DISPLACEMENT OR COMPLEMENTARITY? AN INSIGHT INTO JOB SECURITY OF NIGERIAN JOURNALISTS IN THE AGE OF AI

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence has revolutionised activities across various industries. Due to automation, studies have shown its ability to take over and monpololise tasks previously handled by humans, fueling panic of displacement and job losses. The field of journalism is not an exception. Aspects of the field involving repetitive tasks, data analysis and content production where speed and efficiency are essential are shown to be under serious threats in this regard. This study therefore seeks to establish whether the displacement ability of AI is likely to dominate the future of Nigerian journalism or whether it can be used to complement the traditional skills of journalists to make the industry more efficient. Anchored on media ecology and technological determinism theories, and using qualitative approach, primary data were gathered through indepth interview of journalists drawn diverse media outlets in Kogi state. Through thematic analysis of data, findings show that job security of the Nigerian journalists in the age of AI will depend on how journalists and news organisations adapt to these technological changes. It specifically indicates that journalists who develop skills in areas where human judgement and creativity are essential, such as investigative and interpretative reporting, storytelling, and analysis, etc, are likely to remain valuable in the evolving media landscape. With such skills, collaboration between journalists and AI tools can lead to new opportunities for innovation and efficiency in journalism.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, Journalism, Media Ecology, Displacement, Complementarity

Introduction

At the First International Conference of the Department of Mass Communication, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, held from 25th – 28th February, 2024, scholars and other stakeholders in the communication industry dwelled extensively on the evolving roles of technology in changing the communication landscape. At the centre of the debate in particular was whether the emerging dominance of Artificial Intelligence was a force for good or evil. The first concern was on the ethical use of the technology for research by students and scholars, and the second was its likelihood to replace human and cause job losses in media and communication industry.

The argument on the potential of AI to cause job losses in the media industry is not out of place. This is because, in terms of objectives, AI has its foundation rooted in the replication of human cognitive function, making it possible for it to emulate and perform human jobs of any complexity. From practical perspective, while there is no denying the fact that AI creates new jobs, it also automates several repetitive tasks.

On this score, Talmage-Rostron (2024) highlighted that the customer service representatives, receptionists, accountants or book keepers, salespeople, warehouse jobs and retails, etc as jobs most likely to be automated.

He also highlighted the jobs of directors, managers, CEOs, psychologists, computer analysts, human resource managers, artists and writers as the ones that would be assisted by AI. It is owing to the foregoing that analysts anticipate that as many as 800 million jobs might be lost to automation by 2030 due to the fact that AI and automation is becoming commonplace in various industries (Ogunleye, 2023).

The signs are already there in reputable news organisation around the world. For instance, *The Washington Post* developed *Heliograf* to collect data and write articles on election and sport stories, *Bloomberg News* uses a system called Cyborg which dissects financial reports helping to churn out thousands of articles on reports of company earnings every quarter, China's *Xinhua News Agency* produced the first ever male and female AI-powered news anchor in 2018 and 2019 respectively (Wharton, 2019). In the Associated Press, journalists were traditionally penning 300 earnings recaps a quarter. With the adoption of the AI-powered Wordpress, however, it started penning 4,400 of those earning recaps, showing that 300 recaps produced by traditional journalists were replaced by robo-journalists who generated ten times more content (Miroshnichenko, 2018). These are indications of the capability of AI to cause job losses (Wang, 2011).

This notwithstanding, Waterson (2020) noted that as of the time, AI was not relieving reporters of their jobs, and that it was only replacing journalists who select and organise news as reflected in the case of Microsoft which fired dozens of journalists who were in charge of selecting, curating and editing articles for the MSN website with the intention of replacing them with automated systems.

However, while we cannot predict if robots would match reporters' tenacity and intuition in the traditional gathering, writing and dissemination of news, the decision by Microsoft and others are warning signs that job losses would result in the industry in the foreseeable future. Here in Nigeria, penetration of AI in the media industry is still at the embryonic stage; meaning that fear of job losses attributable to the effect of the technology might not be as worrisome as presently manifest in the advanced society. However, this does not rule out likely occurrence in the near future due to the increasing wave of AI penetration in virtually all sectors of socio-economic development across the world.

