IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities
Vol. 11. No. 6, (2025)
ISSN: 2488- 9210 (Print) 2504-9038 (Online)
Dept. of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Tansian University Umunya
Indexed: Academic Journals Online, Google Scholar, Igwebuike Research Institute

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, ETHICS, AND EROSION OF HUMAN INTEGRITY: NIGERIAN QUEST FOR RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION AMIDST GLOBAL STANDARDS AND LOCAL REALITIES

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various sectors, offering immense potential for societal advancement. However, its rapid development raises ethical concerns that could erode human integrity. Nigeria, a nation poised for technological growth, must navigate this complex landscape to ensure responsible AI innovation. While AI presents opportunities, it also poses risks such as algorithmic bias, job displacement, and privacy violations. Nigeria's unique socio-cultural context and limited regulatory framework intensify these challenges. This research investigates the ethical implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in Nigeria by analysing existing regulatory frameworks and proposing strategies for responsible AI development that align with both global standards and local contexts. Its findings aim to support informed policymaking, promote ethical AI practices, and enrich public discourse on the responsible use of AI in Nigeria. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Data collected through literature review, interviews with AI experts, policymakers, and industry leaders, and surveys of the general public are examined. The study reveals gaps in Nigeria's AI regulatory framework, a lack of public awareness about AI ethics, and a need for greater collaboration between stakeholders. In addressing ethical concerns and fostering responsible AI innovation, Nigeria is challenged to harness the benefits of AI while safeguarding human dignity and societal wellbeing.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, Human Integrity, Responsible Innovation, Regulatory Framework, Algorithmic bias

Introduction

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) globally and Nigeria in particular presents both unprecedented opportunities and significant ethical challenges (Dike, 2015). While AI holds the potential to drive economic growth, improve healthcare, and address societal issues, its development and deployment raise concerns about the erosion of human integrity. These concerns include potential biases in AI systems, the displacement of human workers, the misuse of AI for malicious purposes, and the lack of transparency and accountability in AI decision-making. Furthermore, the development and adoption of AI in Nigeria must direct a complex landscape of global standards and local realities (Dike, 2025). While adhering to international best practices is crucial, a one-size-fits-all approach may not adequately address the unique social, cultural, and economic contexts of Nigeria. Nigeria, like many developing nations, is grappling with the ethical

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dilemmas surrounding AI development and deployment. The lack of a robust regulatory framework, coupled with the unique social, cultural, and economic realities of the country, necessitates an intentional approach to ensure responsible AI innovation.

This research delves into the critical connexion of Artificial Intelligence (AI), ethical considerations, and the preservation of human integrity within the Nigerian context. The rapid advancement of AI technologies presents both unprecedented opportunities and significant challenges (Okoronkwo, Dike, & Dike, 2025). While AI promises to revolutionize various sectors, concerns regarding its ethical implications, particularly the potential erosion of human values and autonomy, are paramount. It aims at investigating the ethical dilemmas surrounding AI development and deployment in Nigeria, explore the potential erosion of human integrity, and identify pathways towards responsible innovation that aligns with both global standards and local realities.

This study seeks to address the following key questions: How can ethical principles be effectively integrated into the development and deployment of AI systems in Nigeria? What are the potential impacts of AI on human dignity, privacy, and autonomy in the Nigerian context? What role should the government, academia, and industry play in fostering responsible AI innovation? How can international AI ethics guidelines be adapted to address the specific needs and challenges of Nigeria? This way, the research aims first, to critically analyze the ethical considerations surrounding AI development and deployment in Nigeria. Second, to investigate the potential impacts of AI on human integrity, including privacy, autonomy, and dignity. Third, to explore the existing regulatory landscape for AI in Nigeria and identify potential gaps and challenges. And fourth, to propose a framework for responsible AI innovation in Nigeria that aligns with global standards while addressing local realities.

This research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. Data collection methods include literature review of relevant academic and industry publications on AI ethics, human rights, and responsible innovation. In-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including policymakers, AI researchers, industry leaders, and civil society organizations. Surveys are made to gather public opinion on AI and its ethical implications, and case studies of specific AI applications in Nigeria to analyze their social and ethical impacts.

