in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, face a unique set of structural and socio-technical hurdles that differ fundamentally from the challenges in the Global North. While broadcasters in developed nations debate the nuances of AI ethics, developing countries are still grappling with the prerequisites of digitisation (Okorie et al. (2025). Erratic power supply and high cost of bandwidth constitute primary physical barriers. In Nigeria and Ghana, researchers emphasise that the dollarization of AI, where premium tools like ChatGPT-4 or Adobe Firefly require subscriptions in USD, creates a massive financial barrier for local newsrooms already struggling with devalued local currencies (Anyanwu, 2024).

AI has led to wider range of data colonialism. Gondwe (2024) and Munoriyarwa et al. (2025) argue that AI models are trained predominantly on Western datasets, leading to a marginalisation of non-Western narratives. For broadcasters in multilingual societies, the lack of Natural Language Processing (NLP) for local dialects (e.g., Swahili, Yoruba, or Wolof) remains a technical wall. Additionally, Journalists in developing countries must spend double the time human-verifying AI outputs because the tools often fail to grasp local political nuances or cultural contexts (Zayani&Sahraoui, 2007).

Developing countries often operate in a "Regulatory Wilderness." While the EU and U.S have moved toward comprehensive AI Acts, many African and Asian governments are still in the early stages of policy formulation. Other challenges include transparency issue and misinformation. Only 13% of newsrooms in developing regions have a formal AI policy (WAN-IFRA, 2025).

Ethical and Labour Concerns

As AI becomes more embedded, ethical concerns have shifted from job loss to editorial integrity. Stahl and Eke (2024) identify accountability, bias, and social cohesion as the primary ethical battlegrounds. A significant concern is the black box nature of AI, where algorithms lack the sophisticated understanding required for delicate political or humanitarian reporting (Nishal&Diakopoulos, 2024). A disturbing trend in AI adoption in broadcasting is that journalists over-relying on GenAI show weaker neural engagement and more formulaic writing compared to those using traditional reasoning (Nishal&Diakopoulos, 2024).

Transparency remains a major failure point. Only 10% of broadcasters globally currently disclose AI-assisted content to their audiences, leading to a potential crisis of public trust. According to Akinrinade and Oluyeye (2025) many media houses in Nigeria lack awareness regarding AI Ethics, with few organisations disclosing the use of synthetic content to their audiences, remains a critical problem to ethical application of AI by the broadcasters in Nigeria.

While AI promises efficiency, it introduces profound risks to the psychological well-being of workers and the editorial integrity of the industry, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. The labour disruption occurs in displacement vs. corrective labour. Bello et al. (2025) argue that while AI is automating repetitive tasks like transcription and scheduling, it is simultaneously displacing entry-level roles such as junior editors and researchers. Additionally, Akpan (2025) reveals that African journalists, particularly women, are increasingly burdened with unpaid clean-up work, fixing errors, hallucinations, and racial biases generated by Western-centric AI models. This creates a hidden labour crisis where the time saved by automation is lost to the manual verification of AI outputs to prevent the misrepresentation of African realities (KICTANet, 2025).

The most critical ethical concern identified in literature is the loss of human oversight. Akinrinade&Oluyeye (2026) state that Nigerian newsrooms often adopt AI in a regulatory wilderness. Without formal editorial codes or a National AI Policy for media, there is a high risk of: algorithmic bias where automated systems unknowingly amplify ethnic or political biases present in training data. Furthermore, there is trust erosion in the media houses. Global surveys show high consumer discomfort when news on sensitive topics is predominantly AI-produced (Newman et al, 2024).

Policy Implications for National Development

The National AI Strategy (2025) emphasises that broadcasting is a strategic sector for digital literacy. Balogun&Mfon (2026) note that despite the lag in formal newsroom adoption, Nigeria's internet users (over 70%) are interacting with GenAI at rates higher than the global average. This bottom-up adoption suggests that while organisations are slow to pivot, the workforce is becoming AI-native, presenting a unique opportunity for policy-led training programmes.

In the Nigerian policy landscape, the harnessing of AI is no longer a choice but a pillar of national development strategy. As of February 2026, Nigeria is transitioning from unstructured adoption to a Legislated AI Economy (Balogun&Mfon, 2026). For the broadcasting sector, this

shift has profound implications for how information is curated, how national security is protected, and how the Digital Nigeria vision is realised.

Agility (2025) argues that AI-assisted broadcasting is essential for communicating public policy effectively. In Nigeria, where large populations are in rural areas, AI-powered translation services (English to Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and Pidgin) are identified in the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (NAIS, 2025) and the Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy documents as a tool for national inclusion. By automating the translation of government directives into local dialects, broadcasting becomes a vehicle for socio-economic change, ensuring that national development is not restricted to urban, English-speaking elites. However, AI technologies can produce fake content, text, audio and images that are difficult to distinguish from authentic material, enabling the rapid and large-scale spread of false or misleading information (Okamgba, 2025).

