

ASSESSING ETHICAL LIMITS OF AI PHOTO AND VIDEO USAGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Ben Ita Odeba, *PhD* & Helen Osamede-Akins

Department of Mass Communication, Bingham University, Karu, Nasarawa State

benjamin.odeba@binghamuni.edu.ng, osamedehelen@yahoo.com

+2347017280999, +2316474807349

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence-generated photos and videos, ranging from deepfakes to artificially enhanced campaigns, make it difficult for citizens to distinguish between facts and deliberate manipulations. This is a challenge to the ability of Nigerians to discern truth in political engagements on social media. Anchored on media ethics and social responsibility theories, this study examined ethical limits for AI photo and video usage in social media political engagement. A mixed-methods approach was used. A sample size of 385 Abuja social media users were surveyed while nine journalists from prominent Nigerian media outlets were interviewed. Findings reveal a high level of awareness of AI-generated political content by the general public and low level of trust and negative perception. Journalists do not use AI-created images due to ethical concerns such as disinformation, risks to authenticity, and political polarization and demand for transparency, norms of verification, regulation, and privacy protection. The study concluded that transparency, verification, and professional responsibility are the ethical standards needed to curb manipulation, misinformation, and disinformation in social media political engagement. The study recommends that media organizations, media professionals and the federal government of Nigeria should prioritize digital literacy for Journalists, transparency in newsrooms, updated industry standards and responsible regulation.

Keywords: AI-generated visuals, deepfakes, political communication, social media, journalistic ethics

Introduction

The emergence of digital space and media is gradually transforming communication, interaction, and participation processes in modern societies globally. Among these developments are AI-generated photo and video contents, deepfakes, and synthetic media being used increasingly as tools of political communication, most notably through social media channels. With new opportunities for narrative and audience engagement open, these new tools and digital technologies pose complex ethical, professional, and societal challenges, especially in terms of misinformation, manipulation, and trust issues among the public (Christodoulou & Iordanou, 2021). The use of AI-generated visual media in political communications is quickly giving rise to wider ethical issues. Deepfakes and other forms of synthetic content threaten democracy by undermining public trust in media and factual discourse (Westerlund, 2019).

The opportunity for such dangers arises in nascent democracies such as Nigeria, which, riddled with fragile political systems, unawareness among the suitable populace, and a greatly fragmented political landscape, forms ideal conditions for the exploitation of new technologies. Politically speaking, social media has provided a relatively uncontested arena of free expression and mobilization for Nigeria's youth, with platforms such as Twitter (now X), Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The advent of the internet has led to a rapid expansion of social media in Nigeria, with a focus on political opinion and mobilization (Chukwudubem, 2025). This increase in influence has also led to a surge in visuals, including photographs and videos, aimed at swaying citizens' opinions during elections, protests, and national discussions. AI elements were recently injected into the generation, initiation, and distribution of these hyper-real yet possibly corruptible images (Alnaser, 2024).

The use of such visuals for politically charged purposes certainly hampered the issues of professional journalism, policymaking, and digital literacy. Consequently, journalists and media practitioners in Nigeria experience growing pressure on them to maintain relevance in the fast-paced, digitally driven media landscape. AI tools present an opportunity for speed and efficiency

as well as creative content generation. However, with these advantages may also come ethical conundrums. Politicians, campaign teams, and media entrepreneurs may use such content to exaggerate achievements, demonize opponents, or manipulate audiences emotionally. According to Chukwu (2025), political actors in Nigeria have a long history of using media to advance partisan interests, and AI tools now offer more sophisticated ways of achieving such ends.

Nevertheless, the motivations of journalists, who generally operate in editorial surroundings where the use of AI goes unregulated, remain largely unstudied. Public knowledge is, in itself, an ethical question that determines the reception, interpretation, and uses attached to visual content in the political arena (Ireton & Posetti, 2018). Unfettered dispersal of synthetic visuals in election-prone Nigeria might fuel misinformation, political violence, or voter apathy. With these changes put on the forefront, developing certain ethical considerations or restrictions on the use of AI-generated pictures and videos in political communication, especially on social media platforms, has become a must. This study, therefore, explored setting ethical limits for AI photo and video usage in social media political engagement.

Statement of the Problem

The rise of AI in visual media production has birthed massive dynamics in political communication, particularly on social media platforms that are widely used in Nigeria for political mobilization, debate, and propaganda. AI-generated images and videos, pure deepfakes, or campaigns that are synthetically enhanced have minimized the line between factual representation and fabrication, rendering citizens almost helpless in distinguishing real from manipulated (Talabi et al., 2024; Westerlund, 2019). Nigeria presently lacks policies that govern the ethical use of these technologies, particularly in political communication by journalists and political influencers who are well-versed with them. The lack of ethical boundaries constitutes a complex issue. Several factors related to the production, circulation, and perception of manipulated political visuals among the Nigerian public have been scientifically analysed to gain some empirical understanding, especially in the context of political dialogue (Ferrari, 2018).

Misinformation, disinformation and digitally manipulated images are largely consumed uncritically by citizens and the public, which may distort public views and undermine election integrity (Ogbodo et al., 2023). The extent to which Nigerian journalists use AI tools for creating or editing photos and videos for political purposes is also very poorly documented. In a very competitive and time-rushed media environment, employing AI can also be another way to drum up attention, pull in engagement, or work to propagate a political narrative. However, such motivations may inadvertently promote misinformation or erode the credibility of professional journalism, as there exist tensions between the technological possibilities offered by AI and the journalistic principles of truth, transparency, and accountability (Ireton & Posetti, 2018).

Conversely, while anecdotal evidence suggests a rising trend in digital content enhancement and automation, the motivations, whether professional, ideological, or economic, behind such practices are not understood. The present media ethical frameworks in Nigeria do not adequately address the issues around synthetic media, and therefore a significant vacuum exists in terms of regulatory and professional guidance (Igbashangev et al., 2023). Hence, this study seeks to address the glaring gaps by looking, concretely, at how ethical constraints can be developed to govern the use of AI-generated photos and videos in political engagement on social media. By doing so, the study aims to contribute toward the development of an ethical framework that balances innovation with accountability in the age of AI-powered political communication.

Conceptual Clarifications

Artificial intelligence is one of the most transformative technologies ever conceived in this epoch. Westerlund (2019) posited that, while AI enhances speed, automation, and personalization in journalism and political communication, particularly with the rise of AI-generated visual content, it also raises significant ethical and regulatory concerns. Artificial intelligence is generally considered the ability of machines or computer systems to accomplish activities that would ordinarily demand intelligent human behaviour. These include reasoning, learning, visual perception, language understanding and decision-making (Vinuesa et al., 2020).

Odeba, B.I.; Osamede-Akins, H.

Copyright © 2026 JOCRE. All rights reserved (<https://www.jocre.com.ng>)

Based on media context, AI refers to a software system that can analyse, generate, and manipulate texts, audio, and visuals either autonomously or semi-autonomously (Beckett, 2019).

According to Chukwudubem (2025), "Artificial intelligence in journalism is the use of algorithms and data-driven technology that mimics human cognition to help or replace parts of the journalistic process." There is no doubt that AI has made a significant impact on journalism in various ways. These include automated news writing, audience analysis, speech recognition, and fact-checking systems. Journalists now use AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT for draughting content, DALL-E for generating images, and Synthesia for producing lifelike video avatars (Ejifoma, 2025). Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other social media sites are thus using AI to curate their content feeds, look for hate speech, and flag misinformation for a better user experience. Ironically, the very platforms themselves are increasingly becoming the breeding ground for AI-generated content, especially synthetic images and videos meant to be misleading (Sadiku et al., 2021).

