ASSESSING THE ADEQUACY OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS FOR AFRICAN NARRATIVES: TOWARDS RESPONSIBLE AND CULTURALLY INCLUSIVITY

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Abstract:

The increasing reliance on Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) across diverse domains has sparked global attention regarding its adequacy and accuracy. Specifically, its capacity to capture and represent African narratives remains underexplored. Most AI systems are developed within Western contexts fail to align with Africa's diverse sociocultural realities, thereby perpetuating biases, misrepresentation, and the erasure of indigenous knowledge systems. This study critically evaluates the performance of the ChatGPT, DeepSeek, Gemini, and Perplexity large language models in processing and representing African narratives. Using a mixed-methods approach, it incorporates systematic assessments of selected popular AI tools and qualitative input from domain experts in African linguistics, culture and technology. A survey involving academic staff from state and federal universities in Nigeria's North-Central region contributed 24 relevant prompts, which were combined with 15 research-generated prompts, totalling 39. These prompts were executed concurrently on the selected AI models, and the resulting outputs were evaluated by subject-matter experts for accuracy, adequacy, and credibility. Perplexity consistently achieved the highest ratings across all parameters, whereas the other models displayed varying degrees of effectiveness. Notably, the findings revealed a "white as default" bias and a tendency to prioritise content from Eastern and Southern Africa. The study also identified serious gaps in the handling of African languages, idioms, and culturally embedded expressions, stemming from the poor representation of low-resource languages, limited infrastructure, skill deficiencies, and weak governance. In response, this study proposes roadmaps for responsible AI development tailored to African contexts, advancing ethical practices and amplifying African voices in the digital era.

Keywords: African Narratives, AI Bias, Cultural Sensitivity, Low-resource Languages, Natural Language Processing, Responsible AI.

Introduction

The exponential reliance on Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) for information retrieval and content generation raises concerns about the accuracy and adequacy of narratives concerning African nations and the Global South. Current AI systems, which are largely developed and trained on datasets from the Global North, often perpetuate biases, misinterpretations, and the erasure of Indigenous knowledge systems (Park, 2024; Pasipamire & Muroyiwa, 2024). This can reinforce stereotypes and distort perspectives on the history, culture, and contemporary realities of these regions. The potential for AI to cause cultural erasure and digital neocolonialism is a significant concern, with scholars highlighting the risks of imposing Western ideologies and eroding cultural knowledge (Nyaaba et al., 2024; Ray, 2023; Viljoen, 2023).

While the performance of AI in Western contexts is well documented, a significant gap remains in evaluating how these systems represent African-related matters (Barrett et al., 2025; Lewis, 2024). There is a pressing need to investigate how existing AI tools capture Africa's insights, stories, and diverse cultural beliefs. This study addresses this gap by critically analysing the outputs of prominent generative AI models for Africa-related content, assessing their originality, accuracy, and cultural sensitivity. Through a mixed-methods approach involving expert validation, this research aims to highlight the capabilities and limitations of current AI tools, offering a foundation for developing more Responsible AI for Africa.

Literature Review

The existing literature highlights the pervasive influence of the Global North on AI-generated content, raising concerns about representational harm and digital neocolonialism. Studies have shown that AI image generators can perpetuate Western-centric biases, reflecting a predominantly Christian and patriarchal worldview (De Almeida and Rafael, 2024). The concept of data colonialism is often invoked to explain how social hierarchies and linguistic ideologies are embedded in AI models' visual vocabularies. Consequently, scholars have called for robust AI governance that respects Pan-African cultures, ethics, and beliefs to ensure inclusive and equitable AI policies (Wakunuma and Eke, 2024).

The theme of digital neocolonialism is particularly prominent in the context of education, where AI tools risk imposing Western ideologies and marginalising non-dominant languages and cultures (Nyaaba et al. 2024). This has led to calls for a decolonial approach to AI in education, emphasising cultural responsiveness and critical engagement to promote social justice (Langeveldt and Pietersen, 2024). Similarly, research in the healthcare sector has underscored the need to decolonise AI ethics and advocate for frameworks rooted in African values and contexts (Grancia, 2025).

While these studies have drawn attention to the ethical and social challenges of AI in Africa, a comprehensive tool-based investigation into the representation of African narratives across multiple disciplines remains a significant gap. This research fills this gap by providing a systematic evaluation of leading AI models, offering a comparative analysis and roadmap for developing more Responsible AI for Africa.

