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Perception of the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Governance by Public Affairs Managers in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study explored the prospects of applying artificial intelligence (AI) in government institutions in Nigeria, specifically in public affairs management, using Lagos State as a case study. A total of 250 public affairs managers were systematically selected for the study. Four key informants who are experienced public affairs specialists in key sectors of governance were also selected for in-depth interviews. The study found that most public affairs managers were not prepared mentally and materially (but were willing) to adopt AI if perceived negative characteristics (such as the lack of originality, presumed high cost of application, and occasional inaccuracies) were addressed. The respondents believed that AI could help due to its speed and huge database storage capacity but considered the lack of funding as a major hindrance towards its adoption. They agree that correct application of AI is helpful in achieving sustainable governance.

Keywords: ICT innovation and infrasturture, artificial intelligence, sustainable governance, public affairs Nigeria

1. Introduction

Public communications management in Nigeria grew from the information units of the British Colonial Administration. The Colonial Information Office was established to deal ruthlessly with nationalists advocating independence. To project the British colonial machinery, the Information Office connected traditional rulers to foster indirect rule. Originally, this was performed through the United African Company (UAC), which later established West African Publicity Ltd in 1928, which later metamorphosed into LINTAS and Afromedia advertising agencies. The objective of the agencies was to create a favorable image of the colonialists before Nigerians, primarily, although the company later handled corporate briefs. Following the unpopularity of the British Government after the Second World War, the government decided to enlist the services of Nigerians in the operation of the public relations offices. (Daramola, 2003).

Historically, early governmental public communications in Nigeria were subsumed in bureaucracy, noted for its circuitous information process. Despite rapid growth in communications technology and dynamism in public relations praxis, most government institutions in Nigeria still place public communications within the government bureaucracy. Lagos (then a Colony, the seat of Colonial Administration) thus pioneered governmental public relations in Nigeria, from where it later became fairly well-established in the states and local governments elsewhere in the country (Daramola, 2003). Lagos State today has the most robust public communications infrastructure among the 36 states that make up Nigeria. Lagos State Government owns three radio stations, a television (TV) station, a Ministry of Information and Strategy and five periodicals/publications, managed by its 500 public affairs professionals across the state – the largest crew by any state government in Nigeria (Seriki, 2024). The state also has the highest population density, the biggest annual state budget and the most elaborate structure of governmental institutions with 29 ministries and 91 departments and agencies (Lagos State Parastatals Monitoring Office [PMO], 2022). The huge task of governing the former capital city of Nigeria in terms of information and public affairs management is very complex and challenging. Apart from state information media, Lagos state has 59 radios, 158 TV stations, and 21 newspaper

establishments that are privately-owned (Lagos State Parastatals Monitoring Office [PMO], 2023). Despite the foregoing media institutions, accessing information about the Lagos State Government activities remains very difficult (Lagos State Ministry of Information, 2023).

Communication experts have therefore suggested the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for managing public communications in government institutions to make them more efficient and result-oriented. Although such an initiative, if successfully implemented, could be of tremendous benefit to the government and all other stakeholders in governance, the modalities for integrating AI into bureaucracy do not appear as easy as they may seem. The impetus to integrate AI into various professional activities is not limited to the public affairs field. Virtually all human endeavors are integrating AI to enhance performance – from medical sciences to engineering, social sciences, and the arts, etc. (Adediran, 2020). Unfortunately, AI use has been associated with several negative implications in Nigeria, which makes ethical moderation expedient (Ibrahim et al., 2023). Besides that, AI has rapidly progressed in recent years, possesses the remarkable potential to transform education fundamentally. By harnessing personalized learning algorithms, adaptive learning, and intelligent tutoring systems, AI can create tailor-made educational experiences that resonate with each student. Imagine a learning environment where real-time feedback and customized pathways adapt seamlessly to all individual's unique abilities and preferences. This is the promise of AI, poised to enrich the educational landscape and empower learners like never before.