The paper focuses on developing a comprehensive understanding of the ethical challenges and opportunities presented by AI in Nigeria. It critically examines the potential impacts of AI on various aspects of human life, including employment, healthcare, education, and justice. The research provides valuable insights into the ethical dimensions of AI in the Nigerian context. This is done through the identification of key ethical principles and values relevant to AI development and deployment in Nigeria. It develops a framework for responsible AI innovation that addresses the specific needs and challenges of the country. It concludes with recommendations for policymakers, industry leaders, and researchers to promote ethical and inclusive AI development.

Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, and Erosion of Human Integrity

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad field of computer science that aims to create intelligent agents, which are systems that can reason, learn, and act autonomously. AI encompasses a wide range of techniques, including machine learning, deep learning, natural language processing, and computer (Nwokolo, 2019) vision. Nigeria is increasingly embracing AI, recognizing its potential to drive economic growth and address societal challenges. The country has established the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR) to foster AI research and development. Additionally, the Nigerian government has launched a National AI strategy to guide the responsible and ethical development of AI in the country (NTIDA, 2023).

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a complex interplay of promise and peril, particularly in the Nigerian context. While AI offers transformative potential across sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and finance, its ethical implications and the risk of eroding human integrity pose significant challenges. Consequently, several Nigerian startups and companies are also leveraging AI to develop innovative solutions in various sectors, such as healthcare, agriculture, and finance. For example, some companies are using AI to develop diagnostic tools for diseases, optimize crop yields, and provide personalized financial services (Van Dijk, 1999). However, the development of AI in Nigeria also presents challenges, including the need for skilled AI talent, access to data, and appropriate regulations. Addressing these challenges will be crucial for realizing the full potential of AI in Nigeria.

Ethical Considerations

AI systems learn from data, and if that data reflects existing societal biases (e.g., racial, gender, socioeconomic), the AI will perpetuate and even amplify those biases. This can lead to discriminatory outcomes in areas like loan applications, job recruitment, and criminal justice, disproportionately impacting marginalized groups in Nigeria (Sparrow, 2008; Okoronkwo & Dike, 2025). AI systems often rely on vast amounts of personal data, raising concerns about privacy violations. Facial recognition technology, for instance, can be used for mass surveillance, potentially infringing on individual freedoms and undermining trust in government institutions. The automation of tasks by AI could lead to significant job displacement, particularly in sectors with high levels of manual labour (Wallach, and Colin, 2013). This could exacerbate existing unemployment issues in Nigeria and widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

Many AI systems operate as "black boxes," making it difficult to understand how they arrive at their decisions. This lack of transparency can hinder accountability and make it challenging to identify and rectify biases or errors. As AI systems become more sophisticated, concerns arise about the potential for them to make autonomous decisions that could have significant consequences (Wallach, and Colin, 2013). Ensuring human oversight and control over AI systems is crucial to prevent unintended harm.

Erosion of Human Integrity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Ethical Concerns for Nigeria

The erosion of human integrity refers to the systematic decline in ethical consciousness and the weakening of moral values that traditionally govern human behaviour, decision-making, and societal cohesion. Rooted in philosophical ethics and existential concerns about technology’s role

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in society, this concept captures how both individual and collective orientations toward truth, trust, responsibility, and respect can deteriorate in technologically mediated environments (Jonas, 1984). In the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI), such erosion takes on new dimensions, where the automation of human functions risks hollowing out the ethical core that underpins meaningful human relationships and civic trust. At its foundation, human integrity is closely linked with moral agency, the capacity to make ethical decisions and take responsibility for them. Hans Jonas (1984), in *The Imperative of Responsibility*, warned against the unintended consequences of advanced technology on ethical responsibility, cautioning that technological systems could outpace human control and moral foresight. In Nigeria, where the moral fabric of society is already under pressure from corruption, inequality, and weak governance structures, the deployment of AI without ethical guardrails may accelerate the erosion of core human values.

