Artificial Intelligence in Contemporary Journalism Practice in Benin City, Edo State

[1]Josephine Osatohanmwen Adeyeye, PhD., [2]Frances Nneka Nwabufoe., [3]Hasel Akpevwe Owobu

[1]Senior Lecturer, Benson Idahosa University

[2]Assistant Lecturer, Benson Idahosa University

[3]Research Assistant, Benson Idahosa University

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ABSTRACT

The researchers examined the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in contemporary journalism in Benin City. The study sought to understand how journalists in Benin City integrate AI into their work, and the challenges they face using traditional practices and regulatory concerns. Anchored on the Technological Determinism theory and Diffusion of Innovation theory, the researchers employed the survey research method and questionnaire as data collection instrument. The population of the study covered all registered journalists in the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) working in Benin City and purposive sampling technique was used in administering 186 copies of questionnaire on the sample size that was arrived at using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determiner. Findings of the study revealed, among others, that journalists (68.5%) in Benin have not fully adopted AI into journalism practices due to lack of training, infrastructure, and regulatory support. The researchers recommended targeted training programmes and the establishment of robust regulatory frameworks that address ethical concerns to ensure responsible AI use in Nigerian journalism.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Contemporary, Journalism, Practice, Digital Technologies

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a significant driver of change across numerous industries. It refers to the creation of computer systems capable of executing tasks that ordinarily require human intellect, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving (Stryker & Kavlakoglu, 2024). The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into various sectors is revolutionizing industries worldwide, and journalism is no exception (Oyedeji & Uthman, 2024). In journalism, AI is being utilized to increase efficiency, accuracy, and engage with audiences (Linares, 2024). One of the primary advantages of AI in journalism is its ability to automate repetitive tasks. News organizations now utilize AI-powered tools to handle reporting, such as financial earnings and sports summaries, enabling journalists to concentrate on more investigative and comprehensive stories. This transformation not only simplifies operations within newsrooms but also speeds up the process of disseminating news (Columbia Journalism School, 2022).

Before the transformation AI brought to the newsroom, it would require intensive human efforts to discover what readers and viewers were interested in reading and watching regularly (Kolawole & Umejei, 2018). AI algorithms now curate news feeds that cater to individual readers and viewers, thereby improving user engagement and satisfaction and simplifying repetitive tasks. AI also significantly contributes to content personalization by assessing user behaviors and preferences. This personalized method allows media organizations to maintain their readership in a competitive online environment (Bouchard, 2024). AI-based systems verify information by cross-referencing data from various sources, thereby maintaining journalistic integrity and reliability. For example, AI tools have been created to identify deepfakes and other altered content, protecting the public from misleading information (Sofiullahi, 2024).

Several AI models are now included in journalistic practices. Natural Language Processing (NLP) allows machines to understand and produce human language, enabling automated news reporting and translation services. Machine Learning (ML) algorithms examine large datasets to reveal patterns and trends, supporting investigative journalism. Furthermore, AI-based chatbots have been implemented to engage with audiences instantly, providing quick responses to inquiries and sharing news updates (Caswell, 2023). Algorithms can now examine extensive datasets to identify trends and breaking news, a task that would be labor-intensive and time-consuming if done manually. Automated systems are currently utilized to convert interviews from speech to text, verify information, especially concerning breaking news and analysis, and compile customized news feeds, thus enhancing the efficiency and speed of news production (Diakopoulos, 2019).

In Nigeria, the adoption of AI in journalism is gradually gaining momentum. Research suggests that AI tools have boosted the efficiency of news reporting and are viewed as enhancing the accuracy of news coverage. Nevertheless, obstacles such as insufficient infrastructure, unclear regulations, and the requirement for specialized training hinder the broader adoption of AI in Nigerian newsrooms (Adjin-Tettey, Muringa, Danso and Zondi (2024). Overcoming these challenges is vital for fully leveraging AI's potential to improve journalistic practices in areas like Benin City. Therefore, the study sought to examine the role of artificial intelligence in contemporary journalism practice in Benin City.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the clear benefits that AI can offer to journalism, its integration within Nigerian newsrooms comes with challenges. Traditional journalistic practices in Edo State have long been characterized by a reliance on manual reporting and human-driven processes. These practices that served communities over the years also come with limitations such as slower reporting speeds, human error, resource constraints, and challenges in processing large volumes of data. AI in journalism offers promising solutions to several issues by automating routine tasks, enhancing data analysis, and enabling real-time reporting, but the transition to an AI-enhanced newsroom is not without its difficulties. The study by Guanah, Agbanu and Obi (2020) reveals a division in the perceptions of journalists in Benin, some of whom expressed fears of job displacement.