The Lagos State Government has the most advanced e-governance infrastructure amongst the Nigerian states in terms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy, infrastructure development digitalization of services and citizen engagement. The State established an ICT policy in 2010, recognizing the potential of e-governance in enhancing effective public administration. The state's ICT-based initiatives such as online payment platforms, established for taxes, fees, and services, land administration and property registration have enhanced governmental operations. Regarding digitalization of its services, the state government has upgraded its Oracle Enterprise Business Suite to enhance e-governance, in her quest towards paperless bureaucracy. The Lagos State Government, as part of partnership and citizen engagement efforts through ICT launched a "Citizens Gate 2.0" platform, and upgraded its Oracle Enterprise Business Suite. (Lagos State Parastatals Monitoring Office [PMO], 2023)). Few years ago, the government launched another phase of its e-governance infrastructure. The afore-stated foundations are necessary conditions for the deployment of AI into governance, as they would make progression to AI integration the natural and logical consequence. (Choudrie, Zamani, Umeoji, & Emmanuel, 2017).

The present paper, therefore, explores the prospects of applying AI in government institutions in Nigeria, particularly in the important area of public affairs management, using Lagos State as a case study. The effective application of AI in public affairs governance, if properly implemented, is expected to close the information gap and digital divide between the government and Nigerians, thereby improving access to public information and communications.

General duties of Lagos State public affairs managers are, content creation and analysis (skits, ad copies, speeches, e-flyers, etc.); media monitoring and analysis; crisis communications management; media relations (traditional and social), including media buying; community engagement/stakeholder management/advocacy communication and feedback management; research and documentation; and other communication management duties (such as compere at events, event management, etc.)

This research was inspired by the fact that little has been done in the application of AI to governance in Nigeria in the area of public affairs and public communications management at the governmental level. It is noteworthy that research in AI has increased in Africa over the past few years, but these studies have not particularly addressed how the technology can be integrated into governance. In a study, Oluwafemi et al. (2023) explored the application of artificial intelligence in enhancing e-governance within African countries, focusing on Nigeria and South Africa. They sought to know how AI technologies were being integrated into governmental functions to improve service delivery and public administration. The study found that AI has the potential to significantly improve efficiency and transparency in government operations. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of skilled personnel, and concerns over data privacy impede rapid or full implementation. In a similar study, a mixed method design was employed to study the adoption of AI in public sector organizations in Nigeria, with emphasis on opportunities and challenges. The researchers found a "moderate level" of AI adoption, driven by local policy and international collaborations. Key challenges include resistance to change, limited technical expertise, and budgetary constraints (Ndlovu et al., 2023). Ndlovu, in the study, also examined the regulatory frameworks and the ethical considerations necessary to ensure AI's positive impact on society. The study reviewed existing AI regulations in Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana and found that AI applications in areas like healthcare, education, and public safety have showed promises in enhancing government efficiency. However, they found that the lack of robust regulatory frameworks raises concerns about privacy, bias, and accountability. Another comparative study of AI adoption amongst African countries provided insights into the strategic use of AI for enhancing governance and public service delivery in Nigeria and South Africa. It was found that AI has

been instrumental in improving public service efficiency and responsiveness. However, challenges such as digital divide, limited infrastructure, and ethical concerns persist (Adeniyi et al., 2023). Ugwueze and Okeke (2023) conducted a historical analysis of Nigeria's journey towards digital transformation through AI adoption in governance. They found significant improvements in service delivery, citizen engagement, policy implementation and attributed it to AI. However, they also highlighted barriers such as cyber security threats, inadequate funding, and a lack of interoperability between systems. The investigation by Folayan et al. (2021) is one of the few studies conducted on AI applications in the communication profession in Nigeria in recent years. They found that Lagos editors were not adequately prepared for the challenges to integrate AI into newsroom management (Folayan et al., 2023). Artificial Intelligence and governance in Africa, have continued to draw considerable attention from scholars lately (Adeniyi et al., 2023; Folayan et al., 2021; Oluwafemi et al., 2023; Ndlovu et al., 2023; Ugwueze & Okeke, 2023). Most of these studies, however, did not examine the application of AI to specific professions within the government bureaucracy. They were largely exploratory, underscoring the necessity for case studies in specific aspects of e-governance.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to describe and explore the benefits and challenges of deploying AI for public communication management in Lagos State. The study further investigated the perceptions of Lagos State public affairs managers on the extent to which deploying AI in the state could enhance public communications management.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is AI being deployed by Lagos State's public affairs managers in the performance of their duties?
2. In what ways can AI make public affairs management by the Lagos State Government more effective?
3. What challenges are currently being faced by Lagos State public affairs managers in the use of AI?
4. What do Lagos State public affairs managers think about the integration of AI in public communications management?

