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AI ADOPTION: CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG ENUGU STATE JOURNALISTS

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ABSTRACT

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism offers diverse benefits and drawbacks across various regional, organizational and environmental settings worldwide. These variations, stemming from differences in development, organizational size and journalistic practices, necessitate customized approaches to maximize the benefits of AI and mitigate its challenges in journalism. This study investigates AI adoption, challenges and coping strategies among journalists in Enugu State. The findings reveal that AI is primarily used in idea generation, writing, research, and transcription, thereby enhancing creativity, quality and efficiency. However, challenges such as insufficient resources, ethical concerns, limited knowledge and difficulty with Nigerian accents impede the effective use of AI. To overcome these challenges, journalists implement adaptive strategies, including investing in infrastructure and training. Anchored on the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) model, this study highlights the complex interplay between technological, organizational, and environmental factors that influence AI adoption. The study recommends investments in infrastructure and training, development of ethical guidelines, and customization of AI tools for local contexts, thereby contributing to the ongoing discourse on leveraging AI's transformative potential in journalism.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Adoption, Challenges, Coping Strategies, Journalists

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Introduction

The journalism profession has undergone significant transformations since its inception, driven by technological advancements. The evolution from traditional tools like pens to computers (Broussard, et.al, 2019) and now to Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized the way journalists work. AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and computer vision can automate routine tasks, provide data-driven insights, and enable personalized content delivery, thus changing editorial and newsroom practices, and freeing up journalists from some repetitive or routine tasks (Noain-Sánchez, 2022; Gbaden, Gambo & Shem, 2024). Early adopters like Associated Press (AP), France Press, Reuters, and Los Angeles Times must have reaped benefits from the AI technology, prompting other media organizations to explore its potential.

Okiyi and Nsude (2019) affirmed that as result of the numerous benefits of AI to journalism, many news organizations today have made it a routine to use artificial intelligence in their work processes. Noain-Sánchez, citing other scholars, identified the need to increase news production and audience engagement in the face of the complexity of journalism in the digital age as the ultimate goal and driver of this growing adoption and proliferation of the technology in journalism. It is anticipated that the incorporation of AI in journalism would undergo substantial growth, with a major focus being the rapid progress in Natural Language Processing (NLP) ultimately enabling AI to produce highly sophisticated and refined contents (Amponsah & Atianashie, 2024).

In spite of its benefits and promising future, AI adoption is hindered by challenges such as inadequate resources, ethical concerns, and limited knowledge. These challenges may be more pronounced for Nigerian journalists due to unique regional, environmental and organizational factors. According to researchers, the proliferation of AI in Nigeria is in its infancy due to several problems, including inadequate infrastructure, cultural and socio-economic barriers (Okunola, 2018; Guanah & Agbanu, 2022). Okunola identified the reluctance of stakeholders to timely accept technological change and the political will of those in government to pursue the diffusion of the AI initiative as the hindering socio-political factors. While previous studies have examined AI adoption barriers, they often neglect the coping strategies employed by journalists.

In the context of the forgoing, this study explores AI adoption, challenges, and coping strategies among Enugu State journalists, aiming to inform support systems for effective AI integration and enhance journalism practice. By investigating the experiences of Enugu State journalists, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on AI in journalism and provides

insights into the opportunities and challenges of AI adoption in a specific context.

Research Objectives:

1. To determine the dominant area(s) of artificial intelligence (AI) use among Enugu journalists in their work processes.

2. To identify the most significant challenges faced by Enugu journalists when utilizing AI in their job processes.

3 To explore the strategies employed by Enugu journalists to overcome the challenges associated with AI use in their work processes.

Literature Review

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized the media landscape, transforming the way content is created, disseminated, and consumed. Algorithm-based search engines and news feeds determine online content visibility (Newman, 2023), while robots are being experimented with to write stories. This technological shift has sparked intense debate among scholars and practitioners globally, with some arguing that AI will enhance journalism by improving efficiency, accuracy, and audience engagement, while others fear that AI may render journalists redundant and compromise the ethics of the profession.

In Nigeria, the media industry is yet to fully harness the potential of AI (Oyedeji & Uthman, 2023; Okocha, & Ola-Akuma, 2022) even though studies reveal that some news organizations have begun experimenting with AI-powered tools in various aspects of journalism. Ogola's (2023) study found that AI helps in content/news gathering, content processing, content/news distribution, and audience engagement. AI-powered tools are also used for video coverage, editorial, documentary, commentary (Udoh, Nsude & Oyeleke, 2021) and editing tasks, such as grammar checks and fact-checking, as well as combating misinformation (Zubair, James & Shedrach, 2024). Nigerian journalists are familiar with various AI applications, including ChatGPT, Google Bard, and Grammarly, among others (Chris, 2025).