This situation creates an ethical dilemma: on one side, AI enhances content discovery and engagement, while on the other, it spreads manipulated media, particularly AI-generated images and videos. The term "deepfakes" usually refers to such creations that reach their goal using advanced machine learning, specifically, Generative Adversarial Nets (GANs). As noted by Sadiku et al. (2021), these technologies can produce strikingly realistic images or videos of individuals doing things they never actually did, leading viewers to struggle with distinguishing reality from fabrication. Normally used for harmless and entertaining purposes, deepfakes are now turning into a grave global issue regarding political communication. In the recent Nigerian elections, distorted images on social media and WhatsApp platforms have tremendously increased, and, on several occasions, these have included fake endorsements or fake clips of news (Adisa, 2025).

Individuals can fabricate and disseminate deepfakes globally within a few hours. "Anytime an act of generating so-called AI-generated media assists in eroding public trust in journalism, it can

provide political actors with tools to discredit opponents or misinform the public in real time" (Abideen, 2024). The low digital literacy of much of the Nigerian populace complicates the situation, making it difficult for audiences to verify whether the visual political content is real or not (Adeleke et al., 2023). Every day, political actors deploy AI-generated photos and videos for various purposes. Such purposes may include discrediting opponents, improving candidate image, disinformation, or propagating ideological narratives. Unlike the usual political propaganda that requires a certain network, anyone with basic knowledge can create AI-generated visuals using simple tools. Therefore, the visual realism of these visuals poses a significant threat to political dialogue and democratic processes (Sholola et al., 2024).

Social Media Political Engagement

Today, social media is a critical channel for the political expression of civic opinion and participation in any digitally connected society (Boulianne, 2019). Hence, one considers social media political engagement to refer to the multitude of ways in which individuals, groups, and organisations use digital platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube to discuss politics, mobilise public opinion, work on policymakers' decisions, and create civic participation. Political engagement in this way may include sharing or commenting on political posts, digitally signing petitions, attending online protests, watching live political discussions or events, or using hashtags to promote awareness on certain political issues (Boulianne, 2019). Following Theocharis (2015), such politicized online activity is to be deemed "digitally networked participation", where networked media platforms empower a potential individual to embark on some form of personalized action towards pressuring political institutions or expressing civic opinions.

Social media redefines civic interaction by providing a political engagement that is horizontal, participatory, and real-time, whereas local communication or elite interactions were previously the only avenues available (Morah & Nwafor, 2024). Having been inculcated in Nigeria's socio-political matrix, social media constitutes a powerful tool for youth to mobilise, monitor elections, educate the populace politically, and conduct various forms of civil disobedience. The

#EndSARS campaign and the subsequent youth engagement in the 2023 elections are model examples of how social media may be used to promote democratic participation even in countries with very limited traditional civic spaces (Bello & Kaufhold, 2023). These platforms offer powerful features such as immediacy, visuality, and virality, which facilitate the rapid dissemination of information and democratize political discourse. In this respect, ensuring the freedom of expression on social networks also gave rise to a new set of ethical, societal, and political concerns, which may have been irrevocably worsened by the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the generation of photographic and video content (Bello & Kaufhold, 2023).

This brings us to the crucial concern of the interface between AI-generated visual media and political engagement in social media. On one hand, AI tools can enhance political communication by creating compelling visuals, simulating future political scenarios, or translating messages across languages and cultures (Chesney & Citron, 2019). This makes it obvious that the same tools can be exploited for political manipulation, disinformation campaigns, reputation attacks, and voter suppression, especially in politically volatile societies. "AI slop", therefore, is the rise of low-quality, confusing, or manipulative AI content, amidst increasing fears that synthetic media may distort political facts and erode citizen engagement on the basis of informed decisions (Hern, 2025). Fake news aided by AI and doctored images tends to be more appealing than real facts, according to Shin (2024), making it even more likely to go viral.

Political actors and interest groups, even governments, have exploited this reality to spread content supportive of their account or in opposition to their rival. In Nigeria, there have been obvious instances of AI-generated images being used in political campaigns for the purpose of enhancing or destroying candidates' reputations, in most cases with no clear disclosure that the material is synthetic (Adelagun, 2025). The use of AI-based visual tools in political context raises questions about truth, accountability, and potential harm. The thin line between artistic political expression and deliberate deception becomes further blurred when the majority of the audience cannot distinguish between a real production and a synthetic one. Low digital literacy

in certain population groups compounds the issue by making them susceptible to misinformation. The lack of a strong regulatory framework in many countries, including Nigeria, has created a perfect environment in which unethical practices in AI media remain unscrutinized (Nnamani, 2025).

Ethical Journalism and AI Manipulation

Ethical journalism means to gather, produce, and disseminate news and information with integrity, truth, accountability, and fair judgement. The Ethical Journalism Network (EJN) listed some of the core values of ethical journalism, namely accuracy, independence, impartiality, humanity, and accountability (EJN, 2023). These values serve as guidelines for journalistic behaviour under normative standards in both conventional and non-conventional media environments. Ethics in journalism compels a journalist to go for fact-checking before the publication of a story, consult sources with full disclosure, and maintain a clear conscience against the allure of sensationalism while also not causing uncalled-for hurt. The press has a foundational obligation to produce reporting that brings in issues of public concern, balanced by the facts and fair comment. As digital and computerized tools, particularly AI, become more accessible and integrated into journalistic processes, the sanctity of journalistic ethics must be preserved (Mahony & Chen, 2024).

While the AI integration into the digital media landscape continues to evolve, new ethical issues come to light, especially in politics, where doctored or manipulated images and videos are all employed in this shaping of public opinion, in this discrediting of real opposition, and in this distortion of real democratic processes. In the Nigerian setting, the Federal Government has recently raised concerns about the ethics of AI in journalism, alongside some professional bodies such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists. On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day 2025, celebrated in Abuja, the government called on media houses to develop AI-use policies that should uphold the core values of journalism in all aspects, including any form of misuse (Anthony, 2025). NUJ had doubled down on this position, insisting that media practitioners,

technologists, and civil society actors must work together in ensuring that the AI technology is wielded for good (Akpan, 2025).

Ethical journalism includes, depending on the jurisdiction, requirements for declaring AI-generated content, guarantees for human editorial control, and creation of a set of newsroom guidelines to navigate AI-centric problems transparently (Dierickx et al., 2024). A foremost challenge in AI-related videos and photos is AI manipulation. Mahony & Chen (2024) described AI manipulation as the use of AI technologies, such as generative adversarial networks (GANs), to create or alter content with the intent to deceive or mislead an audience. The primary form of AI manipulation is the infamous deepfake, which refers to any kind of synthetic media where an existing image or video of one person is digitally replaced by the likeness of another, often without the consent of the individual in question or for nefarious purposes.

AI manipulation occurs in social media and political communication when campaign videos, forged photographs, or visual clips are manipulated, maligning an opponent or creating controversy. These fake materials pose threats to democratic integrity given they fabricate erroneous narratives, cause unrest, and sow doubt into the perfection of journalism and its governance (Adamu et al., 2024). Temir (2020) maintained that the growing sophistication of AI manipulation is what particularly sets it apart as dangerous. Today's deepfake technology and hyper-realistic AI-generated images can deceive the average viewer into questioning their perception of reality. In essence, this behaviour distances journalists and media outlets from verification in the face of viral misinformation risk (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Wired, 2023).

