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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AMONG MASS COMMUNICATION LECTURERS IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly altering the ways academic work is conceived, organised and performed, bringing teaching, research and scholarly communication into closer engagement with intelligent digital technologies. Yet, evidence on how these technologies are being used by Mass Communication lecturers in Nigerian universities remains limited. This study examined AI usage and academic engagement among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with data collected from 33 lecturers across four private universities using a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The results showed a high extent of AI usage ($M = 3.02$) and a high level of academic engagement ($M = 3.42$). Lecturers reported positive perceived contributions of AI to teaching activities ($M = 3.28$), particularly lesson preparation and the quality and speed of feedback. AI was also perceived to contribute positively to research engagement ($M = 3.22$), especially in proofreading and editing research manuscripts and improving academic writing. In addition, respondents identified infrastructural, technical, institutional, financial and ethical conditions as relevant to AI utilisation ($M = 2.88$), with internet access recording the highest mean. The study concludes that AI constitutes a meaningful component of academic practice among the lecturers studied, particularly in supporting specific teaching and research tasks. It recommends stronger institutional support, continuous AI capacity building, improved digital infrastructure and clear guidelines for responsible AI use in higher education.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Academic Engagement; Mass Communication Lecturers; Higher Education; AI Utilisation; Teaching; Research

1 INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a peripheral feature of digital innovation; it is increasingly becoming part of the infrastructure through which contemporary academic work is organised, performed and evaluated. In higher education,

intelligent technologies now support activities ranging from instructional delivery and assessment to research, feedback and academic writing (Pedró et al., 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). This development signals more than a technological shift. It raises fundamental questions about how lecturers perform their professional responsibilities, the conditions under which technology enhances academic work, and whether increased technological capability translates into deeper engagement with teaching and research. As AI becomes embedded in university practice, understanding its implications for lecturers is therefore as important as understanding its implications for students.

Academic engagement provides an important lens through which this transformation can be examined. Lecturers' engagement encompasses the cognitive, emotional and behavioural investment they bring to teaching, research and institutional responsibilities (Schaufeli, 2013). Such engagement is associated with professional commitment and active participation in academic work, with implications for student learning and institutional performance (Kahu, 2013). Research on educational technologies has also associated appropriate technological integration with improvements in teaching effectiveness, research productivity and pedagogical innovation (Kirkwood & Price, 2014). The incorporation of AI into academic practice consequently raises questions about whether and how such technological capabilities affect lecturers' engagement with their professional responsibilities.

The promise of AI, however, should not be equated with automatic improvement in academic engagement. Technology adoption is shaped by users' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, as well as by the conditions that facilitate actual utilisation (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). At the same time, critical scholarship has drawn attention to the possibility that increasing automation could alter the human and professional dimensions of academic work. Selwyn (2019) cautions that greater dependence on automated systems may weaken interpersonal interaction, mentorship and critical dialogue, while Knox (2020) argues that AI can reconfigure lecturers' roles within machine-mediated educational environments. Effective engagement with AI also requires appropriate competencies and institutional support; deficiencies in training and support can constrain meaningful adoption (Rakisheva & Witt, 2023; Redecker, 2017). The central issue, therefore, is not simply whether lecturers use AI, but what its use means for the academic activities through which their professional engagement is expressed.

This question assumes particular importance in Nigeria, where universities continue to operate within uneven infrastructural, financial and digital environments that can shape the adoption of emerging technologies (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023). Although digital technologies have become increasingly integrated into Nigerian higher education, existing research has not adequately established how university lecturers are incorporating AI into their academic responsibilities, particularly across specific disciplines and institutional contexts. Private universities in Ondo State therefore provide a relevant setting for examining whether the growing availability of AI translates into actual academic utilisation and how such utilisation is situated within lecturers' teaching and research responsibilities. The Mass Communication discipline presents an especially pertinent context for this inquiry. Its professional and pedagogical environments are closely connected to technological change, while developments in AI are already reshaping media practices through automated journalism, audience analytics and content recommendation systems (Carlson, 2015; Diakopoulos, 2019). Mass Communication lecturers consequently operate at the intersection of technological change, academic practice and professional preparation.

Despite growing scholarship on AI in higher education, lecturers remain comparatively underexamined. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019), in their systematic review of AI research in higher education, found that scholarship has concentrated substantially on student learning, with less attention to educators' experiences and professional roles. Ifenthaler et al. (2019) similarly identified the need for greater attention to the implications of AI for educators. The Nigerian context presents an even more specific unresolved problem: there is limited evidence on AI utilisation among lecturers in particular disciplines and institutional settings, particularly regarding how AI usage is situated alongside lecturers' academic engagement. For Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State, the available literature does not adequately establish the extent of AI usage, the level of their academic engagement, the ways AI is perceived to shape teaching and research activities, or the conditions that facilitate or constrain its utilisation.