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The advent of computers and their extended technologies has transformed (and is still transforming) all professions. For instance, in the public communications sector, it has paved the way for easier and more efficient paths in research, public speaking, presentations, and internal and external communications. Nonetheless, as expected with advances in human knowledge, new technologies do not just aid humans in carrying out tasks; technology has been trying to "replace" humans with machines. John McCarthy, regarded as the founding father of AI, defines the praxis as science and engineering of making intelligent machines (Domke et al., 1999). It is the theory, development and use of computer systems to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence.

AI took more than seven decades to achieve the prominence and attention it currently enjoys worldwide. In the early 1950s, Allan Turing began spadework on how to make computer machinery "intelligent" – to exercise initiative and carry out tasks beyond the instructions given to it. His effort later led to the Turing Test – a measurement of the computer's intelligence, which is now more commonly referred to as artificial intelligence (Folayan et al., 2022). Progressing through the decades, the computer was made to make complex computations, hold awesomely huge data, remember and process information rapidly, respond to natural language quickly and make decisions and actions on its own, very much like (if not better than) the human being.

The current (fifth) industrial revolution is being anchored by AI. The four previous revolutions were highlighted by the transition from peasantry to mechanization and factory system: automation, steam engine, electricity, and digitization (including robotics). While the early revolutions practically eluded Africa, affecting few fields of endeavor and providing little economic transformation, the latter revolutions and the latest revolution are expected to affect more professions and endeavors in Africa (Korpelainen, 2011). This emerging revolution has also been described as featuring "disruptive technologies" such as the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality (VR), and AI (Ajzen, 2012). The adoption of new technologies in the news production process, for example, has given birth to phenomena such as "robotic reporter," "robot journalism," "automated journalism," and "programmatic advertising." These terms have one thing in common: the use of Algorithms, AI, software and natural language processing (NLP) techniques to produce media content (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

There are four main AI types envisioned and conceptualized by scientists: reactive machines, limited memory machines, theory of mind, and self-awareness. While the first two types have been accomplished, the latter two are still being envisioned and have not been fully accomplished, but scientists are making swift progress in attaining the stage. *Reactive machines* can take inputs from users to deliver outputs requested. *Limited memory machines* imitate the way human brains work. It can tap into the experiences in its environment and take actions based on its "experiences." A

typical example of a limited memory machine is the driverless car. *Theory of Mind* is the future computer that would demonstrate deeper thoughts and emotions. The final destination of AI consciousness is *Self-Awareness*. At this level, a robot, for example, would be able not only to know when it is hungry, but also could decide when to eat. (Domke et al., 1999).

Two of the most cited theories on the adoption of new technologies – the Technology Acceptance Model Theory (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) serve as theoretical grounding for this investigation. TAM aims to predict and explain ICT usage behavior, i.e., what causes potential adopters to accept or reject the use of information technology (IT), (Korpelainen, 2011). The theory draws its constructs from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). TAM proposes that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are the two critical factors that determine a user's likelihood of accepting a new technology. The *perceived usefulness* refers to extent to which an individual thinks a new technology would make its work more efficient. On the other hand, *perceived ease of use* refers to how difficult the individual thinks it would to adopt the new technology. The UTAUT attempts to integrate other popular models that explain ICT usage, namely TRA, TAM, the Motivational Model (TMM), and Diffusion of Innovation (Venkatesh et al., 2003). The theory emphasizes a user's *intent* to use ICT and predicts his or her subsequent user-behavior. It has four constructs: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