From an ethical perspective, while AI may be used to fine-tune visual storytelling or automate production workflows, its approach to subverting political propaganda negates any semblance of responsible journalism. Hence, scholars stress the need for strong institutional frameworks and codes of ethics regulating the manner in which AI-generated content is created, distributed, and labelled (Anthony, 2024). In these digital spaces, especially in politically charged environments, the widespread use of AI-generated images and videos raises ethical concerns. If fake videos

depict a candidate as intoxicated, crying, or otherwise altered by AI, voters' perceptions could be influenced before any mechanisms are in place to ensure their veracity. Journalists who share such content may unknowingly propagate disinformation due to inadequate scrutiny. On the other hand, political actors may intentionally use these visuals to garner approval or demonize their opponents (Dierick et al., 2024).

It must be noted that if all these ethical challenges are not addressed, the situation might lead to social and individual infringements that might affect or be constant threats to Nigerian democracy, journalism, and civil discourse. In other words, the combination of politics, media, and artificial intelligence in the internet era has made ethical dilemmas even more challenging (Kietzmann et al., 2020). Nigeria stands at the crossroads in terms of holding the sanctity of democratic discourse and the trust of the people against AI-generated photos and videos, including deepfakes, artificially generated voices, and half-truthful political narratives (Okocha, 2024). In a country where social media have largely come to share the role of traditional channels in political expression and participation, the ethical issues of AI media in political engagement are crucial in the discussion of technological emergence and sustenance of democracy (Kietzmann et al., 2020).

While these technologies have opened up numerous opportunities for media creation, they are at present being employed to further political ends. Deepfakes, for instance, can be used to create fake political endorsements, fabricate scandals, manipulate voter perceptions, or, in essence, put the entire democratic process under peril (Chesney & Citron, 2019). Political activities have thus largely moved online in Nigeria, with Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and WhatsApp acting as the main theatres for campaign messaging, citizen mobilization, and civic debate (Chukwudubem, 2025). On the negative side, these platforms serve as a breeding ground for misinformation, disinformation, and AI-manipulated content, primarily during election periods (Jinadu, 2023). Such a metamorphosis forces us to think further about the impact of AI-generated visuals on political communication channels, public perception, and electoral credibility.

Madobi (2025) states that the ethics of AI-generated media in a political setting can be framed under four main foci: misinformation or manipulation, lack of consent or identity theft, erosion of public trust, and accountability. Deliberately disseminating AI-generated disinformation undermines democratic participation. Research has produced the idea that deepfakes can influence political opinions, incite violence, or suppress voter turnouts simply by distorting the political realities (Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). For example, fake videos of candidates making inflammatory comments may be circulated to ignite ethnic or religious tensions; such propaganda is an increasingly worrying issue in the ethnically diverse and politically sensitive atmosphere of Nigeria (Madobi, 2025). Deepfakes' use of real people's images and voices raises fundamental questions about consent and an individual's digital identity.

It was reported in the Fact Encyclopaedia of Africa (2025) that some prominent Nigerian figures, including Pastor Enoch Adeboye and Seun Okinbaloye, have recently been targeted by fraudulent AI-generated videos that promote fake cryptocurrency schemes. These AI-generated materials have the potential to erode public trust in the information landscape. For instance, viral videos claiming to show election fraud and AI-driven campaign ads that spread rapidly on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp are significant examples of this issue (Madobi, 2025; Adelagun, 2025). Nigeria, like many other emerging democracies, lacks the legal and moral foundations necessary to effectively defend against threats posed by AI-generated political media. While the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) have promulgated rather generic guidelines for the use of digital communication, there is yet no mention of synthetic media in the political communication context (Lund et al., 2025).

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the simultaneous application of the media ethics theory and the social responsibility theory. These frameworks provide two perspectives: the micro-ethical standpoint, which analyses the ethics of either an individual or an organisation, and the macro-ethical standpoint, which analyses an institution's responsibilities towards society. Traditional ethical

philosophies, such as deontology (which focuses on duties and moral laws) and utilitarianism (which emphasizes outcomes that benefit the majority), form the foundation of media ethics (Wilkins & Christians, 2020). While media ethics has historically concentrated on journalists' conduct, it is increasingly relevant in today's digital and AI-driven environments, where safeguarding independence, accountability, and truth is crucial (Porlezza, 2023). This standard in political communication mandates moral accountability for all actors, irrespective of their technological sophistication.

The media ethics theory holds that all contents of the media, regardless of whether they are created by human beings or artificial intelligence, are bound by fundamental moral principles of truthfulness, justice, respect for human dignity, consent, and non-maleficence. It discounts the possibility that a technological innovation can ever justify an ethical lapse and insists that the makers and distributors of the content must in some way carry the social consequences of the content. In Nigeria, there has been a rise in AI-generated deepfakes used for political manipulation. Videos depicting political figures making alarming statements or involved in scandals have gone viral during election periods (Idris, 2025). Such content misleads the public, tarnishes reputations, and hampers informed decision-making.

In a country like Nigeria, where political institutions foster suspicion, such violations of ethics only add to societal tensions. The National Artificial Intelligence Strategy acknowledges this threat and calls for ethical AI practices in safeguarding democratic processes (FMCIDE, 2023). Media ethics theory sets a criterion for addressing the potential for misinformation in AI-generated politicized media within Nigeria's already vulnerable information environment. In response to the challenges posed by political deepfakes, arguments for harm reduction, informed consent, and trustworthiness should surface. Media ethics theory can be moral education for politicians and news workers to develop firm ethical standards for AI-assisted political news.

Social Responsibility Theory, originating from the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press during the mid-20th century, states that media companies have certain responsibilities

other than just political or commercial ones. They are expected to act in ways that promote democratic health, safeguard public welfare, and uphold truth in the promotion of public interest (Oluwasola et al., 2024; McQuail, 2020). From a digital perspective, tech platforms, AI developers, and online political communicators bear this responsibility. The theory holds that freedom of the media is not absolute; thus, it carries with it the responsibility to avoid those actions that may endanger society, spread misinformation, or undermine the democratic process. Mahony and Chen (2024) state that we accord very high respect to the concepts of accountability, transparency, and commitment to the advancement of society, as AI-generated disinformation during the Nigerian election cycle can trigger and escalate political unrest and bloodshed.

Some of the most significant threats posed by AI include manipulated political ads on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, along with viral videos alleging voter suppression. Such tactics can mislead voters and create confusion during elections (Madobi, 2025; Adelagun, 2025). Instead of acting as a deterrent, these issues accelerate the disintegration of national unity. In line with all these, Nigeria's initiatives for AI governance, such as the NAIS and the Nigeria Data Protection Act, highlight the importance of ensuring societal peace and democratic stability. These factors should take precedence over mere partisanship or engagement strategies for those involved in digital media. Social Responsibility Theory comes into play by transferring the concern from the private moral choices of individuals to institutional duties – thus, requiring AI content creators, political parties, social media platforms, and regulatory bodies to protect Nigerian democracy, in lavish accord with national policy frameworks on responsible AI use, transparency, and public accountability (Adelagun, 2025).

Hence, embedding social responsibility theory in this study helps further assert that the ethical constraints on the use of political content via AI go beyond mere individual morality. The theory accentuates the collective responsibility of content producers, platforms, and regulators to set forth and enforce some ethically binding code of conduct for treatment via AI in Nigeria.

