Human–AI Collaboration in Media Production: Exploring Opportunities and Challenges for Communication Professionals

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.101000445

Received: 21 October 2026; Accepted: 26 October 2026; Published: 04 November 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examined human–AI collaboration in media production, focusing on the opportunities, professional benefits, ethical concerns and challenges associated with the integration of artificial intelligence into the work of communication professionals in Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The population comprised communication professionals and media practitioners working in journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, digital media, film/video production and related fields in selected Nigerian urban centres (Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Ibadan and Kano). A sample of 400 respondents was selected. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 347 were returned and found usable, giving a response rate of 86.7%. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings indicated a high level of awareness and use of AI among communication professionals ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 0.89$). Major areas of collaboration included AI-assisted research, editing and proofreading, content generation, transcription and social-media production. Respondents reported substantial opportunities, particularly increased production speed and reduction of repetitive work. However, they also identified inaccurate AI output, job-displacement concerns, ethical uncertainty, copyright issues, privacy concerns, inadequate AI training and overdependence on automated systems as important challenges. The findings further showed a strong perception that human judgement remains necessary in media production. A significant positive relationship was found between professional AI competence and positive attitudes towards human–AI collaboration ($r = .58$, $p < .001$). The study concludes that AI is more appropriately viewed as a collaborative production tool than a complete substitute for communication professionals. It recommends continuous AI literacy training, institutional AI policies, human editorial oversight, transparent disclosure of AI use, ethical guidelines and continued development of professional skills that complement rather than compete directly with machine capabilities.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, human–AI collaboration, media production, communication professionals, generative AI, journalism, public relations, broadcasting

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence has moved from a specialised technological concept to an increasingly visible component of contemporary media production. Communication professionals now encounter AI in activities ranging from research and transcription to writing assistance, image generation, video editing, translation, audience analysis and social-media content production. Generative AI systems can produce or transform textual, visual, audio and video material, allowing communication professionals to incorporate computational tools into tasks that were previously performed almost entirely by humans. In earlier production environments, the communication professional was responsible for most stages of creating a media product. Generative AI introduces a different relationship. Instead of merely operating software, the communication professional can interact with an AI system through natural-language instructions, provide source material, request alternatives, evaluate generated outputs and revise the results. The production process therefore becomes increasingly collaborative.

Human–AI collaboration, as used in this study, refers to a working arrangement in which communication professionals use artificial intelligence to support, augment or accelerate media-production activities while retaining human responsibility for decisions, interpretation, verification, editing and final approval. This approach differs from full automation because the human professional remains actively involved.

The relevance of this distinction is particularly clear in journalism. AI can assist with transcription, summarisation, translation, headline generation, research and data analysis, but journalistic production also requires source evaluation, contextual understanding, ethical judgement and accountability. Similar principles apply to public relations, advertising, broadcasting, film production and other communication fields.

The emergence of AI presents significant opportunities. Communication professionals can use AI to reduce repetitive workloads, generate alternative ideas, process large quantities of information, improve production speed and create content for multiple platforms. At the same time, collaboration creates new professional risks. AI systems may generate false information, reproduce bias, expose confidential information, imitate copyrighted material or produce content that appears convincing despite being inaccurate. Communication professionals may also become overly dependent on AI-generated outputs. In addition, the increasing capacity of AI to perform creative and technical tasks has generated concerns about employment, professional identity and the future division of labour in media industries.

This study investigates human–AI collaboration in media production, focusing on the opportunities and challenges encountered by communication professionals in selected Nigerian urban centres.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid development of artificial intelligence has created new possibilities for media production. Communication professionals can now use AI tools to generate ideas, draft content, analyse information, edit material, create visuals, transcribe interviews and produce content for different digital platforms. These developments may improve productivity and allow professionals to handle increasing demands for fast and continuous content production. However, the integration of AI into professional media work also creates considerable uncertainty. One major concern is the possibility of inaccurate or misleading AI-generated content. Another concern is professional dependence. Employment is another concern. Ethical issues relating to authorship, transparency, copyright, privacy, bias and accountability also require attention. The Nigerian media environment presents additional challenges. Many communication professionals work under financial, technological and infrastructural constraints. Access to advanced AI tools may be uneven, while formal institutional policies governing their use may be limited. Professionals may therefore adopt AI faster than organisations can develop appropriate guidelines for its responsible use.

Despite the increasing relevance of AI, there remains a need for empirical research that examines human–AI collaboration specifically from the perspective of communication professionals rather than treating AI merely as an automated replacement for media workers. The problem addressed by this study is therefore the uncertainty surrounding the opportunities, professional implications and challenges associated with human–AI collaboration in media production in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to:

1. Determine the level of awareness and use of AI among communication professionals.
2. Identify the major areas in which communication professionals collaborate with AI in media production.
3. Determine the perceived opportunities provided by human–AI collaboration.
4. Assess the perceived influence of AI collaboration on media-production efficiency and quality.
5. Determine the major challenges associated with human–AI collaboration in media production.