On one hand, there is recognition of AI's ability to streamline operations and improve efficiency; on the other, there are significant concerns about the ethical implications of relying on automated systems. Journalists worry about the potential loss of the human element in storytelling, the risk of algorithmic bias, and the possibility of AI-generated misinformation. The lack of formal regulatory frameworks to guide the ethical use of AI in journalism exacerbates these concerns, leaving practitioners to navigate an uncertain landscape. By examining the case of Benin City, Edo State, this study filled a critical gap, offering empirical insights that can inform future research on digital transformation in journalism. As the media landscape continues to evolve, this study examined AI's various roles in transforming contemporary journalistic practices in Benin City.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the level at which journalists are currently adopting AI in their journalism practice.
2. Examine AI's various roles in transforming contemporary journalistic practices in Benin City.
3. Ascertain the ethical challenges facing AI's adoption in contemporary journalism practice in Benin City.

Hypothesis

H_1: There is a significant level of artificial intelligence adoption among journalists in their journalism practice.

H_0: There is no significant level of artificial intelligence adoption among journalists in their journalism practice.

Theoretical Framework

Technological Determinism Theory and Diffusion of Innovation Theory

This study was anchored on technological determinism and diffusion of innovation theories. The Technological determinism theory developed by Thorstein Veblen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries suggests that technology is the primary driver of social, economic, political, and cultural change, a view that is particularly relevant when considering the impact of digitalization on traditional news practices (Chandler, 1995). This theory suggests that technological developments drive and shape the course of societal change, often having profound effects on various aspects of human life, including culture, communication, and economy (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2022; Adeyeye & Nwaoboli, 2024). The theory proposes that each technological innovation comes with its own inherent qualities, capabilities, and limitations, which can influence how it is used and its effects on society and considers how changes in media technology, such as the printing press, telegraph, radio, television, and the internet, have transformed how information is communicated, distributed, and consumed (Asemah et al., 2022; Adeyeye & Nwaoboli, 2024). The diffusion of innovation theory propounded by Sociologist Everett Rogers in 1962, explains how new ideas and technologies spread through a social system. It outlines a process of how individuals and groups adopt or reject innovations, considering factors like communication channels, time, and the social system. The theory further explains how new technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), are adopted over time within a society (Omoera, Nwaoboli & Emwinromwankhoe, 2024; Adeyeye & Nwaoboli, 2024).

From the overall objectives of this study, both theories were relevant. This is because technological determinism and diffusion of innovation theories offer valuable insights to examine the on-going transformation in journalism practices as traditional media adapt to new digital realities and also provide a vantage standpoint in understanding how digital technology would shape the thinking, feelings, and operations of the journalism as Nigeria moves from analogue journalism to digital.

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an essential technological development in the modern era, revolutionizing several sectors including media and journalism. It represents a class of technologies designed to emulate human cognition in performing tasks such as learning, problem-solving, perception, and decision-making. Oyedeji & Uthman (2024) observe that AI encompasses a range of technologies that enable machines to mimic human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, and problem-solving. In journalism, this includes functions like automated news writing, data analysis, and content personalization. Russell & Norvig (2020), in their foundational work, define AI as "the study of agents that receive precepts from the environment and perform actions." These agents function based on algorithms that allow them to reason, learn from data, and improve over time. This definition captures the adaptive and intelligent nature of AI tools used in modern media environments. Brynjolfsson & McAfee (2014) take a more applied view by describing AI as "digital technologies that exhibit capabilities such as perception, learning, and reasoning, which were once thought to be exclusive to humans." They emphasize AI's ability to enhance productivity and automate knowledge-based tasks. In journalism, this includes AI applications such as automated content generation, real-time news alerts, and intelligent news feed algorithms. Together, these definitions underscore the growing relevance of AI in reshaping how news is gathered, produced, and consumed. The use of AI in journalism continues to expand, facilitating faster reporting, enhancing accuracy, and redefining newsroom efficiency.

