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Knowledge and Use of Public Relations Artificial Intelligence Tools Among Practitioners in Awka

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Abstract

This study explores the knowledge and application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools among Public Relations (PR) practitioners in Awka, Nigeria. Adopting a qualitative research design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with ten purposively selected PR professionals based in the city. The findings indicate that while there is a general awareness of AI tools among practitioners, this awareness is predominantly limited to general-purpose applications such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot. There is a marked deficiency in both knowledge and utilization of industry-specific AI tools such as Meltwater, Cision, and Sprinklr—platforms designed to support media monitoring, sentiment analysis, strategic communication, and automated content generation. Actual usage of AI tools in PR practice remains minimal and largely confined to surface-level tasks such as text editing and paraphrasing. The study concludes that there is a significant skills and awareness gap that may hinder effective AI integration into PR workflows. Accordingly, it recommends targeted capacity-building initiatives, including workshops, certification programmes, and collaborative training involving technology providers and academic institutions. Additionally, the study

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underscores the importance of hands-on exposure through mentorship schemes and tool demonstrations. Finally, it calls for the development of ethical guidelines to ensure responsible AI adoption, with particular attention to transparency, accountability, and data privacy in professional communication contexts.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Public Relations; Professional Practice; Media Technology; Ethical Adoption

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative innovation, reshaping the landscape of various professional fields, including Public Relations (PR). AI refers to advanced computer systems or software capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. Scholars (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024; Ugwu et al., 2024) note that AI tools are increasingly being integrated into PR practices to enhance campaign planning, media monitoring, sentiment analysis, content generation, and audience engagement. For instance, certain AI-powered platforms can automate the creation of press releases, analyse public opinion across social media, and optimise communication strategies based on data insights (Adams & Chuah, 2022). Moreover, AI tools assist in improving message clarity, brand consistency, and real-time responsiveness, thereby increasing the effectiveness of PR efforts. Despite the numerous benefits AI offers to PR practice, several ethical and operational concerns have been raised. Issues such as transparency, misinformation, data privacy, and the potential erosion of human creativity have sparked caution among practitioners (Perkins & Roe, 2024). These ethical dilemmas, alongside practical limitations like digital illiteracy and lack of access to premium AI tools, contribute to the hesitation in fully embracing AI within the PR industry.

PR practitioners in Nigeria, particularly those operating in cities like Awka, are not exempt from these challenges. Many professionals contend with inadequate digital infrastructure, limited training opportunities, and resistance to adopting new technologies, all of which hinder the effective utilisation of AI in their work (Ayoko, Peter & Jegede, 2023). Additionally, some practitioners express concerns over AI's perceived threat to job security and the authenticity of human-driven communication strategies. These perceptions, although valid, often overshadow the immense potential of AI to scale PR

operations, save time, and foster strategic communication outcomes. Although interest in AI adoption is growing globally, its application in PR practice in Nigeria especially among practitioners in Anambra State remains underexplored. This study, therefore, seeks to address this knowledge gap by examining the awareness, usage patterns, and barriers to the adoption of PR-specific AI tools among practitioners in Awka.

Statement of the Problem

While substantial research has examined the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in various sectors, limited scholarly attention has been given to its application within the field of Public Relations (PR) in Nigeria. Existing studies (e.g., Okunade, 2024; Edung, 2024) have primarily focused on the use of AI in education, healthcare, and general business communication, with little emphasis on how PR practitioners understand and adopt AI tools in their professional activities. This gap is particularly crucial, considering that AI technologies are rapidly redefining strategic communication, media monitoring, content creation, and stakeholder engagement across the globe (Pigola et al., 2023). Despite the transformative potential of AI in PR practice, the extent to which Nigerian practitioners particularly those in semi-urban centres like Awka are aware of and utilise PR-specific AI tools remains unclear. Few studies (e.g., Oluwu, 2024; Oduenyi & Etumnu, 2024). have explored the level of awareness, knowledge, and practical application of AI tools in PR workflows within the Nigerian context. As a result, there exists a significant knowledge gap regarding the patterns of AI tool usage, the challenges practitioners face in adopting these technologies. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this critical gap by investigating the knowledge and use of AI tools among PR practitioners in Awka.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the knowledge of PR Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools among Public Relations practitioners in Awka.

