

ADVANCEMENT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) ON ELECTORAL NEWS COVERAGE IN NIGERIA: A BREAKTHROUGH OR SETBACK?

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ABSTRACT

Electioneering in Nigeria like other democratic nations are characterized by effective media coverage. In Nigeria, the media are critical stakeholders in electoral process and have over the years retained focus, informing and educating the public on the process and system of governance. Since 1999, Nigeria has experienced an unbroken chain in democratic governance with seven general elections. Within these years, the media have been at the centre stage as watchdogs of democracy. The media along the ages have also advanced in line with technology and innovation. The global waves towards digital coverage, Newmedia and currently Artificial Intelligence have accordingly influenced news coverage in Nigeria. Though, there are obvious challenges, the media have subtly prevailed and discharged their duties satisfactorily. In recent times the advent of artificial intelligence and its influence have garnered popularity. This recent invention of **(AI)** has technically influenced the globe across disciplines with strong traits of superiority and dominance. There is however a growing apprehension that trends of **AI** possess great threat to development and this extends to all facets of life including the media. This study weighs the prevailing impact of **AI** on electoral news coverage in Nigeria. The paper establish serial impacts, strengths and frailties as regards electoral news coverage in Nigeria. The study anchors on two media theories of technology dominance and diffusion of innovation, using qualitative research method design with analysis relying solely on exploratory case study. This study established a link and departure from the old era to the new age of **AI** with specified problems and prospects.

Keywords: News coverage, artificial intelligence, breakthrough, setback.

INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria today, the practice of media and journalism is rapidly evolving and there is overwhelming evidence of strong technological advancements that have transformed the way information are produced, disseminated, and consumed. Among these innovations, Artificial Intelligence (AI) stands out as a potent force reshaping various aspects of the society, including electoral news coverage. Nigeria as a country with a vibrant political institution and a diverse media network, the integration of AI in electoral news coverage raises critical questions about its implications for democracy, transparency, and media integrity. In line with this, a historical analogy of weaknesses in analog media and social media setting will be x-

rayed to ascertain if the superiority of AI is actually underway.

The advancement of AI technologies offers promising opportunities to enhance the efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of electoral news coverage. AI-powered algorithms can analyze vast amounts of data in real-time, identify emerging trends, and personalize news contents to suit individual preferences. Furthermore, automated systems through the power of AI enable news organizations to streamline their production processes, delivering timely updates to audience across diverse digital platforms.

However, the significant growth of AI in electoral news coverage also raises strong challenges and concerns. The reliance on AI

algorithms for content creation and distribution raises questions about the transparency and accountability of news dissemination processes. Moreover, the potential for algorithmic biases to influence the presentation of electoral information poses risks to media plurality and democratic discourse. In Nigeria, where media freedom and press independence are crucial for fostering an informed citizenry, the ethical implications of AI-driven news coverage demand careful consideration.

It is against this backdrop, that this study seeks to explore the impact of the advancement of artificial intelligence on electoral news coverage in Nigeria, with a particular focus on whether it represents a breakthrough or a setback for democratic governance and media development. This will be achieved by examining the adoption, effects, and challenges associated with AI in electoral news reporting. This research aims to provide insights into the complex interplay between technology, media, and democracy in the Nigeria nation.

Through a multidisciplinary approach drawing on insights from media studies, political science, and computer application, this study aims to contribute to scholarly debates on the role of AI in shaping electoral news coverage and public opinion. This research work will shed light on the opportunities and risks associated with AI-driven electoral news coverage. This research also seeks to inform public, media practitioners, and other stakeholders about the implications of technological innovation for the future of media and democracy in Nigeria. With an overview of the history of electoral coverage in Nigeria, the paper further examined the significant impact of AI on electoral news coverage in Nigeria, outlining the general problems of both the conventional media and social media, tracing the existence of AI, problems and the prospects.

Definition of terms

News Coverage: News coverage refers to the process of gathering, analyzing, and disseminating information about current events, issues, and developments to the public through various media channels such as newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms (McQuail, 2010). In this trending era of social media, news coverage are also rampart amongst citizen journalist who gather and disseminate

information through different social media platforms as; Facebook, X(formerly Twitter), Instagram, Telegram amongst others. News coverage now represent a practical way of gathering and dispensing information either professionally or unprofessionally.

