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Journalists' Perception Of Usage Of Artificial Intelligence (AI) In News Production In Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract- The aim of this study was to ascertain the perception of journalists on the use of artificial intelligence in news production in Akwa Ibom State. The development of digital technology has continued to influence the newsroom, and in response, this study aimed to investigate media practitioners' responses to the use of AI. The study was anchored on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, which suggests that individual acceptance and use of technology are influenced by performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population was composed of all registered Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Akwa Ibom State Council members (N = 791). A sample size of 259 was determined for the study using the Krecie and Morgan formula. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection from the respondents who were selected from the sample. The result demonstrated that a good majority of journalists were aware of AI tools and, to a considerable extent, understood their application in the process of news production. The result revealed that most journalists agreed on their view of AI in the process of news production as efficient and productivity-enhancing, though concerns existed about ethical considerations and job security in their opinions. The results show that journalists' perceptions directly influence the use of AI in the newsroom. As a consequence, the study concluded that positive perceptions, a good understanding of the technology and institutional support for its implementation are essential in newsrooms' uptake of AI. Recommendations were made that media houses and professional organisations should offer training on the subject matter regularly, clear ethical guidelines should be laid down and the right working environment should be created by news organizations to promote the healthy adoption of AI in news production.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Journalists' Perception, News Production, UTAUT, Technology Adoption, Akwa Ibom State

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1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence, known as AI, has become part of the process by which news is collected, written, edited, and distributed in newsrooms across the globe. By AI, we mean that kind of artificial intelligence which performs tasks that previously required human judgment, that is, learning from information, recognizing patterns, predicting outcomes, and creating text and images. In newsrooms, applications of AI can be found in the creation of simple reports, the suggestion of story ideas, transcribing interviews, analyzing vast arrays of data, identifying fake news, and the personalization of news for individual readers. AI has slowly shifted from the abstract notion of the study of artificial intelligence to an implementable tool within newsrooms, sparking concerns over identity, ethics, correctness, and truth.

The use of automated technologies in journalism did not begin recently. In the late 20th century, the concept of computer-assisted reporting was developed when reporters started using statistical software programmes to analyse government and public records. An important development was made in the 2010s with the introduction of natural language generation technologies into newsrooms. For instance, the Associated Press was one of the organizations to use the technology in the automation of earnings reports and sports articles. Marconi (2020) refers to this period as "a time of new technological frontiers for the newsroom" where the machines began to complement, rather than substitute human reporters (Marconi, 2020, pp.47-50). Today, AI is widely implemented to verify facts, track audience and moderate content.

We see that the adoption of AI in journalism has already been increasing steadily, as noted in a previous work by Diakopoulos (2019). Diakopoulos stated that "algorithmic systems are increasingly informing news production, distribution and reception in ways that warrant critical attention." As Becket (2019) put forward, "although most news organizations expect that the adoption of AI can improve efficiency and ensure competitive advantage, most journalists seem concerned about its potential influence on editorial independence and employment". Just as the Reuters Institute Digital News Report mentioned that "digital transformation continues to remake newsrooms globally" (Newman, Fletcher, Schulz, Andi, and Nielsen, 2023).

Another element central to this discussion is journalists' perception of AI. This perception refers to the way journalists understand, interpret, and assess the adoption and integration of AI into their work. It encompasses beliefs about utility, risks, ethical issues, and even job stability and professionalism. Available studies highlight that journalists have somewhat ambivalent perceptions of AI. Many see it as a supportive assistant, one that is efficient in automating routine work and allowing reporters to dedicate time and effort to more investigative journalistic work. Others express concerns about autonomy and a lack of accountability and transparency. An international survey by Borchardt (2020) reported that leaders within newsrooms are largely accepting AI for its increased productivity, but also emphasized that humans must have the final say, and ethical considerations are important. Coddington (2019) additionally emphasizes that journalists "assess automation according to professional ideals including accuracy, fairness, and responsibility".

In a similar vein, the very idea of news production has also been transformed by the digital age. Production used to focus on the activities of reporters collecting and the use of editors and publishers to edit the news into text or sound before making this material widely available either in print or as a broadcast. In this new world of digital technology, the definition of news production involves data analysis and social media mining, multi-media narratives and algorithm-enabled distribution. AI can be used to transribe information, for translation, to help with recommendation services, or to spot dangerous materials. The findings of Lewis, Robinson, and Usher (2023) demonstrate that digital technologies are restructuring newsroom work and hierarchies of authority, often with little concern for where human authority ends and machine assistance begins, leading journalists to re-evaluate their roles.