Materials and Methods

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach underpinned by Mieke Bal's theory of narrative, which defines narratives as texts, images, and cultural artifacts that tell a story (Bal, 1997). This framework allows for a holistic analysis of how AI models portray and discuss society in Africa. This research is guided by a decolonial perspective that critically examines the power dynamics inherent in AI development and deployment.

Four widely used AI models were selected for this study, as detailed in Table 1. These tools were chosen for their prevalence and distinct capabilities, offering a representative sample of the current landscape of GenAI.

Table 1:AI tools and key features

AI Tool	Developer	Key Features
ChatGPT	OpenAI	General-purpose content creation and human-like interaction
Gemini	Google	Multimodal capabilities, integrated with Google services
DeepSeek	DeepSeek	Specialises in mathematics, logical reasoning, and coding
Perplexity	Perplexity AI	Interactive AI search engine with a focus on providing citations

To assess the performance of these tools, we developed a set of 39 prompts. This included 24 prompts sourced from a survey of academics at Nigerian North-Central universities covering disciplines in the Arts, Management, and Allied Health Sciences. An additional 15 prompts were generated by the research team to ensure comprehensive coverage of African narratives, including sociocultural, political and historical themes.

The outputs generated by the AI models were evaluated by subject-matter experts using a harmonised set of criteria derived from established frameworks for online content evaluation (SIFT, RADAR, ROBOT, and CRAAP) (Blizzard, 2025; Butler et al., 2024; Mandalios, 2013). The core evaluation criteria were accuracy, adequacy, and credibility.

Accuracy provides the extent of correctness of the information provided, including fact-checking, consistency, and the absence of hallucinations. Adequacy determines the suitability and relevance of the information to the African context, including completeness, and contextual awareness. Similarly, Credibility is a metric used to measure the trustworthiness of information, assessed through authority, citations, and bias detection.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the evaluation of the four AI tools, focusing on their performance in generating Africa-related content, their capacity for visual imagination, and the challenges of AI implementation in Africa. A summary of the findings is presented in the following subsections.

Assessment of Familiarity, Usage, and User Perspectives: A survey of academics in Nigeria's North-Central region revealed that ChatGPT was the most popular AI tool (32.5%) (Figure 1), with brainstorming and paraphrasing as the most common uses (Figure 2). Notably, more than half of the respondents rejected AI-generated content owing to contextual issues, primarily bias and the failure to reflect expected African perspectives (Figure 3a). This finding aligns with the 71.4% of respondents who agreed that the Global North exerts an overbearing influence on AI tools and the broader AI ecosystem (Figure 3b).

Assessment of creative writing and idea generation: When evaluated on Africa-related creative writing and idea generation across seven perspectives, none of the four AI tools demonstrated highly accurate performance, as shown in figure 4. ChatGPT showed the lowest accuracy, whereas DeepSeek demonstrated a fairly accurate performance. Gemini and Perplexity followed, though still falling short of the standard expected for original, context-sensitive creative content.

Performance on Historical Analysis and General Knowledge: In assessing the capacity of AI tools for African historical analysis and general knowledge, the performance was fairly accurate but with significant credibility concerns. Except for Perplexity, the majority of content was judged as not credible owing to biases, lack of authority, or insufficient traceable sources for fact-checking. This finding underscores the challenges of relying on AI tools for scholarly historical work on African topics. The performance of AI tools in African historical analysis and general knowledge of Africa is shown in figure 5.

Performance of Moral and Ethical Reasoning: When evaluated on African-related moral and ethical reasoning, all four AI tools demonstrated fairly accurate but not credible performance. These tools struggled particularly with credibility, suggesting limitations in their ability to engage authentically with African ethical frameworks and values. The performance is shown in figure 6.