Whereas media ethics deals with the relationship between moral concepts and AI-generated

political content, social responsibility theory is interested in the institutional and societal means of applying those concepts. Where political communication is loose and prone to vagueness in Nigeria, the two concepts merge to form a vibrant theory that closes the technology-ethics gap. Together, they provide a functioning framework for establishing moral boundaries in the legal and philosophical contexts developed by Nigeria's emerging AI regulatory landscape.

Research Objectives

While the primary aim of this paper is setting ethical limits on AI photo and video usage in social media political engagement, the specific objectives are to:

1. determine public perceptions of the use of AI-generated photos and videos in social media for political engagement in Nigeria;
2. ascertain the extent of usage of AI-generated images and videos for social media political engagement by journalists in Nigeria;
3. examine the motivations behind Nigerian journalists' use of AI-generated photos and videos in political communication on social media; and
4. investigate the ethical implications of using AI-generated photos and videos for social media political engagement in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are set to guide the investigation.

1. What is the public perception of the use of AI-generated photos and videos in social media political engagement in Nigeria?
2. To what extent do Nigerian journalists use AI-generated photos and videos in political reporting on social media platforms?
3. What are the motivations behind Nigerian journalists' use of AI-generated photos and videos in political communication on social media?
4. What ethical challenges do Nigerian journalists encounter when using AI-generated photos and videos for political engagement on social media?

Literature Review

Nnamani (2025) examined the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in enhancing political communication and participation within selected Southeastern states in Nigeria. Following the state of political participation in southeast Nigeria, the survey identifies citizen challenges and thus comparatively argues for AI applications able to address those challenges, thereby promoting inclusivity, transparency, and engagement in political processes. This theory rests on technological determinism and agenda setting. We used purposive sampling to select 400 respondents from the selected states of Ebonyi and Enugu, Nigeria. The findings indicate that participation in politics faces several challenges, including limited access to information, voter apathy, and inefficiencies in governance structures, all of which often prevent citizens from fully engaging in political affairs. However, the findings contradict the idea that online media literacy, particularly the use of AI tools, serves as a barrier, based on the assumption that uneducated individuals may struggle to use them effectively. Results also demonstrate that the AI application could be an excellent strategy for futuristic political development in the region.

Ekpang et al. (2023) investigated social media and artificial intelligence: perspectives on deepfake use in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. This study sets out to identify the forms and reasons behind deepfakes' use and the effects during Nigeria's 2023 general elections. The survey design was adopted using the quantitative research method for data collection and analysis. Researchers distributed a total of 1500 copies of the "Perspectives on Use of Deepfakes" questionnaire to a research population from five states in the South-South region of Nigeria: Cross River, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Bayelsa. A set of 300 copies was distributed to each of the states. At the end of the field distribution, 1123 copies of the questionnaire were returned from all the states. After quantitative analysis using statistical tables with simple percentages, findings revealed that the use of artificial intelligence in the form of deepfakes was dominant on social media, especially in picture and voice forms, and that deepfakes were used as a mudslinging tool to dent the image of some Nigerian politicians and as propaganda tools to present some personalities as misfits in Nigeria's leadership positions. The

paper concluded that artificial intelligence in the form of deepfakes was used predominantly for negative motives.

Karanja (2023) carried out research titled ‘Africa Deepfakes Buzz: Exploring online media socio-political discourses on deepfakes – Focus on Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa’ revealed that AI techniques have been used to combine, replace or superimpose images and videos to create controversial deepfake videos. The emergence of deepfakes has been referred to as the ‘infopocalypse’ due to the difficulty the content poses to producers, publishers, and consumers of information. Using medialization theory and reflexive inductive thematic analysis, findings indicate that there are deep anxieties about the rising cases of deepfake-instigated financial fraud, religious animosity, xenophobic attacks, and cyber-harassment. Additionally, despite genuine efforts to highlight the usefulness of deepfakes through media, legal, and public literacy initiatives, the prevailing online media logic and perception remain dystopian. Implications are discussed.

Deepfakes – The Digital Threat in the Real World was the title of Mankoo (2023) research set up with the objective of understanding and tackling the alarming surge of digital imposters known as the world of deepfakes. Mankoo's research employs artificial intelligence-based deep machine learning software, cyber forensics, and physical mind awareness and alertness to combat deepfakes. Deepfakes use artificial intelligence and deep machine learning techniques to create fake images of people and events that are as attractive or authentic as the original. Mankoo (2023) discovered that deepfakes represent a significant challenge in cyber security, elevating the security mindset to a new level and highlighting the potential for catastrophic consequences. In a recent live impersonation case, the mayor of Berlin believed he was having an online meeting with Vitali Klitschko, the former boxing champion and current mayor of Kyiv; however, it was later revealed that he was actually conversing with a deepfake, an AI-generated video that appeared real and authentic. Previous Deepfake videos exhibited telltale signs such as edits or odd movements, indicating that the commodity, person, or event was not real. Not presently. In recent Delhi elections, the BJP candidate Mr. Manoj Tiwari fabricated his old speech on the

“Citizenship Amendment Act” into a political campaign speech to reach different linguistic voter bases, especially Haryanvi voters. Tiwari did not have any knowledge about Haryanvi but made his political campaign message reach Haryanvi voters through deepfake technology.

In their research titled "Discovering AI-driven Purposeful Political Brand Content to Influence Voter Attitudes", Jain & Sharma (2025) investigate how AI-driven political content shapes the views of voters in India and among Indian expatriates living abroad. These expatriates, who hold voting rights under Section 20A of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, represent a significant segment of the Indian electorate. Using a qualitative approach, the study confirmed that AI-generated, purposeful political content is a new frontier in political branding, but it is not entirely utilized by all political parties. However, progressive parties are using AI-generated content to increase the political participation of voters in India and Indian expatriates and create a pleasant political brand image worldwide.

Kadem and Lassouane (2024) investigated the negative impact of deepfake technology on the reputation of leading individuals on some social media platforms: an analytic study on a sample of fabricated videos. This study also addresses the negative effects of deepfake technology on the reputations of public figures on social media. Deepfake technology's rapid evolution underscores its detrimental effects on digital life. The research aims to understand how deepfakes influence public perception of notable individuals and to develop strategies to lessen these adverse effects. The research methodology includes analysing manipulated video samples to identify signs of deepfake manipulation. The findings reveal that deepfake videos have a serious impact on the reputations of people both in their private and professional lives. The researchers again stress the urgency of increasing the digital literacy of users and working on a solution to battle deepfake technology. The solution should concentrate on strengthening the digital security policy and vigorously investigating suspicious content on social media platforms. The study again reiterated that the digital challenges above are mounting and that, hence, it is time to be proactive with measures to protect the reputation of individuals targeted with this deepfake technology.

Research Methodology

A mixed-methods research design was employed to combine the statistical generalizability of surveys with the contextual richness provided through qualitative research. To collect quantitative data for this study, structured cross-sectional copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents drawn as a sample from the Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), FCT, Nigeria, by employing a probability-based stratified multi-stage sampling technique. Using Cochran's formula, the sample size of 385 respondents was determined. AMAC in Abuja was selected because of its cosmopolitan features, with a substantial population estimated to be between 1.4 and 1.7 million (Paywizzard, 2023). Contrastingly, six Nigerian journalists and editors were purposefully selected by Television Continental (TVC), AIT and Premium Times, based in Abuja, FCT, to participate in semi-structured interviews to gather qualitative data. The researcher analysed the quantitative data using SPSS and identified themes from the responses (Akpan, 2023).