Contemporary Journalism

Contemporary journalism refers to modern-day news gathering, production, and dissemination practices shaped by digital technologies, changing audience behaviors, and evolving media ecosystems. It marks a departure from traditional, print-based journalism to more dynamic, real-time, and interactive news formats. Phillips (2014), in exploring the transformation of journalistic practices, explains that contemporary journalism is "a fluid and adaptable profession increasingly shaped by digital tools, real-time reporting, and a decentralization of news production." He highlights that journalists today must engage with audiences on multiple platforms, often with fewer institutional constraints and faster news cycles. According to Broersma &

Singer (2021), "contemporary journalism is a multi-platform, technology-mediated profession that blends traditional storytelling with data-driven techniques and audience analytics." This definition reflects the hybrid nature of journalism today where legacy practices coexist with emerging formats such as multimedia storytelling, live blogging, and AI-generated content. Also, Chaudhary, Usman, Ghani & Farooq (2025) define contemporary journalism as "the current approach to gathering, evaluating, creating, and delivering news and information across platforms including print, broadcast, and digital media." They emphasize that it is characterized by immediacy, technological integration, and audience interactivity. These perspectives demonstrate that contemporary journalism is not just about technological adoption but also about a fundamental shift in journalistic values, workflows, and the relationship between media producers and their audiences.

Artificial Intelligence and its Relation to Media

Guanah, Agbanu & Obi (2020) state that the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is gradually influencing every facet of society. As an indispensable part of modern life, the mass media are not exempt from these technological disruptions. To remain relevant, media organizations must adapt and synergize with emerging technologies (Dorr, 2015). The integration of AI into journalism and media production is reshaping how information is generated, distributed, and consumed. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in modern times cannot be overlooked, especially by professionals who wish to remain relevant in the evolving future of work. In many workplaces, AI-human collaboration has emerged, while in others, AI tools have fully taken over tasks previously handled by humans (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Galily (2018) affirms that the use of AI technologies has become an indispensable part of the field of media, which will lead to radical transformations in the field of journalism. For instance, smart templates and automated writing software enable the production of news reports on routine topics such as sports scores or financial updates (Graefe, 2016; Diakopoulos, 2019). These tools allow newsrooms to publish timely, data-driven content with minimal human input.

According to Loosen (2018), the introduction of AI and automation in journalism has led to a significant transformation in the news production process. Advances in automated content production have reshaped how journalists create and distribute information. Loosen's work further highlights several areas affected by this transition, including data journalism, algorithm journalism, automated journalism, and metrics-driven journalism, all of which influence not just how news is delivered but journalism's core values and practices. This shift has sparked debate, particularly among veteran journalists, about the ethical implications of delegating core journalistic tasks to algorithms. Concerns have been raised about objectivity, transparency, and the accountability of AI-generated content (Beckett, 2019; Porlezza & Schapals, 2024). As traditional journalistic routines give way to automation, the nature of storytelling, editorial control, and audience engagement continues to evolve, signaling a new chapter in the practice of journalism in the digital age (Okonkwo, Njoku & Okonkwo, 2024).

In recent times, AI tools have demonstrated capabilities comparable to those of trained professionals, executing tasks more quickly and with increasing accuracy. Artificial Intelligence has simplified many tasks previously performed manually, and in some cases, it has eliminated the need for human intervention (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014; Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). With numerous models and tools being developed across the AI ecosystem, the growing influence of AI suggests that its spread will continue to impact nearly every sector globally, significantly affecting world economies (Bughin, Seong, Manyika, Chui & Joshi, 2018).

AI Technologies and Contemporary Journalism Practice

Contemporary journalism is characterized by an array of AI-driven tools that are reshaping how news is gathered, processed, and disseminated. In Benin City, media organizations have yet to embrace these technologies on an agency-wide level to enhance efficiency and improve content quality (EtiJm-James, 2024). One of the primary applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism is automated content generation. Natural Language Processing (NLP) systems can produce news stories from structured datasets, such as financial results or sports scores. Diakopoulos (2019) explains how such algorithms can translate raw data into coherent narrative form, allowing journalists to redirect their focus toward more analytical and investigative reporting. These advancements contribute not only to faster news dissemination but also to improved accuracy

and credibility (EtiJm-James, 2024). AI is also transforming journalism through data analytics. Broersma and Singer (2021) argue that real-time data analytics enables newsrooms to remain agile and responsive to rapidly changing audience preferences, particularly in dynamic socio-political environments.