Despite the growing interest in AI, researchers argue that its adoption is still low in Nigeria and that the country is not ready for widespread adoption due to some challenges. These challenges, according to Okiyi and Nsude (2019), include inadequate training, limited AI literacy, epileptic power supply, and lack of political will. Other infrastructure deficits, including limited broadband penetration, further constrain AI adoption. Furthermore, concerns about job displacement, bias, and ethical issues associated with AI and unclear policies and frameworks around AI in Nigeria also hinder AI adoption (Lawal, 2024; Adeyemi & Oyebode, 2020; Onwe, Ajibo & Nworie, 2024; Ezinwa, Agbo, & Ozojukwu, 2024).

By and large, the literature suggests that AI adoption in journalism is complex, with both opportunities and challenges. Nigerian media practitioners and media organizations essentially need to navigate

these complexities to harness AI's potential benefits while addressing concerns around job displacement, ethics, and infrastructure.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) model, developed by Tornatzky and Fleischer in 1990. The TOE model offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the factors that influence technological adoption within organizations. It consists of three key components: the technological context, which examines the characteristics of the technology itself; the organizational context, which looks at internal factors such as top management support and resources; and the environmental context, which considers external factors like regulatory environment and competitive pressure.

The TOE model is particularly suitable for this study because it provides a structured approach to understanding the factors that influence AI adoption among journalists. Its components are contextually relevant, allowing for a multifaceted examination of the interplay between technological, organizational, and environmental factors that impact AI adoption. By applying the TOE model, this study aims to investigate influence AI adoption among Enugu State journalists. Ultimately, the TOE model will enable this study to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors influencing AI adoption and ways to navigate the changing media landscape.

Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research approach to explore AI adoption, challenges, and coping strategies among Enugu State journalists. A semi-structured interview guide that aligns with the study's objectives was developed, allowing for in-depth insights into journalists' experiences. The study employed purposive sampling to select journalists with diverse roles, including reporters and editors from private and government-owned media outlets. Snowball sampling was also used to identify journalists with varying levels of AI experience, ensuring a range of perspectives. The sample size was determined by data saturation. The saturation point was considered to have been reached at the thirteenth interviews, at which point some of the answers began to be reiterative. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the thirteen (13) journalists, covering key areas related to the research objectives.

The interviews were recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes in the data, providing a nuanced understanding of AI adoption, challenges and coping strategies among Enugu journalists.

Findings

Dominant area(s) of artificial intelligence (AI) use among Enugu journalists

The study reveals that participants primarily use AI in four key areas: generating

ideas, writing and editing content, conducting research and fact-checking, and transcribing audio or video recordings.

Idea Generation: Most participants (9 out of 13) reported using AI to brainstorm for story ideas, develop a slant to their stories, and generate interview questions, among others. According to a print journalist and first participant:

"AI is quite useful in suggesting punchy and suitable headlines for news stories, especially in feature news writings. For instance, Meta AI and chatGPT can help in generating interview questions if you are planning for an interview session. They can suggest multiple likely questions you could ask in your interviews, depending on the topic, from which you can select the ones you consider appropriate for your topic".

*"I use AI tools to brainstorm for a topic idea for my radio programme. Sometimes I search for trending issues from which I draw and refine into an appealing topic for my audience." (*Participant 2, a radio broadcaster)

Writing and Editing: Most participants revealed that AI aids them in audio and visual editing, as well as, in editing their writings. A print journalist revealed that, *"Although our organization does not provide us with AI tools, most of us have AI-driven tools used for paraphrasing and checking grammar errors. Grammarly and QuillBot are some of the ones we are conversant with".*

In the account of a broadcast reporter, *"AI is quite useful in our sound edition as it can denoise and improve the quality of your audio contents. When we return from the fields on news coverage, we use it to refine the reports for our news broadcasts".*

Research and Fact-Checking: Participants 6 and 7 view the role of AI tools in research and verification of information as the most benefiting part for journalism on the grounds of accuracy and credibility. *"A lot of us journalists use AI for source verification and information gathering, we can't deny that. For instance, it can be used to generate weather updates, financial reports and sports scores. However, in some cases, you have to verify the information and AI can still supply you with website or links to the information you need to verify". (Participant 6)*

Transcription and Translation: AI-powered transcription tools assist participants in transcribing audio interviews into text and also for translating texts from one language to another. But more than half of the participants are conversant with using AI for transcription than for translation. According to Participant 9, *"It is often an interesting experience transcribing recordings from an event you have gone to cover using AI. But it is mostly terrible when the quality of the audio recorded is not clear or when the speakers have strong Nigerian accent.*

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Most significant challenges faced by Enugu journalists when utilizing AI

The research identified major challenges hindering journalists' effective use of AI, including: insufficient resources and infrastructure, ethical concerns such as AI-generated data issues, limited knowledge and training on AI, and difficulty with AI transcribing Nigerian accents.