Several studies have been carried out on Artificial Intelligence in journalism in Nigeria and found that though journalist affirm that AI is useful in the journalistic process, they have the fear that their jobs as journalists may be threatened (Okocha and Ola-Akuma, 2020, Onoja, 2023). While AI and robot journalism has been embraced more by the Western world than it has been in developing countries like Nigeria (Santos & Ceron, 2022), little studies have been done to find out from practitioners how truly realistic the potential of AI is in displacing journalists of their jobs in Nigeria in recent times. This explains the need to provide an insight into the displacement or complementary effect of AI on the Nigerian media landscape.

Objectives of the Study
The study sought to:

1. assess the current level of penetration of Artificial Intelligence among journalists in Kogi state;
2. find out the perception of journalists on whether Artificial Intelligence poses significant threat to job security of the Nigerian journalists and the reasons for their claim;
3. determine areas in which AI tools can complement the traditional roles of journalists and strengthen professional effectiveness.

Review of Literature
Conceptualisation of Artificial Intelligence and Job Security in Journalism

Artificial Intelligence according to Perretti (2022) refers to a collection of ideas, techniques and technologies that relate to a computer system's ability to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence. Across different sectors of economy and social life all over the world, these tools which are task-specific have been developed and injected to handle jobs that were hitherto handled by human.

Journalism has had its fair share of the development. Traditionally, journalists have the editorial responsibility of preparing and

transmitting news stories or other information. In other words, their principal responsibilities include news gathering, news processing and editing and management of news operations (Hanitzsch & Hoxha, 2016). However, several AI-powered tools have been developed and injected, causing disruption in the long standing ascribed role. These include *TinEye* which is used in investigative journalism to analyse images, identify their sources and verify their authenticity; *ChatGPT* which is one of the most popular AI-powered conversational tool used for content generation in article writing. There is *Jasper.ai* which is used for content creation, as a writing assistance, to check grammar and spelling. In editing, there is *Quillbot*, a paraphrasing tool which is used to refine and polish text, Grammarly-AI writing assistant that helps to assess content for grammatical errors, and a host of others.

Combined, the AI tools create the effect of *robot journalism*, which Saad and Issa (2020) describes as a set of technologies that leverage artificial intelligence to produce news articles at record speed without depending on human labour. Rather, it used pre-models and vast amounts of data that are fed to the software to be analysed and learnt on its own. For instance, *Cyborg* supports Bloomberg in the competition with Reuters, which is its primary adversary in the realm of fast-paced business and financial news (Peiser, 2019)

While there are more of such tools in existence in the media industry and many more still evolving, worthy of attention, however, is the likely implication for the traditional roles of the reporter, editor, proof reader, graphic artist, etc, whose survival rests squarely on the job they do. This brings us to the concept of job security. It refers to the assurance that an individual's employment is stable and protected from termination or layoffs (Joon-ho, Seung-hye, Soo-Yun & Hyun-ju, 2019). Its importance cannot be overemphasised. Work gives people a sense of purpose, makes them feel valued which boosts their productivity in carrying out their duties at work, thereby enhancing overall business performance and profit for the employers.

In addition, for most people, it is by having jobs that they can provide for themselves and their families, put food on their tables, pay bills such as rent, utility, healthcare, childcare and so on.

Thus, not having the feeling that the means through which one provides basic necessities for himself and his family for their livelihood in society is secure, or having that feeling of security being threatened can cause unprecedented level of mental stress with damaging effect (Miles, 2022).

Empirical Review

A number of studies conducted in Nigeria have indicated the depth of penetration of AI and its possible implications on the job security of the Nigerian journalists. These include those of Guanah, Agbanu and Obi (2020), Onoja (2023), Okocha and Ola-Akuma (2020) and Folayan, Ajibade & Onayinka (2023).

On their part, Guanah, Agbanu and Obi (2020), while accessing the perception of journalists in Benin City on artificial intelligence in journalism revealed that majority of journalists believed that the use of AI-driven media applications (automated journalism) is an improvement on the current reporting process. A higher percentage of those journalists, however, see AI-driven media applications as threat to their jobs.