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Artificial Intelligence is a branch of computer science that focuses on the development of intelligent machines capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include natural language processing, problem-solving, pattern recognition, and decision-making (Russell & Norvig, 2016). It is a recent development that has penetrated every facets of life including the media. In media and communication, AI is deployed in both generating and disseminating information.

Breakthrough: A breakthrough refers to a significant and decisive advancement or development in a particular field or area of study. It represents a moment or discovery that marks a notable shift or improvement in understanding, capability, or achievement (Chandy, 2016). It is a notable height acclaimed to be complete departure and improvement on an existing pattern to something better.

Setback: A setback refers to an obstacle, failure, or regression that hinders progress, slows down advancement, or undermines the achievement of goals or objectives in a particular endeavor or undertaking (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). It is regarded as an anticlockwise situation that distorts or hampers progress.

Statement of the Problem:

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various sectors globally, including media and journalism. In Nigeria, the implementation of AI in electoral news coverage presents a complex scenario characterized by both significant opportunities and formidable challenges. This dichotomy raises a critical question: Is the advancement of AI in electoral news coverage a breakthrough or a setback for Nigeria?

On the one hand, AI portends to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of electoral news coverage. AI tools can analyze vast amounts of data swiftly, providing real time insights and predictions that are invaluable during elections. For instance, AI-driven algorithms can monitor

social media platforms to gauge public sentiment, detect misinformation, and identify emerging trends, thereby enabling more informed and timely news reporting. Additionally, AI can personalize news delivery, ensuring that voters receive relevant information tailored to their interests and concerns, potentially increasing voter engagement and participation.

However, the integration of AI in electoral news coverage also poses significant challenges and risks. A primary concern is the potential for algorithmic bias, where AI systems may inadvertently reinforce existing prejudices and biases present in the data they are trained on. This can lead to skewed reporting that misrepresents certain candidates or issues, thus undermining the integrity of the electoral process. Furthermore, the reliance on AI for content creation and dissemination raises ethical questions about transparency and accountability in journalism. There is also the risk of AI systems being manipulated by malicious actors to spread misinformation or manipulate public opinion, thereby threatening the democratic process.

The disparity in technological infrastructure and expertise between different media houses in Nigeria further complicates the situation. While some organizations are beginning to adopt AI tools, many lack the resources and technical know-how to effectively implement and manage these technologies. This uneven adoption could widen the gap between well-funded, technologically advanced media organizations and those struggling to keep up, potentially leading to a fragmented and uneven media management circle.

In sum, while AI offer promising advancements for electoral news coverage in Nigeria, its potential drawbacks cannot be overlooked. The country must navigate these challenges carefully harness AI's benefits while mitigating its risks. This balance is crucial to ensuring that AI serves as a breakthrough rather than a setback for Nigeria's electoral news coverage and, by extension, its democratic processes.

Research Questions:

1. How has the implementation of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria influenced

the accuracy and reliability of election-related information?

2. What are the main ethical concerns associated with the use of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria?

3. In what ways has AI been utilized by Nigerian media houses to enhance voter engagement and participation during elections?

4. What are the challenges faced by Nigerian media houses in adopting AI technologies for electoral news coverage?

5. What measures can be taken to mitigate the risks and maximize the benefits of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Democracy in Nigeria became more pronounced in the way back 1922 with enactment of Clifford's constitution. Albert A.B (1955) understudied significant stance in the evolution of Democracy and Empire in Britain 1865 through 1914 and within the scope democracy remained a government of the people but in the case of Nigeria it was developed by their colonial lords.. It is however interesting that within this era, the media were already ahead in the politics of education and dissemination of information in Nigeria. The point here is that the important role of Nigeria media in shaping political discourse and public opinion during the colonial era cannot be overemphasized. In furtherance to this, political, cultural and socio-economic factors that snowballed into nationalism within this era were the essential strategy of Nigeria press who framed provoking thoughts through democracy and electoral coverage.

All these were within the analogue era when journalism was dominated by newspapers, radio and television productions. This era was associated with turbulent challenges before the emergence of online journalism and social media. With more advancement of technology in the process of journalism, there are intensified efforts to fill existing gap in communication between the media and communicating public. The advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has been seen as a palpable tool that can transform the industry.

The press maintained pace through the constitution development to the upsurge of nationalism and political freedom in Nigeria.