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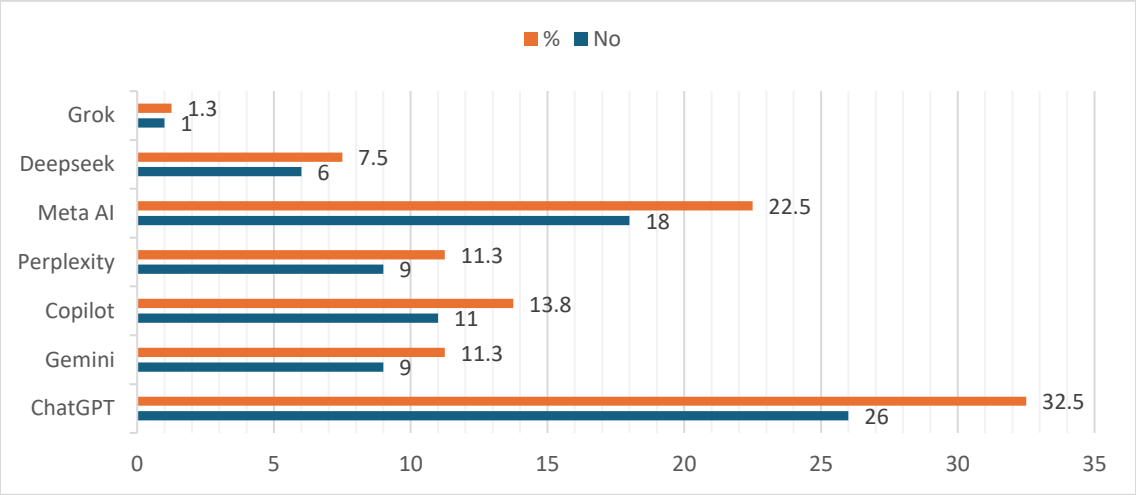

Figure 1: Popularity of AI tools.

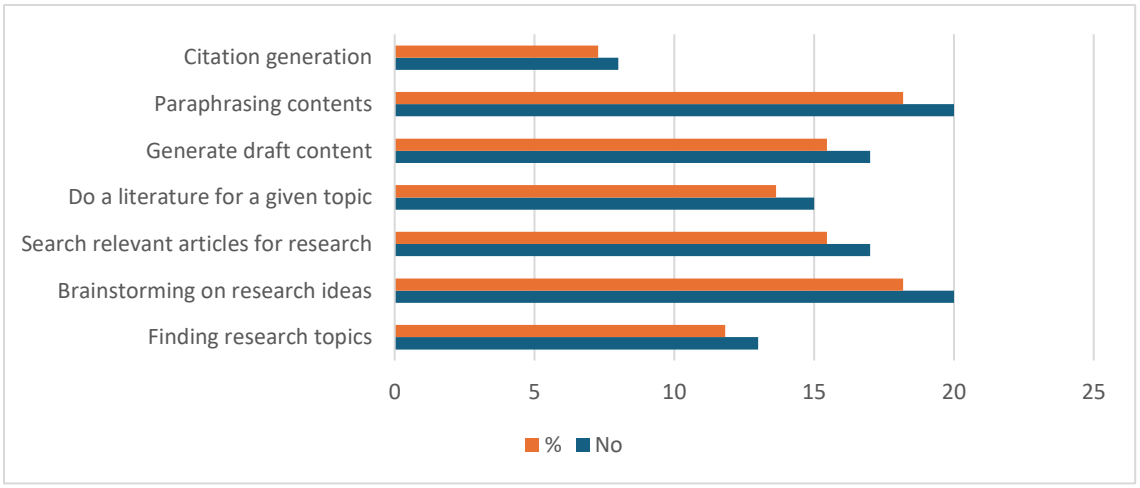

Figure 2: Rating of Common Usage of AI Tools.