The resulting gap is both empirical and contextual: existing scholarship provides growing evidence on AI adoption among educators, but does not sufficiently explain how Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State are using AI within their teaching and research responsibilities. This study therefore examines the extent of AI usage, the level of academic engagement, lecturers' perceived influence of AI on teaching and research activities, and the factors affecting its utilisation. The study thus situates AI use within the everyday academic responsibilities of lecturers while recognising that its application is shaped by the technological, institutional, financial and ethical conditions surrounding academic practice.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study specifically sought to:

- determine the extent of artificial intelligence usage among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State;
- examine the level of academic engagement among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State;
- examine lecturers' perceived influence of artificial intelligence usage on teaching activities among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State;
- assess lecturers' perceived influence of artificial intelligence usage on research engagement among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State;
- identify the factors affecting the utilisation of artificial intelligence among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the extent of artificial intelligence usage among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?
- What is the level of academic engagement among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?
- What is the perceived influence of artificial intelligence usage on teaching activities among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?
- What is the perceived influence of artificial intelligence usage on research engagement among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?
- What factors affect the utilisation of artificial intelligence among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Artificial Intelligence and Academic Practice in Higher Education

Artificial intelligence (AI) has moved from a predominantly computational concept to a practical component of contemporary higher education, with applications extending across teaching, assessment, research and academic administration. At its core, AI involves computational systems capable of performing functions associated with human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, pattern recognition and decision-making (McCarthy, 2007; Russell & Norvig, 2021). Advances in machine learning and related technologies have expanded these capabilities beyond rule-based systems, enabling AI applications to process large volumes of information, identify patterns and generate outputs with increasing levels of sophistication (Goodfellow et al., 2016). In higher education, this technological development has created new possibilities for integrating intelligent systems into established academic practices.

The use of AI in universities encompasses a range of applications intended to support academic and institutional activities. In teaching, intelligent systems can assist with instructional planning, personalised learning, assessment and feedback, while data-driven applications can support the monitoring of student progress and the adaptation of learning experiences (Holmes et al., 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). AI has also become increasingly relevant to academic research, where computational systems can facilitate the processing of large datasets, pattern recognition, literature searches, academic writing and other stages of scholarly work. Such applications position AI not simply as an educational technology but as a resource that can become embedded in the everyday practices through which academic work is undertaken.

For lecturers, the significance of AI lies in how its capabilities can be incorporated into existing academic responsibilities. In research, intelligent applications can support literature identification, information processing, data-related activities and aspects of academic writing and publication (Kasneci et al., 2023; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). In teaching, AI can similarly assist with instructional preparation, assessment and feedback. These applications suggest that AI is most appropriately understood as a resource that can augment lecturers' work rather than as an automatic substitute for disciplinary judgement and professional expertise. This distinction is particularly relevant to Mass Communication, where AI is simultaneously reshaping the professional practices for which lecturers prepare students.

The integration of AI into academic practice nevertheless involves important limitations and concerns. Access to technology does not necessarily translate into meaningful or effective utilisation. Lecturers' adoption of technological

tools is shaped by perceptions of usefulness and ease of use, individual competencies and the availability of facilitating conditions (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Institutional support, training and adequate technological infrastructure are similarly important in determining whether emerging technologies can be incorporated effectively into academic work (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Beyond practical constraints, the increasing presence of AI raises questions about professional autonomy, human interaction, critical judgement and the ethical boundaries of automation in education. Selwyn (2019) cautions against uncritical technological adoption, while Knox (2020) draws attention to the ways AI may reconfigure the roles and responsibilities of educators within increasingly automated educational environments.

The emerging pattern is therefore one of integration rather than simple technological substitution. AI can provide lecturers with resources for managing academic tasks, expanding pedagogical possibilities and supporting research activities, but its significance depends on how these tools are incorporated into substantive academic practice. The literature consequently supports an understanding of AI usage among lecturers as a multidimensional practice involving the extent and manner of technological utilisation, the academic activities to which AI is applied, and the conditions within which such utilisation occurs. This perspective provides a basis for considering the more specific question of what AI usage means for lecturers' engagement with their academic responsibilities.

2.2 Academic Engagement and the Emerging Role of AI

Academic engagement refers broadly to the extent to which individuals invest cognitive, behavioural and emotional resources in academic work. Schaufeli et al. (2002) characterise engagement in terms of vigour, dedication and absorption, while Fredricks et al. (2004) conceptualise it as a multidimensional construct encompassing behavioural, emotional and cognitive dimensions. Kuh (2009), from a higher education perspective, emphasises the time and effort devoted to activities associated with meaningful academic outcomes. Taken together, these perspectives position engagement as more than mere participation: it involves the sustained investment of intellectual, behavioural and affective resources in academic responsibilities.

In the case of university lecturers, academic engagement is expressed through sustained involvement in teaching, research and institutional responsibilities. Teaching engagement encompasses commitment to instructional delivery, interaction with students, development of learning materials and the adoption of approaches that support effective learning. Research engagement involves participation in scholarly inquiry, data analysis, publication and knowledge production, while institutional engagement may include committee work, administration and other forms of academic service. Kahn (1990) and Saks (2006) similarly locate engagement in the mobilisation of physical, cognitive and emotional energies within work roles. Academic engagement among lecturers therefore concerns the quality and intensity of their involvement in the activities through which their professional roles are performed.