2. To examine the extent to which PR practitioners in Awka utilise AI tools in their professional activities.

3. To identify the factors discouraging the adoption of PR AI tools among practitioners in Awka.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the level of knowledge of PR Artificial Intelligence tools among practitioners in Awka?

2. To what extent do PR practitioners in Awka utilise AI tools in their professional activities?

3. What factors discourage the adoption of PR AI tools among practitioners in Awka?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), originally developed by Fred Davis in 1989. TAM posits that two primary factors determine the acceptance and use of any new technology: Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will improve their job performance, while perceived ease of use describes how effortless the technology is to learn and operate. Over the years, TAM has been widely applied in research examining user adoption of various technologies, including information systems, e-learning platforms, and, more recently, artificial intelligence (AI). Despite evolving technological contexts, TAM remains relevant for understanding the motivations and barriers associated with the adoption of AI tools.

In the context of this study, TAM provides an appropriate framework for analysing the knowledge and use of PR AI tools among practitioners in Awka. It is assumed that PR professionals are more likely to adopt and integrate AI tools into their workflow if they perceive such tools as beneficial to their communication strategies and public engagement tasks, and if they find them easy to navigate.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been defined in various ways by numerous scholars. According to Ihejirika, Ogana, and Uzezi (2023), AI refers to any machine or computer that employs human-like thinking to accomplish tasks. Kaplan and Haenlein (2019) describe AI as a system's ability to interpret and learn from input data and then apply this

knowledge to achieve specific goals. Similarly, Pereira, Hadjielias, Christofi, and Vrontis (2023) view AI as a specialised branch of computer science focused on creating machines capable of executing tasks typically requiring human intelligence. Strusani and Houngbonon (2019) add that AI combines extensive data sets with computational power to simulate human intellectual capabilities, such as reasoning, language understanding, perception, vision recognition, and spatial processing.

Khaleel, Jebrel, and Shwehdy (2024) highlight that AI is the foundation of modern computer science, built on algorithms and models designed to replicate and potentially surpass human cognitive abilities, enabling machines to solve problems and perform tasks traditionally handled by humans. They also note that AI is not only capable of independent thinking but does so with greater efficiency than humans. Nwakunor (2021) defines AI as computer-controlled robots programmed to think intelligently, mimicking human mental processes. These robots are electronically operated through computer systems, replicating human competencies.

From these definitions, AI can be understood as machines or computer systems designed to replicate human-like thinking and perform tasks requiring human intelligence, leveraging vast data sets and computational capabilities. The effectiveness of AI tools depends on their ability to accurately simulate human thought processes and the quality of prompts provided. Although AI has recently gained prominence, its origins can be traced back to the 1940s and 1950s when scientists began exploring the possibility of developing an artificial brain.

Public Relations

The concept of public relations has attracted a lot of expose around the world. Kazoleas and Teven (2009) emphasised that the central function of public relations lies in relational management. They argued that public relations should focus on fostering relationships among individuals, groups, and organisations, as well as on the communication practices that sustain these interactions. From this perspective, an organisation must strategically monitor and manage its relationships with key stakeholders, with trust emerging as a vital outcome of this process. Similarly, Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2010) contributed to redefining public relations by focusing on the concept of “publics,” deliberately using the term in its plural form. They posited that the idea of a single "general public" is inaccurate; instead, individuals belong to multiple, distinct, and identifiable

publics. Zaharna (2000), drawing from Wilcox, Ault, and Agee (1989), defined international public relations as the structured and strategic efforts of an organisation, institution, or government to build mutually beneficial relationships with publics in other countries. This definition highlights public relations as a tool for intercultural communication, setting it apart from more general domestic applications.

Similarly, Sharpe (2000) proposed that public relations be defined through the lens of professional activities, as outlined by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). He maintained that these activities are essential for establishing and sustaining effective relationships between organisations and their publics. Sharpe also aligned with Seitel's (1998) view, which describes public relations as "the practice of doing the right thing," underscoring its ethical and strategic dimensions. In general sense public relations is act of creating and maintaining mutual understanding between an organization and its publics as well as promoting the image of the organization in the eyes of the public through two way communication flow. It entails speaking with different groups including media, customers, members of the public government etc. considering the lack of consensus regarding a single definition of public relations, In this study, the researcher apply the definition provided by The Chartered Institute of Public Relations, a worldwide professional organization for public relations practitioners which asserts that, "Public Relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics."