Within those periods indigenous news media as West Africa Pilots founded and published by Nnamdi Azikiwe, was very influential and since 1937 was used as the tool for political rebellion, great projector of Nigerian's political aspirations and the forerunner of political independence in Nigeria (Falola et al 2009). Other foremost Nigeria Newspapers include; the Nigeria Tribune, published by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, which also played a vital role in mobilizing the masses towards the nationalist cause (Adesoje, A. 2016), the Daily Times established in 1925, which within the period became a significant voice for Nigerian nationalism for self governance (Adebayo 1999), the Comet Newspaper as founded by Ernest Ikoli in 1933 also played a significant role in the nationalist movement in Nigeria (Ekejiuba, F.I. 2014). These frontline media organizations were the precursors of nationalism in Nigeria as their advanced roles in news coverage facilitated the eventual independence of Nigeria in 1960.

In 1963, Nigeria became a republic and the quest for democracy and partisan politics soared. Within this era, the media were still at the centre stage as their news coverage moulded opinions of the masses. With the emergence of different political parties from diverse ethnic, religio-cultural affiliations, political interests and ideologies, public opinions were nurtured along those directions. However, political pundits and scholars have been forthright in their analysis with this political behaviour. Scholars like Joseph R (1987) noted fragmentations of Nigeria political parties along ethnic, religion and the personal lines. This fragmentation according to him, often lead to challenges in building national consensus and promoting cohesive governance. Taking this further, Adejumbi (2002) stressed, parties often serve as a vehicle for distributing resources and favours to supporters rather than being based on clear ideological differences. There are more to these anomalies when ethnic coloration is added to the practice or development of political parties in Nigeria, it promotes divisiveness rather than good governance and rural development.

Diamond (2002) understudied how Nigeria parties often reflect and reinforce ethnic and regional cleavages. This can lead to identity based politics and the underdevelopment of cross-cutting national identities.

This political cum regional interest and ideology are often linked to the duties of the media including electoral coverage. However, these lapses or biases on the side of the media are also associated with the media structures in Nigeria. There are different media organizations in Nigeria viz; state-owned, privately owned, community/cultural based and Faith based media and each of these media organizations are alleged to overtly work for the interest of their owners in gathering and dissemination of information. As regards this issue of bias, Agba & Ushie (2019) found evidence of biases in Nigeria media coverage favouring certain political parties or candidates. Ilorunniola (2017) also, highlighted how media ownership influences coverage with media houses owned by politicians and elites often showing bias in their reporting.

Similarly, Amnesty International and Committee to Protect Journalist (CPJ) have also detected instances for government interference in media coverage during elections. In these reports are evidence of harassments, intimidations and censorship of the press especially those who are critical to the government in power. From the foregoing it is crystal clear that conventional media within the ambit of print and electronics media were overwhelmingly in charge of the entire media space in Nigeria and consequently dominated electoral news coverage all over the country (Oso, L. 2011).

However, the history of electoral news coverage in Nigeria has serially evolved within the dimension of technological development and the demand of time. This technological advancement includes the emergence of internet and online news platforms which took over the space and almost hijacked electoral news coverage in the country. Olumede, A. (2016) saw this only as providing alternative source of electoral news coverage but aside electoral news coverage the platform is gathering popularity and even dominating conventional media.

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter (now X), WhatsApp, Telegram, among others have dominated electoral process including election news coverage (Sule, A. & Musa, and A.Z. 2018). This simply ushered in citizen journalism whereby the general public whether or not they are trained now get involved in

gathering and dissemination of electoral news. Akinfeleye, R.A. (2018) noted that citizen journalism gathered momentum, allowing ordinary citizens to participate in the gathering and dissemination of electoral news. Following these critically, there are no much differences between the conventional media where you have trained journalists and the social media where the opposite is the case in terms of challenges of mutual interest arising from ethnic, faith/cultural and political affiliations but over bearing issues of fake news and misinformation are more obvious in the social media. Obono .K. (2019) highlighted this, pointing out that, the rise of online platforms has also led to challenges such as misinformation and fake news which can influence electoral outcome. Classical propaganda, high tailored rejections and censorship of platforms critical to government in power have been counted as major setback of social media in the news industry. In June 5, 2021 Nigeria government under General Muhammad Buhari banned the use of Twitter (now X) in Nigeria. This is one of the major attempts targeted at gagging the media, silence dissenting voices and to a large extent control the flow of information in Nigeria at the time. Other challenges facing the social media in the news industry especially with regard to electoral news coverage are; cyber security threat and digital divide. Social media platforms are susceptible to Cyber threats with breaches from hackers, data failures and deliberate manipulations from mischief makers. In 2019 according to Oladejo, T. (2019), the website of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was reportedly hacked on the eve of the Presidential elections. The attackers allegedly accessed and published sensitive electoral data, raising concerns about the security of electoral infrastructure and the potential for interference in the electoral process. There are also voter registration data breaching where hackers have gained unauthorized access to voters' database. Breaches like this violate the privacy of the voters' information and may pave way for manipulation of the process (Ogunwale, A.B. 2020). The fear of foreign interference with the process is another factor as emphasized by some politicians. These foreigners with their different motions and vested interests can