Technological integration can become relevant to this engagement because digital tools may alter the amount of time and effort lecturers devote to different academic tasks. Research on educational technology has associated appropriate technological integration with changes in teaching practices, pedagogical innovation and academic work processes (Kirkwood & Price, 2014). In principle, technologies that reduce repetitive tasks, facilitate information processing or support feedback can create greater scope for lecturers to concentrate on intellectually demanding and interactive aspects of their work. AI extends these possibilities by performing increasingly sophisticated functions across teaching and research. Its potential relevance to academic engagement consequently lies not simply in whether lecturers possess or use AI tools, but in how such use is incorporated into the activities that constitute their academic roles.

The relationship between AI and academic engagement, however, should not be understood as inherently positive. Greater technological capability may facilitate academic work, but it may also introduce new demands and professional concerns. Heavy reliance on automated systems could affect interpersonal interaction, mentorship and critical dialogue, while concerns about accuracy, academic integrity, professional autonomy and ethical use may influence lecturers' willingness to incorporate AI into their work (Knox, 2020; Selwyn, 2019). Similarly, inadequate competence, limited institutional support or insufficient infrastructure may prevent lecturers from translating access to AI into meaningful academic practice. The implications of AI for engagement are therefore contingent on the conditions surrounding its use and on the ways lecturers perceive and incorporate the technology into their professional responsibilities.

For Mass Communication lecturers, these considerations are particularly significant because teaching and research take place within a discipline undergoing rapid technological transformation. AI has become increasingly embedded in the media environment, making familiarity with its applications relevant not only to lecturers' own academic work but also to the preparation of students for contemporary communication professions (Diakopoulos, 2019; Pavlik, 2013). Examining AI usage alongside academic engagement provides a means of understanding how lecturers are encountering an emerging technology within the specific practices of teaching and research.

2.3 AI Utilisation among University Lecturers: Evidence and Contextual Issues

The growing presence of artificial intelligence in higher education has produced varying levels of utilisation among university lecturers, with actual use shaped by perceived usefulness, digital competence, institutional support and access to appropriate technological infrastructure. Evidence from Ondo State illustrates this complexity. Alabi et al. (2025) found that lecturers generally had positive perceptions of AI, yet reported very low adoption, with poor internet connectivity, inadequate funding and insufficient infrastructural support identified as major constraints. Similarly, Alabi (2025) reported very low use of AI for teaching and learning among lecturers at Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, despite high perceived ease of use. These findings indicate that favourable perceptions alone may not translate into sustained academic utilisation where the conditions necessary for regular application are inadequate.

Beyond access, the Nigerian evidence highlights the importance of competence and institutional capacity. Okeke (2025) identified financial constraints, the cost of AI tools, inadequate technical skills, integration difficulties, algorithmic concerns and weak regulatory structures as barriers to adoption. Abubakar and Onasanya (2025) likewise found generally favourable attitudes towards AI among lecturers in Northwest Nigerian universities but reported moderate digital competence, inadequate technical support and gaps in advanced AI skills. Their study also identified self-directed learning and peer support as important avenues for developing AI competence. The evidence therefore suggests that meaningful utilisation depends not only on whether AI is available but also on whether lecturers possess the capacity and institutional support required to incorporate it into their academic responsibilities.

International studies reinforce the significance of usefulness, competence and ease of use. Chatterjee and Bhattacharjee (2020) found performance expectancy, effort expectancy and facilitating conditions to be important to AI adoption in higher education, while Tran and Nguyen (2024) linked AI literacy with lecturers' perceptions of usefulness and ease of use in relation to teaching. Du et al. (2024) similarly identified AI literacy and self-efficacy as important to teachers' readiness to engage with AI. Such evidence suggests that utilisation is likely to be more substantive where lecturers can identify clear academic value, operate AI tools with confidence and exercise informed judgement over their outputs.

The purposes for which lecturers employ AI also warrant attention. Recent Nigerian evidence from Ogunbadejo et al. (2026), involving university lecturers in Southeast Nigeria, reported high awareness and moderate reliance on ChatGPT, particularly for content generation and efficiency. Lecturers perceived benefits in simplifying complex concepts, supporting engagement and providing immediate feedback, while continuing to regard professional judgement, classroom interaction and mentorship as fundamentally human responsibilities. This evidence is particularly relevant to Mass Communication because it illustrates AI use as an augmentation of academic practice rather than an automatic replacement for lecturers' expertise. Evidence from South Africa similarly reveals a combination of experimentation and caution. Mutanga et al. (2024) reported that lecturers used AI for activities such as generating quizzes, assignments and learning materials, while also expressing concerns about overreliance, critical thinking and lecturer-student interaction. Schoona et al. (2025) further demonstrate the growing African interest in academics' adoption and perceptions of generative AI.