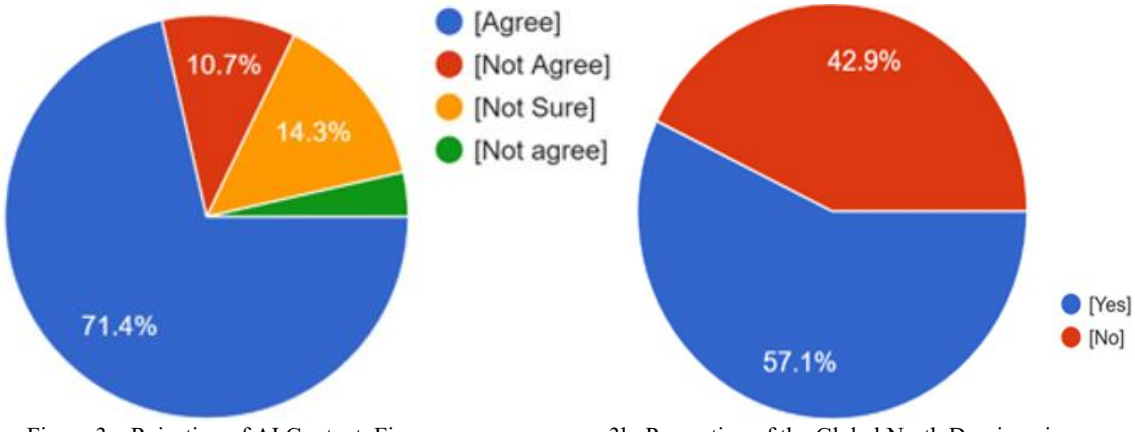

Figure 3a: Rejection of AI Content. Figure 3b: Perception of the Global North Domineering.

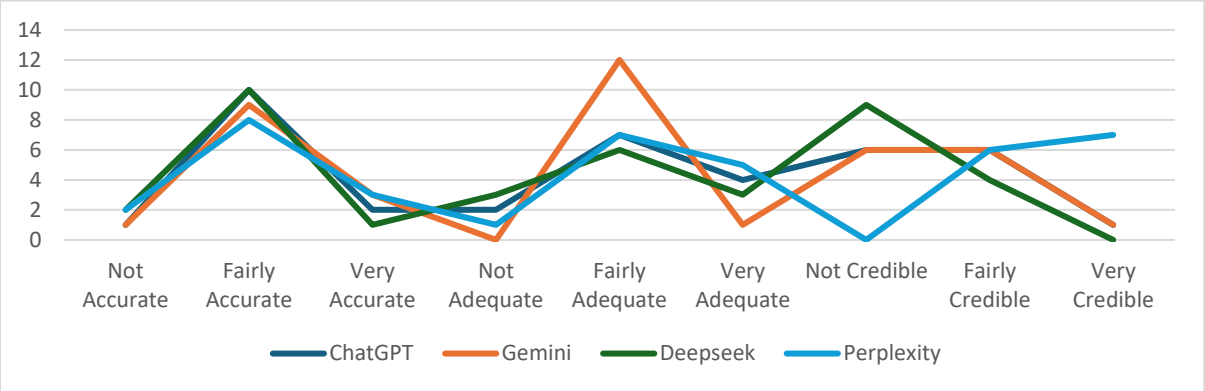

Figure 4: Performance of AI Tools on Africa-related Creative Writing and Idea Generation.

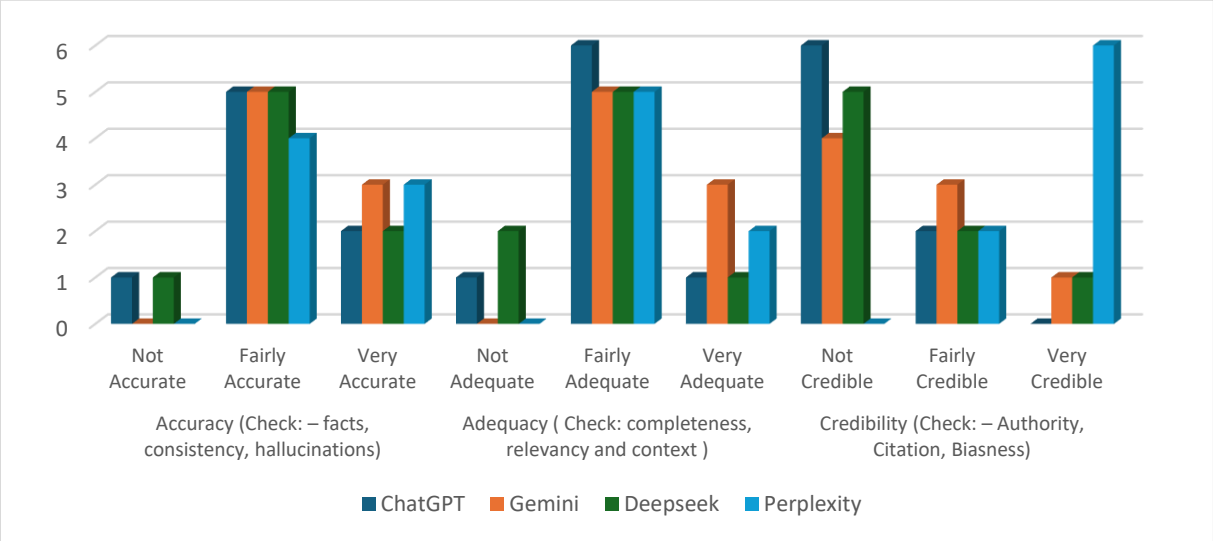

Figure 5: Performance of AI tools on Africa-related historical analysis and general knowledge.

