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Effects of Artificial Intelligence on Sustainable Public Service Delivery in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming governance and public service delivery across the globe, offering innovative solutions for enhancing efficiency, transparency, and sustainability. In Nigeria, a nation with complex socioeconomic challenges and entrenched bureaucratic inefficiencies, the integration of AI into public services presents significant opportunities and obstacles. This paper examines the impact of AI on sustainable public service delivery in Nigeria, highlighting its potential benefits, such as automation of routine administrative tasks, predictive analytics for policy design, enhanced resource allocation, improved transparency, and citizen-centric services. It also interrogates the challenges hindering adoption, including infrastructural deficits, limited digital literacy, ethical concerns, resistance to change, and data privacy issues. The paper relies on content analysis as its method of data analysis with emphasis on secondary data, anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Governance Theory. The study establishes that while AI has the capacity to revolutionize governance in Nigeria, its effectiveness depends on institutional readiness, policy frameworks, and strategic investments in human capital. The paper concludes that deliberate efforts in policy implementation, capacity building, infrastructure development, and ethical governance are essential to harness AI for sustainable public service delivery in Nigeria.

Keywords— **Artificial Intelligence, public service, sustainability, governance, Nigeria**

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the Nigerian public service, like many across the world, has faced significant challenges in efficiency, transparency, and service delivery. Traditional administrative processes, characterized by manual labor and bureaucratic red tape, have hindered the government's ability to meet the growing demands of its citizens. This has resulted in inefficiencies, delays, and reduced public trust. With global advancements in technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), there is a growing recognition that AI could address many of these issues by automating tasks, improving decision-making, and enhancing overall service delivery (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025).

Globally, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly becoming a transformative force across various sectors, and its application in public service and governance is gaining significant attention in Nigeria, a nation characterized by a rapidly growing population and complex socioeconomic challenges. The integration of AI into public services and governance holds the potential to address key issues such as ineffectiveness, inefficiency, corruption, and service delivery gaps (Nwosu et al., 2024). Nations with growing economies, exemplified by Nigeria, are gradually recognizing the many benefits that AI promises for refining public services, catalysing economic development and ameliorating societal welfare (Lawal & Adamu, 2024), Artificial intelligence refers to machine intelligence, with natural intelligence receiving minimal focus as machines assume the functions of human intelligence within organizations. Machines can now effortlessly perform tasks that humans can accomplish seamlessly. Developing economies are adopting AI and Machine Learning (ML), swiftly reshaping their political, economic, environmental, and social landscapes (Ndubuisi-Okolo et al., 2025).

According to Nwosu et al. (2024), AI technologies can enhance decision-making processes, improve the management of public resources, and provide innovative solutions to challenges faced by government agencies. Automating routine administrative tasks to enhance sophisticated data analysis and predictive modeling. AI offers opportunities to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of governance structures. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) champions AI to accelerate progress towards sustainable development while steadfastly promoting human rights. This involves the ethical, transparent, and sustainable development and utilization of AI technologies to ensure that their deployment strengthens local AI ecosystems and advances human dignity, quality, and justice for all. Advancements in information technology influence social conditions, such as medical service systems, educational service systems, government administration, and various other aspects of life. Digital technology advancement has enormous potential to improve human well-being and increase economic development and productivity. AI as a digital technology has great potential to solve problems associated with ineffectiveness and inaptitude in public service and governance (Nwosu et al., 2024)

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines. This involves machines mimicking the capability of humans such as learning and decision making. In the context of public service, AI's potential to revolutionize administrative processes, service delivery, and decision-making has garnered significant attention. As Nigeria strives to enhance its public service efficiency, AI offers promising opportunities to streamline processes, improve transparency, and deliver better services to its citizens. The adoption of AI technologies, including machine learning, natural language processing, and robotic process automation, can bring profound benefits to Nigeria's public sector (Anazodo &

Ezenwegbu, 2025). AI applications range from automating repetitive tasks such as data entry and customer service to enhancing predictive analytics for policy development and resource allocation. For instance, AI can assist in optimizing public healthcare delivery by analyzing vast datasets to predict disease outbreaks and resource needs, as evidenced in other developing nations. Similarly, AI-driven automation in administrative tasks can lead to significant cost reductions and improved service efficiency (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025).