AI systems often operate based on large datasets and algorithmic logic that reduce complex human realities into quantifiable variables. This reductionist logic can undermine the recognition of inherent human dignity, especially when individuals are treated as mere data points in surveillance systems, predictive policing, or automated welfare assessments (Sparrow, 2008). In the Nigerian context, where socio-political marginalization and digital exclusion persist, such technologies can further dehumanize already vulnerable populations, reducing them to objects of prediction and control rather than subjects with rights, agency, and dignity. For example, the rise of automated public service systems in Nigeria, such as biometric identity verification or AI-driven customer support often lacks empathy and contextual understanding. These systems may exclude rural or illiterate users, exacerbate frustration, and reinforce alienation. The replacement of human judgment with machine logic risks prioritizing efficiency over ethical deliberation, undermining the interpersonal care and relational values central to African communal ethics (Mbiti, 1990).

AI technologies, particularly generative AI, have facilitated the rise of deepfakes, algorithmic manipulation, and large-scale misinformation campaigns. In a fragile democratic environment like Nigeria, where public trust in institutions is already tenuous, the use of AI to manipulate public opinion threatens to delegitimize democratic processes and public discourse. This aligns with Sparrow's (2008) concern that as trust erodes, both in information sources and in interpersonal relationships societies risk descending into cynicism, disillusionment, and fragmentation. Moreover, the ethical implications of using AI in electoral processes, digital surveillance, or political messaging are significant. Without transparent oversight mechanisms and civic education, these tools could be co-opted by elite interests to perpetuate misinformation, violate privacy, or suppress dissent, thereby corroding democratic integrity and social trust.

Another dimension of human integrity at risk is the erosion of emotional intelligence and empathy in social interactions. AI-driven platforms mediate increasing aspects of human communication, often in impersonal and mechanistic ways. Automated responses in education, healthcare, or customer service replace emotional nuance with algorithmic efficiency. While useful for scalability, this shift risks flattening human relationships and discouraging the cultivation of empathy, patience, and active listening core virtues in African interpersonal ethics (Gyekye, 1997). This phenomenon is exacerbated by the overreliance on AI systems, which can disincentivize

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human creativity, critical thinking, and moral deliberation. As Bostrom (2014) warned in *Superintelligence*, there is a danger that excessive dependence on AI could create passive humans, users who no longer question, challenge, or reflect, but instead surrender to machine decisions. In Nigeria, where educational systems already face critical challenges in nurturing independent thought, the unchecked proliferation of AI may widen this deficit, compromising the cognitive and ethical development of future generations.

The erosion of human integrity through AI must be interpreted not only in universal ethical terms but also through Nigeria's cultural, spiritual, and communal values. Traditional African ethics place high value on concepts such as *Ubuntu,* the idea that "a person is a person in relation to others." This relational worldview emphasizes responsibility, solidarity, and mutual respect. However, AI systems developed without reference to these values may promote individualism, abstraction, and detachment, threatening the normative foundations of Nigerian communal life. Furthermore, the socio-economic inequality that marks Nigeria's digital landscape means that the burdens of AI-induced ethical erosion are not evenly distributed. Marginalized groups, women, rural populations, the uneducated are more likely to be victims of dehumanizing algorithms and less likely to benefit from AI's potential. Ethical AI in Nigeria must therefore not only focus on technological parameters but also on questions of justice, equity, and cultural identity.

The erosion of human integrity in the context of AI is not merely a philosophical concern, it is a tangible and urgent ethical crisis that affects how Nigerians live, relate, learn, and govern. It involves the subtle dismantling of values such as empathy, accountability, and communal responsibility. To counter this trend, Nigeria must prioritize ethical education, human-centered AI design, inclusive policymaking, and culturally grounded frameworks for technology governance. Responsible AI innovation should enhance not diminish the moral fabric of Nigerian society.

Nigerian Quest for Responsible Innovation Amidst Global Standards and Local Realities

The phrase "Nigerian Quest for Responsible Innovation Amidst Global Standards and Local Realities" encapsulates the nation's aspirations to leverage innovation for development while navigating the complexities of a globalized world and its unique domestic circumstances (Yelwa, Abdulhameed, Maigari, 2020). Understanding the concept of Nigerian quest for responsible innovation is a significant and deliberate effort to harness innovation not just for economic growth, but also for social progress, environmental sustainability, and ethical considerations (Nwokolo, 2019). It emphasizes a proactive approach to innovation that prioritizes inclusivity, equity, and the well-being of all citizens. Global standards on the other hand, refers to the internationally recognized principles and guidelines for ethical and sustainable innovation. These standards often encompass aspects like human rights, environmental protection, data privacy, and algorithmic fairness. They provide a framework for responsible innovation practices that transcend national boundaries. Furthermore, local realities acknowledge the unique socio-economic, cultural, and political context of Nigeria (Nwokolo, 2019). It highlights the need for innovation strategies that are tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities faced by the country, such as poverty, inequality, infrastructure gaps, and security issues.