In another study, Onoja (2023) assessed the implication of AI on the Nigerian writing industry using a mixed method. The result of the study showed that AI facilitates the writing process by providing writers with tools for composing, editing and publishing. The drawback, however, was the fear of the respondents that the writing professions (such as journalism) could be threatened. Another theme drawn from the study was that AI generated work lack creativity, imagination and empathy which are important in writing. There is also a concern that content produced by AI would reinforce preexisting prejudices and stereotypes.

Okocha and Ola-Akuma (2020) examined the extent to which Nigerian journalists are exposed to robot journalism and their views on the use of automated journalism. The study was anchored on mediamorphosis theory, using a survey design with a sample of registered journalists across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria and across various media sectors. Findings revealed that a slight majority of media practitioners were aware of the concept of robot journalism and a slight majority as well expressed their concern that the adoption of

robot journalism would lead to loss of employment for traditional (human) journalists. A vast majority believe that robot journalism would not contribute to the socio-economic status of journalists.

However, a significant majority of journalists were of the opinion that robot journalism would enhance the voice of journalists in news coverage and dissemination in the sense that it would afford them more time that they can spend sourcing for news that would yield more as continuous mundane tasks of gathering stories around beats such as weather, sports finance are delegated to automation. Majority of the respondents believe that journalists should be trained in robot journalism and emphasized the need for close collaboration between journalists and software engineers. In essence, robot journalism is something they look forward to, as it has not been adopted yet.

In their study, Folayan, Ajibade and Onayinka (2023), examined the attitude of editors in newsrooms in Lagos state, which has been considered to be a media hub in Nigeria, towards the use of Artificial Intelligence in news management. They also attempted to find out how prepared Nigerian news organizations are for AI in news management, critical challenges facing its integration in news management and solutions, and finally, the potential impact of its non- deployment on news management. Based on the diffusion of innovation theory, the result of the study showed that there was inadequate familiarity with AI by Nigerian print media outlets.

The study also revealed that increase in training of staff, funding of news processing technology and publishers' commitment were important factors that would drive the deployment or integration of AI into the news management process. It also indicated that though editors believe AI would lead to faster news management process, the cost of acquiring the equipment and material for use for news production was high, and publishers were not enthusiastic about investing in them as they are not familiar with the potential of AI.

The study concluded that preparedness of Nigerian newsrooms for AI was quite low and that the technology might not be applied soon because it is not a priority for most organisations. Thus, most news organisations were in the late adopter's category. The study

suggested amongst other things, that trial (seeing AI at work in the news room) is critical for its adoption in order to really comprehend its potential.

A breakthrough in this regard is the creation of Nubia, an open-source AI by Dataphyte, a media, research and data analytics organization in Nigeria, whose function is to convert real-time information from weather, socio-economic and satellite web camera pictures into news reports, advisories and data insights that can be sent to newsroom and to the audience (Alkassim, 2023). Dataphyte is in partnership with *Daily Trust* newspaper, to utilise AI in transforming data journalism.

The studies indicated that fear of job losses is seen among journalists. This implies that journalists see artificial intelligence as a threat to their job security, and although this fear is logical, the question is that is the fear of job security and panic that AI will take away media jobs really realistic? The studies also show mixed views regarding the usage of AI across newsrooms in Nigeria. While some indicated that they were familiar with AI, most of the studies show that embracing AI and robot journalism optimally is still something to look forward to.

Theoretical Framework

The study draws inspiration form the presuppositions of the technological determinism theory propounded by Thorstein Veblein in 1929 and the media ecology theory pioneered by Neil Postman (1968). While technological determinism is a reductionist theory that presumes that a society's technology drives the development of its social structure and cultural values (Awofadeju, 2022), the media ecology theory focuses on the study of media environments with particular emphasis on the tenet that technology not only has significant impact on society but it also dominates almost every aspect of life (Islas & Bernal, 2016). The term 'ecology' is the study of environment and their interrelationships, including structure, content and social impact.

Technological determinism sees technology as a driver of social change which impacts all aspects of life and strengthens inevitability of changes which are beyond human control. Although changes emphasised by technological determinism theorists are not essentially

anchored on negativity, there is no denying the fact that the theory's presuppositions embrace both the negative and positive aspects of change. On the other hand, the media ecology theory is built on the idea that technology and techniques, modes of information and codes of communication play a leading role in human affairs. It provides a platform for investigation into how human perception and comprehension are influenced by media and communication processes aided by technological innovations.