AI in broadcasting promotes cultural and linguistic inclusion. Nigeria's diversity has often posed communication challenges in broadcasting. AI-based multilingual tools, including speech recognition and subtitling systems, allow broadcasters to transmit content in Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, pidgin, and minority languages (TVC Communication, 2025). This inclusivity fosters national unity, cultural preservation, and equitable participation in national discourse.

Also, AI tools reduce operational costs through automation of repetitive newsroom tasks such as transcription, scheduling, and video editing. For broadcasters, this leads to cost savings, efficiency, and competitiveness in an increasingly digital economy (Anyanwu et al., 2024). At the macro level, AI efficiency contributes to Nigeria's digital economy agenda and supports innovation-led growth. With AI, broadcasters can create interactive educational content, deploy adaptive learning via broadcast channels, and use analytics to tailor programming for diverse audiences. This strengthens human capital development and aligns with Nigeria's sustainable development goals (Okroiet al., 2025). AI strengthens national security and crisis communication through content monitoring and analysis that support early warning systems during crises such as health pandemic, insurgencies, or natural disasters (Ajjola&Yahaya, 2025).

Empirical Review

Nwodu, Okorie&Udoh (2025) investigated "AI in broadcasting: A study of Implications on information dissemination within Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State". This study focused on how artificial

intelligence tools have been integrated into the Broadcasting Corporation of Abia State (BCAS) and the implications for the effectiveness of information dissemination. Nwodu et al., (2025) used a mixed-method approach, surveying station staff and analysing programming outputs to document changes to production workflows, audience targeting, and content personalisation introduced by automated systems. The study reported improvement in turnaround time for breaking news and increased reach through personalised content recommendation, and highlighted challenges such as limited technical capacity among staff, budget constraints for licensing AI tools, and ethical concerns around automation displacing editorial judgement. The study recommended capacity building, regulatory oversight on automated content, and strategies to leverage AI for public interest. This study differs from the present study in methodology and context.

Asiimwe (2025) explored the areas AI is adopted in broadcast media in Nigeria's broadcasting sector. The paper mapped potential AI applications from speech-to-text services and automated subtitling to content recommendation engines and sentiment analysis for audience research. The study adopted diffusion of innovation theory and technological appropriation to explain why uptakes may be uneven across stations (public, private and community). It also pointed out ethical and regulatory issues including data privacy, misinformation risks, and intellectual property concerns. It recommended that Nigerian regulators and industry bodies should develop context-sensitive guidelines. However, the study was not linked to national development which is the primary focus of the present study.

Umejei et al.,(2025) compared AI and journalism in four African countries to determine how journalists in Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, and Kenya appropriate AI tools within newsroom practice. Employing a comparative case studies, the research documented varied trajectories of adoption shaped by national policy environments, market structures, and educational ecosystems. The Nigerian case highlighted pragmatic uptake in areas like automated transcriptions and social media analytics, constrained by infrastructural and policy limitations. This study is similar to the present study because both emphasises AI use in the media. However, Umejei et al. (2025) study was not tailored to national development.

Oladele&Olajide (2025) examined “Adoption of artificial intelligence in news gathering and reporting in Nigerian mass media: A study of LTV and TVC”. This station-level examination focussed on practical application of AI in news gathering and reporting. Using interviews with reporters and technical staff, as well as analysis of news work flows,

the authors documented practical uses such as automated transcription, rapid face-checking aids, and metadata enrichment for archival retrieval. The study recommended targeted capacity-building interventions, transparent disclosure of AI usage to audiences, and partnership with local universities to co-develop content-specific tools.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was originally formulated by Fred Davis in 1989. Derived from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), TAM is one of the most influential extensions in information systems research, designed to predict and explain an individual's acceptance of information technology (Akinrinade&Oluyeye, 2026).

At its core, TAM posits that an individual's behavioural intention to use a new system is determined by two primary cognitive beliefs: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) (Davis, 1989). For Nigerian journalists, many of whom may lack advanced computational training, the complexity of an AI interface becomes a decisive factor in its adoption.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design, specifically utilising the phenomenological approach. This design was chosen to facilitate a deep, contextual exploration of the lived experiences of Nigerian broadcasters as they navigate the integration of AI tools. Given that AI adoption is a contemporary socio-technical phenomenon, a qualitative approach allowed for the capturing of nuances, professional anxieties, and ethical dilemmas that quantitative metrics might overlook. The study is situated within the constructivist paradigm, asserting that the implications of AI are best understood through the subjective perspectives of those directly interacting with the technology in Nigerian newsrooms. The population for this study comprised professional broadcasters, including station managers, news editors, reporters, and technical producers, currently employed in Nigerian broadcast organisations. This includes both public (e.g., NTA, FRCN) and private (e.g., Channels TV, Arise News, Raypower FM) media houses. The focus was on professionals in major media hubs (Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt) where AI integration is most likely to be actively occurring.