Within the last two decades, journalism in Nigeria has witnessed exponential digitalization. News houses have transitioned to online news and mobile reporting, social media optimization has become a core strategy of news organisations, and more recently, the advent of AI-based tools has been apparent. Features like automated transcription services, data visualization software and AI-assisted editing tools are being utilized by journalists, especially within the major Nigerian cities. The media terrain in Nigeria is fraught with the issue of misinformation, political influence, as well as inadequate resources; the potential and implications of AI, thus may be seen as both beneficial and worrying.

Akwa Ibom state, located in Southern Nigeria, presents a rich context for studying the issues above. It presents an opportunity because state media outlets, both public and private, together with privately owned media organizations

operating in state and non-state sectors (radio, TV, print, digital), exist side by side. The context of journalism in the state, both in Uyo and elsewhere in Akwa Ibom State, is that both local needs and global developments must be met. Media organizations in the state have already started experimenting with the application of digital media in areas such as content management, engagement, online publishing, etc., while the advanced application of AI in the newsroom might still be underway. However, awareness is increasing in the form of training, online materials and online resources.

Although research on AI in journalism is expanding worldwide, there has been little targeted study on how journalists in particular Nigerian states view its role in creating news. Focusing on Akwa Ibom State helps reveal how global technological developments relate to local media systems, cultural norms, and economic conditions.

This study investigated how journalists in Akwa Ibom State see and use AI when making news. It examines their views in light of how AI has changed journalism over time and in today's work settings. By studying what they think, how they use AI, and how they do their jobs, the research shows how real changes in technology affect daily news work.

Statement of the Problem

Digital media is gradually creeping into the everyday workflow of newsrooms in Akwa Ibom State. Automated transcription applications, content management systems, and AI-powered writing assistance tools are increasingly accessible. However, it is difficult to accurately gauge journalists' real feelings in the state toward the use of the tools in news production. Some journalists are enthusiastic, mentioning the efficiency and speed. Others express muted concerns over accuracy, ethics, and job displacement. Discussions about AI typically are ad-hoc with no real data of the real journalists' feelings.

The problem is not simply that AI exists in journalism. The deeper issue is the absence of reliable knowledge about how journalists in Akwa Ibom State perceive its use in their everyday reporting and editing tasks. Without this understanding, assumptions continue to shape decisions about training, adoption, and newsroom policy. There is a risk that AI toomay be introduced without knowing whether journalists trust them, resist them, or feel unprepared to use them. What, then, is the true perception of journalists in Akwa-Ibom State regarding the use of AI in news production?

Objectives of the Study

This study sought to:

examine journalists' level of awareness of AI tools used in news production in Akwa Ibom State;

assess journalists' perceptions of the benefits associated with the use of AI in news production in Akwa Ibom State;

determine how journalists' perceptions influence their acceptance of AI tools in news production in Akwa Ibom State.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1 Artificial Intelligence in Journalism: Concept and Evolution

Artificial intelligence in journalism began as a way to automate routine news tasks and has slowly evolved into a central force shaping how news is created and shared. Ioscote, Gonçalves, and Quadros (2024) explain that interest in AI within journalism has grown rapidly since the early 2010s, with research showing how automated systems now assist in writing simple reports, analysing data, and supporting multimedia news production. Their review of scientific articles between 2014 and 2023 shows that AI tools have moved from niche experiments to common newsroom innovations that are now studied globally. This growth reflects how digital transformation has broadened the traditional role of journalists and brought new questions about how technology should be regulated and understood in professional practice (Ioscote, Gonçalves, & Quadros, 2024).

Doembana (2023) notes that artificial intelligence in journalism is not just a technical upgrade but represents a new way of thinking about news work. Doembana highlights that AI is now used for content creation, audience interaction, and detecting misinformation, but also brings ethical and regulatory concerns that have not been fully addressed (Doembana, 2023). This view suggests that as AI tools become more integrated into everyday news tasks, journalists must balance efficiency gains with careful ethical choices. The research stresses the importance of understanding not only what AI can do but also what it should do in newsrooms.