6. Examine communication professionals' perceptions of the continued role of human judgement in AI-assisted media production.

7. Determine the relationship between professional AI competence and positive attitudes towards human–AI collaboration.

8. Determine whether professional experience significantly influences communication professionals' attitudes towards human–AI collaboration.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness and use of AI among communication professionals?

2. What are the major areas in which communication professionals collaborate with AI in media production?

3. What opportunities does human–AI collaboration provide for communication professionals?

4. To what extent does human–AI collaboration improve media-production efficiency and quality?

5. What are the major challenges associated with human–AI collaboration in media production?

6. What is the perceived role of human judgement in AI-assisted media production?

7. What relationship exists between professional AI competence and positive attitudes towards human–AI collaboration?

8. Does professional experience significantly influence attitudes towards human–AI collaboration?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989) and the Human–AI Collaboration framework. The Technology Acceptance Model posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the primary determinants of an individual's intention to use a technology. In the context of this study, communication professionals' willingness to collaborate with AI is expected to be influenced by the extent to which they perceive AI as useful for improving productivity and the ease with which they can integrate AI tools into their workflows. Complementing TAM is the Human–AI Collaboration perspective, which emphasises that effective integration of AI occurs when humans and machines perform complementary roles rather than competing ones. AI is positioned as a tool that augments human capabilities in repetitive and data-intensive tasks, while humans retain responsibility for judgement, ethics, creativity and final decision-making. This dual theoretical lens provides a suitable foundation for examining both the acceptance of AI and the collaborative dynamics between communication professionals and AI systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Level of Awareness and Use of AI among Communication Professionals

Awareness of artificial intelligence among communication professionals refers to the extent to which practitioners understand the existence, capabilities, applications and implications of AI technologies within their professional activities. AI awareness goes beyond simply having heard about technologies such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, DALL-E and other generative AI platforms. It involves an understanding of how these technologies can be applied to communication activities, their limitations, ethical implications and the extent to which they can be incorporated into professional workflows. Use, on the other hand, concerns the actual application of AI tools by communication professionals in performing media-production tasks. The rapid development of generative AI since the public emergence of ChatGPT has increased professional awareness of AI within communication industries. Reuters Institute research indicates that generative AI has moved from largely invisible, behind-the-scenes applications towards more visible uses in journalism and other media

activities. News organisations have experimented with AI for headline testing, summarisation, translation, image generation, chatbots and synthetic presentation, although many organisations continue to

adopt the technology cautiously because of concerns about accuracy, transparency and editorial oversight. Empirical evidence from Nigeria demonstrates that AI awareness is becoming increasingly established among journalists. Ismail, Ogunsola and Folorunsho (2024), in their study of journalists in Kwara State, examined awareness, usage and perceptions of AI in journalism. Their findings showed different levels of AI adoption, with journalists distributed across categories corresponding to early adopters, early majority and late majority. The study associated this pattern with the diffusion of innovation and technology acceptance processes, indicating that awareness does not necessarily translate into uniform adoption. Evidence from Ghana also demonstrates growing AI awareness among communication professionals. Anani-Bossman, Nutsugah and Abudulai (2024) examined AI in public relations and communication management in Ghana and focused specifically on professionals' knowledge, adoption, impact perceptions, opportunities and risks. Their study was motivated partly by the limited African scholarship on AI in public relations and communication management. Similarly, Nutsugah and Senanub (2024) conducted a continent-wide qualitative study involving public relations professionals across Africa. They found substantial adoption and use of generative AI among PR practitioners. However, their findings also revealed that professional use was occurring in an environment where formal ethical policies governing AI use remained inadequate. This suggests that awareness and actual use may develop faster than institutional mechanisms for regulating professional AI use.

The level of awareness may also influence professional attitudes toward AI. Research by Moravec et al. (2024) found that AI literacy varies across demographic and socioeconomic groups and argued for targeted AI-literacy interventions as journalism becomes increasingly influenced by AI. More recent research similarly demonstrates that familiarity and practical experience can influence how users perceive AI. A 2026 study by Thomson et al. found that acceptance of AI applications was associated with users' knowledge and direct experience with AI, although acceptance also depended on the specific application and its implications for accuracy, transparency and ethics. Awareness and use should therefore be treated as related but distinct concepts. A communication professional may be aware of generative AI without using it regularly, while another may use AI frequently without possessing sufficient competence to evaluate its outputs critically. For the present study, examining both awareness and actual use is therefore necessary for establishing the extent to which AI has become part of the professional media-production environment.