Institutional readiness emerges across this literature as a critical condition for sustained utilisation. Reliable internet connectivity, access to appropriate digital tools, technical assistance and opportunities for professional development can determine whether lecturers' interest in AI develops into routine academic practice. Nigerian studies repeatedly identify infrastructural and support deficiencies (Alabi et al., 2025; Okeke, 2025), while Amupitan and Tella (2026), examining Library and Information Science lecturers across universities in Southwest and North Central Nigeria, also identified limitations in the availability of AI infrastructure and tools. Institutional preparedness consequently extends beyond providing access to technology to creating the conditions under which lecturers can acquire the competence and support required for effective use.

Ethical and professional considerations further complicate AI utilisation. The increasing use of generative AI has raised concerns about academic integrity, originality, privacy, authorship, accuracy, job security and the boundaries of appropriate machine assistance. Brown et al. (2025) identified concerns about academic integrity, job security and inadequate institutional guidance, while Baig and Yadegaridehkordi (2025) found ethical considerations, security, privacy and facilitating conditions relevant to academic staff's satisfaction and continued intention to use generative AI. In Nigeria, Eleje et al. (2025) similarly drew attention to academic integrity, overreliance and concerns about critical thinking. These concerns suggest that effective AI utilisation requires technological competence to be accompanied by ethical awareness and professional judgement.

The research dimension remains less developed than teaching in the existing empirical literature. Much of the evidence focuses on adoption, pedagogical application, perception or behavioural intention, with comparatively less attention to how lecturers use AI across broader scholarly responsibilities such as literature searching, academic writing, data-related activities, research communication and publication. This is significant because lecturers' academic engagement extends beyond classroom instruction. Understanding AI utilisation therefore requires attention to its place within the

wider range of activities through which lecturers perform their teaching and research roles. A further limitation is the tendency to treat university lecturers as a homogeneous professional group despite differences in disciplinary practices and technological demands. This is particularly important for Mass Communication, a discipline being reshaped by automated content production, audience analytics, algorithmic distribution, digital storytelling and verification technologies (Diakopoulos, 2019; Graefe, 2016). Their utilisation of AI therefore warrants disciplinary attention rather than being subsumed within general studies of university academics.

Taken together, the literature indicates that AI utilisation among university lecturers is shaped by perceived usefulness, competence, infrastructural access, institutional support, cost and ethical considerations, while its applications extend across both teaching and research. However, existing Nigerian and African studies have given greater attention to adoption, perception, competence, pedagogical use and barriers than to the relationship between AI utilisation and the broader academic responsibilities of lecturers. Evidence specific to Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State is particularly limited. The present study addresses this contextual and disciplinary gap by examining AI usage alongside academic engagement and lecturers' perceived experiences of AI in teaching and research activities.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003). The theory explains technology use through four central constructs: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions. Performance expectancy concerns the extent to which an individual believes that using a technology will improve job performance; effort expectancy refers to the perceived ease of using the technology; social influence concerns the extent to which important others encourage or expect its use; and facilitating conditions refer to the organisational and technical resources available to support use.

UTAUT provides a particularly appropriate framework for this study because the utilisation of AI by university lecturers is not determined by the technology alone. Performance expectancy is relevant to lecturers' assessment of the usefulness of AI for academic responsibilities such as preparing instructional materials, developing assessment items, supporting academic writing and undertaking research activities. Effort expectancy directs attention to the ease with which lecturers can access and use AI tools, as well as the competence required to employ them effectively. Social influence captures the role of colleagues, institutional expectations and the wider academic environment in shaping lecturers' disposition towards AI. Facilitating conditions address the availability of internet access, digital resources, institutional support, training and other infrastructure necessary for sustained utilisation.

Within this study, UTAUT serves as an explanatory lens for examining the extent and conditions of AI utilisation among Mass Communication lecturers. The theory is not applied as a set of causal relationships to be statistically tested, but as a framework for interpreting lecturers' reported patterns of AI use and the factors that facilitate or constrain such use. Accordingly, performance expectancy provides a basis for understanding lecturers' perceptions of the usefulness of AI in their academic responsibilities; effort expectancy draws attention to the ease of use and competence required for effective engagement with AI tools; social influence considers the role of colleagues, institutional expectations and the broader academic environment; while facilitating conditions point to the institutional and technical resources that enable sustained use.

The application of UTAUT therefore allows the study to examine AI utilisation within the actual context of academic work rather than treating use as a simple consequence of technological availability. It provides a coherent basis for interpreting how lecturers' perceptions of AI, their ability to use it, the influence of their academic environment and the availability of institutional support shape their engagement with AI in teaching and research. In this regard, UTAUT provides the theoretical foundation for understanding AI utilisation among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State, while remaining consistent with the descriptive orientation of the study.