In the present study, both TAM and UTAUT provide insight into how public affairs managers (new or prospective users of AI) perceive the new technology. The theories predict that if the public affairs managers perceive AI as capable of enhancing their duties effectively, they would embrace the new technology. In addition, if they find the technology quite easy to use, they would want to adopt it. The facilitating conditions of public affairs managers adopting AI (according to TAM and UTAUT) would include social influence, government policies and regulations

2. Methods

The key variables in the investigation were: *current usage* (extent to which AI was being used by Lagos State public affairs officers at the time of the study); *perceived usefulness* (the ways through which AI could help Lagos State public affairs perform their jobs better); *difficulty* (the challenges being faced by Lagos State public affairs who made efforts to adopt AI in the performance of their official duties); and *preparedness* (the overall perception of the public affairs officers in terms of how ready they are to use AI in governance). Indicators of the foregoing were inferential statistics and central tendencies drawn from a standardized survey of the public affairs officers. Expert opinions of experienced senior public affairs managers were also sought. Pearson's coefficient variable was calculated to indicate the preparedness of the public affairs managers for the adoption of AI (Ayedun-Aluma et al., 2022).

The researchers adopted the mixed-method design (a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques). According to Folayan and Obi-Okoye (2025), there are 1,556 public affairs specialists in government institutions in Nigeria (Federal and State Governments). The spatial distribution of the public affairs specialists across the country is haphazard (for example, Zamfara State has just 15 practitioners, while Ondo and Lagos States have 32 and 500, respectively). Getting equal or proportional representation from all 36 states making up Nigeria could affect the quality of responses due to the significant gap in practical experiences between Lagos State-based practitioners and those from most of the other states, where public affairs practice is still fledgling. Therefore, to ensure that detailed, valid and reliable insights were obtained from knowledgeable participants, the researchers chose Lagos State as the study location. The decision to make Lagos State the study location was also underscored by the fact that in a pre-test conducted by the researchers. Lagos State had far more communication and information technology infrastructure than the other states. Half of the population of public affairs specialists in Lagos State, (250), was systematically selected as respondents to a set of structured and semi-structured questionnaires based on the research questions of the study. This was to enhance validity and reliability as it would reduce bias and enhance quality control. This approach was also cost-effective. Experts recommend this technique (purposive sampling) for case studies so that researchers can select specific cases that are representative of the phenomena being investigated (Ayedun-Aluma et al., 2022). To strengthen the validity and reliability of the method adopted, in-depth interviews were conducted with four strategically-selected public affairs officials. Each of the four interviewees has spent at least 25 years in the Ministry and had moved round several ministries and local government councils as public affairs officers and managers. In addition, they differed in specializations – two were media analysts, one was public relations specialists and one was a researcher/administrator. The public affairs officials were picked for the interviews also because of their current areas of primary assignment – one each to represent parastatals, ministries, agencies and local government service. This triangulation of interviews was also to provide perspectives on the responses. The in-depth interviews were structured into three sessions: extent of AI adoption, perception of the effectiveness of AI, and the challenges of integrating AI into public affairs management in government institutions.

3. Results

Quantitative data from the study were processed using the Scientific Package for Social Sciences software, (2023 edition), with emphasis on inferential statistics and central tendencies. To test relationships between variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The in-depth interviews were transcribed with Samsung Live Transcribe (data preparation), and the transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy and coded according to patterns and themes, for comparative analysis.

The results of the investigation are presented in three perspectives: The extent to which AI is being deployed by Lagos State public affairs managers in the performance of their duties; Public affairs managers' perception of ways that could make AI help public affairs managers to be more effective; and perception of the problems and challenges of using AI for public affairs management.