PR Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools

PR Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools refer to specialised software and digital platforms designed to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of public relations practices. These tools leverage AI technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing, and data analytics to support various PR functions. Key applications include media monitoring, audience sentiment analysis, automated press release generation, social media engagement, trend forecasting, crisis communication management, and performance measurement (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024; Bolanos et al., 2024; Jhajj et al., 2024).

There is a wide range of AI-powered tools tailored for PR activities. For example, Meltwater and Cision enable media monitoring and coverage analysis, Lately.ai assists in content generation for social media, while Sprinklr and Brandwatch offer sentiment

analysis and digital reputation tracking. Also, more general tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot are also used by public relations practitioners to support writing, editing, and paraphrasing tasks (Agbor et al., 2024; Tarlan et al., 2024b). PR AI tools are increasingly becoming essential for communication professionals seeking to streamline their workflows, personalise messaging, and gain data-driven insights into public perception. They help practitioners automate repetitive tasks, respond to audiences in real time, and make more strategic communication decisions. This technological shift has enhanced productivity, speed, and precision in PR operations. AI is gradually gaining traction in the public relations and communication industry as communication professionals and scholars have begun to acknowledge its productive potential (Panda et al., 2019).

Review of Empirical Studies

Few studies on AI application exist. From Nigeria, Olowu (2025) examined the adoption and utilization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Public Relations (PR) practices among selected banks in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), Nigeria. The study was anchored on the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) and employed a descriptive survey design. Using Taro Yamane's formula, 400 respondents were selected via simple random sampling, and data were collected through questionnaires. Analysis was carried out using mean scores and standard deviation. The study found a positive relationship between AI adoption and PR practices in the selected banks, highlighting the growing acceptance of AI tools. It recommended the use of key performance indicators (KPIs) and evaluation metrics to measure AI-driven PR strategies' effectiveness. This study contributes by demonstrating the practical relevance of AI in enhancing communication functions within Nigeria's banking sector.

In a similar effort, Oduenyi and Etumnu (2024) investigated the impact of AI integration in PR practices in Nigeria, examining its benefits, challenges, and implications through the lens of Agenda-Setting and Uses and Gratification Theories. A qualitative research method was adopted, involving in-depth interviews with 10 purposively selected PR practitioners in Imo State. Findings revealed that while AI is viewed as a tool for enhancing communication efficiency, its adoption is met with mixed emotions—optimism, curiosity, and skepticism. Concerns included data privacy, bias, and job displacement. The study's contribution is its detailed exploration of practitioner attitudes and ethical concerns,

providing insight into the social and psychological dimensions of AI adoption in Nigerian PR.

Away from Nigeria but within the African continent, , Anani-Bossman et al. (2024) explored AI integration in the PR and communication management industry in Ghana, with an emphasis on knowledge, adoption, and perceived risks. The study used a quantitative survey method to collect data from 275 professionals. Results revealed that although respondents were aware of AI, their practical understanding remained limited. They recognised the potential of AI to reshape PR practices but did not express significant concern over risks such as job displacement or ethical issues. The study underscores the need for increased AI literacy among professionals and calls for academic discourse on AI within African PR scholarship. Its contribution lies in highlighting the awareness-application gap in AI usage in the PR sector in Ghana.

Outside Africa, Ahmad, Ismail, and Ganiem (2024) focused on the challenges and prospects of AI adoption among PR practitioners in Malaysia. Using a qualitative research design, the researchers conducted 12 interviews, and the data were analysed using thematic analysis. Although AI has been incorporated into PR to an extent, findings indicated that individual skills, ethics, organizational culture, and infrastructure serve as significant barriers. The study contributes to the field by identifying context-specific constraints affecting AI integration and suggesting that a supportive organisational ecosystem is crucial for the technology's effective implementation. Corroborating, Jeong and Park (2023) explored the influence of AI on PR practices through the Organization-Situation-Public Communication (OSPC) model using a comprehensive literature review approach. The study analysed various academic sources and industry reports, revealing that AI tools enhance PR effectiveness by enabling personalized communication, situational adaptability, and improved relationship building with publics. However, it also flagged risks related to overdependence on automation, ethical transparency, and the erosion of human expertise. The study emphasized the need for balancing AI with human input, thereby contributing to a conceptual framework for ethical AI adoption in communication management.