Areas of Human–AI Collaboration in Media Production

Human–AI collaboration in media production occurs when communication professionals employ AI systems to support particular stages of the production process while retaining responsibility for interpretation, verification, editing and final decisions. The collaboration can occur at different stages, including research, content development, production, editing and distribution. Rahmawati (2024) identified three broad stages of journalism in which AI can collaborate with journalists: news gathering, news production and news distribution. During news gathering, AI can assist with collecting information from multiple sources and identifying audience interests. During production, AI can support script creation, editing and proofreading. During distribution, AI can facilitate content adaptation and audience-oriented dissemination. Coolsa and Diakopoulos (2024) similarly examined journalists' perceptions of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Bard and DALL-E. Their research demonstrates that generative AI can be incorporated into multiple newsroom activities rather than being restricted to automated article writing. The authors examined both the possibilities and dangers perceived by journalists, showing that AI collaboration encompasses a wider range of professional activities.

In practical media production, communication professionals may collaborate with AI in **research and information gathering**, where AI assists in searching, organising and summarising large quantities of information. They may also use AI for **writing and editing**, including drafting, rewriting, headline generation, proofreading and adapting content for different audiences. **Transcription and translation** constitute another major area because AI can convert speech into text and translate content rapidly. AI is also increasingly relevant to **visual production**, including image generation, image enhancement, video editing and visual effects. Reuters Institute research indicates that news organisations have experimented with image generation and other AI-supported production applications. In public relations, AI collaboration extends to preparing communication

materials, social-media content, research, campaign development and other routine communication activities. Nutsugah and Senanub (2024) found that generative AI was increasingly becoming part of PR practice in Africa, demonstrating that AI collaboration is not limited to journalism. The areas of collaboration therefore range from relatively low-risk technical activities, such as transcription and grammar correction, to activities involving greater professional judgement, such as content generation and visual representation. This distinction is important because the level of human involvement required may differ according to the consequences of the particular AI application.

Opportunities Provided by Human–AI Collaboration

Human–AI collaboration creates opportunities for communication professionals by combining human creativity, judgement and contextual knowledge with AI's capacity to process information and generate content rapidly. The literature generally identifies increased productivity, creativity, flexibility, accessibility and innovation as major potential benefits. One major opportunity is **increased productivity**. AI can undertake repetitive activities that traditionally consume substantial professional time. Transcription, summarisation, proofreading, translation and basic content adaptation can be performed more quickly with AI assistance. This allows professionals to devote greater attention to activities requiring human judgement, such as investigative work, interviewing, strategic communication and creative direction. Nutsugah and Senanub (2024) found that African PR professionals recognised important benefits from generative AI while simultaneously identifying practical, sociocultural and ethical concerns. Their findings suggest that AI is valued partly because it can support professional work and improve the efficiency of communication practice.

AI also provides an opportunity for **creative exploration**. Rather than generating one idea manually, professionals can use AI to produce multiple alternative headlines, scripts, concepts, campaign ideas, visual treatments or story approaches. The professional can then select, modify and combine the most appropriate elements. This transforms AI from a simple automation tool into a source of creative alternatives. The opportunity for **multiplatform production** is particularly important in contemporary media environments. A single piece of content may need to be converted into a newspaper article, website story, social-media post, podcast script, video caption and short-form video. AI can assist professionals in adapting content across formats and audiences. AI also creates opportunities for **personalisation and audience engagement**. Communication professionals can use computational systems to analyse audience behaviour and generate content adapted to different audience groups. Reuters Institute research shows that media organisations are increasingly exploring AI for personalisation and other audience-oriented applications. Another opportunity is **multilingual communication**. AI-assisted translation can make communication content available to audiences who speak different languages. This is particularly relevant in multilingual societies where communication organisations must serve audiences with diverse linguistic backgrounds. AI can also contribute to **accessibility** through automated captioning, transcription, translation and audio conversion. These capabilities can make media content more accessible to people with different communication needs. However, the literature suggests that the greatest benefit is likely to occur when AI complements rather than replaces professional expertise. Human professionals can determine the purpose, audience and context of a communication product, while AI can assist with computationally intensive or repetitive components. The resulting collaboration can potentially increase productivity without eliminating professional control.

Influence of AI Collaboration on Media-Production Efficiency

Media-production efficiency refers to the ability of communication professionals and organisations to produce content within shorter periods, with appropriate use of human and technological resources while maintaining required professional standards. AI can influence efficiency by reducing the amount of time required to perform repetitive or information-intensive tasks. Generative AI is particularly relevant to efficiency because it can produce preliminary outputs within seconds. A journalist may use AI to transcribe an interview, summarise a lengthy document or generate alternative headlines before refining the material. A PR professional can similarly use AI to produce initial drafts of communication materials and then edit them according to organisational requirements. Reuters Institute's 2025 research demonstrates the importance that media organisations attach to efficiency. The report found that news publishers were increasingly using generative AI for back-end efficiency, alongside applications involving personalisation, content creation and newsgathering. Coolsa and Diakopoulos