The extent to which AI can be deployed is highly dependent on existing ICT infrastructure and policy in the state. As indicated earlier in this report, Lagos State has a robust ICT infrastructure, which is growing rapidly. However, the researchers found that most of the public affairs managers had no prior training in AI.

Table 1. Previous training in AI

SN	Responses	Number of Respondents (%)
1	Yes	12 (4.8%)
2	No	238 (95.2%)
		250 (100%)

The number of participants who had prior AI training is displayed in Table 1. Most participants (95.2%) confirmed that they had no prior AI training, while 4.8% claimed to have had some training in AI.

The researchers also examined the perceived benefits of adopting AI by the public affairs managers across genders. The outcome is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Perception benefit across gender

Item	Male	Female	Total
AI is more beneficial to my duties	81 (67.5%)	112 (86.15%)	193 (77.2%)
AI is not beneficial to my duties	29 (24.17%)	10(7.7%)	39 (15.6%)
Not sure/Neutral	10 (8.3%)	8(6.15%)	18 (7.2%)
	120	130	250

Table 2 shows that 86.15% of the female respondents thought AI would be more helpful for their day-to-day tasks, while 67.5% of the male respondents also had this opinion. However, according to 24.17% of males and 7.7% of females, AI is not helpful for their jobs. On the other hand, 7.2% of respondents—8.3% of males and 6.15% of females—were unable to take a position on the usefulness of Al on their official duties. The category of respondents who indicated "Not sure" were those who believed that AI is as beneficial as it is harmful. They represent less than a tenth of the respondents.

Table 3. Perception of most important benefit of AI

SN	Item	Number of Respondents (%)
1	Enhanced efficiency and high-quality outputs	50 (20%)
2	Speed	65 (26%)
3	Convenience	43 (17.2%)
4	Cost effectiveness	33 (13.2%)
5	Accuracy	25 (10%)
6	Don't know/Not sure	34 (13.6%)
		250 (100%)

Table 3 indicates how the public affairs managers perceive the most important benefit of AI. One-fifth of the respondents confirmed that AI increased productivity on high-quality output, 26% agreed that the speed of task completion is perceived as an AI benefit, 17.2% said it makes tasks more convenient for them to complete, and 13.2% said it is consistently effective. Comparably, 10% of respondents claimed that AI operates accurately, while 13.6% of respondents were unsure of what is the most important benefit of the technology. Respondents who indicated "Don't know" were not sure of which benefit of AI to select as "most". Some of them were not familiar enough with AI to appropriately respond to the question.

Table 4. Perception ease of use of AI

SN	Item	Number of Respondents (%)
1	Loss of creativity	60 (24%)
2	Difficulty in mastering protocols	55 (22%)
3	Limitations of AI's capacity	30 (12%)
4	Fear of been indolent/ Lazy	45 (18%)
5	Fear of losing job to AI	20 (8%)
6	Inacceptable evidence due to high cost and high level of illiteracy	40 (16%)
		250 (100%)

According to the results, one of every four public affairs managers who responded thought AI would bring about a loss of creativity. About one-fifth of them said it would make learning protocols harder, 12% claimed AI has limited use, and 18% said they were afraid that AI could make them lazier in their lines of work. Similarly, 16% of the respondents felt that AI was unacceptable because of its high cost and the high illiteracy rate amongst their primary audiences. Close to 10% feared that AI could cost them their jobs, since it would be able to take over the jobs currently being performed by the managers (Table 4).

Table 5. Most suitable for AI

SN	Duties/ Task	Number of Respondents (%)
1	Content creation and analysis	65 (26%)
2	Research	65 (26%)
3	Media relations	40 (16%)
4	Media monitoring	47 (18.8%)
5	Community/ Stake holders' engagement advocacy	25 (10%)
6	Crisis Communication	8 (3.2%)
		250 (100%)

Nevertheless, all the respondents agreed that AI could perform public affairs duties in one way or another. According to the respondents, AI could be used for public affairs duties in the following ways: media relations (26%), research (26%), and content creation/analysis (6%). Comparatively, almost one-fifth of respondents said they used AI for media monitoring, 10% for lobbying community/stakeholder engagement, and 3.2% said they used AI-embedded software for crisis communication.