However, the adoption of AI, especially in Nigerian public service and governance, is not without challenges; issues such as infrastructure deficits, limited digital literacy, and concerns about data privacy and security need to be carefully managed. Additionally, the ethical implications of AI use, including potential biases and their impact on employment, require thoughtful considerations (Nwosu et al., 2024). The lack of skilled personnel capable of developing and maintaining AI systems is another barrier, making it crucial for Nigeria to invest in education and training (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025).

According to Lawal and Adamu (2024) Nigeria government has initiated a plethora of measures to promote development and assimilation of AI across various sectors such as healthcare, agriculture etc. Concurrently, the Nigerian technological ecosystem is experiencing an exceptional boom in AI startups and research endeavours. AI-driven innovations have been introduced to improve processes such as identity management, tax collection, and public health monitoring. For example, tools like facial recognition systems and chatbots are being explored to enhance citizen engagement and reduce administrative bottlenecks (Boniface, 2024). In Nigeria, the government has acknowledged the capability of AI and has sought to develop programs such as the National AI Strategy 2020-2030 as well as the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR). The government also set up the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) for the promotion of the digital economy (Ogunbodede & Atchrim, 2025). Also, some state governments, like Edo and Lagos, are executing policies and projects that seek to encourage ICT development and a guaranteed business environment (International Trade Administration, 2023). All these are clear indicators that the Nigerian government is making serious efforts in the use of technology and innovation to shape the economy and the lives of its citizens (Ogunbodede & Atchrim, 2025).

It is against this backdrop that this research explores the current state of AI implementation in Nigeria's public service, its potential benefits and challenges, and the strategic steps needed to harness AI for

improved sustainable public service delivery. It aims to provide insights into how AI can be a catalyst for positive change in Nigeria's public sector, while also addressing the hurdles that must be overcome to ensure its effectiveness and equitable deployment.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper did not use empirical data to investigate the topic. It comprehensively reviewed some literature on AI adoption and deployment in Nigeria's public service. The main sources are secondary data gathered from Library research, SCISPACE, official documents and the internet. The materials encompass journal articles, book chapters, institutions' reports, internet, and legal provisions on AI adoption and deployment in the Nigeria's public service.

III. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

A. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

An overview of AI refers to the simulation of human intelligence processes using machines, particularly computer systems. These procedures included learning (acquiring information and rules of application), reasoning (using rules to reach approximate or definite conclusions), and self-correction. AI technologies encompass a range of tools and systems including machine learning, natural language processing, robotics, and expert systems (Nwosu et al., 2024). In academics, it is the study of how digital computers and algorithms handle activities and solve complex problems usually requiring human intelligence, reasoning, intuition, and predictive ability to adapt to dynamic conditions (Ndubuisi-Okolo et al., 2025).

Nwosu et al. (2024) renowned American computer scientists coined the term Artificial Intelligence (AI) in 1956 and described it as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines like the intelligent computer programs". Since then, the term has been associated with diverse meanings and interpretations. First, it refers to the theory and development of computer systems with the capacity to execute tasks (such as decision-making, visual perception, speech recognition, and translation between languages) demanding human intelligence. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a pivotal technological force in the 21st century, poised to profoundly impact international relations (Nwosu et al., 2024)

The three types of artificial intelligence (AI) identified by Boniface (2024) are: analytical AI, which integrates cognitive and emotional intelligence components, understands human feelings, and arrives at decisions according to experience; redefined AI, which illustrates characteristics of all three

classifications of intelligence (cognitive, emotional, and social) and has the ability of consciousness of oneself and nervousness in interactions with others. This can be achieved by focusing on different types of AI systems (human-inspired, humanised, analytical, and artificial intelligence), or by observing artificial intelligence by means of a series of phases of evolution (invented narrow, invented general, and invented super intelligence) (Boniface, 2024).