Other notable studies outside the African continent include Mazid et al. (2024), who applied the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to assess AI's integration into PR education. Survey data revealed that social influence, AI knowledge, and emotions significantly shaped acceptance among educators. Similarly, Enander and Lindbeck (2024),

using semi-structured interviews with Swedish PR consultants, showed that engagement with generative AI is multifaceted and context-dependent, with usage driven by operational tasks and individual perception. In the same vein, Lastly, Beni, Radwan, and Askar (2024) adopted the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), combining quantitative and qualitative methods to assess AI adoption in UAE PR practice. They found that while AI enhanced audience engagement and operational efficiency, ethical concerns, lack of training, and policy issues remain major barriers.

Collectively, the reviewed studies contributed to diversifying the geographic, theoretical, and methodological scope of research on AI in public relations. They highlighted the transformational power of AI across various aspects of public relations and identified several challenges associated with its adoption. However, it is evident that studies from Nigeria remain limited, with only those by Olowu (2025) and Oduenyi and Etumnu (2024) available. Notably, none of these studies was conducted in Anambra State. This clearly establishes a geographical gap, which justifies the relevance of the current study.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection. The population for the study comprised public relations practitioners operating within Awka, Anambra State. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of ten participants, chosen based on their relevance to the subject matter and their experience with AI tools in PR practice. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews guided by a structured interview protocol. Each session was audio-recorded using a digital recording device (smartphone), and the recordings were transcribed verbatim. The data were analysed using thematic analysis, which enabled the researcher to explore participants' knowledge and usage of PR-related artificial intelligence tools and to address the study's research questions effectively.

RESULTS

Description of Participants

The sample comprised ten public relations practitioners operating within Awka, Anambra State. The participants, coded PT1 to PT10, represented a diverse range of

professional roles and organisational affiliations, including government agencies, private firms, and consultancy outfits. Their years of experience in public relations practice ranged from five to twenty years. This diversity in professional background and experience provided a well-rounded perspective on the knowledge and use of AI tools in PR. The variation in practice duration and roles offered valuable insights into how familiarity with and adoption of AI tools may differ based on career stage and exposure, which is essential for understanding the broader implications of AI integration in the public relations profession.

RQ 1: What is the level of knowledge of PR Artificial Intelligence tools among practitioners in Awka?

The data collected and analyzed based on the research question above strongly suggest that PR practitioners in Awka have extremely limited knowledge of PR-specific artificial intelligence tools. While some had heard of AI broadly, most had never encountered tools such as Meltwater, Brandwatch, Cision, or Lately AI, which are standard in the industry. The table below show the themes that emerged from the interviews based on the research question.

Table 1: Emerging Themes on Low Knowledge of PR Artificial Intelligence Tools Among Practitioners in Awka

Theme	Description	Supporting Quotes
1. General Awareness of AI but No Knowledge of PR-Specific Tools	Participants had heard of AI in general but were unfamiliar with AI tools tailored for public relations.	*"I've heard about AI in tech, but I didn't know there are tools made specifically for PR work."* (PT2) *"Someone mentioned AI for marketing before, but I don't think we use any PR AI tools here in Awka."* (PT6)
2. Unfamiliarity with Industry-Standard Tools	Widely used PR AI platforms such as Meltwater, Brandwatch, Cision, and Lately AI were unknown to participants.	*"I've never heard of Meltwater or Brandwatch until now. Are they used in Nigeria?"* (PT4) *"What is Cision? I honestly don't know any of these tools."* (PT8)
3. Confusion Between AI Tools and Basic Digital Tools	Participants confused AI-powered PR tools with regular social media platforms or software like MS Word.	*"If you mean WhatsApp or Canva, then yes, I've used them. But I don't think those are AI tools, right?"* (PT9) *"I use Facebook for publicity. Isn't that what PR tools are?"* (PT10)

Theme	Description	Supporting Quotes
4. Lack of Formal or Informal Exposure	Participants had no prior exposure to PR AI tools, either through training, peer sharing, or media.	*"I've not attended any workshop or seminar where they discussed AI tools for PR."* (PT1) *"Honestly, no one has ever introduced me to these tools, not even online."* (PT3)

RQ 2: To what extent do PR practitioners in Awka utilise AI tools in their professional activities?