(2024) similarly identified efficiency-related possibilities in journalists' use of generative AI. Their study shows that journalists perceive AI not merely as a mechanism for replacing content production but as a tool that can support different stages of newsroom work. The efficiency benefit is particularly apparent in tasks involving large quantities of information. AI can process documents, transcripts and other materials much faster than an individual professional working manually. This may reduce turnaround time and enable professionals to handle greater volumes of content.However, efficiency cannot be equated simply with speed. If AI produces inaccurate information that requires extensive correction, the apparent time saving may be reduced. Reuters Institute research shows that media organisations have faced problems associated with inadequate oversight and inaccurate AI-generated information, reinforcing the need to verify AI outputs. Consequently, AI collaboration can improve media-production efficiency when the technology is appropriately matched with professional tasks and when human review is incorporated into the workflow. The efficiency gains are likely to be greatest for repetitive and structured tasks, while activities requiring contextual interpretation and ethical judgement continue to require substantial human involvement.

Influence of AI Collaboration on Media-Production Quality

Media-production quality encompasses accuracy, relevance, clarity, originality, consistency, credibility, technical standard and suitability for the intended audience. AI can influence these dimensions positively or negatively depending on how it is integrated into professional workflows. One potential benefit is **improved consistency**. AI can help identify grammatical errors, formatting inconsistencies, spelling problems and other technical issues. It can also provide alternative versions of a communication product, allowing professionals to compare different formulations. AI can also support quality by enabling professionals to analyse large amounts of information that might otherwise be difficult to process manually. For example, AI-supported analysis can help identify patterns in large datasets or summarise lengthy documents that inform journalistic or communication decisions. However, AI-generated content does not automatically guarantee high quality. Coolsa and Diakopoulos (2024) identified accuracy and other professional concerns among journalists evaluating generative AI. Their study demonstrates that professionals recognise both possibilities and risks in AI-assisted newsroom work. Accuracy is particularly important because generative AI can generate plausible but incorrect information. A communication professional who publishes AI output without verification may therefore reduce rather than improve the quality of the final product.

Human judgement remains essential because quality is not determined solely by grammatical correctness or technical presentation. A journalist must determine whether a story accurately represents an event; a PR professional must assess whether a message is appropriate for a particular stakeholder; and a broadcaster must determine whether an audio-visual product is credible and contextually appropriate. Research by Thomson et al. (2026) reinforces this point from the audience perspective. Their study found that acceptance of AI in journalism depended partly on how AI was used, whether its use was transparent, whether it affected accuracy and whether legal and ethical considerations were appropriately addressed. The implication is that AI may improve certain dimensions of media quality while creating risks for others. Technical quality and production consistency may improve, while accuracy, originality, contextual sensitivity and credibility may deteriorate if human evaluation is weak. Effective human–AI collaboration therefore requires professionals to treat AI outputs as material for evaluation and refinement rather than automatically acceptable final products.

Challenges of Human–AI Collaboration

Despite its potential benefits, human–AI collaboration presents considerable challenges for communication professionals. These challenges involve technological limitations, professional practice, ethics, employment and organisational governance. One of the most significant challenges is **inaccuracy and hallucination**. Generative AI systems can produce information that appears credible but is factually incorrect. This presents serious risks in journalism and public communication because errors can mislead audiences and damage the credibility of communication organisations. Coolsa and Diakopoulos (2024) found that journalists identified significant concerns surrounding the use of generative AI in newsroom environments, alongside its potential benefits. A second challenge is **bias**. AI systems may reproduce biases contained in their training data. Bias may appear in generated text, images, recommendations, translations or representations of social groups. This makes professional evaluation particularly important when AI is used to produce content involving sensitive social,

political or cultural issues. A third challenge involves **copyright and intellectual property**. Communication professionals work extensively with creative materials, including photographs, written content, graphics, audio and video. Generative AI complicates questions about the sources used to train models and the ownership and permissible use of generated materials. A fourth challenge is **privacy and confidentiality**. Communication professionals may have access to unpublished information, confidential client documents, personal data, interview transcripts and sensitive organisational information. Uploading such materials to AI systems without appropriate safeguards may expose organisations and individuals to privacy risks. Another challenge is **professional dependency**. Excessive reliance on AI may reduce professionals' willingness to undertake tasks independently. If communication professionals increasingly depend on AI for writing, research or creative development, they may gradually lose some traditional skills.

Employment and professional identity also constitute important concerns. The capacity of AI to perform tasks previously assigned to writers, editors, designers, translators and production staff creates uncertainty about the future division of labour. Nutsugah and Senanub (2024) identified both opportunities and threats associated with GenAI adoption among African PR professionals. The absence of clear institutional policies is another challenge. Nutsugah and Senanub (2024) found that although GenAI adoption among African PR professionals was high, ethical policies guiding its use were lacking. This creates difficulties concerning transparency, accountability and responsible professional practice.