Based on the presuppositions of the two theories, the impact of AI tools on the media ecosystem in Nigeria can be examined. This is because it has been seen to have the potential of changing the dynamics of media organisations, communications styles and content consumption habits (Khan, 2023). In relation to this study, therefore, while the media ecology theory helps situate the current depth of AI penetration on the Nigerian media landscape (objective 1 of the study), technological determinism helps capture the possible impact of the penetration either by way of job losses or complementarity (objectives 2 and 3).

In essence, the theories provide framework for the application of AI in journalism and newsrooms in Nigeria, with specific focus on its potential to either displace human journalists or play complementary role or both. This is considered worthy of attention because with the introduction of AI into the newsroom, the dynamics of the global news ecosystem has changed. For instance, ChatGPT and other AI models automate a large number of cognitive processes that underpin journalistic workflows (Caswell, 2024), posing significant challenge to work schedule in the global media industry.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Qualitative approach is adopted to provide insight into job security of Nigerian journalists in the age of AI. This is because the qualitative approach enables the researcher to make "knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspective (i.e. multiple meanings of individual's experiences) with the intent of developing a pattern" (Creswell, 2003, p.18). It provides "rich, elaborate descriptions of specific processes or concerns within a specified context". In qualitative studies, there are no scientifically validated rules that guide the selection of sample size; "The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information-richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with the sample size (Patton, 1990, p.185).

On that strength, indepth interview was conducted with with purposively sampled 10 journalists drwan from the print, broadcast and online media outfits in Kogi State. The journalists who are knowledgeable on AI were purposively selected as they were in the best position to provide insight and reasons on why AI can displace journalists of their jobs or not.The interview which was conuccted in May, 2024, was anchored on a guide which was reviewed by two communication research experts to ensure validity.

Some of the interviews were conducted online while some were conducted face-to-face at an agreed venue with the respondents. Respondents were codenamed as follows:

Code Names	Affiliation	Media Type	Years of experience
Inf. 1	Freelancer	Online and Offline	4 years
Inf. 2	Grace FM	Broadcast	3 years
Inf. 3	Wisdom Express New	Online	30 years
Inf. 4	Kogi reports	Online	12 years
Inf. 5	PR Directorate	Online and Offline	20 years
Inf. 6	Inside story	Online	9 years
Inf. 7	Inside story	Online	3 years
Inf. 8	Vanguard	Print	17 years
Inf. 9	Trend	Online	23 years
Inf. 10	Nigerian Post	Online	20 years

The data gathered from the indepth interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically.

Data Presentation
Theme 1: Usage of AI by Journalists

Journalists in this study highlighted various AI tools they utilize in the process of writing and reporting and what they specifically use it for. From Inf. 1: *'I don't use AI to write news stores but when I'm working on stories when time is limited, I use AI like quillbot to rephrase sentences, I use AI like ChatGPT to generate ideas on how to go about a particular task. I also use AI to perfect my writing. Like when I finish writing my story, I just go to Grammarly platform, paste the story, allow it to scan through for possible errors that I need to correct so it serves as an editing tool. if I have a bulky document I am working on, all I need to do is copy it to Gemini AI and ask it to summarise it for me and it gives me a summary within seconds, instead of cracking my brain trying to read from A-Z'.*

From Inf. 5: *'I use AI Bing Chat to check and correct tenses in my articles. I use ChatMasterAI to find some background or history about any features I might be working on or to keep abreast of needed information of past events'. For Inf. 7, 'AI tools are versatile. They are a product of huge investment of knowledge so you can literally get a wide range of information in its database. From my experience using AI in putting news and documentary script structure together, you will be so amazed at some of the suggestions it will give. It's vivid and helps you generate avid ideas and data'.*

Inf. 2 stated that: *'I use chatGPT to check my sentence construction, recast my headline, also, at times when I have to interview a guest on a program, and I am not too familiar with the subject of discussion, chatGPT is where I run to, to find out questions I can ask the guest based on that subject of discussion and it gives me very good answers'.*

Their responses show that AI has a wide range of application in the journalistic workflow whether in the print, broadcast or online media. The applications include providing information for news and features writing, script writing for various programmes, editing, summarising, verification, etc. Journalists also attest that the usage of AI has helped to save time which is of essence in journalism process, reduce their mental stress of beating deadline, provide them with ideas which help enhance efficiency in their various tasks in news production.