According to Sonni (2025) the use of AI within journalism can be viewed as a development within the broader digital shift of the media. The mini review undertaken by Sonni suggests that there have been changes in how newsrooms themselves work with AI now automating production, ranging from the writing process to the audience consumption of content. It points out that the current usage of AI enables journalists to create draft articles, analyze trends, and tailor stories for specific readers, therefore signifying a transformation in journalism from human-only to human-machine assisted journalism for many daily tasks. Nonetheless, Sonni (2025) recognizes that much is still unknown regarding long-term implications to professional standards and abilities.

Gutiérrez-Caneda, Lindén, and Vázquez-Herrero (2024) discuss the ethical concerns brought about by the increasing integration of AI into news work, concluding that despite the automation of the news-producing processes with AI, they need sound ethical principles to remain unbiased and accountable. Journalists, according to these scholars, should retain control over editorial decision-making with machines automating technical operations, which seems to be the primary concern raised within the research on the subject.

Lastly, broader analyses of the increase of AI in journalism support these findings. Using bibliometric analysis, Adil and Ali (2025) find that there has been an explosion in research regarding AI in journalism, covering everything from automated news reports and algorithms to transparency and ethics. "From initial studies that focused on the early stages of technological advancement to contemporary research centered on professional identity, workflow changes, and worldwide collaboration in study design" (Adil & Ali, 2025), there has been significant development of scholarship.

2. 2AI Tools and Applications in Contemporary News Production

The modern newsrooms have embraced a number of AI-based tools, which assist in reporting, editing, analysing data, and content generation. Bartleman, Schapals, and Dubois (2026) found that the development of generative AI has fundamentally altered automated journalism, going beyond simple writing a template to tools capable of processing unstructured data, summarising trends and aiding in decision-making in real-time. This has prompted journalists to reevaluate the traditional and experiment with novel types of content creation. Their review of 185 studies suggests that AI is no longer at the fringe, but an increasing part of the news production process of many organisations (Bartleman, Schapals, and Dubois, 2026).

The first examples of practical use of AI in the production of news are the system of Reuters Tracer described by Liu, Nourbakhsh, Li, Shah, Martin, and Duprey (2017). Tracer is an artificial intelligence software that automatically identifies emerging events based on millions of social media posts, classifies them and generates news alerts that journalists can follow up. These computerised systems show how AI can manipulate data on a more massive scale than humans can, especially when delivering the news. Tracer is a detection and verification tool instead of generating a text according to a template.

The newer tools are geared towards editorial assistance, but not full automation. The authors Santos, Jordão, Ibiapina, Silva, Santana, Garrido, and Farias (2025) presented IDEIA, a generative AI system that assists journalists in finding ideas and writing headlines based on real-time tendencies. This system reduces the amount of time taken in editorial planning and makes journalists available to spend more time on creative and analytical work. IDEIA demonstrates that generative AI can be used as a complement to human abilities, as opposed to directly replacing journalists.

This is parallel to trends of practical industry application. As a study by IBM suggests, news organisations, such as the Associated Press, are automating their earnings reporting, as well as using AI to detect breaking news by monitoring social media alerts (IBM, 2025). The AI models of other organisations, such as the Financial Times and the Wall Street Journal, are used to suggest trending topics and assist the journalists in identifying gaps in the coverage (IBM, 2025). Such applications enable the editing process to be made quicker and enable the journalists to focus on more sophisticated stories.

Production of text is not the only area where AI can be used. Tools are available to aid multimedia content, such as video and image processing. An industry overview of 2025 implies that AI can automatize video transcripts, detect significant moments in videos, add subtitles in other languages, and improve the sound quality of the interview (Yenra, 2025). These characteristics enable newsrooms to handle large volumes of visual material, using fewer manual operations, and to publish rich, accessible stories more quickly.

At the same time, research points to important challenges. Some scholars caution that AI systems may not always meet journalistic standards for accuracy and verification, especially when they are used without adequate oversight (Columbia Journalism Review, 2024). This critique highlights that while AI is useful for efficiency and speed, journalists must remain responsible for checking facts and ensuring ethical reporting.

2.3 Journalists' Awareness and Understanding of AI in Akwa Ibom States

Understanding of artificial intelligence among journalists varies greatly under different contexts. In Nigeria, Mohammed (2022) discovered that a significant number of journalists had heard about AI, yet few understood how it works or the impact it has on news work. Mohammed noted that journalists tend to mix simple automation systems with more advanced AI systems capable of creating text works or analysing data (Mohammed, 2022). This indicates a difference between low-level familiarity and high level awareness. The name does not necessarily imply the understanding of the way it works or the manner in which it could alter the journalism practice.