Table 6. Problems and challenges of AI

SN	Item	N
1	Lack of originality and creativity	93 (37.2%)
2	Difficulty of adoption to public affairs duties and task	63 (25.2%)
3	Culture of Bureaucracy	50 (20%)
4	Cost of developing AI software	20 (8%)
5	Lack of skilled human power	13 (5.20%)
6	Need for human relations	11 (4.4%)
		250 (100%)

Regarding the issues and difficulties associated with AI, as shown in Table 6, roughly 37.2% of respondents agreed that AI lacked originality and creativity, 25.2% thought it was hard to apply AI to tasks or duties related to public affairs, and 20% agreed that AI would conflict with the traditional bureaucratic culture of the civil service. Bureaucratic culture is typically hierarchical and driven by rules and regulations in which communication is usually secretive and formal. The results show that one-fifth of the public affairs perceived that AI would disrupt this culture, resulting in inefficiency. Furthermore, 8% of the respondents said that the price of creating AI software is too high; 5.2% said that it could lead to a shortage of qualified human labor, and 4.4% said that interpersonal relationships would be eliminated by AI if adopted.

Other findings

Apart from the aforesaid findings of the research salient to the research objectives, the data also reveal important facts about the different media preferences of the public affairs managers in the performance of their duties.

When it comes to the preferred media among the public affairs managers in Lagos State, the data reveals that 40.8% of the respondents use it for social media, 21.2% for broadcast media (TV and radio), 15.2% for newspapers, 14.4% for online news media, 4.4% for traditional media, and 4% for interpersonal, group, and outdoor communication.

Table 7. Media preferences among Lagos State public affairs managers in performance of their official duties

SN	Item	N
1	Social media	102 (40.8%)
2	Broadcast media (TV) Radio	53 (21.2%)
3	Newspaper	38 (15.2%)
4	Online news media	36 (14.4%)
5	Oral media (Traditional Media)	11 (4.4%)
6	Other (Interpersonal, group, outdoor communication)	10 (4%)
		250 (100%)

Table 8. Relationship between the variables

		AI	PREP	INTEGRATION	SUITABILITY
AI	Pearson Correlation	1	.841**	.839**	.815**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	250	250	250	250
PREP	Pearson Correlation	.841**	1	.852**	.839**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	250	250	250	250
INTEGRATION	Pearson Correlation	.839**	.852**	1	.952**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	250	250	250	250
SUITABILITY	Pearson Correlation	.815**	.839**	.952**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	250	250	250	250

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results presented in Table 8 show the relationship between the variables: AI, the preparedness of Lagos State public affairs managers in using AI, the integration of AI, and the sustainability of AI. The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between AI and the preparedness of Lagos State public affairs managers in using AI, with a correlation coefficient of 0.841. Similarly, a strong positive relationship between AI and integration of AI is observed, with a correlation coefficient of 0.839. There is also a strong positive relationship between the suitability of AI in preparing the duties of the public affairs managers in Lagos State, with a correlation coefficient of 0.815. All variables have a significant relationship with AI, with their respective p-values less than the 5% significance level. Hence, AI has a significant relationship with the preparedness of the public affairs managers, integration of AI, and the suitability of AI.

Data generated from the in-depth interviews correlate with the quantitative data. On current usage of AI*,* the interviewees said most of their colleagues were not using AI in carrying out their official duties. The interviewees perceived AI as useful for the performance of public affairs duties. Three of the four interviewees viewed the difficulty of adopting AI stemming from lack of clear and firm government policy on AI usage. The interviewees agree that Lagos State public affairs specialists were "not ready" for the adoption of AI in their official duties for two principal reasons: lack of basic knowledge in the application software and lack of financial empowerment to use the technology. One of the interviewees put it succinctly:

> The idea of losing one's job is not the main issue. People had similar fears when the computer replaced typewriters. Rather than displace us on our jobs, AI would enhance them, but is the government ready to provide the necessary tools? These tools are not free. (Seriki, 2025, Participant II, KII)).