Theme 2: Limitations of AI (Why it cannot cause job loss)

Journalists in this study were unanimous in their views that even though AI has been useful and beneficial in saving time to carry out tasks in the journalistic workflows, it still has limitations which make it difficult for it to displace journalists completely from the jobs. Their responses are coded under the following subthemes:

Subtheme 1: Adherence to Ethics.

Journalism has ethical and legal rules of conduct that regulate its practice and that its practitioners are required to follow, which is one of the reasons it is considered a profession. In order to give the public unbiased information, ethical rules are essential. Informants in this study have asserted that this is one reason why AI is limited and will still require human journalists. Being a repertoire of information, it doesn't have the nuance for the ethical codes guiding journalist. In the words of Inf. 4, *'AI cannot adhere to the codes of ethics that human journalists follow. Human journalists are bound by a code of ethics that requires them to be balanced, honest, fair and accurate in their reporting. AI does not understand the importance of these ethical principles. So even if it helps in giving information on some parts of a story, it's still left for the journalists to check to make sure the ethics of the profession are adhered to - like making sure the story portrays all opposing views to ensure balance, verify facts especially those peculiar to our context and the likes'.*

Subtheme 2: Real Time Event Reporting

Journalism is a real time profession where events and happenings are reported as they occur. In their typical daily routine, journalists often go to their beats where they attend events, and give news reports based on what happened in such events. Informants in this study reiterated this fact, buttressing on the limitation of AI for event reporting.

Inf. 7 explained thus: *'Journalism is highly realistic. You can't practice it with just a repertoire of knowledge. There are real time events journalists cover every day. You can't say you will go to AI to generate a news story of an event that happened in a local area. It can give you idea of structure, background, perhaps, but when it comes to the content itself,*

it can't give you that. So it's not a threat'. For Inf. 2, *'AI can help to write news or feature story on a topical issue. However, on a situational issue it is different. For instance, an accident or fire outbreak occurs here now and needs to be reported immediately as breaking news. The journalist will still need to tell the story by himself in such situational report. AI cannot do that for you, so for now it can only complement and not displace'.* This was corroborated by Inf. 5. Their response shows that journalist's writing skills remains relevant in reporting on events as they occur.

Subtheme 3: Storytelling skills

Journalism involves creativity in writing. There are various aspects of journalism which requires a reporter's creative ingenuity. News writing, feature writing, opinion, investigative reports, news analysis, editorials, illustrations, documentaries, bulletins, programs of all kinds, interviews are all media content which requires creativity in creation and production. Respondents in this study assert that another area where human journalists are superior to AI based on their experience in its usage is in the area of writing.

As Inf. 2 recounts, *'If I write a story with AI at times, when I submit it to my superior who is more experienced on the job, they will be able to tell that it was AI generated because the story will be dry or flat in a way…that human emotion or feeling will not be there, so it is not something one can totally rely on. So I don't think it can actually make journalists to lose their jobs'.* Inf. 6 put it this way that: *'Even though AI is able to put out scripts quickly, it still lacks that personal connection and touch that only human journalists are able to incorporate in the newsroom. A straight news story may not necessarily need emotions but we have human interest and lifestyle features, opinions, which require creative writing where the writer writes in such a way as to evoke that emotional connection with the audience. You can't expect AI to give you that maximally. So you see that the type of content that AI can serve has limits too'.*

Inf. 1 reiterated the fact that every writer develops his writing style overtime, such that even the audience can identify how a writer writes and this makes journalists unique, especially in the print media. In his experience, AI is limited in that style. In his words, *'AI can*

never be human. But it can take your creativity. Because we all have styles of writing. If you see a write-up, you can tell it was written by me because I have a particular style, but when I use AI it becomes generic. It gives me its own style and with overreliance on it, gradually or unconsciously, I can lose my own creativity'.