The data show that the **utilisation of AI tools among PR practitioners in Awka is extremely limited.** While some practitioners may unknowingly use AI-powered features in basic tools, there is virtually **no structured or intentional adoption** of AI for PR functions. The result is further presented below.

Table 2: Emerging Themes on the Extent of AI Tool Utilisation Among PR Practitioners in Awka

Theme	Description	Supporting Quotes
1. Minimal to No Utilisation of AI Tools	Most participants revealed they do not use any AI-based PR tools in their daily professional tasks.	*"I've never used any AI tool for my work. I mostly rely on email and Microsoft Word."* (PT3) *"There is nothing like AI in our workflow. We use traditional methods."* (PT5)
2. Accidental or Uninformed Use of Basic AI Features	Some practitioners unknowingly use AI-powered features (e.g., auto-suggestions or grammar checks) without recognising them as AI.	*"Maybe Grammarly counts as AI? I use it for writing memos, but I didn't know it's AI."* (PT7) *"I think Google auto-complete is the only AI I use, and that's just for emails."* (PT10)
3. Reliance on Human-Centric PR Methods	Participants heavily depend on press releases, media relations, and physical events, showing little integration of tech-based processes.	*"I still prefer face-to-face meetings and press conferences. We haven't gone digital, let alone AI."* (PT1) *"We draft our statements manually and deliver them personally."* (PT8)
4. Perceived Barriers to Utilisation	Commonly cited barriers included lack of access, inadequate training, cost, and uncertainty about where to start.	*"I've heard of AI tools, but they are too expensive or complex to understand."* (PT4) *"There's no training available for us, so we don't know how to start using them."* (PT9)

RQ 3: What factors discourage the adoption of PR AI tools among practitioners in Awka?

The data further show that the adoption of PR AI tools among practitioners in Awka is discouraged by several interrelated factors, including **low awareness, lack of training, financial constraints, infrastructure challenges**, and **fear of job displacement.** This is given below.

Table 3: Emerging Themes on Factors Discouraging the Adoption of PR AI Tools Among Practitioners in Awka

Theme	Description	Supporting Quotes
1. Lack of Awareness and Exposure	Many practitioners are unfamiliar with the existence or purpose of AI tools for PR functions.	*"This is actually the first time I'm hearing about AI tools specifically for public relations."* (PT2) *"We've never been introduced to these tools."* (PT6)
2. Absence of Training Opportunities	There are few or no professional development programmes or workshops on AI tool usage.	*"We need training. Without it, we can't use what we don't understand."* (PT7) *"If there were seminars or short courses on AI, I'd be willing to attend."* (PT10)
3. High Cost and Limited Access	Practitioners believe AI tools are expensive or inaccessible for small organisations or individuals.	*"Tools like Meltwater or Cision are for big companies. We can't afford them."* (PT5) *"Even if we wanted to try AI, the cost is a big barrier."* (PT8)
4. Technological Infrastructure Gaps	Inadequate digital facilities and unreliable internet hinder AI tool adoption.	*"Our internet is too slow to run advanced tools. Sometimes it's not even stable enough for basic emails."* (PT4) *"We lack the infrastructure to support these technologies."* (PT9)
5. Fear of Irrelevance or Job Loss	Some practitioners fear that AI may replace human input or reduce the value of their expertise.	*"People are scared AI will take over our jobs. That fear alone makes them avoid it."* (PT1) *"There's this belief that the more we automate, the less we are needed."* (PT3)

DISCUSSION

The findings from this study indicate that PR practitioners in Awka possess extremely limited knowledge of artificial intelligence (AI) tools specifically designed for public relations practice. Although some participants demonstrated general awareness of AI technologies, most were unfamiliar with standard industry tools such as *Meltwater*, *Brandwatch*, *Cision*, and *Lately AI*. A number of respondents even confused AI tools with basic digital platforms like WhatsApp, Canva, or Facebook, further underscoring a

significant knowledge gap. These findings partially align with those of Anani-Bossman et al. (2024) in Ghana, who found that although professionals were aware of AI, their understanding was shallow. However, the present study differs markedly from Olowu (2025) and Oduenyi and Etumnu (2024) in Nigeria, whose participants demonstrated a higher level of familiarity and adoption of AI tools in banking and public relations sectors, respectively likely due to differences in organisational investment, exposure, and location.