4. Discussion

The present investigation suggests that public affairs managers in the services of the Lagos State Government consider AI to be potentially useful in the performance of their official duties (research and content creation recorded the highest percentages of potential usage (26 per cent each) . A strong positive relationship between AI and integration (0.839) establishes that the public affairs were willing but not necessarily ready to adopt AI (due to some perceived challenges). Generally, the public affairs officials are lagging in climbing the four-step ladder of AI competence. They are presently at the "limited memory machines" level of adoption, while most of their counterparts in China and many other developed countries are at the last two stages – "theory of mind" and "self-awareness." For example, currently, there is practically no official task of the public affairs specialist that cannot be performed by AI in reality. Public sector organizations use AI for analytic capabilities and are curating data-driven cultures worldwide, which help them to make more informed analyses and proffer solutions. The goal of the government in making Lagos a "smart city" would be difficult to attain without AI.

The present investigation underscores the constructs of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits that *perceived usefulness* and *perceived ease of use* are the two critical factors that determine a user's likelihood of accepting a new technology. In other words, it predicts that the degree to which the public affairs managers believe that using a particular system would enhance his or her performance would determine their acceptance of the technology. The degree to which public affairs managers of Lagos State perceive AI to be capable of enhancing the effective

performance of their duties directly correlates with their acceptance of the technology. (Choudrie, et al., 2017). The respondents differ remarkably in terms of what they considered as low points for the adoption of AI in carrying out their duties. Lack of originality, however, comes first in the negative attributes of AI when considered for use in public affairs management duties. This may be because they feared that AI software would give the same standard responses to questions put to it. This further shows their misconception of the potency of AI technology, because, in reality, the essence of AI is to make the computer "more creative," rather than being merely "reactive technology."