Subtheme 4: Opportunities

As part of the ways in which journalists will prevent being displaced by AI, respondents in this study have mentioned that AI creates opportunities as much as it has its own threats. An opportunity in the sense that since AI is a machine or a tool, it cannot operate itself and needs humans to give it prompt and commands for it to follow. Therefore, journalists who understand how it works will remain valuable for media organizations when AI is being fully adopted in newsrooms. This is from Inf. 1:

> *'Personally, I have no fears because I know that as the trend is evolving, it is also creating opportunities. In my media organization, no one has been let go from the job because we all use AI and from the get go everyone is encouraged to jump on the trend of using AI. In my office, not everybody knows the kind of commands I know in using AI especially CHATGPT. If I want to get any kind of information, I know the kind of command to give to CHATGPT, and so commands, prompts have become specialties that if writers and journalists are aware of, they will remain in their jobs. This is because these AI cannot generate things by themselves. They need people to command them. So if you become an expert at giving the right command, you remain relevant'.*

This shows that media managers have a stake in determining the extent in which their staff can be displaced. Organizations which encourage their staff to keep abreast of the trends may get more value from the staff in using AI to work efficiently. Based on the limitation of AI, respondents also mentioned that another area of opportunity for journalists to remain relevant in their jobs is in reporting of local content. As Inf. 5 noted: *'Journalists can also focus on producing local contents and give in-depth reports about them which AI cannot do. Most times, AI fails to give information about names of persons, places or objects peculiar to our*

localized environment, and some remote areas'.

In summary, Inf. 8 emphasised that, just like the development of ICT came and automated some of the routine activities in the reporting process and people had to embrace it and upgrade themselves, only journalists who refuse to move with trend of AI will be displaced. Inf. 8 put it this way:

> 'If as human beings we give all our power to machines, then what is our usefulness? AI is good but we must set boundaries in usage. If you ask AI to create content, it will. But what is wrong with you creating your content and asking AI to help you modify it? As individuals we only need to upgrade ourselves to a level of working paripasu with AI. Job loss due to technology did not begin today. So every involuntary redundancy will definitely go away. When journalism started, it started with fax machine, sending it by vehicle to head office but with advancement, you sit at the comfort of your home, type and send stories and even edit. Anyone who did not upgrade himself will become redundant. So there's no way, I repeat, no way a machine can completely take away human reasoning. So once you realize the limit of the machine, you realize the angle you can come in through and you cannot be laid off as a journalist. Only people who are redundant will be displaced'.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study made key findings. First is the fact that AI-powered tools are being used by journalists in Kogi state to enhance their news gathering, editing, reporting and production process. Regarding the perception of journalists on whether AI will displace journalists or not in Nigeria, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that AI will not displace journalists from their jobs, but will rather complement their processes. The subthemes that emerged as limitations of AI that prevents it from displacing journalists are adherence to ethics, event reporting, emotional involvement, and opportunities.

In essence, while automation can be a useful tool for news organisations in search of

decrease in costs without sacrificing the calibre and breadth of their coverage, Amponsah and Atianashie (2024) argue that despite the progression in AI, human journalists would always play a crucial role. For instance, a degree of interpretation in storytelling skill that AI is now unable to match is frequently needed for complex stories. Human journalists are superior at comprehending the nuances and larger context of these tales, offering the breadth and clarity necessary for high-caliber reporting.

Another area where human journalists are considered as crucial as found in this study is in ethical decision making. This is in line with Al-Zoubi, Ahmad and Hamid (2024) who found that data bias, absence of legislation and international regulation regarding the use of AI in journalism and privacy violations are ethical challenges faced by journalists in adopting AI in the newsroom. Therefore, human journalists are essential in deciding the direction and tone of journalism, making sure that it adheres to moral principles and advances the public good.