B. AI in Public Service and Governance

AI in public services involves the use of intelligent systems to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of government operations and services. This can include automating routine administrative tasks, improving decision making through data analytics, and providing better services to citizens through AI-driven platforms. According to Nwosu et al. (2024), governance is the ability to create, enforce, and deliver services. Governance, in other words, is a performing agent that carries out the wishes of the masses in the best possible way to ensure progress and sustainability, whereas AI in Governance refers to the integration of artificial intelligence technologies into government operations and public service delivery to ensure progress and sustainability for the populace. This includes using AI for data analysis, decision making, automating routine administrative tasks, improving public services, enhancing transparency, and combating corruption. AI can be applied in areas such as healthcare, education, security, infrastructure, and financial services to help the government operate more efficiently, make data-driven policies, and improve the quality of governance. Examples include AI tools for analyzing large datasets to optimize resource allocation, monitoring and predicting security challenges, and offering personalized public services. It also has the potential to improve electoral processes, enhance public-sector accountability, and create smart cities.

However, implementing AI in governance in Nigeria faces challenges, such as infrastructure deficits, limited digital literacy, and concerns about data privacy and security. Nwosu et al. (2024) argue that the government involves people, who are the tool makers and the tool users that participate in the work of the government. This goes to interpret the nexus between governance and human innovations, and how best the government uses such innovations to improve the lives of citizens.

C. AI in Nigerian Public Service

Despite the global trend of AI integration in public service, the adoption of AI in Nigeria remains limited. However, there is growing interest in exploring the potential of AI to address the inefficiencies and challenges facing Nigeria's public sector. Anazodo and Ezenwegbu (2025) notes that Nigeria's public service is characterized by inefficiencies, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and a lack of accountability, which AI

could potentially address through automation and improved decision making. AI applications in Nigeria are still in the nascent stages, with only a few sectors exploring its benefits. A report by (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025) highlighted the use of AI in Nigeria's financial sector, where regulatory bodies like the

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) have adopted AI-driven tools for fraud detection and risk management. In contrast, the public service lags in AI adoption due to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, low digital literacy, and resistance to change. Existing literature points to a lack of comprehensive studies documenting the extent of AI deployment in Nigerian public service, signifying a research gap that this study aims to fill (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025).

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IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Governance Theory.

A. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

This study is grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), which posits that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are critical factors influencing the adoption of new technologies. In the context of AI in public service, public servants' willingness to adopt AI will depend on their perception of how AI can improve their work (usefulness) and how easy it is to use the technology (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025).

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was proposed by Davis in 1986 (Nwosu et al., 2024), It posits that users' acceptance of technology is primarily influenced by two factors: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Application: In the context of AI in public services, TAM can be used to assess how public servants and citizens perceive the usefulness and ease of use of AI systems, which in turn affects their willingness to adopt and use these technologies. Relevance to Nigeria: This model helps understand the factors that may facilitate or hinder the adoption of AI in Nigerian public services.

According to Ndubuisi-Okolo et al. (2025), TAM is a widely acknowledged framework that explicate how users come to accept and use technology. This implies that the theory firmly advocates the adoption, acceptance, and usage of technology. Artificial intelligence implies the use of information technology which facilitates the work we do. Machines now have the capacity to do more than human beings can do. The theory avers that two factors affect technology acceptance; they are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness depicts the extent to which one believes that utilizing a particular system or technology would improve their job performance, while perceived ease of use shows the extent to which a person believes that the system would be used seamlessly.

B. Governance Theory

Governance Theory has key contributors such as James Rosenau and R. A. W. Rhodes, both scientists, and Elinor Ostrom, an economist known for her work on "Polycentric Governance." This theory examines the processes, systems, and structures through which societies and organizations are managed. It often focuses on the role of public institutions' accountability and distribution of power. Application: This theory can be used to study how AI technologies are governed by public services in Nigeria. This can provide insights into how AI impacts decision-making processes, accountability, and transparent governance. Relevance to Nigeria: Governance theory is critical for analyzing how AI could potentially transform public service delivery and government structures in Nigeria (Nwosu et al., 2024).

C. Public Sector

The public sector plays a crucial role in the development of both developed and developing nations. It is the engine that drives economic growth, provides essential services, and ensures the well-being of citizens. Firstly, the public sector is responsible for providing essential services such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. These services are vital for the well-being of citizens and contribute to the overall development of a nation. In developed nations, the public sector has already established a strong foundation for these services, ensuring that citizens have access to high-quality healthcare, education, and infrastructure. In developing nations, the public sector is working towards building these foundations,

investing in projects that will benefit future generations. Secondly, the public sector is a significant contributor to economic growth. By investing in infrastructure projects, such as roads, bridges, and public transportation, the public sector creates jobs and stimulates economic activity. Additionally, the public sector plays a crucial role in regulating the economy, ensuring fair competition, and protecting consumers.