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The Nigerian quest for responsible innovation necessitates a delicate balancing act between adhering to global standards and addressing local realities. It poses the challenge of contextualization of global standards (Yelwa, Abdulhameed, Maigari, 2020). While embracing international best practices, Nigeria must adapt global standards to its specific needs and circumstances. This involves a nuanced understanding of how these standards can be effectively implemented while respecting local values, traditions, and priorities. This way, there is need for prioritizing local requests. Innovation efforts must be driven by local needs and aspirations. This involves identifying and addressing critical challenges such as poverty, unemployment, healthcare access, and food security (Robert Sparrow, 2008). Innovation should be a tool to empower local communities and improve their livelihoods.

There is also need to build local capacity. Developing local expertise and capabilities in science, technology, and innovation is crucial. This involves investing in education, research, and development, and fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the country. This calls for inclusive innovation (Sparrow, 2008). Ensuring that the benefits of innovation are shared equitably across all segments of society is essential. This requires addressing the digital divide, promoting access to technology and digital literacy, and mitigating the potential negative impacts of innovation on marginalized communities.

Challenges and Opportunities

While AI presents inherent risks of facilitating innovation fraud, its potential for detecting such misconduct should be actively explored and responsibly implemented. This Essay advocates for a proactive approach to safeguarding the integrity of Nigerian research, drawing inspiration from global best practices. A crucial aspect of this approach involves strengthening the federal government's role in managing research misconduct. Specifically, this article proposes a novel strategy: actively seeking repayment of misused funds. This strategy would not only deter future fraud and recover taxpayer dollars for legitimate research but also serve as a powerful deterrent against the erosion of human integrity within the Nigerian innovation ecosystem The Nigerian quest for responsible innovation faces several challenges, including: first, limited resources. Inadequate funding for research and development, limited access to technology and infrastructure, and a brain drain of skilled professionals can hinder innovation efforts. Second, weak regulatory framework. A lack of clear and effective regulations can impede responsible innovation and create a breeding ground for unethical practices. Third, corruption and inefficiency. Corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency hinder the implementation of innovation policies and hinder the growth of innovative enterprises (Nwokolo, 2019).

However, Nigeria also presents significant opportunities for responsible innovation (NITDA, 2020), first, a young and dynamic population. Nigeria has a large and youthful population, which can be a source of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial drive. Second, growing digital economy. The rapid growth of the digital economy presents opportunities for innovation in areas such as fintech, e-commerce, and digital services. And third, rich natural resources. Nigeria's abundant natural resources can be leveraged for sustainable and innovative solutions in areas such as agriculture, renewable energy, and environmental conservation.

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The Nigerian quest for responsible innovation is a complex and multifaceted undertaking. By carefully navigating the interplay between global standards and local realities, Nigeria will harness the power of innovation to drive sustainable development, improve the lives of its citizens, and contribute to a more just and equitable world.

Insufficient Governmental Oversight

In the Nigerian context, a robust regulatory framework is crucial to address the ethical challenges and mitigate the risks of AI-driven research misconduct. While drawing inspiration from global best practices, such as the role of the US Office of Research Integrity (ORI), it is imperative to tailor this framework to the unique realities of the Nigerian research landscape. The current system, where research institutions are primarily responsible for investigating misconduct allegations, presents both advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, institutions possess a deeper understanding of local research practices, enabling them to conduct efficient and cost-effective investigations (Yelwa, Abdulhameed, Maigari, 2020). They also have direct access to relevant evidence, including lab data and personnel. Moreover, institutions possess the authority to impose a full range of sanctions, including dismissal, ensuring appropriate consequences for proven misconduct.

