



PERCEPTION OF COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS ON ADOPTION AND USAGE OF CHATGPT FOR MEDIA STUDIES

**Obiora Adanma Vivian (Ph.D.)¹, Nwammuo Onyinye Sylvia²,
and Nwammuo Angela Nkiru (Ph.D.)³**

¹Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Email: av.obiora@coou.edu.ng

²Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Email: sylvianwammuotj@gmail.com

³Department of Mass Communication, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Email: an.nwammuo@coou.edu.ng

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ABSTRACT: *ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer) as an artificial intelligence (AI) tool has created a paradigm shift in the field of media studies by enhancing research efficiency, transforming teaching, and on the other hand, raising critical questions about authorship and algorithmic bias which has sparked concerns over ethical implications in media studies. This study therefore investigated communication scholars' views, concerns, and expectations regarding ChatGPT's integration into media studies through in-depth interview of 20 communication scholars purposively drawn from all communication scholars scattered in various universities within Anambra state, Nigeria. Findings revealed that most communication scholars in Anambra State, Nigeria, viewed ChatGPT as a beneficial tool for media studies sustainability regardless of the disadvantages inherent in its usage and are willing to adopt it as some have already put it into use for various activities in media studies. It is recommended that training programmes focused on AI literacy are essential to equip communication scholars with the necessary skills to engage with ChatGPT effectively.*

KEYWORDS: Adoption, ChatGPT, Communication scholars, Media studies, Perception, Usage.



INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has transformed various fields, including communication and media studies. Among these technologies, natural language processing (NLP) models like ChatGPT have gained significant attention because they offer a range of applications, from content generation to data analysis, thereby reshaping how scholars and practitioners approach research and communication. This paper explores the perceptions of communication scholars regarding the adoption and usage of ChatGPT in media studies, examining its potential benefits, challenges, and implications for academic enquiry.

In this contemporary era of AI, particularly NLP like ChatGPT, scholars are here again at a crossroads, facing the need to adapt to emerging technologies that redefine communication practices. AI and NLP have made significant strides in creating ChatGPT that enables machines to articulate, make meanings, and generate human language. Models like OpenAI's ChatGPT exemplify these advancements, offering capabilities that range from text generation to language translation and sentiment analysis, (Binis, 2020). The adoption of these technologies in various sectors including, health, film, journalism, public relations, education and book publishing now highlights their potential to enhance communication efficiency and creativity (Ezeaka, 2024; Obiora & Adikuru, 2024a; Obiora & Adikuru, 2024b; Obiora, 2024; Obiora & Uche, 2023, Uche & Obiora, 2022).

In the context of media studies, ChatGPT can play significant roles for teachers as well as students by streamlining teaching and research processes. For instance, it can assist teachers to get more value added to course curriculum, enhance literature reviews for researchers by summarising vast amounts of information quickly and efficiently (Cohen & Felix, 2022). Additionally, ChatGPT can facilitate qualitative research by generating interview questions or helping to analyze textual data through thematic analysis. However, its ability to generate coherent and contextually relevant text raises questions about its role in content creation.

Communication scholars can leverage these capabilities to explore new forms of pedagogy in the field of communication as the model can assist in drafting articles and generating multimedia scripts (Obiora & Uche, 2024; Liu et al., 2021). Moreover, ChatGPT can aid in data analysis, allowing researchers to process large datasets more efficiently. By employing ChatGPT techniques, scholars can extract insights from social media conversations, public opinions, and audience engagement metrics. This capability enhances the understanding of media impact and audience behaviour, essential for various contemporary media studies like advertising, development communication and public relations among others, (Obiora, 2024; Obiora, 2022; Bennett & Segerberg, 2013).

ChatGPT in media studies is not without challenges, one of the concerns is the quality and accuracy of the information generated by AI models; hence, scholars have more job to be done by ensuring that they critically evaluate the reliability of AI-generated content, as these models can produce misleading or incorrect information (Binns, 2020). Although, this challenge raises relevant concerns about the responsibility of scholars in ensuring the integrity of their research



outputs.

Despite its potential benefits, this paradigm shift challenges traditional notions of authorship and creativity, prompting scholars to reconsider the role of AI like ChatGPT. The integration of AI innovations like ChatGPT has brought about ethical dilemmas, especially in the aspects of authorship and intellectual property. As scholars use ChatGPT for content generation, there are bound to be emanating issues like plagiarism, copyright, and source attribution, (Broussard, 2018). Academic community may seek for ways to navigate these ethical considerations to maintain the integrity of scholarly work. Moreover, the reliance on AI tools may also impact traditional scholarly communication practices as the increasing use of AI-generated content could shift the dynamics of peer review and academic publishing, raising concerns about the authenticity and originality of research outputs (Hagendorff, 2020). So, scholars may need to develop new frameworks to assess AI-generated contributions and their implications for the field.

As artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, particularly Natural Language Processing (NLP) models like ChatGPT, become increasingly integrated into various fields, their implications for communication and media studies are glaring. Despite the potential benefits of these technologies in enhancing research methodologies, generating content, and analyzing data, there are significant concerns regarding the accuracy, reliability, and ethical implications of AI-generated information. Given this context, the primary problem this study addresses is to find out communication scholars' perceptions of the adoption and usage of ChatGPT for media studies. In other words, to identify the opinions of communication scholars on the adoption and usage of ChatGPT into media studies considering its obvious capabilities and challenges integrated in its application. It is also crucial to assess their perceptions on how they will navigate the ethical implications and concerns regarding the quality of AI-generated content of This study aims to determine the perception of communication scholars on the adoption and usage of ChatGPT for media studies as well as evaluate factors that influence their opinions. Also, to ascertain their perceived avenues to navigate around the inherent challenges there are.



LITERATURE REVIEW

Evolution of ChatGPT

ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, has transformed the landscape of artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) (Altman, 2023)). This innovative chatbot has its roots in earlier language models, evolving significantly over time. OpenAI was founded in 2015 by Elon Musk, Sam Altman, and others, with a mission to develop and promote friendly AI technologies (Altman, 2023)). In 2018, OpenAI introduced the transformer model, a breakthrough in NLP that enabled more efficient and effective language processing, as described in Vaswani et al (2017). Building on this success, OpenAI released GPT-1 in 2018, a language model trained on 45TB of text data, (Bouvier, 2022). GPT-2 followed in 2019, boasting 1.5 billion parameters and improved performance, GPT-3 was released in 2020, with 175 billion parameters and significant advancements in language understanding and generation, (Brown et al,2020, cited in Anandkumar, 2022).

According to Bouvier (2022), ChatGPT was launched in 2022, fine-tuned from GPT-3 for conversational AI, with capabilities. Its public release sparked widespread interest, with many praising its ability to engage in coherent and context-dependent conversations. The ChatGPT application programming interface (API) was made available to developers, enabling integration into various applications, (Huang, 2023). Today, ChatGPT influences various industries, including customer service, film, journalism, engineering, sociology, humanities, medicine, law, advertising, public relations, politics, administration, education, and content creation. Et cetera.

ChatGPT works as an intelligent chatting robot which is able to provide a detailed response according to an instruction in a prompt. ChatGPT has shown powerful functions on various language understanding and generation tasks such as multilingual machine translation, code debugging, story writing, admitting mistakes and even rejecting inappropriate requests, (Chen et al., 2022). It is an integration of multiple technologies such as deep learning, unsupervised learning, instruction fine-tuning, multi-task learning, in-context learning and reinforcement learning.

Integration of AI tools in media studies

AI tools have been in use in media studies research, it enables scholars to analyse large datasets, generate content analysis and coding, and generate new content (Noble, 2018). For example, ChatGPT's language generation capabilities have been employed in media studies research to analyze and generate text-based data. According to Krumsvogel (2020), AI-generated content has become increasingly prevalent in media studies research. Its integration in media studies has significant implications, like enhancing research efficiency by generating routine tasks, enabling new research methods, transform teaching by facilitating personalized learning and adaptive assessment (Obiora & Uche, 2024), and challenge traditional notions of authorship and ownership.



Krumsvogel (2020) highlights the potential benefits and challenges of integrating ChatGPT into media studies research, while Katz (2017) provides a useful framework for understanding ChatGPT's implications for media studies pedagogy. The intersection of ChatGPT and media studies pedagogy is another area of enquiry as researchers are investigating how ChatGPT can enhance teaching and learning, particularly in areas such as media literacy and critical thinking. ChatGPT's potential for personalized learning and adaptive assessment has also garnered attention. To fully understand ChatGPT's implications for media studies, scholars may need to consider the broader social and cultural contexts as it reflects and reinforces existing societal trends, such as the increasing reliance on technology and the blurring of boundaries between human and machine.