This helps to create a stable and prosperous business environment, attracting investment and promoting economic growth. Furthermore, the public sector is responsible for ensuring the well-being of citizens. By providing social services such as unemployment benefits, housing assistance, and social security, the public sector helps to reduce poverty and promote social equality. This not only improves the quality of life for citizens but also contributes to social stability and cohesion. The public sector is the engine of development for both developed and developing nations. It provides essential services, contributes to economic growth, and ensures the well-being of citizens. For the public sector to achieve its objectives there is a need for a responsive, transparent, and accountable administration (Igbokwe et al. (2025).

The methods for enhancing the efficacy and efficiency of public services, guaranteeing accountability and transparency, and advancing the public interest are also included in the field of public management. Conversely, governance describes the procedures, frameworks, and management techniques employed to oversee and control the activities of a community, institution, or group. Transparency, accountability, involvement, and the rule of law are attributes of good governance. It is crucial for guaranteeing the effective, prudent, and efficient use of public resources as well as the representation of community interests and goals in public policy (Boniface, 2024).

D. Sustainability

Sustainability refers to a system's ability to persist and adjust to evolving circumstances while preserving its fundamental functions and processes. This definition underscores resilience and adaptability as fundamental elements of sustainability, accentuating the necessity of preserving critical services amid environmental changes. Sustainability is the amalgamation of economic advancement, social equity, and environmental conservation to guarantee a harmonious approach to progress. This definition emphasizes the interrelation of economic, social, and environmental aspects, promoting a comprehensive approach to sustainable development (Ndubuisi-Okolo et al., 2025).

Sustainability denotes the capacity of organizations to function in a way that fulfills current requirements without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to satisfy their own, while also adhering to

ecological constraints. This definition includes the notion of intergenerational equality and underscores the significance of natural limitations in sustainable efforts. Sustainability is a multifaceted concept including environmental stewardship, social equality, and economic viability, with the objective of establishing a balanced framework for long-term growth. This concept emphasizes the necessity for a balanced strategy that incorporates several aspects of sustainability to attain long-term objectives. It entails the ongoing enhancement of procedures to mitigate environmental impact while improving social and economic results". This underscores the need for continuous enhancements in sustainability methods, highlighting the necessity to equilibrate environmental, social, and economic results (Ndubuisi-Okolo et al., 2025).

E. Service Delivery

According to Lawal & Adamu (2024), service delivery is commonly understood to mean "the provision of goods or services by a government or other organizations to those who need or demand them". Such delivery of services by whoever is constitutionally responsible takes into consideration numerous social factors. This includes evenly rearrangement and reallocation of resources, social equality, and improvement of people's living conditions and stimulating economy to ensure service provision sustainability. Service delivery is conceptualized as the relationship between policy makers, service providers and poor people. It encompasses services and their supporting systems that are typically regarded as a state responsibility. These include social services (primary education and basic health services), infrastructure (water and sanitation, roads and bridges) and services that promote personal security (justice, police). The sustainability of service delivery is also dependent on a stimulated economy, and this is conceptualized as a relationship of accountability between policymakers, service providers, and citizens, particularly the poor. This framework highlights the crucial role of institutions and political processes in ensuring the provision of public services such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and justice.

F. AI and Service Delivery

According to Lawal & Adamu (2024), there are several aspects of service delivery that can be improved with the introduction of AI:

i. Speed and Efficiency: AI can help automate routine tasks, allowing government agencies to process applications and requests more quickly, reducing the time and resources required for these processes.
ii. Fraud Detection: AI can help identify patterns of fraud or corruption in government services,

iii. leading to more efficient delivery and transparent service

iv. Accuracy: AI can help reduce human error and increase accuracy in data collection, analysis, and decision making, leading to more reliable and consistent service delivery.

v. Personalization: AI can analyze data on citizens' interactions with government services and provide personalized recommendations - or advice, leading to a more tailored and responsive service delivery experience.

vi. Accessibility: AI can help government agencies provide more accessible services, for example by offering chatbots or virtual assistants that can provide information and assistance to citizens with disabilities (Nwosu et al., 2024).