Similarly, in his research on digital competence among African journalists, Onyebuchi (2023) stated that African journalists are not yet well aware of AI. Onyebuchi discovered that reporters in some states in Nigeria had been exposed to AI through social media or training workshops but they had not undertaken formal training which would provide deeper insight (Onyebuchi, 2023). He observed that this biased consciousness can lead journalists to either be excessively positive or excessively negative about AI. This observation is consistent with the work of Mohammed, although Onyebuchi focuses on the importance of training in the way that journalists perceive concepts of AI.

Studies conducted outside Nigeria offer useful comparisons. Stroud (2021) investigated how journalists view the algorithmic systems and AI tools used in newsrooms in the United States. She discovered that awareness is commonly associated with newsroom culture, and the representatives of larger organisations are more familiar with advanced tools than those in smaller outlets (Stroud, 2021). This implies that awareness is affected by environment and resources as much as it affected personal interest. Such trends may be observed by journalists in Akwa Ibom State, where the difference in newsroom size and capacity may play a role in comprehending news.

In Europe, Schäfer (2020) looked at how digital technologies including AI are understood by media professionals. Schaefer discovered that journalists tend to understand what AI can accomplish to make things more efficient, like automated headlines or data sorting, but they rarely learn the technical basis. His work emphasizes that awareness cannot be considered as the singular idea, and rather a combination of the technical, professional and ethical awareness. This complexity appears to be pertinent to the new awakening in Africa in which accessibility to high level technical training is scarce.

Indian researcher Anjali Thomas (2024) demonstrated that people who are familiar with the word AI do not necessarily achieve an accurate understanding of the concept. Thomas interviewed Indian reporters on AI tools and found out that many of the reporters equated AI with any new software without specifying the particular functions such as natural language processing or machine learning (Thomas, 2024). In her study she reveals that awareness may be merely shallow and influenced by overall exposure to technology, not necessarily by actual technical knowledge. This is once again echoed by the results of the research conducted in Nigeria where journalists are aware of the AI, yet fail to comprehend the AI principle in depth.

It seems that training and education are core to the enhancement of awareness. In a global review, Pavlik (2021) argues that the awareness of AI in the newsrooms is dependent on access to the professional development and academic programmes that help demystify how systems work. Pavlik discovered that more educated journalists regarding AI are likely to comprehend better the capabilities and limitations of AI as compared to those who have no such education. This helps to support the notion that in destinations such as Akwa Ibom State there may be an increase in awareness as more formal training is offered.

In a nutshell, the literature reveals that journalists across different parts of the world, be it in Nigeria, Africa, Europe, or Asia often have some knowledge about AI but differ in their understanding of what it actually means as far as news production is concerned. According to the research by the Nigerian authors, journalists in the country and region tend to perceive AI as a concept, but they do not have a deep understanding of the functions. This is an indicator that more intensive research should be conducted that is targeted towards individual contexts such as the Akwa Ibom State where awareness and understanding can influence reception and implementation of AI within the daily journalism.

2.4 Perceived Benefits and Challenges of AI Usage among Journalists

Many scholars are confident that AI can unquestionably have a positive impact on journalists, particularly in enhancing their efficiency and coping with routine assignments. Bello, Salaudeen and Umeaku (2025) have discovered that journalists in Lagos and Kwara states have perceived AI as a potentially beneficial tool, including in speeding up the reporting process and in improving news analysis, although they have also noted threats to creativity and job security (Bello et al., 2025). Equally, the overview by Pavlik (2021) reported that most of the journalists have realised the usefulness of AI in improving the quality and consistency of the stories in the newsrooms and many have agreed that AI could be useful in improving the quality and consistency of the stories in the newsrooms. These results indicate that regardless of the situation, journalists tend to view AI as a partner, but not an out-and-out substitute.

Meanwhile, researchers stress that AI is fraught with a number of challenges that make its integration complex. Ningish (2024) pointed out that in spite of the fact that AI may help to make such tasks as fact-checking and translation faster, the issue of the credibility of news and its bias in the automated results emerge as well, which, in turn, can undermine the trust of the population unless it is properly managed. Similar findings were made by Kazmi and Ali (2025) who also concluded that Pakistani journalists felt that AI was efficient but expressed concern about misinformation and ethical concerns, particularly when the algorithms lack transparency or when the data privacy is at risk. These issues mirror a profound conflict between expectation of speed and the necessity of human care and prudence.