However, the inherent risks associated with self-investigation, such as potential conflicts of interest and the desire to protect institutional reputation, cannot be ignored. The Nigerian government must therefore establish a robust oversight mechanism to ensure the integrity of these investigations. This could involve:

a. Establishing an independent National Research Integrity Office: This office would provide guidance, support, and, when necessary, independent oversight of institutional investigations.
b. Developing clear and transparent guidelines: These guidelines should outline the procedures for reporting and investigating AI-related research misconduct, including data manipulation, plagiarism, and the development of AI systems with harmful biases.
c. Promoting a culture of open inquiry and accountability: This involves fostering a research environment where concerns about ethical violations can be raised without fear of reprisal and where transparency and accountability are prioritized.

By implementing these measures, Nigeria can strive to create a research ecosystem where AI innovation thrives ethically, safeguarding human integrity and fostering public trust in the responsible development and deployment of AI technologies.

Federal Government's Responsibilities in Establishing Ethical and Accountable AI Innovation in Nigeria

The Nigerian federal government holds a central and non-transferable responsibility in shaping an AI research environment that is both ethically grounded and institutionally accountable. As the primary allocator of public research funding, particularly through agencies such as the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), and the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI). The

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government must move beyond traditional regulatory roles to become a proactive enabler of responsible AI innovation. In light of global debates on AI ethics and governance (Floridi et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2021), there is an urgent need to establish a national framework for AI fraud prevention, which includes clearly defined accountability mechanisms for public-funded research.

A foundational component of this responsibility involves the institutionalization of robust auditing and accountability systems. These systems should empower funding bodies such as TETFund to conduct ex post facto evaluations of project implementation, including the recovery of disbursed funds where fraud or ethical violations are identified. This aligns with international best practices; for example, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) retains the authority to "seek to recover PHS funds spent in support of activities that involved research misconduct" (Office of Research Integrity [ORI], 2024). A similar legal provision should be embedded within Nigeria's National Research and Innovation Policy to serve as both a deterrent and corrective tool against fraudulent use of AI research funding.

In tandem with financial accountability, the government should operationalize a tiered framework for AI-related research misconduct. This system should categorize ethical infractions based on severity, intent, and potential for societal harm. At the base of the tier could be administrative lapses such as omission of transparency declarations, while at the top would be high-impact offenses such as algorithmic bias propagation, falsified data in training models, or unauthorized surveillance applications. The severity of the misconduct should directly inform the magnitude of sanctions, including financial restitution, publication bans, and exclusion from future funding calls. Such proportional justice ensures that the punishment fits the misconduct, thus preserving public trust in AI systems and research institutions (Whittlestone et al., 2023; Jobin et al., 2019).

To ensure transparency and democratic legitimacy, the modalities for enforcement should be articulated through a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), encouraging participatory governance by involving researchers, legal experts, ethicists, and the public in policymaking. This process would also enable Nigeria to domesticate relevant principles from global AI frameworks such as the OECD AI Principles (OECD, 2023), UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021), and the African Union's emerging data policy frameworks. These documents emphasize values such as accountability, transparency, human oversight, and equity, all of which are foundational for building AI systems that align with human dignity and national development priorities.

Crucially, the federal government's ability to enforce restitution for fraudulent activities sends a clear signal: publicly funded AI innovation must be ethically grounded and socially responsive. This is especially significant in the Nigerian context, where weak institutional oversight, bureaucratic inertia, and corruption often undermine the developmental impact of research initiatives (Onuoha & Jolaoso, 2023, Dike, 2025). Establishing firm and enforceable standards for AI ethics not only prevents the misuse of scarce resources but also strengthens the moral legitimacy of AI research as a tool for national development and public good.

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In all, the Nigerian government must strategically leverage its funding, regulatory, and normative powers to create a national AI ethics ecosystem. Through structured deterrents, transparent enforcement mechanisms, and alignment with international standards, Nigeria can foster a research culture that is innovative yet accountable, locally responsive yet globally respected. This approach would not only safeguard the integrity of AI science but also defend the deeper human values at stake in the age of intelligent machines.