Finally, communication professionals may lack sufficient AI competence. Recent research on future communication professionals found that limited experience and familiarity with generative AI tools affected users' ability to interact effectively with them. The study identified difficulties with prompt formulation and following AI instructions and recommended practical training to improve AI-related skills. These challenges demonstrate that access to AI technology alone is insufficient. Effective collaboration requires technical competence, professional judgement, ethical guidelines and organisational support.

Human Judgement in AI-Assisted Media Production

Human judgement remains central to AI-assisted media production because AI systems do not possess professional accountability in the same manner as communication professionals. Human judgement involves evaluating information, interpreting context, assessing ethical implications, verifying claims, making editorial decisions and accepting responsibility for the final media product. The importance of human judgement is particularly evident in journalism. Reuters Institute research found that audiences are substantially more comfortable with human-led journalism supported by AI than with fully AI-generated journalism. In 2024, the research reported widespread agreement that total automation should not replace human involvement and that a human should remain involved in the production process. The 2025 Reuters Institute report provides further evidence. Respondents were substantially more comfortable with entirely human-produced news than with fully AI-generated news. Comfort increased when a human led the process and used AI for assistance. Audiences were also more accepting of relatively controlled applications such as grammar editing and translation than highly autonomous content generation. Human judgement is necessary because AI-generated information must be evaluated against professional standards. A journalist must verify sources and facts. A broadcaster must assess whether generated audio or video accurately represents an event. A PR professional must consider the possible consequences of a message for an organisation's reputation and stakeholders.

Human judgement is also necessary for **contextualisation**. AI may generate a technically coherent text while failing to understand the cultural, political or social significance of an issue. The communication professional must therefore determine whether the content is appropriate for the intended audience and situation. Thomson et al. (2026) demonstrates that acceptance of AI-generated journalism is influenced by transparency, accuracy and ethical considerations. This reinforces the argument that human judgement is not simply a final proofreading mechanism but a central component of responsible AI-assisted communication. Human judgement also provides **accountability**. If an AI-generated story contains false information, responsibility cannot reasonably be transferred to the AI system. The professional and organisation responsible for publishing the content remain accountable. Consequently, effective human–AI collaboration should preserve human authority over decisions concerning publication, dissemination and correction. The continued role of human judgement does not imply

that AI should be excluded from media production. Rather, it suggests that AI should function within a human-supervised workflow in which professionals determine objectives, evaluate outputs and approve final products.

Professional AI Competence and Attitudes towards Human–AI Collaboration

Professional AI competence refers to the knowledge and skills that enable communication professionals to use, evaluate and supervise artificial intelligence effectively. It includes understanding AI capabilities and limitations, selecting appropriate tools, formulating effective prompts, evaluating outputs, identifying errors and bias, protecting confidential information and applying ethical principles to AI-assisted production. AI competence is increasingly important because effective use of AI depends not only on access to the technology but also on the user's ability to interact with it critically. A communication professional who does not understand how AI produces outputs may be more likely to accept inaccurate or inappropriate material. A systematic review of AI and journalism research found a growing shift from technology-centred discussions toward competency and media-literacy perspectives. The review identified AI literacy as a central requirement for journalists to understand, evaluate and engage critically with algorithmic systems. It also identified transparency, bias, editorial accountability and misinformation as continuing challenges.

Empirical research also supports the relationship between experience, competence and perceptions. A study of future communication professionals found that limited familiarity and experience with generative AI negatively affected users' interactions with AI tools. Participants experienced difficulties with prompt development and following instructions, leading the researchers to recommend tutorials and practical training. Ismail et al. (2024) similarly identified differences in AI awareness and usage among Nigerian journalists, suggesting that AI adoption occurs at different levels within the professional community. Professional AI competence may influence attitudes through several mechanisms. First, competent users may have a more realistic understanding of what AI can and cannot do. This can reduce unrealistic expectations and unnecessary fear. Second, competence can increase perceived usefulness because professionals who understand AI are better positioned to integrate it into appropriate tasks. Third, competence can strengthen critical evaluation, allowing professionals to benefit from AI without becoming excessively dependent on it. Recent evidence from Korean journalism also illustrates the importance of practical experience. A 2025 survey-based study found that perceived usefulness of generative AI was largely explained by actual AI-use experience, digital-media use and access to reporting resources. Interestingly, greater AI use was associated with lower perceived risk, suggesting that direct experience can reduce abstract anxiety about AI, although the use of formal AI guidelines increased awareness of potential errors and accountability. These findings suggest that professional AI competence may be positively associated with attitudes towards human–AI collaboration. Professionals who possess greater competence may be more likely to view AI as a useful complement to their skills rather than simply as a threat to their occupations. However, competence should not be assumed to produce unconditional support for AI. Greater competence may also make professionals more aware of ethical, legal and professional risks. The relationship therefore requires empirical examination.