Insufficient Resources and Infrastructure: Findings suggest that obsolete and inadequate infrastructure constitute the major challenge hindering their use of AI. The infrastructural constraints mentioned include: obsolete and unsupportive AI equipment, high cost of AI tools subscriptions, poor internet connectivity and unreliable power supply, among others. In the views of a broadcast journalist, *"We currently lack the necessary infrastructure to integrate AI tools, as our organization still struggles with basic internet access and faces significant challenges in adopting advanced technologies.* The participant cited the difficulties they experience connecting to their head station in Abuja for the transmission of their network news as an evidence of the effects of poor infrastructure and internet access.

"Have you tried to compare the picture quality of foreign TV stations and what we have here? Apart from that, the rains are here; soon you would begin to frequently experience cases where you are watching the news and suddenly the image blurs or the sound cuts out. Yes, it happens even in foreign TV stations but not as frequent as it happens in our local stations. Our case is often caused by poor internet connectivity and faulty equipment which may not support the AI technologies even if we want to adopt it. Don't forget that effective use of AI, to a large extent, rests on high quality and accessible data, which has remained a challenge that affects not only our media outlet but the entire country", a TV broadcaster offered a different perspective.

Ethical Concerns: Apart from the infrastructural challenges, participants mentioned ethical constraint. According to participant 12, *"It is not in all cases that AI provides accurate information, sometimes, it does not provide unique responses especially in instance of peculiar cases. Some of the information it provides needs to be edited to fit into context".*

"For ethical violation concerns and its attending consequences on organizational public image and reputation, our organisation prohibit use of AI. That is because no media organisation likes to be found wanting for inaccuracies that could lead to libelous suits" Although some of us still use some AI tools privately, we are usually careful with it", a print journalist explained.

Limited Knowledge and Training on AI: Participants reported limited understanding of AI tools and their applications as one of the challenges that obstruct their use. According to one of the participants, *"A lot of us here have never been to any AI training even*

though we are conversant and experimenting with some AI tools. So this shows you that our knowledge of it is relatively limited. Yes, many of us would love to acquire the skills but the high cost of the trainings and because of its operational complexities, one may not be able learn it without enrolling for a training.

Difficulty with AI transcribing Nigerian Accents: Participants highlighted a significant limitation about AI transcription tools, particularly in the area of handling diverse accents and dialects. In the account of Participant 13, "*When dealing with Nigerian accents, AI transcription tools often struggle to accurately capture what's being said. Instead, they tend to make assumptions, inserting words or phrases that weren't spoken, or even fabricating entirely new words".*

Coping Strategies for AI Challenges

The study revealed that journalists are adopting various strategies to overcome AI-related challenges, including: purchasing backup power systems and digital devices, conducting thorough investigations, self-sponsoring AI training, and resorting to manual transcription methods.

Investment in Backup Power Systems and Digital Devices: Findings revealed that participants resort to alternative power supply such as electricity generating sets, power bank gadgets and personal Wi-Fi gadgets to overcome the challenges of power supply and internet connectivity.

According to participant 8, "*A couple of months ago, I bought some solar-powered power bank gadgets for my laptop computer because I cannot tell my employer that I couldn't meet the story deadline because of erratic power supply in my area. I can't risk losing my job in the face of this gross unemployment experienced in the country. All my colleagues (reporters) at work own router for alternative internet connections apart from our mobile phones".*

"At our workplace, we have implemented a strict protocol to ensure uninterrupted news broadcast. During new broadcast, we automatically switch to our station's generator to prevent transmission disruptions which often results when the national grid power fails in the course of the news broadcast", (a radio presenter participant).

Thorough investigations: Participants employ thorough investigations and verifications to ensure that AI generated contents are accurate and not misleading.

"Most of us journalists who use AI tools to generate contents know that at some points, the AI tools do miss context or highlight claims that are untrue. So we use our discretion or oversight to address such shortcomings. In some cases we have had to place calls or send emails to appropriate authorities for verifications", (Participant 9).