manoeuvre their ways through gaining illegal access by hacking the electoral infrastructure.

The issue of digital divide becomes critical in electoral news coverage in Nigeria owing to uneven distribution of communication platforms and infrastructure across the country. This as a deficiency in communication poses a threat to electoral news coverage in Nigeria through the Social media. This imminent threat posed by digital divide, particularly in ensuring equitable access to information and fostering democratic participation has been identified as a very big loophole in effectiveness of social media in electoral news coverage. This gap stems from disparities in internet penetration, access to digital devices, and digital literacy among different socioeconomic groups (Akinyemi et al., 2020). These leakages will be further examined thus,

1. **Internet Penetration Disparities:** Nigeria's internet penetration rate remains uneven, with urban areas having higher access compared to rural regions (Akinyemi et al., 2020). This disparity limits the reach of online electoral news coverage to certain segments of the population, potentially marginalizing those without internet access.
2. **Access to Digital Devices:** The uneven distribution of digital devices exacerbates the digital divide in electoral news coverage. Many Nigerians, particularly in rural and low-income areas, lack access to smartphones, laptops, or tablets necessary to access online news platforms (Oliver & Ogbogu, 2018).
3. **Digital Literacy:** Limited digital literacy further widens the gap in accessing and understanding electoral news coverage online. While some individuals may have access to digital devices, they may lack the skills to navigate online platforms effectively or critically evaluate the information presented (Oyebode, 2017).

Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, media executives, and civil society groups to bridge the digital divide and ensure inclusive electoral news

coverage. Initiatives such as government-sponsored internet infrastructure projects, community-based digital literacy programs, and partnerships between media practitioners and grassroots organizations can help mitigate the disparities in access to electoral information (Oliver & Ogbogu, 2018).

These challenges associated with both conventional media and the social media underscore the urgent need to proffer a lasting solution or at least a viable alternative that can address these viral problems of misinformation, fake news, and censorship of the press with an advance technology that can tighten the loopholes in the cyber space. This precaution will certainly give creditability and integrity to news coverage in Nigeria. One of the credible alternatives often touted is the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in news coverage. The major contention here is the effect or impacts of AI on electoral news coverage in Nigeria. Artificial Intelligence as already defined is the imitation of human intelligence by programmed computers and machines. The loopholes of electoral news coverage evidence in both the conventional and social media have incited researchers towards digging deep for further mechanisms which can enhance more credible electoral news coverage in Nigeria. Within the purview of this paper, we have established fake news, misinformation, biases, propaganda and censorship as major issues and challenges of both conventional and social media as regards electoral news coverage in Nigeria and will subsequently examine whether Artificial Intelligence shears the same weakness or possesses superior modifications.

In recent years, some media houses in Nigeria have started to explore the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) for enhancing their news coverage, but adoption remains relatively nascent compared to global counterparts. These recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have significantly influenced electoral news coverage and the overall electoral process in Nigeria. These advancements are reshaping how information are disseminated, voter engagement managed, and electoral integrity maintained. "AI is being used to combat election-related misinformation, ensuring that voters have access to accurate information. For instance, IVerify, a Nigerian initiative, employs

AI to detect and counter misinformation during elections. This ensures that the electorate receives reliable information, thereby promoting informed decision-making" (International Republican Institute, 2023).

Nigerian media houses have increasingly relied on this new technology (AI) for news coverage, particularly during the 2023 elections. This adoption is evident in several initiatives aimed at improving the accuracy and speed of information dissemination.