Data Analysis

Data were obtained from 385 completed questionnaires administered to social media users in the Abuja Municipal Area Council. Descriptive statistics were employed, and results are presented in frequency and percentage tables. To capture richer survey data, nine semi-structured interviews were carried out with journalists from Premium Times, AIT, and Television Continental (TVC). Due to the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants who were journalists, they were coded as PREM-1 to PREM-3, AIT-1 to AIT-3, and TVC-1 to TVC-3. Thematic analyses were conducted on the interview data and aligned to the quantitative data for a more robust interpretation of each of the research questions.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	201	53%
	Female	184	47%
	Total	385	100%
Age	Under 19 years	17	5%
	20–29 years	87	23%
	30–39 years	147	39%
	40–49 years	83	22%
	50–59 years	35	10%

	60 years and above	16	5%
	Total	385	100%
Occupation	Student	95	25%
	Civil Servant	67	18%
	Private Sector Employee	101	27%
	Self-Employed	113	30%
	Other	9	3%
	Total	385	100%
Social Media Usage	Yes	355	93%
	No	30	8%
	Total	385	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The gender representation of the data in Table 1 indicates that males make up 53% and females 47%. Likewise, the age distribution depicts more young adults, with the 30- to 39-year-old category being in the majority at 39% and the 20- to 29-year-old category at 23%, together representing over 60% of the sample. On the basis of their occupation, respondents portray an array of categories, where the self-employed individuals take the largest with 30%, followed by private sector employees with 27%, and student respondents with 25%. Significantly, 93% are active social media users, validating that the study population is of high relevance in investigating AI-based content in digital political activities.

The public's perception of AI-generated political content

Table 2

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness of AI-generated photos or videos being used in political communication on social media	Yes	321	84%
	No	64	17%
	Total	385	100%

Frequency of encountering AI-generated political content on social media	Very often	73	19%
	Often	129	34%
	Sometimes	141	37%
	Rarely	31	9%
	Never	11	3%
Total	385	100%	
Level of trustworthiness of AI-generated political content	Not at all Trustworthy	95	25%
	Slightly Trustworthy	89	24%
	Neutral	63	19%
	Trustworthy	81	21%
	Very Trustworthy	57	15%
Total	385	100%	
Perception of the impact of AI-generated political content on public opinion	Very Positive	21	6%
	Somewhat Positive	43	12%
	Neutral	89	23%
	Somewhat Negative	163	43%
	Very Negative	69	18%
Total	385	100%	

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 indicates that awareness of AI-generated political information is substantial, with 84% of respondents indicating familiarity. Exposure is prevalent: 37% encounter such content "sometimes", 34% "often", and 19% "very often". Nonetheless, trust levels remain low: over half (49%) characterize such content as "not trustworthy," and just 36% consider it "trustworthy" or "very trustworthy." Perceptions of impact are predominantly negative: 61% feel AI-generated content adversely affects public opinion, while just 18% see it positively. These findings indicate that, although the Nigerian public are becoming more aware and exposed to AI-generated

political information, scepticism regarding its genuineness and ethical considerations prevails in its usage, resulting in a negative perception.

The extent of journalists’ use of AI-generated photos and videos in political reporting on social media platforms

Table 3

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Observation of AI-generated photos or videos in political news	Yes	257	67%
	No	128	33%
	Total	385	100%
Frequency of Journalists’ Use of AI-generated photos and videos	Very Frequently	15	4%
	Frequently	41	11%
	Occasionally	97	26%
	Rarely	153	40%
	Never	79	21%
	Total	385	100%
How respondents think Journalists verify the authenticity of AI-generated content before publishing	Editorial Review Fact-Checking Tools	161	42%
	Cross-Reference with Sources	89	24%
	No Verification	91	24%
	Others	21	6%
	Others	23	6%
	Total	385	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Data from table 3 highlights the fact that most respondents (67%) have observed AI-generated visuals in political news. However, a plurality of journalists (40%) report rarely using these,

while 15% report using them often or very often. Verification basically happens via editorial review (42%) and then through the use of fact-checking tools and cross-referencing (24% each). Only 6% admitted to never verifying. Responses from the interviews conducted reveal that Nigerian journalists have varying degrees of familiarity with AI-generated photos and videos, though most described their knowledge as limited. In other words, very few of them extensively dealt with graphical and AI video production, and even fewer knew the text-based technologies.

"I do know about them, but I haven't used them much"

(PREM-1).

When asked about usage, the majority of respondents stated that they had never incorporated AI-generated visuals into their political reporting. They prefer authentic content such as live photos, press releases, and ground coverage. One respondent emphasised, "I don't use AI-generated visuals in my work. I only use original photos from my camera or from official press releases" (PREM-3). Among the few who had experimented with AI, the usage was minimal and largely restricted to background or symbolic illustrations for social media engagement. As TVC-1 explained:

"Yes, I once used an AI-generated image as a background illustration for an online political story. I used it for social media graphics to add interest to the post" (TVC-1).

Motivations behind Nigerian Journalists' Use of AI-Generated Photos and Videos in Political Communication on Social Media

The interviews revealed that Nigerian journalists across Premium Times, AIT, and Television Continental (TVC) held profound but largely cautious views about the role of AI tools in political reporting. Journalists were generally aware that AI has the capacity to shape political narratives and public opinion because of the way audiences respond to visual content. For example, PREM-2 explained that "AI can make content look very real, even when it is fake, and that can shape how people see politicians or issues." This was a thought shared by others who worried that the hyperrealism of AI-based images or videos might affect public perception, more so in Nigeria's politically charged climate. Such implications notwithstanding, a small minority

acknowledged some motivations behind the limited use of AI. Their concern revolves around the practicality AI offers in simplifying complex political issues, promoting rapid content production, and improving engagement with these stories on social media.

AIT-2 pondered, "Sometimes AI images can help to illustrate abstract political issues, especially on social media where people like visuals more than long texts." In the same line, TVC-3 admitted to having experimented with AI-generated images as background illustrations for online stories. For this journalist, the motivation was not so much to replace genuine reporting but, more so, to imbibe creativity and attract audience attention. These comments could be taken to infer that, even though adoption is rare, there might be a few journalists who are willing to experiment with AI for auxiliary uses rather than as a central reporting tool. However, the predominant theme was avoidance. The three most frequent reasons given by reporters and producers in all three media organisations for not using AI-generated images or videos in political reporting were audience trust, credibility, and professional ethics. They emphasised that using artificial content threatened to compromise the reality upon which their line of work relies. In the words of TVC-2:

"The risk is too great. If people find out that you used AI to create political photos or videos, they may see it as fake news" (TVC-2).

Others supported this, arguing that if the audience believed their work was fake, the harm to their reputation would be irreparable. PREM-3 noted that losing trust can be challenging to regain. Thus, the collective view was that ethical responsibility and long-term professional credibility outweighed any short-term gains from using AI-generated visuals.