Self-sponsoring AI Training: Some participants have begun engaging in

workshops and training programmmes to develop AI skills but that is only on individual efforts as most media establishments where they work hardly sponsor or train workers in the skill.

*"I believe that focusing on skills such as in-depth analysis, interviewing and investigative reporting and all other roles which algorithm cannot execute will address the fear that AI will render journalists redundant", (*Participant 5 &11).

Reliance on Manual Transcription Methods: Participants reported relying on manual transcription due to AI's limitations in accurately transcribing Nigerian accents and languages, finding the process stressful and time consuming.

"I wish there is an AI tool that carters to Nigerian languages and accents. But there is none --maybe there is – but there is none that I for one, know of for now", (Participant 10).

"You would love AI transcription tools if there were transcribing audio clips of the native speakers' accent. The tool is phenomenal and saves a lot amount of time if not for its African languages and accent limitations", (Participant 13).

Discussion of Findings

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the adoption and utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) among Enugu journalists. The research revealed that AI is predominantly used in four key areas: generating ideas, writing and editing, conducting research and fact-checking, and transcribing audio or video recordings. This suggests that AI is seen as a useful tool in enhancing creativity, improving content quality, and increasing efficiency in journalistic work processes. The use of AI in these areas indicates a growing recognition of its potential benefits in journalism, from idea generation to content refinement and transcription. These findings align with that of other researchers, Ogola's (2023); Udoh, Nsude & Oyeleke, (2021); Zubair, James & Shedrach, 2024, which suggest a growing recognition of AI's potential benefits in journalism.

However, despite the benefits, the study also identifies several significant challenges that hinder the effective use of AI among Enugu journalists. These challenges include insufficient resources and infrastructure, ethical concerns related to AI-generated data, limited knowledge and training on AI, and difficulty with AI transcribing Nigerian accents. These findings concour with that of Lawal, 2024; Adeyemi and Oyebode, 2020; Onwe, Ajibo and Nworie, 2024; Ezinwa, Agbo, and Ozojukwu, 2024, and thus, underscore the need for investment in infrastructure, training, and ethical guidelines to support the effective integration of AI in journalism. Addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing the benefits of AI while minimizing its risks.

In response to these challenges, Enugu journalists are employing various strategies to overcome their AI-related

difficulties. These strategies include purchasing backup power systems and digital devices to address infrastructure issues, conducting thorough investigations to verify AI-generated information, funding their own AI training to enhance their skills, and resorting to manual transcription methods when AI tools fail to accurately transcribe Nigerian accents. These adaptive strategies demonstrate the resourcefulness of journalists in navigating the challenges associated with AI adoption.

Furthermore, the study's findings align with the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) model, which examines factors influencing technological adoption. The technological context highlights AI's benefits in areas like idea generation and transcription, while also revealing challenges like difficulty with Nigerian accents and ethical concerns related to AI-generated data as technological limitations. The organizational context shows that insufficient resources and infrastructure hinder AI adoption, with journalists' adaptive strategies such as purchasing backup power systems and funding their own AI training indicating organizational gaps. On the environmental context, the study's findings on difficulty with Nigerian accents suggest that environmental factors such as local language and accent nuances can impact AI adoption. By understanding these interconnected factors and strategies, media organizations and policymakers can better support journalists in effectively integrating AI into their work processes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in journalism, while also revealing significant challenges that must be addressed. Enugu journalists are leveraging AI to enhance creativity, improve content quality, and increase efficiency, demonstrating a growing recognition of its benefits. However, to fully harness AI's potential, it is crucial to invest in infrastructure, provide training, and establish ethical guidelines. By understanding the adaptive strategies employed by journalists, media organizations and policymakers can develop targeted support systems, enabling journalists to effectively integrate AI into their work processes and maximize its benefits while minimizing risks. Ultimately, this study contributes to the evolving narrative on AI in journalism, informing efforts to shape a future where technology enhances the profession.

Recommendations

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

1. Investment in infrastructure and training: Media organizations and policymakers should invest in providing necessary infrastructure (for example, reliable power, digital devices) and training to enhance journalists' knowledge and skills in AI.

2. Development of ethical Guidelines: Media organizations should establish clear ethical guidelines for AI use in journalism,

addressing concerns related to AI-generated data and ensuring responsible AI adoption.

3. Customization of AI Tools for Local Contexts: AI developers should prioritize customization of AI tools to accommodate local accents and languages, such as Nigerian accents, to improve transcription accuracy and enhance AI's effectiveness in journalism.

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