Findings and the Nigerian Challenges

Despite the growing discourse on Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a transformative tool for economic development, healthcare, education, and governance, Nigeria faces several structural and ethical challenges that hinder the responsible and equitable deployment of AI systems. These challenges not only threaten the integrity of innovation but also risk exacerbating existing social inequalities and undermining public trust in emerging technologies. The key challenges identified in the Nigerian AI landscape are as follows:

i. Limited Regulatory Framework

Nigeria lacks a coherent and enforceable national legal framework that governs the design, deployment, and oversight of AI technologies. While institutions such as the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) have initiated efforts through documents like the National Artificial Intelligence Policy Draft (2023), these remain largely aspirational and lack legislative force. This regulatory vacuum provides room for unethical experimentation, data misuse, biased algorithmic applications, and commercial exploitation of vulnerable populations (Adeleke & Ayoade, 2023). Furthermore, the absence of binding ethical standards makes it difficult to hold actors accountable when AI systems cause harm, discriminate, or violate rights. This challenge stands in stark contrast to global developments such as the European Union's AI Act (2024), which seeks to classify AI systems based on risk and enforce appropriate legal responsibilities.

ii. Digital Divide

The deployment of AI in Nigeria occurs within a context of pronounced digital inequality. According to the Nigeria Digital Economy Report (World Bank, 2023), significant portions of the population, especially in rural and marginalized regions lack access to broadband internet, digital devices, and digital literacy. This entrenches a two-tiered society, where urban elites benefit from AI-driven services (e.g., fintech, e-health, smart agriculture), while rural dwellers are excluded or exploited as data sources without consent or benefit. Moreover, limited digital literacy means that large segments of the population are unable to critically evaluate or resist the impacts of AI technologies, which may deepen power asymmetries and marginalization (Iwuoha & Ezema, 2022; Dike & Okoronkwo, 2024). The digital divide thus poses both an ethical and developmental challenge, as AI risks amplifying, not mitigating socioeconomic disparities.

iii. Data Privacy Concerns

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Nigeria's current data protection landscape remains underdeveloped and weakly enforced. The Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) of 2023 represents a progressive step toward protecting personal data, but significant gaps persist in enforcement, institutional capacity, and public compliance. These deficiencies make it easier for AI systems, particularly those driven by large language models, biometric tools, or surveillance technologies to exploit personal data without transparency, consent, or oversight (Oladunjoye, 2024). The ethical concern is not just about privacy breaches, but also about informational injustice where individuals or communities are misrepresented, stereotyped, or surveilled by AI systems that draw from biased or unregulated datasets. In the absence of strong institutional enforcement mechanisms and public awareness, the integrity of human dignity and autonomy is at stake.

iv. Lack of Public Awareness

Public understanding of AI technologies, their capabilities, and their ethical implications remains critically low in Nigeria. The dominant narrative often frames AI as a futuristic, elite-driven, and foreign concept, alienating the general public from active engagement in AI governance debates. This epistemic gap weakens democratic participation and accountability, as citizens are neither informed enough to challenge unethical AI practices nor equipped to demand protective legislation (Ezeani & Adebayo, 2023). Without targeted public education campaigns, media literacy programs, and civil society advocacy, the ethical trajectory of AI innovation in Nigeria may be dictated solely by commercial interests and global tech conglomerates, with little regard for local values, human rights, or developmental priorities.

These challenges regulatory gaps, digital exclusion, data vulnerability, and public ignorance form a converging threat to ethical and inclusive AI development in Nigeria. If unaddressed, they risk undermining both the legitimacy of technological progress and the foundational principles of human integrity, justice, and dignity. Conversely, recognizing and responding to these challenges with bold policy reform, inclusive capacity building, and community-driven AI literacy initiatives can position Nigeria to chart a unique, Afrocentric model of responsible AI innovation. Such a model must balance global ethical standards with the sociocultural, legal, and economic realities of the Nigerian context.

Recommendations

These ethical issues and dilemmas, challenge the public sector organizations to think through and focus on AI literacy programs that are both beneficial and responsible. With these in view, policymakers and stakeholders are required to work towards developing a comprehensive framework for responsible AI development and deployment. These strategies will promote the responsible and equitable use of AI in the public sector. This includes ensuring transparency, mitigating bias, protecting privacy, and addressing the potential impacts on the workforce. This way, Nigeria will modernize their national statistics and data collection systems to better support the development and deployment of AI, while ensuring data quality, ethical considerations, and public trust. The Nigerian government need to create a more attractive environment for IT professionals, reduce brain drain, and harness the potential of the country's tech talent to drive

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economic growth and development. Importantly, while both the National Assembly and State Assemblies have a role to play in AI legislation, the National Assembly is likely to play a more prominent role due to the national scope and impact of AI. However, effective AI governance requires collaboration between all levels of government, ensuring a balanced and rich approach that addresses both national and local concerns.