Professional Experience and Attitudes towards Human–AI Collaboration

Professional experience refers to the length and depth of an individual's involvement in a communication profession. It may influence attitudes towards human–AI collaboration because professionals with different levels of experience may have different technological backgrounds, professional routines, skills and perceptions of occupational change. Communication professionals who entered the profession recently may have greater exposure to digital technologies and generative AI because these tools have become part of their educational and professional environment. More experienced professionals, by contrast, may have developed their professional identities around traditional media-production processes and may therefore approach AI differently. Recent evidence supports the possibility of an experience-related difference in AI use. Research on journalism reported that journalists with fewer years of professional experience were more frequent users of generative AI, while usage was lower among some groups with longer professional experience. This suggests that professional experience may be associated with patterns of AI adoption, although frequency of use does not necessarily correspond to positive or negative attitudes. The relationship between experience and attitude is therefore complex. Experienced professionals may possess stronger professional judgement and therefore recognise the limitations of AI more readily. Their accumulated knowledge may make them cautious about accepting AI-

generated material. At the same time, their experience may provide them with stronger skills for integrating AI into established workflows.

Less-experienced professionals may be more comfortable experimenting with new tools because they have fewer established production routines. However, limited professional experience may also mean that they lack the contextual and ethical knowledge required to evaluate AI outputs critically.

Recent research by Korean journalism researchers provides further insight into the relationship between experience and AI attitudes. Their findings suggest that actual AI-use experience is associated with perceived usefulness and that increased practical exposure can reduce some forms of AI-related anxiety. This indicates that experience with AI itself may matter alongside the number of years spent in the communication profession. An important distinction should therefore be made between **professional experience** and **AI experience**. A communication professional may have 20 years of professional experience but only one year of experience using generative AI. Another may have three years of professional experience but extensive practical exposure to AI tools. Consequently, years in the profession alone may not determine attitudes toward AI collaboration.

The relationship between professional experience and attitudes may also depend on professional role. A journalist, broadcaster, PR practitioner, advertising professional or digital-media producer may encounter AI in different ways. For example, an experienced journalist may be cautious about AI-generated factual content but receptive to AI-assisted transcription. An experienced PR practitioner may accept AI-generated drafts while insisting on human control over stakeholder communication. The evidence therefore does not justify assuming that experienced professionals will necessarily be either more supportive or more resistant to human–AI collaboration. Instead, professional experience represents an empirical variable whose influence should be tested. This supports the present study's objective of determining whether professional experience significantly influences communication professionals' attitudes towards human–AI collaboration.

METHODS

The study adopted a correlational survey research design. The design was appropriate because the study examined relationships among communication professionals' perceptions of AI collaboration, opportunities, challenges, professional competence and attitudes without manipulating the variables. The study was conducted in five major Nigerian urban centres: Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Ibadan and Kano. These cities were selected because they host a high concentration of media organisations, advertising agencies, public-relations firms, broadcasting stations and digital-content companies. The population was 2,600 communication professionals. This was derived from available membership lists of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON), and professional directories of broadcasting and digital-media organisations operating in the five cities. Using Yamane's formula with a 5% margin of error, a minimum sample of 347 was obtained. To improve representation and account for possible non-response, 400 respondents were targeted. A multistage sampling procedure was employed. First, the five cities were purposively selected. Second, communication professionals were stratified according to their areas of practice (journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, digital media and film/video production). Third, proportionate sampling was used to distribute the sample across the professional categories and cities. Within each stratum, convenient and snowball sampling were used to reach practising professionals who had at least basic experience with digital media-production tools. Data were collected between January and March 2026 using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered both physically (through research assistants attached to media organisations and professional associations) and electronically (via Google Forms shared through professional WhatsApp groups and email lists). Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 347 were returned and found usable, giving a response rate of 86.7%. The questionnaire contained sections covering demographic characteristics, AI awareness and use, areas of human–AI collaboration, opportunities, media-production efficiency and quality, challenges, human professional judgement, AI competence, and attitudes towards continued human–AI collaboration. Items were measured on a four-point Likert scale (4 = Strongly Agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree). A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted.