Moreover, AI-driven personalization tools are increasingly employed to tailor news feeds for individual users. These systems utilize recommendation algorithms based on user interests and online behavior to deliver customized content. By aligning content delivery with user preferences, media organizations can enhance user engagement and foster audience loyalty (Ying, 2025). However, while the personalization of news offers substantial benefits, it also raises concerns regarding algorithmic transparency, editorial accountability, and the creation of echo chambers that may limit exposure to diverse viewpoints (Beckett, 2019). In Benin City, as media outlets strive to keep pace with global trends, the adoption of AI technologies represents both an opportunity and a challenge. Thus, the integration of AI tools is not merely a technical upgrade but a transformative process that reshapes the entire landscape of contemporary journalism.

Impacts of AI on News Production, Curation and Dissemination

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has had a significant impact on the production, curation, and dissemination of news. In Nigeria, the integration of AI technologies is transforming traditional newsroom workflows by improving both content quality and operational efficiency. Routine journalistic tasks, including transcription, data aggregation, and even initial content drafting, are increasingly managed by AI systems, resulting in more streamlined news production processes (Diakopoulos, 2019; Dorr, 2016). AI-powered content curation systems have also reshaped how news is organized and distributed to audiences. These algorithms analyze vast datasets to identify and prioritize stories that align with specific demographic segments. This enables a personalized news consumption experience, where readers are presented with content tailored to their interests and behavior patterns (Thurman, Dorr & Kunert, 2017).

More so, Adjin-Tettey et.al (2024) emphasize that AI-driven curation enhances user interaction while helping media organizations better interpret audience needs. This level of understanding enables more strategic content planning and editorial decision-making. Furthermore, the speed at which AI processes data allows for near-instantaneous updates to news feeds. In the context of a fast-moving digital environment, such responsiveness is vital for maintaining journalistic relevance and credibility. This is particularly significant, where timely access to information can carry important socio-political consequences.

Ethical Considerations and Challenges of AI Integration in Journalism

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into journalism introduces a complex array of ethical considerations. In Nigeria, as in many other regions, the adoption of AI-driven tools necessitates a re-evaluation of established ethical frameworks and journalistic norms. Key concerns include algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, diminished accountability, and the potential erosion of journalistic integrity (Diakopoulos 2019; Marconi, 2020). Algorithmic bias arises when AI systems produce outcomes based on prejudiced patterns embedded within their training data. In journalistic practice, this can result in skewed coverage, marginalization of minority voices, or reinforcement of harmful stereotypes. Diakopoulos (2019) cautions that without careful oversight, automated news systems may inadvertently perpetuate misinformation or fail to represent diverse perspectives, thereby jeopardizing media credibility. Transparency represents another critical ethical issue. The inner workings of many AI algorithms remain blurred, making it difficult for both journalists and the public to understand how editorial decisions are made. This lack of clarity can erode public trust and raise concerns about editorial accountability.

Porlezza & Schapals (2024) add that the different uses of AI systems across journalistic domain from content generation to fact-checking, audience engagement, or automated tagging may entail distinct requirements in terms of transparency. This often remains unclear to what extent the use of AI technology needs to be labelled if used as an aid only i.e., in the case of translations. Recent research focuses on AI guidelines within European and US news media contexts (Porlezza & Schapals, 2024). Notable scholars also analysed guidelines and their content, ranging from determining acceptable and prohibited applications of AI, to underscoring the necessity of human oversight, the importance of transparency, accountability and responsibility, as well as privacy and

confidentiality (Becker et al., 2023; Cools & Diakopoulous, 2023). Publishers across different countries tend to adopt similar strategies in response to the increasing impact of AI, despite variations due to cultural and organizational factors (Porlezza & Schapals, 2024). Broersma & Singer (2021) emphasize the necessity of clear ethical guidelines and robust accountability measures to ensure that AI applications in journalism adhere to professional standards.