In this context, ChatGPT represents a key technology that is reshaping the contours of media studies. By examining ChatGPT's potentials in media studies, scholars can gain insights into the complex relationships between technology, society, and culture. As Obiora and Uche (2024) noted, the integration of information and communication technologies into educational sector requires social shaping of technology as a complex process that involves the interaction of technical, social, and cultural factors. In the context of media studies, As scholars continue to explore ChatGPT's capabilities and implications, there is need to understand how to make good use of the capabilities and seek ways to curtail and negotiate around the challenges.

Probable challenges in adopting and using ChatGPT for academic purposes

The integration of AI technologies like ChatGPT into media studies presents both opportunities and challenges. As scholars explore the implications of AI-generated content, it is crucial to address the multifaceted issues that may arise.

- ❖ ChatGPT are trained on extensive datasets, which often include misinformation. This can lead to the propagation of false narratives and misleading data, (Binns, 2021).
- ❖ ChatGPT lacks the nuanced contextual awareness that human researchers possess. This deficiency can result in outputs that do not accurately reflect the complexities of social and cultural phenomena, (Chen et al., 2022)
- ❖ The rise of AI-generated content complicates the traditional notions of authorship and originality. The potential for unintentional plagiarism increases when scholars utilize AI outputs without proper citation. This is more prevalent in the era where online communications are not regulated, (Obiora & Onyeka, 2022; Onyeka & Obiora, 2021)
- ❖ ChatGPT can unintentionally replicate societal biases inherent in their training data, leading to twisted representations in AI-generated analyses, (Gonzalez, 2022).
- ❖ While ChatGPT is capable of generating text, it often lacks the critical depth required for rigorous academic analysis, (Noble, 2018).
- ❖ Over reliance on AI tools like ChatGPT could lead to an undervaluation of traditional research methodologies, such as qualitative analysis and ethnographic studies, (Meyer,



2020).

- ❖ Effective use of ChatGPT in media studies requires a certain level of technical proficiency. Communication researchers and students who lack or have little of the skills to leverage these technologies may find themselves at a disadvantage (Huang, 2023).
- ❖ Automation of content creation through ChatGPT raises significant concerns about the erosion of human creativity, (Elkins, 2022).
- ❖ Understanding how audiences perceive and engage with ChatGPT generated content is crucial for media studies as research indicates that audiences may not always differentiate between human and AI-created media, which may influence their trust and engagement (Lee, 2022).

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Studies have shown the relevance of adopting AI in various human activities and how it has enhanced such activities and the field of media studies should not be left out

In the field of film, Obiora and Adikuru (2024a) examined how film producer applied AI techniques in the production of *Jagun Jagun (The Warrior)* movie. The study was anchored on Diffusion of Innovation theory and adopted textual analysis to examine whether there are manifests of AI applications in the movie scenes and establish if those manifests communicate meaning to the production. Findings acknowledge the application of AI techniques in the movie production and the techniques added meaning to the scenes involved but the AI application is still in its very early days as the movie is dominated by techniques that revolve around computer-generated imagery (CGI) and visual effects.

Ezeaka and Ochuba (2024) explored the innovative intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and development communication as a strategic approach to drug abuse prevention. They examined how AI-driven tools and algorithms can enhance the effectiveness of communication campaigns, identify at-risk populations, and deliver personalized interventions. The study delves into various AI methodologies, including predictive analytics, natural language processing, and machine learning, to analyze patterns of drug abuse and tailor prevention messages that resonate with diverse Nigerian demographics. Furthermore, the paper discussed the ethical considerations and challenges of implementing AI in development communication, emphasizing the need for culturally sensitive and inclusive strategies.

In the field of education, Das & J.V., (2024) examined how higher education students perceive the use of ChatGPT in academics, investigating factors behind their acceptance and explored its benefits, limitations, and ethical concerns. Survey design was used for the study using Google Forms to elicit data from both undergraduate and postgraduate students that comprised of 162 respondents who have been using ChatGPT. Results showed that



insignificant usage of ChatGPT by students of higher learning and that the perception of higher education students towards ChatGPT usage is not significantly influenced by gender, academic programmes, and streams.

In the same vein, Strzelecki, A., *et al* (2024) investigated the level of acceptance of the usage of ChatGPT by academics in Poland, as well as point out factors influencing their intention to use this tool.. Online survey was used to collect data form Polish public universities. The survey was prepared using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) model extended with Personal Innovativeness. Findings revealed the acceptance level of ChatGPT usage in Polish universities by teachers and researchers and the antecedents influencing willingness to use this technology in academic work.