G. Benefits of AI in Public Service

The benefits of AI in public service are well-documented in literature. AI has the potential to transform public administration by automating routine tasks, enhancing service delivery, and optimizing resource allocation. According to Anazodo and Ezenwegbu (2025), AI can significantly reduce the administrative burden on public servants, allowing them to focus on more complex, high value tasks. AI's ability to process vast amounts of data also enables governments to make data-driven decisions, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of policies (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025). In healthcare, for example, AI can analyze medical records to predict patient needs and optimize resource distribution, as seen in other developing countries. AI applications in public safety, such as predictive policing, have been used to enhance crime prevention efforts by analyzing historical crime data and identifying potential risks (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025). The use of AI in these areas demonstrates its ability to improve the speed and quality of public services, making government operations more responsive and citizen-centric.

H. Challenges of AI Adoption in Nigerian Public Service

While the benefits of AI are significant, the adoption of AI in the Nigerian public sector faces several challenges. One major challenge is the lack of infrastructure to support AI technologies. AI requires robust computational power, high-speed internet, and data storage facilities, all of which are in short supply in Nigeria’s public sector (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025). Additionally, Nigeria faces a shortage of skilled professionals capable of developing, implementing, and managing AI systems (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025). Data privacy and security concerns also present significant challenges. Nigeria lacks comprehensive legal frameworks to regulate the use of AI in public service, raising concerns about the ethical implications of AI, particularly in terms of data collection, usage, and storage (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025). There is also resistance to change within the Nigerian public service, where entrenched bureaucratic practices and fear of job losses associated with automation hinder the widespread

adoption of AI (Anazodo & Ezenwegbu, 2025). Overcoming these challenges requires concerted efforts from policymakers, government officials, and the private sector to create an enabling environment for AI.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds immense potential to reshape Nigeria's public service by improving efficiency, transparency, accountability, and sustainability. AI-driven innovations, such as automation, data analytics, fraud detection, and predictive modeling, provide opportunities to reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and foster citizen-centered service delivery. However, despite these benefits, Nigeria faces significant obstacles that limit AI's effective adoption. Infrastructural challenges, inadequate digital skills, weak regulatory frameworks, and resistance to change continue to impede the full realization of AI in governance. Theoretical insights from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) affirm that public servants' perceptions of AI's usefulness and ease of use are critical to its adoption, while Governance Theory underscores the need for accountable, transparent, and participatory structures to manage AI deployment effectively. Therefore, for Nigeria to reap the transformative potential of AI in its public service, deliberate and coordinated efforts must be made to address these gaps.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

i. Strengthening Digital Infrastructure: The government should invest in robust ICT infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity, data storage, and computational facilities, to support large-scale AI deployment in public service.

ii. Capacity Building and Digital Literacy: Continuous training programs should be introduced for public servants to enhance their digital literacy and technical competence in adopting and managing AI systems.

iii. Comprehensive Policy and Regulatory Framework: The Nigerian government must develop and enforce strong legal and ethical frameworks to guide AI adoption, focusing on data privacy, security, accountability, and equitable access.

iv. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Collaboration with private sector players, tech startups, and international partners can provide innovative solutions, funding, and expertise to accelerate AI integration into public governance.

v. Ethical and Inclusive AI Adoption: Policies should ensure that AI deployment is transparent, free from bias, and designed to enhance social equity while minimizing negative implications for employment and vulnerable groups.

vi. Citizen Engagement and Awareness: Public awareness campaigns should be launched to sensitize citizens on the role of AI in service delivery, fostering trust and reducing resistance to change.

vii. Research and Innovation Ecosystem: Support for academic research and innovation hubs such as the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR) should be intensified to promote homegrown AI solutions tailored to Nigeria's governance needs.

viii. Pilot Programs and Gradual Scaling: Government agencies should adopt pilot projects in sectors such as healthcare, education, and tax administration before scaling up AI solutions nationwide to ensure effectiveness and adaptability.

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