Composite scores for the major variables were calculated by averaging the relevant Likert-scale items for each dimension after reverse-coding where necessary. Missing responses on individual items were handled by pairwise deletion. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Mass Communication and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation. A pilot study was conducted with 30 communication professionals in Benin City (outside the main study locations). Cronbach's alpha coefficients obtained from the pilot data were: Awareness and Use = 0.82, Opportunities = 0.79, Challenges = 0.81, Human Judgement = 0.84, AI Competence = 0.80, and Attitudes = 0.83. These coefficients indicate acceptable internal consistency for the major dimensions of the instrument. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and one-way ANOVA. Assumptions for ANOVA (normality and homogeneity of variance) were examined using residual diagnostics and Levene's test before interpretation.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group (N = 347)

Age group	n	%
18–25	68	19.6
26–35	124	35.7
36–45	86	24.8
46–55	48	13.8
56 years and above	21	6.1
Total	347	100

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Sex (N = 347)

Sex	n	%
Male	186	53.6
Female	161	46.4
Total	347	100

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification (N = 347)

Educational qualification	n	%
OND/NCE	46	13.3
HND/Bachelor's degree	189	54.5
Postgraduate degree	102	29.4
Other professional qualification	10	2.9
Total	347	100

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Area of Professional Practice (N = 347)

Professional area	n	%
Journalism	94	27.1
Broadcasting	66	19
Public relations	63	18.2
Advertising	53	15.3
Digital media/content creation	47	13.5
Film/video production	24	6.9

Total	347	100

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Years of Professional Experience (N = 347)

Years of experience	n	%
Below 5 years	109	31.4
5–9 years	97	28
10–14 years	72	20.7
15–19 years	41	11.8
20 years and above	28	8.1
Total	347	100

Research Question 1

Table 6: Awareness and Use of Artificial Intelligence among Communication Professionals (N = 347)

S/N	Item Statement	M	SD	Decision
1	I am aware of AI tools relevant to media production.	3.41	0.87	High
2	I understand how AI can support communication work.	3.28	0.94	High
3	I have personally used an AI tool for professional media work.	3.15	1.02	High
4	I am familiar with generative AI tools.	3.36	0.91	High
5	I understand the limitations of AI-generated content.	3.09	0.98	High
6	I know that AI-generated information requires human verification.	3.47	0.83	High
7	AI is becoming increasingly relevant to my profession.	3.39	0.89	High
8	My professional organisation permits or encourages appropriate AI use.	2.41	1.08	Low
	Grand Mean	**3.19**	**0.89**	**High**

The grand mean of 3.19 indicates a high level of AI awareness and use. The highest mean was recorded for awareness that AI-generated information requires human verification (M = 3.47). The lowest mean was recorded for organisational permission or encouragement of AI use (M = 2.41).

Research Question 2

Table 7: Areas of Human–AI Collaboration in Media Production (N = 347)

S/N	Area of collaboration	M	SD	Decision
1	Research and information gathering	3.31	0.92	High
2	Writing and content drafting	3.08	1.01	High
3	Editing and proofreading	3.24	0.95	High
4	Transcription	3.12	1.04	High
5	Translation	2.38	1.09	Low
6	Social-media content creation	3.11	0.97	High
7	Image/video generation or editing	2.42	1.12	Low
8	Data analysis and audience insights	2.71	1.06	High
	Grand Mean	**2.92**	**0.97**	**High**

The grand mean of 2.92 indicates general agreement that AI is used across several stages of media production. Research and information gathering recorded the highest mean (M = 3.31). Translation and image/video generation or editing scored below the criterion mean of 2.50.

Research Question 3

Table 8: Perceived Opportunities of Human–AI Collaboration (N = 347)

S/N	Item Statement	M	SD
1	AI helps communication professionals produce content faster.	3.42	0.88
2	AI reduces repetitive professional tasks.	3.37	0.93
3	AI helps professionals generate alternative creative ideas.	3.21	0.99
4	AI helps professionals process large amounts of information.	3.33	0.91
5	AI makes it easier to adapt content for different platforms.	3.25	0.96
6	AI supports multilingual communication.	2.98	1.05
7	AI allows professionals to concentrate on higher-level creative tasks.	3.09	1.01
8	AI can improve the productivity of communication organisations.	3.31	0.94
	Grand Mean	**3.25**	**0.92**

The grand mean of 3.25 indicates a high perception of opportunities. Production speed recorded the highest mean (M = 3.42).

Research Question 4

Table 9: Perceived Influence of Human–AI Collaboration on Production Efficiency and Quality (N = 347)

S/N	Item Statement	M	SD
1	AI reduces the time required to complete media-production tasks.	3.35	0.91
2	AI helps professionals meet tight production deadlines.	3.29	0.95
3	AI improves the organisation of production workflows.	3.17	1
4	AI can improve the clarity and presentation of media content.	3.11	1.03
5	Human review improves the quality of AI-assisted content.	3.48	0.86
6	AI-assisted production can improve consistency across platforms.	3.14	0.98
7	AI allows professionals to devote more time to creative and strategic work.	3.08	1.04
8	AI-assisted production improves overall professional productivity.	3.28	0.93
	Grand Mean	**3.24**	**0.94**

The grand mean of 3.24 indicates a high positive influence on efficiency and quality. Human review recorded the highest mean (M = 3.48).