3 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to examine artificial intelligence (AI) usage and academic engagement among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study population comprised 33 Mass Communication lecturers across the four private universities in the state offering Mass Communication: Achievers University (10), Elizade University (6), Wesley University (8), and Sam Maris University (9). Given the small and manageable population, census sampling was used, thereby including all 33 lecturers in the sample. A structured questionnaire comprising six sections was used for data collection. Section A elicited demographic information, while Sections B to F contained 38 substantive items. Section B comprised eight items measuring the extent of AI usage; Section C contained eight items measuring academic engagement; Section D comprised seven items measuring the perceived influence of AI usage on teaching activities; Section E contained seven items measuring the perceived influence of AI usage on research engagement; and Section F comprised eight items measuring factors affecting AI

utilisation. Section B was measured on a four-point frequency scale ranging from Very Frequently (4) to Never (1), whereas Sections C to F were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument underwent face and content validation by the supervisor and a specialist in Mass Communication and research methodology from the University of Lagos. Reliability was established through a pilot study involving 15 Mass Communication lecturers from a private university outside the study area but with comparable characteristics. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.814 to 0.865 across the five substantive sections, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.842, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

The questionnaire was administered directly to the 33 lecturers, and the completed copies were retrieved for analysis. The data were coded and analysed using SPSS Version 27. Frequency counts and percentages were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyse responses to questionnaire items corresponding to the five research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to interpret the item means: scores of 2.50 and above were regarded as accepted, whereas scores below 2.50 were regarded as rejected. Standard deviation was used to indicate the degree of variation in respondents' responses around the mean. The analysis was restricted to descriptive statistics in keeping with the descriptive survey design.

4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Respondent Profile

The study covered 33 Mass Communication lecturers from four private universities in Ondo State. Achievers University accounted for the largest proportion of respondents (30.3%), followed by Elizade University (18.2%), Wesley University (24.2%), and Sam Maris University (27.3%). The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with females constituting 51.5% and males 48.5% of the respondents. Respondents aged 40–49 years formed the largest age group (36.4%), while 24.2% were below 30 years, 24.2% were aged 50 years and above, and 15.2% were aged 30–39 years. Regarding academic qualification, PhD holders constituted 51.5% of the respondents, followed by Master's degree holders (30.3%) and those with other qualifications (18.2%); none reported a Bachelor's degree as their highest qualification. Associate Professors/Readers constituted the largest academic rank category (33.3%), followed by Lecturer II (24.2%). In terms of teaching experience, 33.3% had less than five years of experience, 27.3% had 5–10 years, 18.2% had 11–15 years, and 21.2% had 16 years or more.

4.1.1 Research Question 1

What is the extent of artificial intelligence usage among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?

Table 1: Extent of Artificial Intelligence Usage

S/N	Statement	VF n(%)	F n(%)	O n(%)	N n(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	I use AI tools to prepare lecture notes and teaching materials.	11 (33.3)	12 (36.4)	9 (27.3)	1 (3.0)	3.00	0.87	Accepted
2	I use AI tools to generate classroom examples and learning resources.	9 (27.3)	12 (36.4)	8 (24.2)	4 (12.1)	2.79	0.99	Accepted
3	I use AI tools to develop examination or continuous assessment questions.	13 (39.4)	14 (42.4)	5 (15.2)	1 (3.0)	3.18	0.81	Accepted
4	I use AI applications to prepare presentation slides for teaching.	6 (18.2)	20 (60.6)	5 (15.2)	2 (6.1)	2.91	0.77	Accepted
5	I use AI tools to search for scholarly literature and academic information.	14 (42.4)	14 (42.4)	4 (12.1)	1 (3.0)	3.24	0.79	Accepted
6	I use AI applications when writing research papers or conference papers.	7 (21.2)	14 (42.4)	8 (24.2)	4 (12.1)	2.73	0.94	Accepted
7	I use AI tools to edit, proofread or improve academic writing.	13 (39.4)	16 (48.5)	4 (12.1)	0 (0.0)	3.27	0.67	Accepted
8	I use AI tools for administrative and academic communication, such as drafting emails or reports.	12 (36.4)	12 (36.4)	7 (21.2)	2 (6.1)	3.03	0.92	Accepted

	Overall Mean					3.02	0.86	Accepted
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Source: Field Survey (2026)

Table 1 indicates a generally high extent of AI usage among the respondents, with an overall mean of 3.02. All eight items exceeded the 2.50 criterion mean. AI was most frequently used for editing, proofreading or improving academic writing ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.67$), followed by searching for scholarly literature and academic information ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.79$) and developing examination or continuous assessment questions ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.81$). Use for writing research or conference papers recorded the lowest mean ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.94$), although it remained above the criterion. The results therefore suggest that respondents reported greater use of AI for academic writing support, information seeking and selected teaching-related tasks than for writing research papers.

4.1.2 Research Question 2

What is the level of academic engagement among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?