The Nigerian Fact-Checkers Coalition (NFC) partnered with Full Fact, a UK-based fact-checking organization, to use AI tools during the 2023 elections. These tools helped in live transcription and real-time fact-checking of election-related claims, enhancing the credibility of information available to the public. The initiative, supported by Google.org, aimed to counter misinformation and ensure informed voting (Smalley, S. 2023). In a similar vein, Arise News, a notable Nigerian media outlet, used AI and data analytics to provide in-depth coverage and analysis of the elections. Despite facing political pressures and accusations of bias, Arise News maintained its commitment to objective reporting, organizing town hall meetings and debates to scrutinize candidates' positions on various issues (International Republican Institute, 2023). This exposed the fact that conventional AI media in Nigeria have played a critical role in informing the public about electoral processes. However, the media in Nigeria is often challenged by government pressures and such affects the need for balanced reporting. Some other media platforms like The Nation have emphasized the importance of the media's role in educating voters and holding political entities accountable, despite the political climate (The Nation Newspaper, 2023).

In sum, the integration of AI in Nigerian media during elections represents a significant step towards enhancing the accuracy and reliability of news coverage. This technological advancement, coupled with the media's ongoing efforts to uphold democratic values, underscores the evolving interest in upgrading election reporting in Nigeria with more sophisticated technology.

These become relevant in establishing the fact that AI has been applied in some media organisations in Nigeria for both news

gathering and dissemination of news information. AI technologies, such as natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning algorithms, are increasingly being used by Nigerian media organizations to analyze and curate electoral news content. These tools enable automated summarization, sentiment analysis, and topic modeling, facilitating faster and more efficient news production processes (Ogundijo, 2020). This algorithm is processed to enhance speedy development of human languages and further classified as a technique that guides reporters in taking decisive decisions in news gathering and dissemination of information. Lample et al (2016) see NLP as process characterized with identification of names, locations and dates.

Fake News Detection and Verification: With the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation during elections, AI-powered tools for fake news detection and verification have become essential for Nigerian journalists and fact-checkers. These tools utilize techniques like pattern recognition and data mining to identify and combat false information circulating in electoral news coverage (Asemah et al., 2019).

Audience Engagement and Personalization: AI-driven platforms and recommendation systems are being deployed by Nigerian media outlets to enhance audience engagement and personalize electoral news content. In analyzing user preferences and behavior, these systems deliver tailored news recommendations and interactive experiences, fostering greater viewer participation and satisfaction (Ayantoye et al., 2020).

Ethical and Regulatory Challenges: Despite the potential benefits of AI in electoral news coverage, there are significant ethical and regulatory challenges that need to be addressed. Concerns related to algorithmic bias, data privacy, and the manipulation of public opinion underscore the importance of developing transparent and accountable AI systems in the Nigeria media network (Okocha & Onoshakpor, 2020).

While specific studies directly addressing the advancement of AI on electoral news coverage in Nigeria may be limited, the broader literature on AI in journalism, media studies, and technology adoption in Nigeria can provide valuable insights into this emerging field.

Global Trends in AI and Electoral News Coverage: Numerous studies have explored the use of AI technologies, such as natural language processing (NLP), sentiment analysis, and machine learning, in analyzing and disseminating electoral news worldwide. These technologies have been employed to detect misinformation, track public sentiment, and automate news production processes. Understanding these global trends can provide insights into potential applications and challenges for Nigeria's electoral news coverage.

Directions and Opportunities: The attempt at exploring emerging trends and innovations in AI-driven journalism and electoral coverage globally can inspire Nigerian researchers, journalists, and policymakers to explore new possibilities and collaborations. If Nigerians cultivate the habit of staying abreast of advancements in AI technologies and their applications in media, Nigeria can position itself at the forefront of innovation in electoral news coverage.

While specific historical reviews of AI's impact on electoral news coverage in Nigeria may be limited, synthesizing insights from existing research and global trends can provide a foundation for understanding the opportunities and challenges associated with AI-driven journalism in the Nigeria.

The use of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria has been steadily growing, with several notable examples showcasing its impact on reporting and analysis.

Automated Fact-Checking: AI-powered fact-checking tools like Dubawa and CrossCheck Nigeria have been utilized to verify the accuracy of electoral claims and statements made by politicians during campaigns and debates (Adelakun, 2019). Such checks which were verifiable were confirmed to be true and reliable.