Moreover, the growing reliance on automation in news production raises questions about the loss of the human touch in journalism. Critics argue that AI-generated content may lack the analytical depth and critical judgment typically provided by seasoned journalists. Furthermore, the extensive use of AI in content curation can also contribute to filter bubbles, where audiences are repeatedly exposed to content that reinforces their existing beliefs (Montal & Reich, 2017). These developments highlight the need for a balanced approach, one that leverages the speed and efficiency of AI while preserving the creativity, intuition, and ethical judgment of human journalists. In Benin City, where community-based journalism has traditionally played a vital role in informing the public, striking a balance between automation and human oversight is essential.

Recent Studies

Guanah, Agbanu & Obi (2020) investigated how AI can or has been impacting journalism practice in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on the Mediamorphosis theory while Survey and In-depth oral interview were adopted as the research methods for obtaining data from the population of 254 registered journalists. The questionnaire and the interview guide served as the research instruments for the study. Among other findings, the study revealed the agreement of journalists in Benin City that automated journalism i.e. usage of AI-driven media applications is an improvement over the current reporting practices which are still done manually. The researchers recommended that Journalism schools should have curricula that embrace technology that will effectively prepare potential journalists for the future use of AI for their work.

Adjin-Tettey, Muringa, Danso & Zondi (2024) study investigated the intricate relationship between journalism and AI with the broad research question of how are journalists adopting AI technologies and the challenges and opportunities such technologies present to them. The researchers through qualitative research techniques interviewed 18 (Eighteen) journalists practicing in Ghana and South Africa. The transcribed interview data were analysed thematically using the data analysis method proposed by Charmaz. Findings from the study showed that most newsrooms in the two countries studied have not formally incorporated AI tools into newsroom practices. Also, journalists used AI tool at their discretion in a non-complex manner, such as research, generating story ideas, transcription, and fact-checking. However, practical limitations which include cost, language barrier, and aversion to change hindered the formal integration of AI technology into newsroom operations. Although participants recognised the advantages of employing AI for newsroom tasks, they were also concerned about the ethical quandaries of misinformation, improper attribution, and intellectual property. Participants also felt that fact-checking and mindfulness regarding ethical usage might increase ethical AI usage in newsrooms.

Verma (2024) investigated the dynamic integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism, tracing its evolution from the initial stages of computer-assisted reporting to the current advanced applications and ethical dilemmas. The researcher used a review approach to offers an in-depth analysis of AI's Impact on journalism, highlighting both the enhancements in efficiency, personalization and data reporting, as well as the challenges posed by ethical concerns, potential job displacement, and the risks of misinformation. The researcher also examined real-world applications and controversies surrounding AI in newsrooms, including the use of automated content generation and AI-driven editorial decisions. The study underscored the necessity of a balanced approach in harnessing AI's capabilities in journalism, ensuring that technological progress aligns with maintaining journalistic integrity and ethical standards.

Porlezza & Schapals (2024) examined AI ethics in journalism (studies): an evolving field between research and practice. This study critically discussed the way journalism (studies) approach ethical issues related to the use and the design of AI systems, given that the responsible use and design of AI systems in journalism is crucial because of its integral role for democracy and society. The research revealed that in the light of an intensifying discourse about ethical concerns in the news industry and growing efforts by governments and

institutions such as the European Union to strengthen AI governance, journalism studies have started to explore the issue as well. However, research on AI ethics is still in its infancy, with significant gaps in understanding the practical enforcement of ethical guidelines within newsrooms, in particular when it comes to the design of AI systems.

In the work of EtiJm-James (2024), the research examined journalism in the rapidly changing world and how our understanding of journalism has rapidly changed and still changing in the era of technological advancement of smartphone, blogs, social media and new styles of publication and broadcast. The study also focused on computational or data journalism as the next big thing of our time, which makes use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Data Mining, Content Analysis and Visualization to execute various levels in journalism processes, stating the advantages and disadvantages of it. Furthermore, the work highlighted the implications of generative Artificial Intelligence in news production and distribution as well as the power imbalances between platform companies and news industry. The study recommended that for optimal utilisation of AI content, quality control is very relevant to maintain the same high standards of quality as traditionally produced content.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey method. This method allows a researcher to make inferences about a population under investigation (universe) at one point in time while trying to measure their perception of the subject-matter (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekhareafo & Okpanachi, 2017). The population of the study was three hundred and fifty-four (354), constituting all registered journalists in the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) working in Benin City, Edo state. The sample size of one hundred and eighty-six (186) was derived using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determiner and purposive sampling technique was used in administering 186 copies of questionnaire to respondents randomly.