Table 2: Level of Academic Engagement

S/N	Statement	SA n(%)	A n(%)	D n(%)	SD n(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	I devote adequate time to preparing for my lectures.	16 (48.5)	14 (42.4)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	3.39	0.66	Accepted
2	I actively participate in teaching and other academic activities within my university.	15 (45.5)	8 (24.2)	9 (27.3)	1 (3.0)	3.12	0.93	Accepted
3	I maintain regular interaction with students to support their academic learning.	17 (51.5)	13 (39.4)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	3.42	0.66	Accepted
4	I actively engage in research and scholarly activities.	19 (57.6)	12 (36.4)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	3.52	0.62	Accepted
5	I regularly participate in academic conferences, seminars and workshops.	17 (51.5)	15 (45.5)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	3.48	0.57	Accepted
6	I willingly participate in departmental and university academic responsibilities.	16 (48.5)	11 (33.3)	6 (18.2)	0 (0.0)	3.30	0.77	Accepted
7	I remain committed to improving the quality of my teaching and research activities.	19 (57.6)	14 (42.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3.58	0.50	Accepted
8	I consistently fulfil my academic responsibilities as a lecturer.	20 (60.6)	12 (36.4)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	3.58	0.56	Accepted
	Overall Mean					3.42	0.68	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The respondents reported a high level of academic engagement, reflected in the overall mean of 3.42. All eight items exceeded the criterion mean. The highest scores concerned commitment to improving the quality of teaching and research activities and consistent fulfilment of academic responsibilities (both $M = 3.58$), followed by active engagement in research and scholarly activities ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.62$) and participation in conferences, seminars and workshops ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.57$). Active participation in teaching and other university academic activities recorded the lowest mean ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.93$), although this also exceeded the criterion.

4.1.3 Research Question 3

What is the perceived influence of artificial intelligence usage on teaching activities among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?

Table 3: Perceived Influence of Artificial Intelligence Usage on Teaching Activities

S/N	Statement	SA n(%)	A n(%)	D n(%)	SD n(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	The use of AI has improved my lesson preparation.	18 (54.5)	13 (39.4)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	3.48	0.62	Accepted
2	AI enables me to prepare teaching materials more efficiently.	12 (36.4)	13 (39.4)	5 (15.2)	3 (9.1)	3.03	0.95	Accepted
3	AI improves the quality of my classroom instruction.	15 (45.5)	13 (39.4)	4 (12.1)	1 (3.0)	3.27	0.80	Accepted
4	AI assists me in developing more engaging learning activities for students.	10 (30.3)	18 (54.5)	5 (15.2)	0 (0.0)	3.15	0.67	Accepted
5	AI helps me prepare assessment questions more effectively.	15 (45.5)	13 (39.4)	4 (12.1)	1 (3.0)	3.27	0.80	Accepted
6	AI improves the quality and speed of feedback I provide to students.	18 (54.5)	11 (33.3)	4 (12.1)	0 (0.0)	3.42	0.71	Accepted
7	AI has enhanced my overall effectiveness as a lecturer.	15 (45.5)	13 (39.4)	5 (15.2)	0 (0.0)	3.30	0.73	Accepted
	Overall Mean					3.28	0.76	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The results show a broadly positive perceived influence of AI usage on teaching activities, with an overall mean of 3.28. All seven items exceeded the criterion mean. The highest mean concerned improved lesson preparation ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.62$), followed by improved quality and speed of feedback to students ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.71$). Respondents also reported positive effects on overall teaching effectiveness ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.73$), classroom instruction and assessment preparation (both $M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.80$). Preparation of teaching materials recorded the lowest mean ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.95$), although the score remained above the criterion.

4.1.4 Research Question 4

What is the perceived influence of artificial intelligence usage on research engagement among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?

Table 4: Influence of Artificial Intelligence Usage on Research Engagement

S/N	Statement	SA n(%)	A n(%)	D n(%)	SD n(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	AI assists me in identifying relevant scholarly literature.	13 (39.4)	16 (48.5)	3 (9.1)	1 (3.0)	3.24	0.75	Accepted
2	AI helps me organise and summarise research information.	9 (27.3)	19 (57.6)	4 (12.1)	1 (3.0)	3.09	0.72	Accepted
3	AI improves the quality of my academic writing.	13 (39.4)	19 (57.6)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	3.36	0.55	Accepted
4	AI assists me in proofreading and editing research manuscripts.	19 (57.6)	10 (30.3)	4 (12.1)	0 (0.0)	3.45	0.71	Accepted
5	AI enhances my research productivity.	12 (36.4)	15 (45.5)	6 (18.2)	0 (0.0)	3.18	0.73	Accepted
6	AI supports me in generating new research ideas.	15 (45.5)	11 (33.3)	6 (18.2)	1 (3.0)	3.21	0.86	Accepted
7	AI has increased my overall involvement in research activities.	8 (24.2)	17 (51.5)	7 (21.2)	1 (3.0)	2.97	0.77	Accepted
	Overall Mean					3.22	0.74	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The respondents reported a generally positive perception of AI's contribution to research engagement, with an overall mean of 3.22. All seven items exceeded the criterion mean. The highest mean was recorded for assistance with proofreading and editing research manuscripts ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.71$), followed by improvement in academic writing ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.55$). AI was also perceived as useful for identifying scholarly literature ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.75$), generating research ideas ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.86$) and enhancing research productivity ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.73$). The lowest mean concerned increased overall involvement in research activities ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.77$), suggesting that the perceived contribution of AI was stronger for specific research tasks than for overall research involvement.