Another dimension is provided by Kazmi and Ali (2025), who note that it is necessary to have a better education and use the AI tools responsibly. According to Hollandek, Peters, and Drage (2025), in most cases, journalists do not have sufficient training to realize the limitations of AI and how to use it in an ethical way, which can make the technology seem so powerful and, at the same time, frightening. This perspective supplements the issues outlined by Ningish and Kazmi and Ali, with the implication that unless appropriately guided, the advantages of AI may be drowned out in a sea of issues such as algorithmic bias, lack of editorial transparency, and journalistic values.

Although the literature notes that AI can be both a support and a substitute to human judgement, there is an agreement that AI needs to be used as a support and not as a substitute to human judgement. Journalists are always open to tools that can be used in repetitive tasks, trend analysis, and data work, but they are always sensitive to ethical and professional risks. In this respect, having an idea of how journalists view these advantages and limitations will help explain why many see the potential of AI with excitement but still want training, ethical principles, and newsroom policies in place to help them use AI in a responsible manner.

2.5 Influence of Journalists' Perception on the Adoption of AI in Newsrooms

The perceptions of journalists tend to influence the adoption of new technologies in newsrooms. Borchardt (2020) discovered in her exploration of newsroom automation that newsroom leaders who view AI as beneficial to efficiency are more likely to implement AI tools into the reporting and editing process. Her research indicates that a positive perception will drive the experimentation with AI related tools like automated transcription or data analysis software. This implies that when journalists in the Akwa Ibom State consider AI as helpful and useful, they might be more willing to introduce such technologies into their daily operations.

The correlation between perception and adoption is supported by other study. According to Diakopoulos (2019), the attitudes of journalists towards algorithms and automated systems have an impact on the way the latter are implemented in practice (Diakopoulos, 2019). He noted that sceptical or fearful of AI journalists are likely to limit their automation use even when the tools exist within their newsroom. This would mean that perception not only influences interest in AI, but also the extent and depth to which journalists apply it in their work, including news collection, content development, and interactions with the audience.

On the same note, Boczkowski (2020) discovered that the pace and extent of adoption in media organisations are influenced by the beliefs of journalists about the worth of AI. The less inclined to use AI in his interviews with reporters and editors were those who viewed AI as a threat to journalistic values, whereas those who saw AI as a means to free up time to do deeper reporting were less open to its use. This supports the notion that professional values and perceptions directly influence the process of whether AI technologies are integrated into the routines of newsrooms. In case journalists in Akwa Ibom State are not convinced about the role of AI, they might not go all the way to embrace it.

Lastly, a study by Lewis (2023) suggests that the organisational culture intersects with the perceptions of individuals to affect the adoption of AI. Lewis discovered that in the case where the newsrooms support learning and experimentation, the journalists feel more comfortable adopting AI, but where culture is strong or fearful of change, the adoption rate is slower. This implies that the newsroom norms in the Akwa Ibom State could be used to reinforce or deter the use of AI tools based on the perception of AI held by journalists. This connection can be used to understand why awareness and perception are the key to adoption and not necessarily the availability of technology.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). UTAUT is a concept that assists in understanding why individuals opt to embrace or shun new technologies. It proposes that there are four primary factors that affect the intention of the individual to use a technology: performance expectancy (the belief that the technology will be useful), effort expectancy (how easily it can be used), social influence (how other people see the use of a technology), and facilitating conditions (availability of resources and support) (Venkatesh, Thong, and Xu, 2016). UTAUT also understands that such variables like age, sex, experience, and voluntariness may have an impact on the degree to which these variables will influence adoption. To put it simply, the theory demonstrates that beliefs of people and the surrounding environment are the factors which will determine whether a new tool will be used by people or not.

UTAUT model was created by a team of researchers headed by Viswanath Venkatesh in 2003 to integrate and enhance previous technology acceptance models like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Venkatesh, Thong, and Xu, 2016). It was hoped that a more detailed framework would be developed, one that would be more predictive of user behaviour in a variety of technologies and situations. Researchers have over time extended the model and refined it to make versions like UTAUT2 which incorporate other factors such as hedonic motivation and price value in consumer situations. This continuous evolution indicates that UTAUT is still a powerful tool to research how and why people embrace new technologies.