On the platforms of social media, Obiora and Adikuru (2024b) set out to determine how the use of AI generated memes on social media can be adapted in the struggle to curtail drug abuse among Nigerian youth. It was hinged on technological determinism theory and relied on secondary data for desktop research. Insights from the study indicated that with the available AI meme generators, social media provide valuable platforms for delivering communication interventions to reduce vulnerability to drug abuse through AI generated memes.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on technological determinism theory. According to McLuhan (1964), it posits that technology is the primary driver of social change, shaping societal structures, institutions, and relationships. This perspective asserts that technological advancements determine the course of history, influencing human behavior and social organization. Karl Marx's concept of technological determinism emphasizes technology's role in shaping social relations and class struggle.

ChatGPT can be analyzed as a technological innovation transforming the field of media studies, influencing how communication scholars conduct research, teach, and interact with each other. ChatGPT's capabilities, such as text generation and summarization, redefine the boundaries of media studies, altering research methods and changing the nature of academic work. The study seeks to understand how scholars perceived the way ChatGPT shapes the media studies and research methods, The technological determinism theory provides a framework for understanding the impact of ChatGPT on media studies. The technological determinism theory has implications for understanding the impact of ChatGPT on media studies. This perspective highlights the need to consider technology's influence on research practices, academic work, and professional identities. By applying the technological determinism theory, the research provides insights into how ChatGPT shapes media studies, influencing communication scholars' practices, research outcomes, and professional identities.



METHODOLOGY

The researchers adopted in-depth interview in data collection for the research by purposively selecting male and female lecturers in federal, private and state universities in Anambra State, Nigeria which include, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka; Madonna University, Okija; and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, University, Igbariam. 20 respondents were interviewed via the telephone based on their awareness and knowledge about ChatGPT, The respondents were asked questions and follow up question with the use of interview guide to ascertain their opinions, concerns and expectations of adoption and usage of ChatGPT for media studies.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data from the indepth-interview were thematically analysed. This qualitative research design enabled the researchers to identify, analyze, and report themes present within the data generated from the in-depth interview. The process entailed familiarization with the data, coding salient and relevant phrases or sentences, searching for overarching themes, reviewing and refining these themes, and ultimately defining and naming them. The findings were subsequently reported in a clear and concise manner, with direct quotes from the interview data to support the researchers' interpretations and offer a more profound understanding of scholars' perceptions of ChatGPT in media studies.

On communication scholars' perception on adoption and usage of ChatGPT for media studies the following themes emerged and discussed below:

ChatGPT is beneficial for media studies in spite of its challenges to media studies

Answers from the interviewees indicates that communication scholars are aware of ChatGPT and primarily learn about ChatGPT through social media platforms, academic publications and colleagues. It is worth noting that most (14 out of 20) communication scholars' opinions toward ChatGPT adoption and usage were generally positive, indicating a high level of willingness to accept and open toward the new technology. A scholar noted thus in her interview:

“ChatGPT is very relevant to all areas of human endeavours and media studies is not left out because of its vast knowledge base that even decades of human learning cannot match. Instead of worrying about it replacing humans, we should use its knowledge to our advantage, as it was created by humans and how we use it depends on us.”

Some scholars also demonstrated a nuanced understanding of the emergence and development of ChatGPT, recognizing that the responsibility for any negative outcomes lies not with the technology itself but with its users. The scholars' perceptions are shaped not only by the



functionality and ease of using the technology but also by the scholar's stage of academic development and familiarity with digital tools.

The respondents appreciated the speed of the responses from ChatGPT, which they felt helped them to enhance their productivity. The appreciation of the speed and quality of responses from ChatGPT aligns with the concept of where individuals seek information as needed to complete a task or solve a problem in real-time. This conforms with the view of Lee (2022) that the speed of AI tools allows for greater efficiency and productivity, as users do not have to search for information or wait for a response.

It was widely acknowledged among scholars that ChatGPT was quick to respond and efficient in providing related information. However, some scholars noted that its reliability was conditional, suggesting that the accuracy and relevance of the information generated by ChatGPT might vary depending on the context or complexity of the query. This is in tandem with Chen et al. (2022) where they noted that ChatGPT exhibits human-like personality traits, and so they are perceived to be more relatable and interactive, thereby enhancing the user's efficiency and task performance.

Some scholars expressed that ChatGPT played a supportive role in their academic pursuits by providing suggestions, offering clues, and guiding their research, among other functions. They emphasized the practical utility of ChatGPT in facilitating their teachings and research activities, this supports the recommendation from the study of Obiora and Uche (2024) that the relevance of contemporary information and communication technology in the development of school leadership is very important and should be embraced.