From another perspective, however, Miroshnichenko (2018) pointed out that editors will not be looking for the best journalist when attracting traffic is at stake. Instead, they will be looking for the fastest journalist. And between a human journalist who submits three stories per week, along with his demand of salary increase, and a near-perfect algorithm with low maintenance cost that can churn three stories per minute, an editor is likely to choose the algorithm. In his estimation, human journalists cannot compete with robot journalism in terms of speed and efficiency and thus, if human journalists continue to work with the media, it will be due to societal necessity to utilise people rather than economic considerations such that maintaining jobs becomes more crucial than boosting productivity. However, respondents in this study have shown that this is not applicable in all aspects or genres of coverage. Algorithms may be valuable in churning out financial reports and the likes, but it may not be the case in reporting real time events.

This is similar to the position of the news editor of Worcester, one of the papers owned by UK's second biggest regional publisher, who stated

that AI cannot visit a bereaved family, be at a crash scene, be in court or a council meeting, look someone in the eye and tell that they are lying. What it does is to give reporters the time to do more of that and, therefore. it should be embraced (Topping, 2023).

It is important to note that because sophisticated AI software can be quite expensive for most media organisations, its development by majority of media organisations has been uneven. For instance, it is more difficult for newsrooms in the Global South (Nigeria inclusive) to acquire them, and studies have shown that the application of AI in African newsrooms appears to be restricted (Santos & Ceron, 2022). Furthermore, even traditional news outlet such as *Washington Post, Associated Press, the New York Times* that have deployed AI projects in their newsrooms did not get them cheaply as AI is expensive even for them (Broussard et al., 2019 in Santos & Ceron, 2022). Majority of Reuters' AI technologies are developed in-house while Associated Press is known to purchase its own through open-market suppliers and startups (Perreti, 2022).

According to Mattai Peretti the manager of *JournalismAI* at Polis, which is the International Journalism think-tank of the London School of Economics, AI powered tools assist journalists, just like any other technological innovation, in carrying out repetitive tasks like transcribing interviews, sifting through volumes of leaked documents, filtering reader comments, writing routine financial earnings for hundreds of companies every three months. More importantly, "we decide what we ask AI to do, and on its own it doesn't have ambition or ability to steal our jobs" (Perretti, 2022).

According to Ruiz (2024), the worry that technology will steal employment is not new, as similar worries were expressed by people during the agricultural and industrial revolutions. As it happened, there was only a shift in the kind of jobs during those periods and not in the overall number of jobs, as menial and hard labour was mechanized while other industries flourished. Therefore, it is likely that the current technological revolution by AI will bring similar outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the current media ecology in Nigeria shows that with deeper and deeper penetration of AI, there are indications that certain aspects of journalism that involve repetitive tasks, data analysis, content creation and moderation, fact checking, personalised recommendations and translation and transcriptions,where speed and efficiency are essential, may be threatened. In other words, displacement or job losses may be real in that regard. However, the encouraging signs in the foreseeable future rests squarely on the adaptability of the Nigerian journalists to take advantage of the limitations of AI as respondents have opined in this study, through reskilling and upskilling. This will create room for complementarity of human and AI roles, leading to efficiency and minimising job losses in the industry.

Consequently, the following are recommended for journalists who aim to avoid displacement in the media industry in the age of AI.

1. Upscaling Investigative Reporting Skills: This is because while AI can assist in data analysis and research, human journalists are crucial for digging deep into stories, uncovering hidden information, and holding power to account through investigative reporting.

2. Honing Storytelling Skills: Journalists can focus on honing their storytelling skills to craft compelling narratives that engage readers and viewers on an emotional level. While AI can generate content, human journalists excel in creating stories that resonate with audiences.

3. Depth in Analysis and Interpretation: AI lacks critical thinking skills. Journalists can capitalise on that by specialising in analysing complex information, providing context, and interpreting data to help audiences understand the implications of news events and trends.

4. Audience Engagement and Community Building: Journalists can focus on building relationships with their audience, fostering community engagement and leveraging social

media to connect with readers and viewers on a personal level. This human touch is essential for building loyalty and trust.

5. Multimedia Skills: Journalists can expand their skill set to include multimedia storytelling, video production, podcasting, and interactive content creation. By diversifying their abilities, journalists can adapt to the changing demands of digital media consumption.

6. Continuous Learning and Adaptation: Journalists should stay abreast of emerging technologies, trends, and best practices in journalism to remain relevant and competitive in a rapidly evolving industry. Continuous learning and adaptation are key to thriving in the age of AI.

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