Ethical Challenges in the Use of AI Political Content

Table 4

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ethical issues involved in using AI-generated political content	Yes	329	86%
	No	23	6%
	Not sure	33	9%
	Total	385	100%
Ethical concerns respondents consider significant	Misinformation	303	79%
	Manipulation of Public Opinion	287	75%
	Copyright Issues	165	43%
	Deception	241	63%
	Loss of Trust in Journalism	219	57%
	Others	17	5%
	Total	385	100%
Need for Ethical Guidelines for the use of AI-generated content	Yes	345	90%
	No	23	6%
	Not sure	17	5%
	Total	385	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Data from table 4 shows that an overwhelming 86% of respondents believe ethical issues are involved in AI-generated political content. The most pressing concerns include misinformation (79%), manipulation of public opinion (75%), deception (63%), and loss of trust in journalism

(57%). Copyright issues (43%) also stood out. Importantly, 90% of respondents called for ethical regulations, showing that the issue of regulation is much in demand in public opinion. In the interview, PREM-2 always emphasised misinformation, authenticity, and erosion of credibility as key ethical concerns. PREM-1 stated that misinformation spreads fast when AI-generated images and videos are manipulated to misrepresent political figures and that "AI-generated photos and videos can easily be manipulated to misrepresent politicians, creating narratives that are mostly falsehoods. Social media content goes viral quickly; thus, the withdrawal after one day is difficult to attain. This undermines the credibility of journalism.

PREM-2 cautioned against the dangers of partisanship, where journalists could face accusations of bias and even unknowingly monitor or use altered visuals. PREM-3 underscored the deterioration of credibility, cautioning that audiences may lose trust in journalists if they suspect every image or video to be artificial intelligence-generated. This suspicion poses a significant threat to democracy. In terms of ethical limits, Premium Times journalists advocated for transparency, compulsory disclosure whenever AI tools are used, and the establishment of editorial and national regulatory guidelines to prevent misuse. For AIT-1, proposed ethical considerations include an internal review process for news articles with clear disclaimers every time AI is used as a visual, alongside programmes emphasizing public education and human oversight. They also stressed those AI-generated visuals should never serve as compelling evidence in political reporting but only as illustration or satire.

At the TVC, journalists concentrated on the challenges of speed, polarization, and accountability.

TVC-1 observed that with everything happening in real-time on social media, speed is paramount, almost at the detriment of accuracy, explaining that "the primary problem is speed versus accuracy. Social media is responsible for the rapid pace, potentially leading journalists to publish AI-generated photos and videos without conducting due diligence. This approach rapidly disseminates misleading information. TVC-2 acknowledged that AI manipulation exacerbates political polarization. Opposing camps can each generate fake visuals to tarnish each other. A

storm of disinformation then ensnares journalists. TVC-3 raised the problem of what has been called the “liar’s dividend”, explaining that:

“AI tools threaten accountability. Politicians could brand genuine, convincingly incriminating videos as 'AI-generated deepfakes', hence weakening the watchdog journalistic function.”

The ethical limits suggested by TVC journalists pertain to strict verification processes, application of forensic tools to authenticate visuals, and newsroom codes that give precedence to truth over speed or sensationalism.

Discussion of Findings

In response to increasing concerns over how AI-generated images and videos are shaping political communication on social media in Nigeria, the study, "Setting Ethical Limits of AI Photo and Video Usage in Social Media Political Engagement," was undertaken. Deepfakes undermine trust, democracy, and privacy all over the world (Citron & Chesney, 2019; Vaccari & Chadwick, 2020). Consistently, many AI-generated photos and videos have gone viral on Nigerian social media around elections and civic discussions, with Facebook, WhatsApp, and X (formerly Twitter) being the main platforms for political discourse (Ekpang, 2023; Dubawa, 2025). However, only a limited amount of empirical research has examined AI-generated visuals in the political perceptions of individuals, the use or avoidance of such visuals by journalists, and the ethical restrictions necessary for their application in political participation.

The objectives were to assess public perceptions of AI-generated political content on social media in Nigeria, to determine the extent to which Nigerian journalists use AI-generated visuals in political reporting on social media, to understand the motivations behind any such usage or avoidance, and to identify the ethical challenges and desired limits seen by journalists in this domain. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, including a survey of 385 social media

users and semi-structured interviews with nine journalists from leading Nigerian news organisations. The quantitative research was analysed by means of descriptive statistics, and the interviews were analysed thematically to generate an all-encompassing evaluation of professionals' and audience perspectives in this study.

This study found that the Nigerian public, for the most part, have been exposed to AI-generated videos and images used in politics and are very aware of them. Despite constant exposure, perception is still quite negative, and overall trust is low. While Ekpong et al. (2023) showed Nigerian voters to be of utmost concern about deepfakes in the 2023 elections, Vaccari and Chadwick (2020) showed deepfake political photos and videos to increase cynicism and lower trust among news consumers. In a similar vein, Dubawa (2025) warned that AI-generated disinformation poses grave threats to Nigeria's 2027 elections. These findings illustrate social responsibility theory, which underscores the obligation of media practitioners to uphold truth and ethical communication (Berry, 2016). When such ethical standards are breached, as they are when synthetic images deceive or confuse, audience trust must decrease.

This study also found that journalists in Nigeria have limited utilization of AI-generated videos and images, and they use original and verified visuals in political reporting to uphold credibility and audience trust. This finding is consistent with empirical research on Nigerian media, such as Bello et al. (2023), which found that while journalists in Lagos and Kwara state showed a high level of proficiency with AI tools, they rarely used AI-generated graphics because most of them were afraid of losing their credibility. Similarly, despite the availability of AI tools, Floridi et al. (2019) discovered that Nigerian journalists value verification and rely on human-based procedures. Such opposition draws attention to the media's ethical standards to be objective, truthful, and compliant with the public record.

Results also indicated that journalists in Nigeria have, by far, a greater motivation to shun these AI photos and videos rather than work with them. Some journalists accepted AI due to its creative potential and acceleration, while others rejected it because of ethical concerns, threats to

their reputation, and morally troubling deceptions. This agrees with Chukwudubem's (2025) finding that Nigerian journalists had resisted AI-driven innovations due to resource gaps, lack of training, and cultural preference for traditional methods (2025). A study by Bello et al. (2023) also found ethical and professional concerns outweighing perceived benefits of AI adoption. This data feeds into media ethics theory, which sees journalism as having a responsibility where efficiency gains should never surpass avoiding harm, ensuring credibility, and upholding the public's right to truth.

Finally, in investigating the ethical implications of using AI-generated photos and videos for social media political engagement in Nigeria, this study revealed that journalists in Nigeria stated that ethical limitations set for the use of AI photos and videos in social media political engagement should encompass transparency (disclosure of AI usage), stringent verification, proper, legal and legitimate regulation or norms, human oversight, and respect for fundamental rights such as privacy. Ikeh (2025) findings corroborate all these outcomes, advocating for independent oversight and control systems for the use of AI in Nigerian media. Dubawa (2025) argued for the need for fact-checking and proactive regulation to prevent AI-generated misinformation in the socio-political landscape of countries that have a strong online presence, especially in this digital era. These findings affirm the relevance of social responsibility theory within the Nigerian setting and underscore the pressing necessity for ethical frameworks and policy guidelines adapted to the nation's socio-political reality.

Conclusion

This study concludes that transparency, strict verification, and well-defined professional and regulatory standards can set the ethical limits for the application of AI-generated photos and videos in political communication. We should require disclosure every time we use AI to create content. We must subject AI-generated photos and videos to more rigorous scrutiny and verification processes than other types of content. These guidelines for ethical behaviour must be enforced by regulatory authorities and professional bodies, such as the Nigerian Union of Journalists, to ensure accountability throughout the industry. Ultimately, human oversight must

take precedence, as journalists bear the final responsibility for guaranteeing truth, credibility, and democratic integrity.