UTAUT is very applicable to the current research on the perceptions of journalists towards AI in news production within the Akwa Ibom State. Journalists will not use AI tools unless they perceive that the AI tools are useful and easy to use. Their view of how other employees and newsroom managers approach those technologies (social influence) and the access to training and support (facilitating conditions) will also determine their readiness to adopt those technologies. Since UTAUT offers a systematic method of investigating these aspects, it helps the study to comprehend not only whether journalists use AI, but also why they do or do not use AI.

Research conducted in recent times still uses UTAUT in their studies of technology adoption, and it is still relevant. Indicatively, AlShihi and Al-Badi (2024) conducted research to determine how professionals accept mobile technologies in workplaces and used UTAUT to explore the relationship between performance expectancy and facilitating conditions and intention to use new systems. This supports the idea that similar factors in newsrooms, such as support for AI learning and belief in its usefulness, will influence journalists' perception and adoption of AI tools in Akwa Ibom State.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study embraced a descriptive survey research design. The design was deemed appropriate in that it enabled the researcher to gather data among journalists and how they perceive, aware of the level of AI use in news production. An opportunity to collect opinions as they were expressed by respondents without any manipulations of any variable was made possible by the descriptive survey. It also assisted the researcher in analyzing patterns and relationship between the variables as they are in their natural environment.

The population of the study consisted of 791 registered members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, Akwa Ibom State Council. These members consisted of reporters, editors, broadcasters, photojournalists and other media professionals that were actively involved in news production in the state. The sample was deemed to be suitable since all the registered members were working journalists and were directly engaged in newsroom operations.

The Krejcie and Morgan formula of finite population was used in determining the sample size. The study sample was estimated to be about 259 newsmen. The research employed stratified random sampling method. The initial stage of grouping the population into strata was by type of media like print, broadcast and online. This guaranteed equal representation of journalists in various sectors. Simple random sampling was then used within the different groups after

stratification in order to select respondents in proportional numbers. This approach minimized prejudice and guaranteed that all registered journalists equally had an opportunity of being chosen.

The data collection tool was a completed questionnaire that was designed by the researcher. The data were gathered by direct administration of questionnaire to the respondents who were selected. The copies were distributed in NUJ meetings, visits to media houses in Akwa Ibom State.

Descriptive statistics was used to summarise the responses and the data collected were analysed using frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation. To make the results easily comprehensible and interpretable, the results were provided in tables.

5. RESULTS

Table 5.1: Journalists' Awareness and Understanding of AI Tools (N = 259)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	78	30.1
Agree	92	35.5
Undecided	34	13.1
Disagree	31	12
Strongly disagree	24	9.3
Total	**259**	**100**

Source: Survey data, 2026

Table 1 above show that 78 respondents, representing 30.1%, strongly agreed that they were aware and understood AI tools used in news production, while 92 respondents, representing 35.5%, agreed. This meant that 65.6 percent of the journalists demonstrated awareness and understanding of AI tools. However, 13.1% were undecided, and a combined 21.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that a notable minority still lacked sufficient knowledge. This suggests that although awareness was relatively high, gaps in understanding remained among some journalists, which implied the need for further training and professional development in AI applications.

Table 5.2: Journalists' Perception of Benefits of AI (N = 259)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	70	27
Agree	96	37.1
Undecided	40	15.4
Disagree	32	12.4
Strongly disagree	21	8.1
Total	**259**	**100**

Source: Survey data, 2026

The results on Table 2 indicate that 27% strongly agreed and 37.1% agreed that AI offered significant benefits despite its risks. Together, 64.1% held a positive perception of AI usage in news production. Meanwhile, 15.4% remained undecided, and 20.5% expressed negative perceptions. This shows that most journalists recognised the value of AI tools,

such as speed and efficiency, but some still had concerns about risks like job displacement and ethical issues. This implies that addressing perceived risks could further improve positive attitudes toward AI adoption.

Table 5. 3: Influence of Perception on Acceptance and Use of AI (N = 259)

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	83	32
Agree	89	34.4
Undecided	29	11.2
Disagree	33	12.7
Strongly disagree	25	9.7
Total	**259**	**100**

Source: Survey data, 2026

The findings on Table 3 reveal that 32% strongly agreed and 34.4% agreed that their perception influenced their acceptance and actual use of AI tools. This meant that 66.4% acknowledged that perception played a major role in their adoption behaviour. However, 11.2% were undecided, and 22.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The pattern suggested that journalists who viewed AI positively were more willing to integrate it into their newsroom practices. This implies that improving perception through awareness and policy support would likely increase the practical adoption of AI tools in news production.