Real-time Data Analysis: AI algorithms have also been employed to analyze large volumes of data from social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook to gauge public sentiment, identify trending topics, and predict electoral outcomes (Bello-Osagie, 2020). These were also proven to be workable and transparent.

Content Generation: Some media organizations have experimented with AI-generated content to produce news articles and summaries based on election-related data, providing readers with up-to-date information in a timely manner (Akinbo, 2018).

Personalized News Delivery: AI-driven news aggregation platforms have been developed to curate and deliver personalized election-related content to users based on their preferences and browsing history, enhancing user engagement and satisfaction (Abati, 2021).

Deepfake Detection: With the rise of deepfake technology, AI algorithms have been deployed to detect and combat the spread of misinformation and fake news during election campaigns, helping to maintain the integrity of electoral news coverage (Olaniyi, 2023).

These examples illustrate the diverse ways in which AI is being used to enhance electoral news coverage in Nigeria, from fact-checking and data analysis to content generation and misinformation detection. This feasible and reliable AI tools have increased the yearning for the use of AI on news coverage in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This work employed Diffusion of Innovation theory and Technology Advancement theory. These theories, uses and applications are explained below:

1. Diffusion of Innovation Theory:

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory, proposed by Everett Rogers in 1962, explores how new ideas, products, and technologies spread within a society or social system. The theory suggests that the adoption of innovations follows a predictable pattern characterized by five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. It also identifies key factors influencing the rate of adoption, such as the perceived relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability of the innovation

(Rogers, 2003). This theory asserts the impact and or influence of fresh laudable ideas on the members of the society.

2. Technology Advancement Theory:

Technology Advancement Theory examines the processes and factors driving the development and evolution of technology over time. It posits that technological progress is driven by various factors, including scientific discoveries, economic incentives, social needs, and cultural values. The theory suggests that technological innovation is iterative, with each advancement building upon previous discoveries and improvements. Additionally, it recognizes the role of institutions, policies, and networks in shaping the trajectory of technological change (Dosi, 1982). This theory significantly harpes on change, advancements and their impact on the society.

Method

In this paper, the qualitative research design was employed basically to identify and underscore the prevailing influence of technological advancements in news coverage in Nigeria. These were done with empirical studies from the reviewed literatures. This qualitative research method was adopted with an in-depth analysis some established works of renowned scholars in the subject of study.

Findings

The findings from the studies show that the advancement of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria has both technical strengths and weaknesses as will be presented and discussed below:

Strengths:

1. Efficiency: AI can process vast amounts of data quickly, allowing news agencies to analyze election trends, voter sentiment, and candidate performance in real-time, leading to more informed reporting.
2. Accuracy: AI algorithms can help identify and fact-check misinformation and fake news, ensuring that the public receives accurate information during election campaigns.

3. Customization: AI-powered news platforms can tailor content to individual preferences, providing voters with personalized coverage based on their interests and demographics.

4. Accessibility: AI-driven tools, such as chatbots and voice assistants, can make electoral news more accessible to a wider audience, including those with disabilities or limited literacy.

5. AI driven electoral news coverage can produce reliable and transparent results.

Weaknesses:

1. Bias: AI algorithms may unintentionally perpetuate biases present in training data, leading to skewed or inaccurate representations of candidates, parties, or issues, which can influence voter perceptions.

2. Privacy Concerns: The collection and analysis of voter data by AI systems raise privacy concerns, as individuals may not be aware of how their information is being used or shared by news organizations and tech companies.

3. Dependence on Technology: Relying too heavily on AI for electoral news coverage may result in a loss of human judgment and editorial oversight, potentially leading to the spread of sensationalized or misleading information.

4. Digital Divide: Not all citizens have access to the internet or digital devices, limiting the reach of AI-powered news coverage and potentially exacerbating inequalities in access to information during elections.

Discussions:

Advancement of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria is a breakthrough owing to reasons below:

1. Enhanced Efficiency: AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of electoral data in real-time, enabling news agencies to provide timely and accurate coverage of election events, voter sentiments, and candidate performances (Koumbarakis et al., 2020). This excerpt credits AI with enhanced efficiency in news coverage and such are obviously lacking in both mainstream and social media devoid of AI.