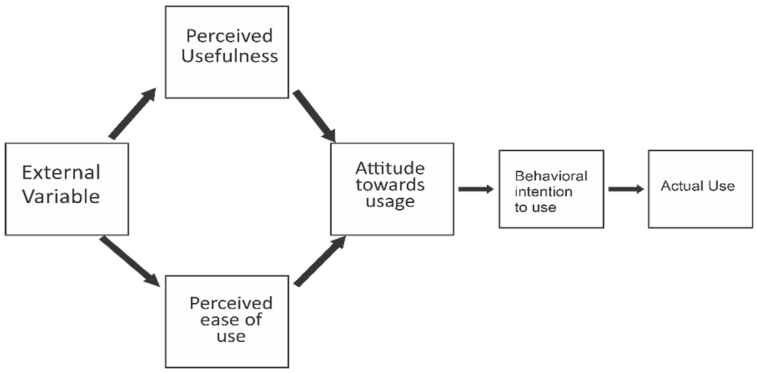

Figure 1. Technology Acceptance Model

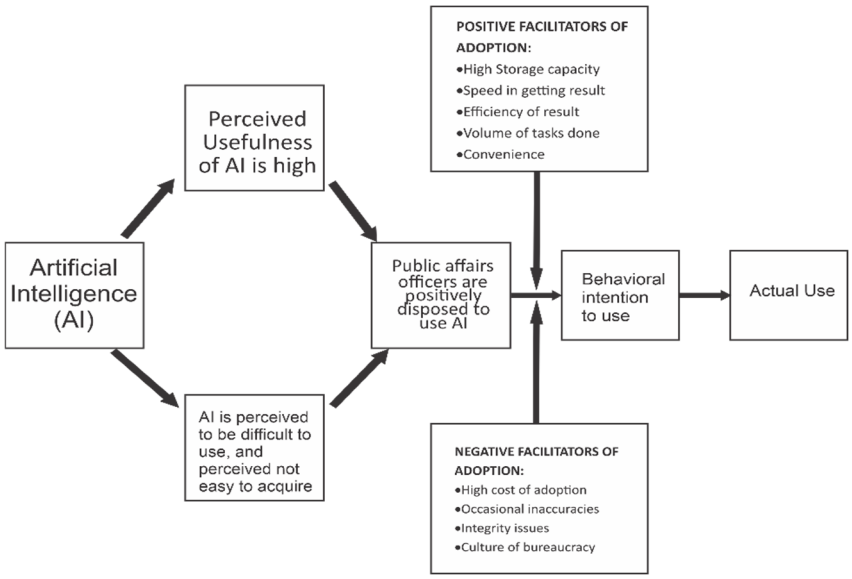

Figure 2. Adoption of AI extrapolated on Technology Acceptance Model

As depicted in Fig 2, the public affairs officials perceived AI as *useful* in performing their official duties. They perceived AI as *difficult* to acquire and apply. Further, the public officials (despite perceiving AI as difficult to use, still indicated their willingness to use it in their official duties (*positive attitude towards AI.* However, "behavioral intention to use AI" is determined by two groups of interactive intervening factors (*facilitating factors of behavioral intent).* There are *Positive Facilitating Factors* such as speed in getting jobs done through AI; efficiency of outcomes; volume tasks done, convenience and huge storage capacity of AI. The *Negative Facilitating Factors* include presumed high cost of adoption; occasional inaccuracies; integrity issues and bureaucratic culture of the public service. According to Fig 2, a majority of the officials have intention to use AI but in reality, they do not use AI. It, therefore, means that perceived usefulness may not necessarily lead to adoption and use of the AI technology. In the same way, people may perceive as a new technology to be difficult to use and still go ahead to use it. Actual use depends on the intensity of the positive and negative forces which mediate between predisposition and behavior intention, and which eventually determines actual use.

A senior official, who participated in the interview, put it aptly in an earlier publication:

> Most of us are computer-literate. But using AI to do our jobs is another ball game. I don't know how that will play out. I see AI in mass communication as helpful in documentation but our job requires a lot of initiatives and creativity, which I am not sure AI can do. I however see AI as an emerging

> technology that we cannot rule out. If all other professionals like medical doctors and lawyers, advertising practitioners are using AI, then we have to prepare for it. (Seriki, 2024:6)

The results identified AI training and the building of ICT infrastructure as facilitating conditions (e.g., government policies and regulations) for the use of AI in public affairs management. The finding that an overwhelming percentage of the public affairs managers prefer social media to traditional media is an encouraging prospect for the adoption of AI in public affairs. This discovery agrees with previous findings by Ugwueze and Okeke (2023) and Folayan et al. (2021). Having ICT infrastructure and being predisposed to the use of social media are good prospects for adopting AI.

5. Conclusion

This investigation has described and explored the benefits and challenges of deploying AI for public communications management in Lagos State. The study further analyzed the perceptions of Lagos State public affairs managers as to their preparedness to adopt and deploy AI in the performance of their duties.

From data generated from the investigation, a conclusion can be drawn that most public affairs managers in the Lagos State civil service are not currently using AI in the course of their duties, but are willing (though not prepared) to adopt AI. If the perceived negative characteristics of technology (such as lack of originality, presumed high cost of adopting it and presumed occasional inaccuracies of AI) are addressed, the innovation could be adopted for the duties of public affairs managers to carry out their official duties such as press releases, writing speeches, conducting analytics and carrying out research speedily. Training and capacity building in the acquisition of AI competence are the major challenges in this regard.

Recommendations

Based on the findings to the present investigation, it is recommended that the government should build robust software, preparatory to the proper adoption of AI by public affairs specialists. The government should also commission software engineers to develop prototype AI applications in specific areas of public affairs management – speech writing, media relations, documentary writing, etc. Also, public affairs managers should undertake self-improvement competence training and up-skilling in AI.

Further studies are required and recommended on the use of AI in other areas of information and sustainable governance,, apart from public affairs management in the public service.

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