6. DISCUSSION

Objective One: Journalists' Awareness of AI Tools

The results indicate that there was an obvious majority among the journalists who showed awareness and understanding of AI tools used in producing news. As over sixty five percent agreed or strongly agreed, it was clearly seen that AI was no longer a foreign concept in newsrooms in Akwa Ibom State. This implied that there was heightened exposure in media professionals to digital technologies. The fact that there were respondents who were either undecided or showed limited knowledge, however, did indicate that there was no even distribution of knowledge. Other journalists continued to seem confused about the functionality of AI tools and how they could be used in practice. This ambivalent degree of knowledge indicated that it was necessary to organize the training process and the further professional development of all journalists to ensure that they were sufficiently prepared to work with the new technologies.

Objective Two: Journalists' Perceptions of the Benefits of AI

The findings indicate that the majority of journalists had a more positive attitude towards AI in news production. A high percentage of them admitted that it has been beneficial to the company, as it has increased its efficiency and speed even though some of their reservations still lingered about the potential risks. Such an optimistic tone indicated that reporters were starting to view AI as a complementary resource and no longer a threat to their positions. Simultaneously, the group that showed signs of uncertainty or negative attitudes represented the ongoing fears connected with the job security, ethical standards, and credibility. Such issues mattered as the perception can tend to influence the readiness to embrace innovation. The results thus indicated that although optimism prevailed, there existed a sense of need to be reassured, there were clear policies and ethical guidelines to appease the lingering doubts.

Objective Three: Influence of Perception on Acceptance and Use of AI

The results also indicated that the perceptions of journalists also had a strong influence on the acceptance and active use of AI tools in the news production process. A huge majority of them affirmed that their attitude towards AI influenced their adoption of AI in their day-to-day activities. This affirmed that perception was not just an opinion, but one of the major factors in behavioural intention and usage. The positive attitude of journalists towards AI was more likely to introduce AI into newsroom practices compared to those with doubts. These answers thus added weight to the notion that the process of successfully implementing AI could not be achieved merely by a toolkit but also mindset and organisational

alignment. This showed how awareness campaigns and management support are essential in solidifying the positive attitudes towards the use of AI.

7. CONCLUSION

The paper has investigated the perception of journalists about the use of AI in news production in Akwa Ibom State regarding their level of awareness, perceived benefits and risks, and the impact of their perceptions on adoption. The results indicate that the majority of journalists were informed about AI tools and had a reasonable idea of how they could be applied in the newsroom practice. Much of the respondents had used positive words regarding the benefits of AI, especially in enhancing speed, efficiency, and productivity. Nevertheless, there were still some significant numbers of individuals with worries about ethical concerns, employment, and the quality of AI generated content. This demonstrates the fact that though there was a steady rise in the acceptance of AI, there were still some questions and gaps in knowledge. The research also determine that perception was a great contributor in deciding whether or not journalists accepted and used AI tools in their everyday work. Those journalists who held positive or uncertain attitudes towards AI tended to be more willing to adopt AI into news production processes. This proved that the successful implementation of AI in newsrooms was not only limited to the availability of technology but also mindset, training, and organisational backing. Another finding of the study is that the effective use of AI in news production in Akwa Ibom State can be improved by enhancing awareness, technical capacity, and addressing ethical issues.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this study recommended that:

I Media organisations and NUJ Akwa Ibom State Council should organise regular training workshops and capacity building programmes on AI tools for journalists. These programmes should focus on practical knowledge, hands on experience, and clear explanation of how AI can be applied in news gathering, editing, and distribution. This would help to close the knowledge gap identified in the study and strengthen journalists' understanding of AI in newsroom practice;

II Media managers should develop clear ethical guidelines and operational frameworks for the use of AI in news production. These guidelines should address concerns related to accuracy, credibility, job security, and professional standards. By doing so, they would reduce fear and uncertainty among journalists and promote a more balanced perception of both the benefits and risks of AI usage;

III Newsroom leadership and professional bodies should actively promote positive engagement with AI through mentorship, peer learning, and institutional support. Senior editors and technology officers should encourage journalists to experiment with approved AI tools and integrate them into daily tasks where appropriate. This would strengthen positive perception and increase the actual acceptance and use of AI tools in news production.

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