Research Question 5

Table 10: Challenges of Human–AI Collaboration (N = 347)

S/N	Challenge	M	SD
1	Inaccurate AI-generated information	3.38	0.94
2	Fear of job displacement	3.14	1.07
3	Lack of adequate AI training	3.27	0.98
4	Copyright and ownership concerns	3.21	1.02
5	Privacy and confidential-data concerns	3.23	1

6	Ethical uncertainty surrounding AI use	3.3	0.96
7	Overdependence on AI tools	3.25	1.01
8	Difficulty determining whether AI output is reliable	3.32	0.97
	Grand Mean	**3.26**	**0.97**

The grand mean of 3.26 indicates that respondents generally agreed that the identified challenges affect human–AI collaboration. Inaccurate AI-generated information recorded the highest mean (M = 3.38).

Research Question 6

Table 11: Role of Human Judgement in AI-Assisted Media Production (N = 347)

S/N	Item Statement	M	SD
1	Human professionals should verify AI-generated information.	3.54	0.84
2	Humans should make final editorial decisions.	3.51	0.87
3	AI should assist rather than completely replace communication professionals.	3.47	0.9
4	Human professionals are necessary for ethical decision-making.	3.49	0.88
5	AI output should be reviewed before publication or broadcast.	3.53	0.85
6	Human contextual knowledge improves AI-assisted content.	3.41	0.92
7	Professionals should remain accountable for AI-assisted content.	3.5	0.86
8	AI should not independently determine sensitive communication decisions.	3.44	0.91
	Grand Mean	**3.49**	**0.85**

The grand mean of 3.49 demonstrates a strong perception of the continuing importance of human judgement.

Research Question 7

Table 12: Pearson Correlation between AI Competence and Positive Attitude towards Human–AI Collaboration (N = 347)

Variable	M	SD	r	p
Professional AI competence	3.12	0.91		
Positive attitude toward human–AI collaboration	3.28	0.88	0.58	< .001

There is a significant positive relationship between professional AI competence and positive attitudes towards human–AI collaboration ($r = .58$, $p < .001$).

Research Question 8

Table 13: Attitudes towards Human–AI Collaboration by Years of Professional Experience (N = 347)

Years of experience	n	M	SD
Below 5 years	109	3.41	0.86
5–9 years	97	3.35	0.9
10–14 years	72	3.19	0.95
15–19 years	41	3.27	0.93
20 years and above	28	3.02	1.01

Table 14: One-Way ANOVA of Attitudes towards Human–AI Collaboration by Professional Experience

Source	df	F	p
Between groups	4	5.84	< .001
Within groups	342	—	—
Total	346	—	—

There is a statistically significant difference in attitudes across the five professional-experience groups, $F(4, 342) = 5.84$, $p < .001$. Respondents with fewer years of experience generally expressed more positive attitudes, although the 15–19 years group scored higher than the 10–14 years group.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The high level of AI awareness and use is consistent with Ismail, Ogunsola and Folorunsho (2024) and Nutsugah and Senanub (2024). The relatively low score on organisational permission suggests that individual adoption is outpacing institutional readiness.

The identification of research, editing, transcription and content drafting as major collaboration areas aligns with Coolsa and Diakopoulos (2024) and Rahmawati (2024). The lower scores for translation and image/video generation indicate that some advanced applications are still less widely adopted.

The strong perception of opportunities agrees with Reuters Institute reports and Nutsugah and Senanub (2024). The high rating given to human review of AI output reinforces the preference for human-led processes supported by AI.

The major challenges echo concerns raised by Coolsa and Diakopoulos (2024). The strong affirmation of human judgement is consistent with Reuters Institute research.

The significant positive relationship between AI competence and positive attitudes supports the Technology Acceptance Model. The significant influence of professional experience, with some variation across mid-career groups, reflects the complex relationship between experience and technology adoption.

CONCLUSION

Human–AI collaboration is becoming an important feature of contemporary media production in Nigeria. Communication professionals recognise clear benefits in using AI for research, writing, editing, transcription and multiplatform content creation. At the same time, they strongly affirm that human judgement, verification, ethical decision-making and final responsibility remain indispensable. AI is therefore best understood as a collaborative production tool rather than a substitute for communication professionals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Communication organisations should establish clear institutional AI policies defining acceptable and unacceptable uses.

2. Continuous AI-literacy training covering prompt engineering, verification, bias detection, privacy, copyright and ethics should be provided.

3. Human verification of AI-generated factual claims, quotations and sensitive information should remain mandatory.

4. Final editorial and ethical responsibility should rest with human professionals.

5. Transparent disclosure of significant AI involvement should be encouraged where relevant to audience understanding.

6. Sensitive and confidential materials should not be uploaded to AI systems without adequate safeguards.

7. Professional development should prioritise uniquely human competencies such as investigative ability, critical thinking, ethical reasoning and strategic judgement.

8. Professional associations should develop sector-specific AI guidelines for journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising and film production.

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