Recommendations

based on the findings, the study recommends follows:

- 1) Due to the low trust in AI-generated content among the Nigerian populace, both the Government and the media organizations should enhance digital literacy to equip citizens with the skills to detect and debunk manipulated images in political engagements on social media platforms, hence mitigating disinformation at the local level.
- 2) Journalists should not use AI-generated images to represent factual evidence but only for illustrative purposes and with vivid disclosure.
- 3) Verification, editorial oversight, and disclaimers starting with the newsrooms should be initiated, as this will encourage a culture that will value accuracy over speed in social-media-based information dissemination.
- 4) To place transparency, verification, and protection of rights at the centre of professional practice, professional associations, e.g., NUJ and BON, should integrate these values into ethics codes, establish standards thereon, and ensure compliance therewith.
- 5) AI-generated image and video legislation must be kept in sine qua non balance by the government and its stakeholders to stop the malicious use of deepfake technology in political campaigns while defending the freedom of the press.
- 6) Political actors must maintain their commitment to an ethical approach to campaigning, ensuring they never use these AI-generated images and videos as weapons. They must also sign a code of conduct prohibiting its manipulative use.

References

- Abideen, O. (2024). The emerging threat of deepfakes and synthetic media to journalism in Nigeria. FactCheck Africa. <https://factcheckafrica.net/the-emerging-threat-of-deepfakes-and-synthetic-media-to-journalism-in-nigeria/>
- Adamu, M. M. U. A., Usman, M., & Yabagi, A. (2024). Guardians of Truth: Navigating the Realm of Deepfakes And Ai-Generated Content In Libraries And Information Professions. Nigerian Library Association (Nla) Niger State Chapter, 69.
- Adelagun, O. (2025). Media urged to create AI usage policy to protect jobs, ethics. Premium Times Nigeria. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/792882-media-urged-to-create-ai-usage-policy-to-protect-jobs-ethics.html>

- Adisa, H. (2025). Deepfakes and AI-manipulated disinformation: The looming crisis for 2027 elections. *The Cable*. <https://www.thecable.ng/deepfakes-and-ai-manipulated-disinformation-the-looming-crisis-for-2027-elections/>
- Akpan, S. (2025, May 3). Journalists should use AI responsibly, says Grace Ike | TheCable. *TheCable*. <https://www.thecable.ng/journalists-should-use-ai-responsibly-says-grace-ike/>
- Akpan, U. (2023). Approaches to mass communication educational researches in universities and polytechnics of Nigeria. *Educational Technology Quarterly*, 2023(3), 302-318
- Alnaser, A. (2024). The Impact of AI-Augmented Image and Video Editing on Social Media Engagement, Perception, and Digital Culture. *Journal of Computational Intelligence, Machine Reasoning, and Decision-Making*, 9(10), 15-32.
- Anthony. (2025). World Press Freedom Day 2025: Navigating convergence between AI, journalism ethics. *The Guardian Nigeria News - Nigeria and World News*. <https://guardian.ng/news/world-press-freedom-day-2025-navigating-convergence-between-ai-journalism-ethics/>
- Bello, A. W. K., & Kaufhold, K. (2023). Power to the People: Social Media as a Catalyst for Political Participation in Nigeria. *International Journal of Interactive Communication Systems and Technologies*, 13(1), 1–17. <https://www.igi-global.com/article/power-to-the-people/320652>
- Bello, S., Salaudeen, A. I., & Umeaku, P. (2023). A survey of awareness and adoption of artificial intelligence journalism among Lagos and Kwara States journalists in Nigeria. *Indonesian Journal of Communication Studies*, 16(2), 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.31315/ijcs.v16i2.10282>
- Berry, D. (2016). *Journalism, ethics and society*. Routledge.
- Boulianne, S. (2019). Revolution in the making? Social media effects across the globe. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22(1), 39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1353648>
- Chesney, R., & Citron, D. K. (2019). Deep fakes: A looming challenge for privacy, democracy, and national security. *California Law Review*, 107(6), 1753–1820. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3213954>

- Chesney, R., & Citron, D. K. (2019). Deep Fakes: A Looming Challenge for Privacy, Democracy, and National Security. *California Law Review*, 107(6), 1753–1819. <https://doi.org/10.15779/Z38RV0D67C>
- Christodoulou, E., & Iordanou, K. (2021). Democracy under attack: challenges of addressing ethical issues of AI and big data for more democratic digital media and societies. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3, 682945.
- Chukwu, O. J. (2025). Impact of social media on political communication: A comparative review of 2015, 2019 and 2023 election campaigns in Nigeria. *Journal of Management and Science*, 15(2), 57-62.
- Chukwudubem, C. U. (2025). Artificial intelligence and journalistic practice in Nigeria: Navigating awareness, adoption, and structural challenges. *Multi-Disciplinary Research and Development Journals Int'l*, 7(1), 136-152.
- Citron, D. K., & Chesney, R. (2019). Deep fakes: A looming challenge for privacy, democracy, and national security. *California Law Review*, 107(6), 1753–1819. https://scholarship.law.bu.edu/faculty_scholarship/640
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Dierickx, L., Opdahl, A. L., Khan, S. A., Lindén, C. G., & Guerrero Rojas, D. C. (2024). A data-centric approach for ethical and trustworthy AI in journalism. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 26(4), 64.
- Dubawa. (2025). *AI-generated disinformation looms ahead of Nigeria's 2027 elections*. Dubawa. <https://dubawa.org/ai-generated-disinformation-looms-ahead-of-nigerias-2027-elections/>
- Ejifoma, R. (2025, April 29). The impact of artificial intelligence and digital tools on Nigerian journalism. *Vanguard News*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2025/04/the-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-and-digital-tools-on-nigerian-journalism/>
- Ekpang, J. E., Iyorza, S., & Ekpang, P. O. (2023). Social media and artificial intelligence: perspectives on deepfakes use in Nigeria's 2023 general elections. *KIU Interdisciplinary Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(2), 109-124.
- FactCheck Africa. (2025). Deepfake deception: How AI-generated ads are misusing Nigerian public figures to scam the public. <https://factcheckafrica.net/deepfake-deception-how-ai-generated-ads-are-misusing-nigerian-public-figures-to-scam-the-public/>

- Federal Government tasks stakeholders on ethical guidelines for use of AI in journalism practice. (2025, May 5). The Guardian Nigeria. <https://guardian.ng/news/fg-tasks-stakeholders-on-ethical-guidelines-for-use-of-ai-in-journalism-practice/>
- Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy. (2023). National artificial intelligence strategy. Government of Nigeria. <https://www.fmclide.gov.ng>
- Federal Ministry of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy (FMCIDE). (2024). Nigeria National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (NAIS). Government of Nigeria. Government portals and policy trackers.
- Ferrari, E. (2018). Fake accounts, real activism: Political faking and user-generated satire as activist intervention. *New Media & Society*, 20(6), 2208-2223.
- Floridi, L., Cows, J., Beltrametti, M., Chatila, R., Chazerand, P., Dignum, V., Vayena, E. (2019). A unified framework of five principles for AI in society. *Harvard Data Science Review*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1162/99608f92.8cd550d1>
- Gorwa, R., Binns, R., & Katzenbach, C. (2020). Algorithmic content moderation: Technical and political challenges in the automation of platform governance. *Big Data & Society*, 7(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951719897945>
- Haq, E. U., Zhu, Y., Hui, P., & Tyson, G. (2024). History in making: Political campaigns in the era of artificial intelligence-generated content. In *Companion Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2024* (pp. 1115-1118).
- Hern, A. (2025). With “AI slop” distorting our reality, the world is sleepwalking into disaster. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/apr/21/ai-slop-artificial-intelligence-social-media>
- Idris, M. (2025). Deepfake videos threaten Nigeria’s political stability. Punch Nigeria. <https://punchng.com>
- Igbashangev, P. A., Abdullahi, S. H., Terungwa Basil, A., Gbasha, C. T., Meshach, U. T., & Humbe, B. T. (2023). Social media as a tool for the advancement of democracy and good governance in Nigeria. SSRN 4513869.
- Ikeh, G. (2025, May 2). *MRA launches Visual Brief to commemorate 2025 World Press Freedom Day*. APA news - African Press Agency. <https://apanews.net/mra-launches-visual-brief-to-commemorate-2025-world-press-freedom-day/>