4.1.5 Research Question 5

What factors affect the utilisation of artificial intelligence among Mass Communication lecturers in private universities in Ondo State?

Table 5: Factors Affecting the Utilisation of Artificial Intelligence

S/N	Statement	SA n(%)	A n(%)	D n(%)	SD n(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	Adequate internet access influences my use of AI tools.	14 (42.4)	12 (36.4)	4 (12.1)	3 (9.1)	3.12	0.96	Accepted
2	Availability of reliable electricity influences my use of AI tools.	8 (24.2)	13 (39.4)	10 (30.3)	2 (6.1)	2.82	0.88	Accepted
3	My level of digital competence influences my utilisation of AI.	11 (33.3)	12 (36.4)	9 (27.3)	1 (3.0)	3.00	0.87	Accepted
4	Institutional support encourages my use of AI in academic activities.	6 (18.2)	13 (39.4)	13 (39.4)	1 (3.0)	2.73	0.80	Accepted
5	Training opportunities influence my use of AI tools.	8 (24.2)	15 (45.5)	8 (24.2)	2 (6.1)	2.88	0.86	Accepted
6	The cost of AI applications affects my level of utilisation.	12 (36.4)	12 (36.4)	4 (12.1)	5 (15.2)	2.94	1.06	Accepted
7	Ethical concerns regarding AI influence my willingness to use AI tools.	7 (21.2)	10 (30.3)	14 (42.4)	2 (6.1)	2.67	0.89	Accepted
8	University policies regarding AI influence my utilisation of AI tools.	11 (33.3)	8 (24.2)	12 (36.4)	2 (6.1)	2.85	0.97	Accepted
	Overall Mean					2.88	0.91	Accepted

Source: Field Survey (2026)

All eight factors exceeded the criterion mean, producing an overall mean of 2.88. Adequate internet access recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 0.96$), followed by digital competence ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.87$) and the cost of AI applications ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.06$). Training opportunities ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.86$), university policies ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 0.97$) and reliable electricity ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 0.88$) also exceeded the criterion. Institutional support recorded $M = 2.73$ ($SD = 0.80$), while ethical concerns recorded the lowest mean ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 0.89$). The pattern indicates that infrastructural access, digital competence, financial considerations, training and institutional conditions were all perceived as relevant to AI utilisation, with internet access emerging as the most prominent factor among those assessed.

5 DISCUSSION

The analysis indicates that artificial intelligence has assumed a meaningful place in the academic practices of the Mass Communication lecturers studied, although its utilisation varies across academic tasks. Reported AI usage was high, particularly for editing and improving academic writing, searching for scholarly information, preparing assessment questions and developing teaching materials. This differs from the relatively low levels of adoption reported by Alabi et al. (2025) and Alabi (2025) among lecturers in tertiary institutions in Ondo State. The divergence suggests that AI utilisation may vary according to disciplinary demands, institutional context and the range of tasks for which lecturers perceive the technology to be useful. The stronger use of AI for writing support, information seeking and assessment preparation indicates that lecturers are more likely to incorporate it where its practical utility is readily apparent. This is consistent with Brown et al. (2025), who reported substantial AI engagement among academic staff alongside differences in AI literacy and attitudes. From the perspective of UTAUT, the pattern is particularly relevant to

performance expectancy, as technologies perceived to improve academic task performance are more likely to be incorporated into routine practice.

The comparatively lower use of AI for writing research and conference papers is also noteworthy. Although the mean remained above the criterion, it was lower than the scores for editing academic writing, literature searching and assessment preparation. This suggests that respondents employ AI more readily for supportive, task-specific functions than for activities involving direct production of scholarly outputs. Such differentiation reflects wider concerns about authorship, accuracy, academic integrity and professional judgement surrounding AI-assisted academic work (Brown et al., 2025; Kasneci et al., 2023; Selwyn, 2019). AI utilisation among the respondents therefore appears more nuanced than a simple distinction between adoption and non-adoption.

The respondents simultaneously reported a high level of academic engagement across teaching, student interaction, research, professional development and institutional responsibilities. This result describes the professional context in which AI is being used rather than establishing that AI produced or increased engagement. Since the study did not statistically test the relationship between AI usage and academic engagement, the two should not be interpreted causally. The evidence instead shows substantial professional involvement alongside considerable AI utilisation, suggesting that AI is being incorporated into an already active academic environment.

The positive assessment of AI in teaching suggests that lecturers value the technology where it offers immediately recognisable assistance with instructional work. This corresponds with literature identifying lesson planning, content development, assessment and feedback as important areas of AI-supported academic practice (Holmes et al., 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). It also aligns with Tran and Nguyen (2024) and Chatterjee and Bhattacharjee (2020), who highlighted perceived usefulness, performance expectancy and facilitating conditions in AI adoption for teaching. The present result is therefore best understood as evidence of perceived utility, with UTAUT's performance expectancy offering a useful explanation for why lecturers value AI where it can enhance identifiable teaching tasks. Effort expectancy is also relevant where such applications can be incorporated into routine academic work.