Communication Scholars in Anambra State, Nigeria, expressed that the primary motivation for scholars to use ChatGPT seemed to stem from the benefits inherent in the usage as they will gain a deeper understanding of ChatGPT and its capabilities. Hence, the benefits ChatGPT offer to communication scholars seem to be the reasons behind their perception of the AI tool as beneficial. This is because most respondents found ChatGPT informative and helpful in completing tasks related to their academic or professional work and hence builds the foundation of the way they perceive the AI tool. This finding is consistent with Bouvier (2022) study on the effectiveness of AI tools in communication research.

ChatGPT has its inadequacies but accepted

Scholars observed that ChatGPT might be more prone to errors when dealing with different languages, particularly with dialects like Igbo and other dialects within Nigeria, A respondent said this in concurrence:

“To me, it was not really reliable, because it would err when confronting questions about entertainment gossip in the media, and make more mistakes in answering Igbo language questions. For example, when I need it to carry out media studies in specific language like Igbo, it cannot provide accurate answers. I don't think it has a good grasp of localized information, and I am skeptical about it.”



Binns (2020) highlighted that AI-generated content as these models can produce misleading or incorrect information. This finding underscores the importance of considering language-specific challenges and potential limitations when evaluating the performance of ChatGPT across various semiotic analysis in media studies.

Scholars also expressed concerns about the potential for personal information to be leaked during interactions with ChatGPT, given its ability to remember personal preferences and habits and its reliance on massive online data. Though, interviewees conveyed confidence in ChatGPT's accuracy in most instances. They also expressed reservations about its overall reliability. This highlights the need for users to approach ChatGPT's output cautiously and cross-verify the information it provides to ensure its correctness and dependability in line with the study of Cohen and Felix, (2022).

On communication scholars' perceptions on how they will navigate the ethical implications and concerns regarding the quality of AI-generated content of ChatGPT, findings from the interviews reveal that they:

- ❖ Intend to adopt critical examination by indulging in human review, if possible, apply another AI tool to ascertain the quality and accuracy of content submitted to them. Elkins (2022) recommended that the need to have a human effort to achieve effective creative in the era of AI.
- ❖ Set up rules and regulations within the discipline of media studies to help safeguard over reliance on any form of misuse and abuse of AI tools for media studies. This conforms to the recommendation of Onyeka and Obiora (2021) that government through its agencies ensures regulations of online communication.
- ❖ Incorporate AI education and training on the use of AI tools. Like every other innovation, ChatGPT has its pros and cons. So, its effectiveness on the adoption and usage depends on those who use them. Rendering AI education to communication scholars to help guide them on the best approach to use ChatGPT will birth efficiency on usage.
- ❖ Paying great attention to intellectual property management by ensuring that authors acknowledge other authors' ideas to eradicate plagiarism or violation of copyright. This aligns with Obiora and Onyeka (2022) where they encourage the need for lecturers to enlighten university students on online laws which include intellectual property right.

This study explored the perceptions of communication scholars regarding the adoption and usage of ChatGPT in media studies. The findings highlight both enthusiasm and caution, underscoring the need for critical evaluation, ethical consideration, and transparency. The study revealed that ChatGPT offers potential benefits in research efficiency, teaching innovation, and student engagement. However, concerns persist regarding data quality, biases, and contextual understanding. Scholars emphasize the importance of human oversight, critical thinking, and AI literacy. The research provides valuable insights into the opportunities and



challenges of integrating ChatGPT into media studies.

CONCLUSION

ChatGPT offers numerous benefits in media studies, transforming the field with its innovative capabilities. ChatGPT enhances media research by providing efficient data collection and analysis. Its natural language processing capabilities enable researchers to scrutinize vast amounts of text data from social media, news outlets, and online fora. So, if ChatGPT could assist users in improving their work performance and achieving better rewards and recognition, this could further increase its acceptance in adoption and usage. Also, this study revealed that ChatGPT aided in meeting academic and professional commitments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of this study, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Institutions should continue to support and resource AI related initiatives, fostering a community of practice among communication scholars. Educators should share best practices for integrating artificial intelligence into teaching and learning.
2. To foster effective adoption, communication scholars should prioritize addressing ethical concerns, developing critical evaluation frameworks, and exploring innovative applications.
3. Media researchers must find a balance between integrating AI tools and maintaining the rigour of traditional methodologies to preserve the integrity of their work.
4. Training programmes and workshops focused on AI literacy are essential to equip communication scholars with the necessary skills to engage with AI tools meaningfully.

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