Developing and establishment of clear ethical guidelines for AI development and deployment is crucial. These guidelines should address issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and accountability. Strengthening data protection laws and enhancing enforcement mechanisms are essential to protect individuals' privacy and prevent the misuse of personal data. AI Education and Research will be of utmost importance. Investing in AI education and research will help to develop a skilled workforce and foster innovation in AI. It will also enable researchers to investigate and address the ethical challenges associated with AI.

Establishment of a National AI Ethics Advisory Council is extremely important. This independent council would comprise diverse stakeholders, including AI experts, ethicists, legal scholars, social scientists, civil society representatives, and end-users. The council's mandate would include the provision of guidance on ethical considerations related to AI development and deployment. It would conduct research and analysis on the social, economic, and ethical implications of AI. And consequently, advise the government on the development and implementation of AI policies and regulations. It beholds the council to raise public awareness about the ethical considerations surrounding AI. There is need to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing. Collaboration between researchers, policymakers, industry leaders, and civil society organizations is crucial to develop and implement effective AI policies. The council would encourage multi-stakeholder platforms facilitate collaboration between government, industry, academia, and civil society through workshops, conferences, and other platforms for knowledge sharing and dialogue on AI ethics. The council similarly engages in international cooperation and knowledge exchange with other countries and international organizations to learn best practices and develop a globally-aligned approach to AI ethics. This way, prioritize human-centered AI that is focused on human values. This in turn emphasize the importance of human values, such as fairness, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, in the design, development, and deployment of AI systems. AI systems should be designed to augment human capabilities and enhance human well-being, rather than replace or dominate human decision-making. Involving a proactively approach in addressing these challenges and embracing a human-centered approach to AI development, Nigeria can harness the transformative potential of AI while mitigating its risks and preserving human integrity. These recommendations are critical for the ethical regulation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Nigeria across all sectors.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force across numerous sectors, promising to revolutionize industries, enhance efficiency, and improve lives. However, this rapid technological advancement also presents a complex set of ethical challenges that threaten to

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undermine human values and exacerbate existing societal inequalities. Nigeria, a nation on the cusp of a technological renaissance, finds itself at a critical juncture, needing to carefully navigate this dual nature of AI.

While AI offers immense potential for economic growth and social progress, it also carries significant risks. Algorithmic bias embedded in AI systems can perpetuate discrimination and marginalize vulnerable populations. Job displacement due to automation poses a serious threat to employment stability, particularly in sectors with high levels of manual labour. Furthermore, concerns surrounding data privacy and security loom large, as AI systems often rely on vast amounts of personal data, raising concerns about potential misuse and exploitation.

Nigeria's unique socio-cultural context and limited regulatory framework further complicate the ethical considerations surrounding AI development. A lack of robust data protection laws and a dearth of skilled AI professionals exacerbate these challenges. Moreover, public awareness about AI ethics remains low, hindering meaningful public discourse and engagement in shaping the future of AI in the country.

This research endeavoured to address these critical issues by examining the ethical implications of AI in the Nigerian context, analyzing existing regulatory frameworks, and proposing strategies for responsible AI development. Through a mixed-methods approach, involving literature reviews, expert interviews, and public surveys, the study:

1. Identifies and analyzes the ethical dilemmas posed by AI in Nigeria, including algorithmic bias, job displacement, privacy violations, and the potential for misuse.
2. Assesses the adequacy and effectiveness of existing regulatory frameworks in addressing these ethical concerns.
3. Develops and proposes a comprehensive framework for responsible AI development that aligns with international standards and best practices while considering the specific needs and realities of the Nigerian context.
4. Fosters public awareness and engagement in AI ethics through educational campaigns, public forums, and collaborative initiatives.

In conclusion, in fostering a deeper understanding of the ethical dimensions of AI and promoting responsible innovation, Nigeria is set to harness the transformative power of this technology while safeguarding human dignity and ensuring a future where AI serves the common good.

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