- Ireton, C., & Posetti, J. (2018). *Journalism, fake news & disinformation: handbook for journalism education and training*. UNESCO Publishing.
- Jain, V., & Sharma, H. (2025). Discovering AI-driven purposeful political brand content to influence the voters' attitude. *International Journal of Market Research*, 67(2-3), 296-313.
- Jimada, U. (2023). Social media hate and misinformation campaign in the Nigeria 2023 elections. *IJRDO-Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 9(7), 1-14.
- Kadem, D., & Lassouane, K. M. E. (2024). The negative impact of deepfake technology on the reputation of prominent figures on social media platforms: An analytical study on a sample of fabricated videos. *Journal of Science and Knowledge Horizons*, 4(1), 510-532.
- Karanja, J. M. (2023). Africa DeepFakes Buzz: Exploring online media socio-political discourses on deepfakes-Focus on Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.
- Kietzmann, J., Lee, L. W., McCarthy, I. P., & Kietzmann, T. C. (2020). Deepfakes: Trick or treat? *Business Horizons*, 63(2), 135–146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2019.11.006>
- Lund, B., Orhan, Z., Mannuru, N. R., Bevara, R. V. K., Porter, B., Vinaih, M. K., & Bhaskara, P. (2025). Standards, frameworks, and legislation for artificial intelligence (AI) transparency. *AI and Ethics*, 1-17.
- Madobi, M. Y. (2025). Combating deepfake videos: A fight for Nigeria's soul. Premium Times. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/805613-combatting-deepfake-videos-a-fight-for-nigerias-soul-by-mukhtar-yau-madobi.html>
- Mahony, S., & Chen, Q. (2024). Concerns about the role of artificial intelligence in journalism, and media manipulation. *Journalism*, 14648849241263293.
- McQuail, D. (2020). *McQuail's media and mass communication theory* (7th ed.). Sage.
- Milli, S., Carroll, M., Wang, Y., Pandey, S., Zhao, S., & Dragan, A. D. (2023). Engagement, user satisfaction, and the amplification of divisive content on social media. arXiv. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2305.16941>
- Mirsky, Y., & Lee, W. (2021). The Creation and Detection of Deepfakes: A Survey. *ACM Computing Surveys*, 54(1), 1–41. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3425780>
- Morah, D. N., & Nwafor, O. A. (2024). Beyond tribal politics for e-participation and development: social media influence on Nigeria's 2023 presidential general election. *Journal of Innovative Digital Transformation*, 1(1), 32-47.

- National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA). (2024). 3 Million Technical Talent (3MTT) and National AI policy consultations. NITDA publications.
- Nnamani, I. E. (2025). Artificial Intelligence (Ai) and Political Communication: Empowering Political Participation in Selected Southeast States, Nigeria. *Int International Journal of The Arts And Sciences*, 6(1), 154-166.
- Ogbodo, J. N., Onwe, E. C., Nwankwo, S. U., & Ewa-Ibe, B. (2023). Fighting Fake News Proliferation through Digital Literacy in Africa: Perspectives from Nigerian Netizens. *African Journalism Studies*, 44(2), 134-152.
- Okocha, M. U. (2024). Perceptions of Journalists on the Impact of AI-Powered Deepfake Technology on the Authenticity and Misinformation in Health-Related Content in Nigerian Journalism (Master's thesis, University of Kansas).
- Oluwasola, O. (2020). The normative theories of the press in the digital age: a need for revision. SSRN 3678282.
- Paywizzard. (2023). Local government areas in Abuja FCT. Retrieved from <https://paywizzard.com/local-government-areas-in-abuja-fct>
- Penpushing. (2025). Media stakeholders call for self-regulation to address unethical use of Artificial Intelligence. <https://penpushing.com.ng/media-stakeholders-call-for-self-regulation-to-address-unethical-use-of-artificial-intelligence/>
- Porlezza, C. (2023). Promoting responsible AI: A European perspective on the governance of artificial intelligence in media and journalism. *Communications*, 48(3), 370-394.
- Sadiku, M. N., Ashaolu, T. J., Ajayi-Majebi, A., & Musa, S. M. (2021). Artificial intelligence in social media. *International Journal of Scientific Advances*, 2(1), 15-20.
- Shin, D. (2024). Misinformation, extremism, and conspiracies: Amplification and polarization by algorithms. In *Artificial misinformation: exploring human-algorithm interaction online* (pp. 49-78). Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Sholola, O., Akande, S., & Oyeleke, F. (2024). Perceived effect of artificial intelligence on ethical journalism among journalists in Kwara State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 8(2). <https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/perceived-effect-of-artificial-intelligence-on-ethical-journalism-among-journalists-in-kwara-state/>
- Taherdoost, H. (2017). Determining sample size; how to calculate survey sample size. *International Journal of Economics and Management Systems*, 2(4), 235-253.

- Talabi, F. O., Oyewole, J. A., Bello, S. A., Adefemi, V. O., Talabi, J. M., Adesile, T., & Oladele, P. O. (2024). Adoption of artificial intelligence in news gathering and reporting in Nigerian mass media. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 3(8), 8959-8968.
- Temir, E. (2020). Deepfake: New era in the age of disinformation & end of reliable journalism. *Selçuk İletişim*, 13(2), 1009-1024.
- Theocharis, Y. (2015). The Conceptualization of Digitally Networked Participation. *Social Media + Society*, 1(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115610140>
- Vaccari, C., & Chadwick, A. (2020). Deepfakes and disinformation: Exploring the impact of synthetic political video on deception, uncertainty, and trust in news. *Social Media + Society*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120903408>
- Vinuesa, R., Azizpour, H., & Nerini, F. F. (2020). The role of artificial intelligence in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *Nature Communications*, 11(1), 233. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-14108-y>
- Wardle, C., & Derakhshan, H. (2017). Information disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policymaking. Council of Europe.
- Westerlund, M. (2019). The emergence of deepfake technology: A review. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 9(11), 40–53. <https://doi.org/10.22215/timreview/1282>
- Wilkins, L., & Christians, C. G. (Eds.). (2020). *The Routledge handbook of mass media ethics*. Routledge.
- WSCIJ. (2025). Experts warn of press freedom risks, call for ethical use of AI in journalism. <https://wscij.org/experts-warn-of-press-freedom-risks-call-for-ethical-use-of-ai-in-journalism-at-wscij-world-press-freedom-day-conversation/>