2. Improved Accuracy: AI-powered fact-checking tools can help combat misinformation and fake news, ensuring that voters receive

credible information during election campaigns (Graves, 2019). This excerpt also identified accuracy as a high attribute of AI in electoral news coverage

3. Increased Accessibility: AI-driven platforms can personalize news content based on individual preferences, making electoral information more accessible and engaging to a wider audience, including those with disabilities or limited literacy (Foy, 2018). This excerpt ascribes the feature of garnering wider audience in electoral news coverage as an advantage of the adventure.

4. Data-Driven Insights: AI analytics can uncover hidden patterns and trends in electoral data, providing the media and their audiences with valuable insights for informed decision-making and strategic planning (Baez, 2021). This excerpt accredits AI news coverage with in-depth analysis of trending issues.

5. Fostering Civic Engagement: AI technologies such as chatbots and interactive visualizations can facilitate citizen engagement by enabling real-time interactions, feedback mechanisms, and educational outreach on electoral processes and issues (Howard & Kollanyi, 2016). This excerpt rated AI very high in feedback mechanism and social interactions.

In sum, the advancement of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria represents a significant breakthrough, offering opportunities to enhance the efficiency, accuracy, accessibility, and civic engagement in the electoral process.

Advancement of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria are also associated with setbacks due to the following reasons:

1. Technical Limitations: AI algorithms may struggle to accurately analyze complex socio-political dynamics, cultural nuances, and regional variations in Nigeria's electoral system. This could result in biased or incomplete coverage, undermining the quality and reliability of election reporting (Tufekci, 2018). This excerpt is pointer to the limitations of AI in electoral news coverage which could be counter productive.

2. Infrastructure Challenges: Nigeria's uneven access to reliable internet connectivity and digital technology infrastructure could hinder

the widespread adoption of AI-powered news platforms, limiting their reach and impact, particularly in rural and underserved areas (Oghuma & Eweoya, 2019). This excerpt dwells on limitations influenced by environments and locations.

3. **Regulatory Concerns:** There may be regulatory hurdles and ethical considerations surrounding the use of AI in media and electoral coverage, including issues related to data privacy, transparency, and accountability (Wasserman & Strömbäck, 2018). This excerpt is raising concern of legislations and legal frameworks which could retard the use of AI.

4. **Trust and Credibility:** Public trust in AI-generated content and automated news delivery systems may be low, especially in a context where misinformation and disinformation are prevalent. Skepticism towards AI-generated news could undermine its effectiveness in shaping voter opinions and behaviors (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018). This excerpt is largely apprehensive of the confidence and trust issues on AI generated news contents by the media audiences.

5. **Social Implications:** The widespread adoption of AI in electoral news coverage could exacerbate existing inequalities and deepen the digital divide, as marginalized communities with limited access to technology may be further marginalized in the information ecosystem (Giga et al., 2020). This excerpt is further emphasizing the problems of digital divide as a disadvantage to the use of AI in generating electoral news.

Conclusion and suggestions

In conclusion, the advancement of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria has been extensively discussed. It has within the length of its applications evidence of both breakthrough and setback. Nigeria as a nation needs a credible electoral process and relies heavily on the media as a critical stakeholders. As a result of this, the exploration and reliance on AI by the media is not out of place. Since it has been discovered that the advancement of AI on electoral news coverage is a breakthrough in so many ways. It is also an emerging technology and further development or advancements are underway. This points to the fact of certainty in the improvements of loopholes currently discrediting the technology.

However, by establishing both breakthroughs and setbacks from the advancement of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria, the potentials of using AI to enhance electoral news coverage while safeguarding the integrity of her democratic process is feasible. It is therefore very practicable to say that the advancement of AI in electoral news coverage in Nigeria is more of a breakthrough than a setback.

The following suggestions are deemed relevant for this study:

1. Nigeria media should avoid over-reliance on AI as it may lead to job displacement for media professionals.

2. Nigerians should minimize the use of AI in electoral news coverage, as its increase may exacerbate the spread of misinformation and disinformation, potentially destabilizing Nigeria's democratic processes.

4. Nigeria should develop and deploy AI systems that are transparent, explainable, and accountable.

5. Nigeria should develop and train AI systems to mitigate bias and promote fairness.

Nigeria should implement robust fact-checking mechanisms and counter-disinformation strategies.

6. Nigeria should support media professionals in working alongside AI systems to maintain the integrity and quality of electoral news coverage.

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