According to Okoro (2001), the purposive sampling technique allows the investigator to select members to be included using his individual judgment as regards their suitability to the research. The choice of the chosen technique despite its constraints was to enable the researchers exclude respondents that were not ICT compliant. These respondents were accessed at the NUJ secretariat, Benin City during congresses. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data for the study and the data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and frequency count. For the analysis, simple frequencies, numbers, percentages and tables were used as well as chi-square to test the hypothesis of the study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The researcher administered 186 questionnaires, out of which 181 were valid and subsequently analyzed with 97.3% response rate.

Table 1: Level of which journalists are currently adopting AI in their journalism practice

Variables	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Fully Adopted	57	31.5
Moderately Adopted	93	51.4
Not Adopted	31	17.1
Total	**181**	**100**

Data presented above showed that majority of the respondents were of the view that journalists in Benin have not fully adopted AI into journalism practices.

Table 2: AI's roles in transforming contemporary journalistic practices

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
A (Improves Journalist Productivity)	26	14.4
B (Speeds Up Research/ Facts Checking and Verification)	22	12.2
C (Generates Story Ideas)	25	13.8
D (Automates Editing, Translation and Transcription	23	12.7
E (Headline Generation)	20	11.0
F (Support in Investigative Journalism)	15	8.3
G (Data Analysis)	13	7.2
A-G (Combined)	37	20.4
Total	**181**	**100**

Data from table 2 showed that AI can transform contemporary journalistic practices with 20.4% of the respondents indicating various roles.

Table 3: Ethical challenges facing AI's adoption in contemporary journalism practice in Benin City

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
A – Plagiarism	25	13.8
B – Lack of Transparency	30	16.6
C – Job Loss	18	9.9
D – Misinformation	15	8.3
E – Erosion of Journalistic Integrity	18	9.9
F – Algorithmic Bias	13	7.2
G – Diminished Accountability	15	8.3
A-G (Combined concerns)	47	26.0
Total	**181**	**100**

From table 3 above, it could be seen that there are ethical challenges militating against the fully adoption of AI's in contemporary journalism practice in Benin City.

Table 4: Testing of Hypothesis

Variables	Observed frequency (F)	Expected frequency (E)	$(O-E)^2/E$
Fully Adopted	57	60.3	0.18
Moderately Adopted	93	60.3	17.74

Not Adopted	31	60.3	14.24
Total	**181**	**181**	**32.16**

According to the hypotheses testing above, the chi-square ($\chi^2 = 32.16$) with 2 degrees of freedom at a 0.05 level of significance is greater than the critical value of 5.99, thus making the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no significant level of artificial intelligence adoption among journalists, rejected. Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, showing that there is a significant level of artificial intelligence adoption among journalists in their journalism practice. This finding implies that AI tools are increasingly being embraced by journalists, with most respondents reporting moderate to full adoption rather than non-adoption.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that majority of the journalists in Benin, which constituted the respondents in the study have not fully adopted AI into journalism practices. This was seen in the response rate of 51.4% (moderately adopted) and 17.1% (not adopted) respectively that answered to that effect. This suggested that although awareness of AI exists among journalists, its practical application remains limited and uneven. This outcome aligned with the findings of Adjin-Tettey, Muringa, Danso & Zondi (2024) who observed that newsrooms in Ghana and South Africa have not formally integrated AI technologies into newsroom operations, leaving journalists to use AI tools at personal discretion and largely for non-complex tasks. The reason for their inability could be linked to the fact that most of the journalists have critical training deficit, lack of infrastructure and regulatory support which hinder the translation of their AI knowledge into practical application capabilities. The finding of not fully adopting AI in their work reinforced Adjin-Tettey, Muringa, Danso & Zondi's (2024) where they found that most newsrooms in the two countries studied have not formally incorporated AI tools into newsroom practices. Also, having training deficit whatsoever substantiated Guanah, Agbanu & Obi's (2020) earlier findings from journalists in Benin City regarding the disconnect between technological awareness and operational competence.