A similar pattern was observed in research engagement. Respondents perceived AI as particularly useful for proofreading and editing manuscripts, improving academic writing and identifying relevant literature, while its perceived contribution to overall research involvement was comparatively lower. The distinction suggests that AI is valued more strongly for improving the efficiency of specific research processes than for expanding lecturers' overall participation in research. This accords with research highlighting AI's usefulness for information retrieval, writing support and text processing (Brown, 2020; Kasneci et al., 2023) and with Du et al. (2024), who emphasised AI literacy and self-efficacy in educators' engagement with AI. Again, UTAUT's performance expectancy helps explain why perceived value is strongest for clearly defined research tasks.

The analysis further shows that AI utilisation is conditioned by the environment in which lecturers work. Internet access, digital competence and the cost of AI applications were among the most prominent factors, while training, university policies, electricity and institutional support also exceeded the criterion mean. Ethical concerns, although the lowest rated factor, remained above the threshold. This pattern reflects evidence from Ondo State and other Nigerian contexts identifying connectivity, infrastructure, financial constraints and digital competence as important conditions for AI adoption (Alabi et al., 2025; Alabi, 2025; Okeke, 2025). It is also consistent with broader evidence concerning institutional readiness, training and technological support (Amupitan & Tella, 2026; Chatterjee & Bhattacharjee, 2020; Mutanga et al., 2024).

These conditions are particularly explicable through UTAUT's facilitating conditions, which encompass the technological and organisational resources required for use. Digital competence is conceptually consistent with the theory's emphasis on ease of use, while institutional support and policies correspond broadly with the facilitating conditions surrounding technology use. Overall, the evidence presents AI utilisation among the lecturers studied as practical, task-oriented and context-dependent. Its reported value is strongest where it supports identifiable teaching and research activities, while lower scores for research paper writing and overall research involvement caution against equating AI use with comprehensive academic engagement. UTAUT therefore provides a useful interpretive framework for understanding the reported patterns without implying that the study empirically validated the theory's causal relationships.

6 CONCLUSION

The study establishes that AI has become a relevant component of academic practice among Mass Communication lecturers in the private universities studied in Ondo State. Lecturers reported relatively high AI utilisation, particularly for academic writing support, scholarly information retrieval, teaching preparation and assessment-related activities. They also reported high academic engagement across teaching, research, student interaction and other professional responsibilities. Importantly, the results indicate that AI was perceived as useful for specific aspects of teaching and research, especially lesson preparation, feedback, manuscript editing, academic writing and literature identification. However, the comparatively lower scores for research paper writing and overall research involvement suggest that AI utilisation remains more strongly oriented towards supporting particular academic tasks than transforming lecturers' broader scholarly engagement.

The analysis further shows that the effective utilisation of AI is shaped by the conditions surrounding its use. Internet access, digital competence, cost, training, electricity, institutional support and university policies were all identified as relevant factors. The results therefore indicate that the value lecturers derive from AI cannot be considered independently of the technological and organisational environment in which its use occurs. Within this context, UTAUT provides a useful interpretive framework, particularly through performance expectancy, effort expectancy and facilitating conditions, for understanding why perceived usefulness and enabling conditions matter to AI utilisation. The study does not, however, establish the causal pathways proposed by the theory.

Overall, the evidence points to AI as a practical academic resource whose value lies principally in supporting identifiable teaching and research activities. Its responsible and sustainable integration requires universities to combine access to appropriate technologies with digital competence, institutional support and clear ethical guidance. For Mass Communication education in private universities in Ondo State, the challenge is therefore not simply to increase AI use, but to create conditions under which its use can complement lecturers' professional expertise, scholarly judgement and academic responsibilities.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

Private university management should strengthen institutional support for AI utilisation by providing clear guidelines, technical assistance and appropriate digital resources for teaching, research and other academic activities. Such support should enable lecturers to integrate AI effectively while maintaining professional and academic standards.

Heads of Mass Communication departments, in collaboration with university management, should organise periodic practical training on the effective use of artificial intelligence for teaching and academic engagement. Such training should focus on relevant applications of AI for lesson preparation, content development, research, assessment and other academic tasks, rather than limiting training to general awareness of AI tools.

Mass Communication lecturers should also be supported to apply AI responsibly in research activities. Universities should facilitate access to relevant AI tools and provide guidance on their use for literature identification, information organisation, academic writing, proofreading and research idea development. AI use should complement, rather than replace, lecturers' independent scholarly judgement and research skills.

Private universities should address the infrastructural and financial conditions affecting AI utilisation by improving internet connectivity and electricity supply, facilitating access to appropriate AI-enabled resources, and addressing the cost of AI applications and relevant training where necessary. These measures would reduce technological, financial and skills-related barriers to sustained AI utilisation.

Finally, private universities should establish clear institutional policies and ethical guidelines for responsible AI use. Such guidelines should specify acceptable applications in teaching, assessment, research and academic writing and address academic integrity, transparency, authorship, privacy, verification of AI-generated information and responsible use. Clear guidance would allow lecturers to benefit from AI while protecting academic standards and professional accountability.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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