Secondly, the findings reveal that the utilisation of AI tools among PR practitioners in Awka is very limited, with most respondents admitting they do not engage with any structured AI-based public relations applications. While a few practitioners may unknowingly use AI-powered features embedded in general software tools like Grammarly or Google auto-complete, these usages are incidental and uninformed, lacking any strategic purpose or alignment with PR functions. Moreover, the prevailing reliance on traditional, human-centric approaches such as physical press releases and face-to-face engagements reflects a significant gap in the digital transformation of PR practices in among practitioners in Awka. These findings sharply contrast with studies like Olowu (2025) and Beni et al. (2024), where participants actively engaged with AI tools, particularly within well-funded sectors like banking in Abuja and institutional PR departments in the UAE. Similarly, Oduenyi and Etumnu (2024) found that even amid ethical concerns, PR professionals in Imo State were exploring AI integration to enhance communication strategies.

The third strand of findings from this study indicate that several interrelated barriers discourage the adoption of PR-specific artificial intelligence tools among practitioners in Awka. Key among these are low awareness and exposure, with many participants encountering the idea of AI in PR for the first time during the study. This is compounded by the absence of professional training opportunities, resulting in a knowledge gap that leaves practitioners unprepared for AI integration. High cost and limited access to premium tools like *Cision* or *Meltwater*, often perceived as exclusive to large firms, further hinder adoption. Additionally, technological infrastructure challenges, such as unreliable internet and poor digital facilities, make the use of AI tools impractical for many PR offices in the region. Lastly, fear of job displacement emerged as a psychological barrier, with some practitioners expressing anxiety over the potential of AI to replace human expertise. These findings mirror the concerns raised in Ahmad et al. (2024), who highlighted skill deficits, ethical concerns, and organisational constraints as key adoption

barriers in Malaysia. Similarly, Beni et al. (2024) found that despite the positive outcomes of AI integration in the UAE, ethical issues and lack of training continue to impede broader acceptance. However, unlike Anani-Bossman et al. (2024) in Ghana, where practitioners showed minimal concern about job loss, PR professionals in Awka demonstrated a marked resistance rooted in fear and uncertainty.

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed a significant knowledge and utilisation gap regarding public relations (PR) artificial intelligence (AI) tools among practitioners in Awka. Despite the growing relevance of AI in modern communication practice, the findings indicate that many practitioners are either unaware of these tools or lack the competence to integrate them into their professional activities. This gap is particularly concerning given AI's potential to enhance message targeting, media monitoring, sentiment analysis, and audience engagement in PR. The limited adoption among practitioners was found to be linked to poor awareness, lack of training opportunities, technological barriers, ethical concerns, and the inaccessibility of premium AI platforms.

Recommendations

In view of the findings in this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Professional PR bodies particularly Nigerian Institute of public Relations (NIPR) Anambra Branch should collaborate with technology providers and academic institutions in the state to organise regular workshops and certification programmes focused on AI in PR. These initiatives should expose practitioners to both foundational and advanced PR AI tools.

2. Awareness must go beyond conceptual knowledge. Practitioners should be exposed to the practical applications of AI tools in areas like media monitoring, content scheduling, data analysis, and stakeholder engagement. Mentorship, case studies, and tool demonstrations can facilitate better understanding and interest.

3. To address fears about job displacement and ethical misuse, PR associations in Nigeria and Awka should develop clear ethical frameworks guiding AI adoption. These should address issues such as transparency, data privacy, and responsible use, thereby building trust in the technology.

4. Cost remains a major barrier to adoption. Organisations, agencies, and institutions in Awka should consider subscribing to premium AI PR tools and making them available to staff. This shared access model can significantly reduce financial constraints and foster a culture of innovation.

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