In ascertaining AI's roles in transforming contemporary journalistic practices, it was found that majority of the journalists were of the view that the various roles of AI can actually metamorphose journalistic practices as seen in a response rate of 20.4% in table 2. This showed that journalists in Benin recognized AI's impact in journalism even when they have not fully integrated it in their professional practices. A notable proportion of respondents (20.4%) acknowledged that AI can significantly reshape journalistic practices. This perception underscored an emerging consensus that AI can enhance newsroom efficiency, improve content production, and support data-driven reporting. This was also in tandem with the thrust of the technological determinism and the diffusion of innovation theory; each technological innovation comes with its own inherent qualities, capabilities and limitations that shape the thinking, feelings, and operations of the journalism practices as traditional media adapt to new digital realities. This also mirrored Verma's (2024) proposition regarding AI's optimization capacity and potential to augment investigative journalism. It also resonated with Guanah et al. (2020) who found that journalists consider automated journalism an improvement over traditional manual reporting methods. Also, findings were in line with Adjin-Tettey et.al's (2024) findings that participants recognise the advantages of employing AI for newsroom tasks. The implication here is that journalists in Benin City are not resistant to innovation per se; rather, they are constrained by systemic limitations that hinder effective utilization.

Subsequent findings revealed that while progress has been made in adopting AI technologies, there are ethical challenges that need to be addressed to ensure a successful and seamless integration. These ethical concerns might have constituted major obstacles to the adoption of AI in contemporary journalism practice in Benin City. Ethical concerns manifested prominently from respondents with 26.0% responses indicating that factors such as plagiarism, lack of transparency, job loss, misinformation, erosion of journalistic integrity, algorithmic bias, and diminished accountability pose obstacles to the full integration of AI's technologies. These findings strongly aligned with Verma (2024) who emphasized that ethical dilemmas remain one of the most contentious aspects of AI integration in journalism, particularly in relation to misinformation, editorial responsibility, and

workforce displacement. The fear of job loss and compromised professional ethics may explain journalists' cautious approach to AI adoption. Similarly, the concerns mirrored those reported by Adjin-Tettey et al. (2024), where journalists expressed apprehension about the implications of AI for newsroom autonomy, credibility, and ethical standards. In the context of Benin City, these ethical challenges were further compounded by the absence of clearly defined AI governance frameworks and professional guidelines tailored to local journalistic realities.

Overall, the study's findings indicated that while journalists in Benin City acknowledged the importance and transformative potential of artificial intelligence in journalism, just as the proponents of Technological determinism posited, the diffusion of such innovation remained as posited by Diffusion of Innovation theory. This was seen in the study as the actual adoption remained low to moderate due to capacity, infrastructural, and ethical constraints. The recognition of AI's relevance, even in the absence of full adoption, suggested a readiness for integration if enabling conditions such as training, infrastructure, and policy frameworks are adequately addressed. Thus, the study reinforced existing literature that positions AI as both an opportunity and a challenge in contemporary journalism practice, particularly in developing media environments. Addressing training gaps, strengthening institutional support, and developing ethical and regulatory frameworks would be critical to ensuring responsible and effective integration of AI in journalism practice in Benin City, Edo State.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the level of adopting AI into journalism practices among select journalists in Benin City is still limited. Although, they recognise the advantages of employing AI, integration is still in the early stages and being hindered by ethical challenges such as plagiarism, lack of transparency, job loss, misinformation, erosion of journalistic integrity, algorithmic bias, and diminished accountability, indicating the need for urgent attention and support.

Artificial intelligence presents both opportunities and challenges for contemporary journalism practice in Benin City. While AI holds promise for transforming journalistic processes and improving media output, its successful integration depends on deliberate capacity building, infrastructural development, and the establishment of clear ethical and regulatory frameworks. Without these enabling conditions, the full benefits of AI in journalism practice may remain unrealized. The study therefore concluded that a balanced and well-regulated approach is essential for leveraging AI as a supportive tool rather than a disruptive force in journalism practice in Benin City, Edo State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Media institutions/houses should implement a phased AI literacy plan, prioritizing infrastructure upgrades and training for staff to enhance adoption of AI technologies.

2. Training programmes and workshops should be organised for journalists to enhance their technical skills and knowledge in managing AI technologies in their journalistic practices.

3. Media regulatory bodies should collaborate with journalists to establish a clear and updated regulatory framework that addresses ethical concerns and compliance requirements for a smooth AI adoption and integration process.

4. Government bodies (e.g. National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Ministry of Information) should draft and finalize a National AI Strategy and ensure its guidelines reaches media industry stakeholders to enable them develop standards for AI in journalism.

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