Purposive Sampling Technique was employed. This ensured that only information-rich cases were selected to provide depth to the research. The study used participants who have had a minimum of five years of professional broadcasting experience and must have engaged with at least one AI application (e.g., ChatGPT, Otter.ai, automated graphics tools) in their professional capacity.

In line with qualitative rigour, the sample size was determined by data saturation. It was anticipated that a sample of 18 to 22 participants, distributed across strategic, tactical, and operational levels of the broadcast hierarchy, was sufficient to achieve thematic saturation.

To achieve data triangulation and ensure the robustness of the findings, two primary methods of data collection were utilised: Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), and qualitative document analysis used to examine available organisational policy documents, editorial guidelines, and recent National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) circulars to triangulate the participants' accounts with official institutional stances. Data were analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA): familiarisation, data coding, naming, and writing (Braun & Clarke, 2025). Trustworthiness measures were applied: credibility, dependability, transferability.

Ethical Considerations

Consideration was given to ethical issues following the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2024) guidelines. Hence, the principles of confidentiality and anonymity were observed in this study. Also, data collection procedures were in strict compliance to the provision of the BERA (2024); hence informed consents from the participants were obtained through their endorsement of the provision for consent as contained in the request letter. In addition, every participant was given the leverage to withdraw from taking part in the research at any stage and no reason(s) shall be required by the researcher before or after withdrawal.

Discussion of Findings

A primary finding of this study was the significant awareness-adoption gap. Participants across all levels, strategic, tactical, and operational, displayed a high degree of conceptual literacy regarding AI's potential. Participant 1 (News Director, Lagos) described AI as a productivity engine, suggesting that the Perceived Usefulness (a core construct of TAM) is well-established within the industry. This aligns with findings by Anyanwu and Iheonye (2024), who noted that over 90% of Nigerian

practitioners recognise AI's potential to enhance accuracy and speed. However, this perceived usefulness has not translated into institutionalised adoption. The findings suggest that in Nigeria, Technology Acceptance is not a psychological hurdle but a structural one. Participant 5's assertion that "the intelligent newsroom becomes a dark room without power" underscores a critical failure of the TAM framework in developing contexts; it often ignores the fundamental infrastructure required for "Ease of Use" such as erratic power and high data costs that are bottlenecks to digital transformation in Nigeria (Obiora&Adikuru, 2024). Scire (2024) identifies as a familiar power imbalance where resource-strapped newsrooms struggle to standardise innovation.

The study also found that Global AI models are predominantly trained on Western datasets that exhibit a profound linguistic bias against Nigerian nuances (Gondwe, 2024). Participant 3 (Field Reporter, Abuja) noted that AI's failure to grasp Nigerian Pidgin forced him to spend more time "cleaning" transcripts than the time originally saved. This finding challenges the narrative that AI inherently increases efficiency (Akpan, 2025). "Cleaning" labour falls disproportionately on operational staff, who must act as human filters for AI hallucinations (Uche, Obiora&Nwabudike, 2025). Participant 10's fear of a "multi-billion Naira libel suit" due to AI errors could be a setback to AI adoption by Nigerian broadcasters

A critical economic finding is the naira-to-dollar barrier identified by Participant 9 (Station Manager, Port Harcourt). Most high-end AI tools for broadcasting such as real-time deepfake detectors or automated multi-platform versioning systems, require subscriptions in US Dollars. With the volatility of the Naira in 2026, these tools are becoming elite technologies. This has profound implications for National Development (Tanaka & Lee, 2025).

The study found a palpable sense of regulatory anxiety among practitioners. Participant 8 (Policy Analyst, Abuja) noted that "we are playing in a playground with no fences," referring to the absence of specific NBC guidelines on synthetic content. This reflects the regulatory wilderness described by Ezeaka&Umennebuaku (2024), where the lack of formal codes leads to high risks of algorithmic bias and transparency failures, and unemployment. Participant 6's observation that "management isn't hiring interns anymore" supports Bello et al. (2025) claim that AI is displacing entry-level roles.

Conclusion And Recommendations

This study concludes that while Nigerian broadcasters have successfully bridged the awareness gap, they remain trapped in an adoption lag driven by poor infrastructure, prohibitive cost of dollarized technologies, and the linguistic marginalisation of Nigerian dialects in global AI models. Hence, the study recommended as follows:

1. There is need for institutionalisation of AI literacy and prompt engineering training tailored to the Nigerian newsroom context to ensure that practitioners can move from being passive users to skilled co-creators with AI.
2. There is need for strategic investment in localised NLP for indigenous languages to help overcome the linguistic barrier.
3. National AI Media Code of Ethics should be formulated. This will help to fill the "Regulatory Wilderness" identified in this study.
4. Also, digital infrastructure subsidies and tax rebates should be provided by the Federal Government to mitigate the economic and infrastructural barriers.

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