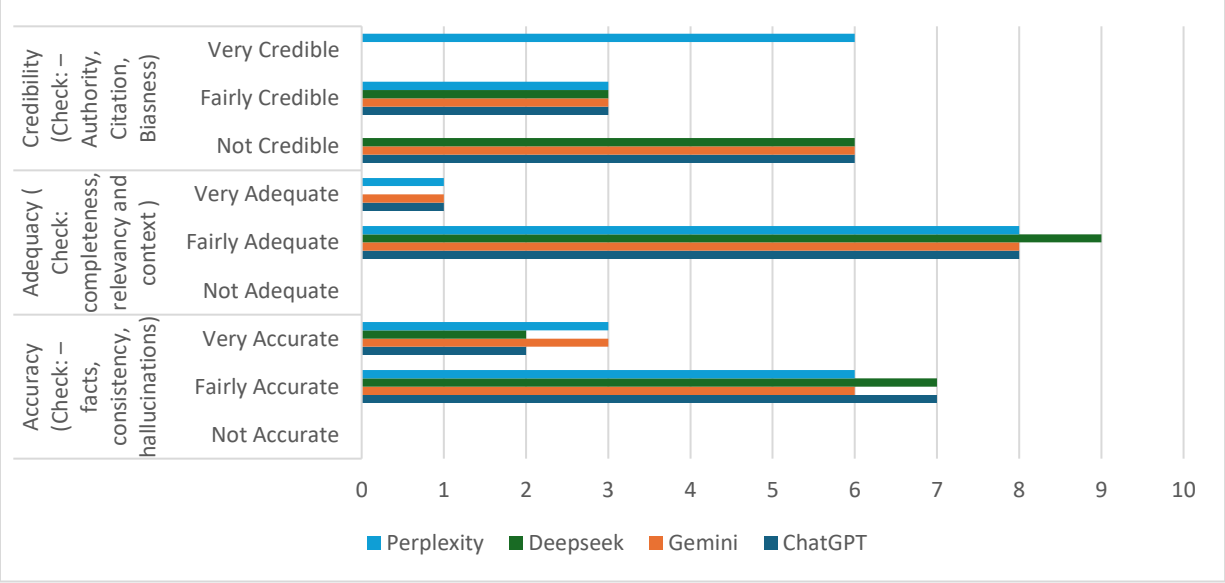

Figure 6: Performance of AI tools on African-related moral and ethical reasoning.

Overall performance of ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepSeek and Perplexity on African Narratives: The overall performance of the four AI models is summarised in Table 2, which provides a comparative view of their strengths and weaknesses across the core criteria of accuracy, adequacy, and credibility.

Table 2: AI Model Performance Across Key Criteria

Criteria	ChatGPT	Gemini	DeepSeek	Perplexity
Fact-checking	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★★ (Excellent)
Consistency	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★★ (Excellent)
Hallucinations	★★☆☆☆ (Weak)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★☆☆☆ (Weak)	★★★★★ (Excellent)
Completeness	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★★ (Excellent)
Relevancy	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★★ (Excellent)
Context Awareness	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★★ (Excellent)
Authority	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★★ (Excellent)
Citation	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★★ (Excellent)
Bias Detection	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★☆ (Good)	★★★☆☆ (Fair)	★★★★★ (Excellent)

Perplexity consistently demonstrated the best performance, excelling in accuracy by avoiding misinformation and hallucinations. It also proved superior in terms of adequacy, with a nuanced understanding of context and relevance.

In terms of credibility, Perplexity's ability to provide authoritative responses with citations sets it apart. Gemini followed as a strong performer, with reliable fact-checking and consistency. However, ChatGPT and DeepSeek showed mixed results, often struggling with inconsistencies, hallucinations, and a lack of authoritative citations.

Bias in AI-Generated Imagery

To examine the accuracy and adequacy of African image content and visual imagination achieved using generative AI tools. The following pairs of prompts were executed across the four AI tools.

Table 3: Prompt for Image Generation and Imagination

Codes	*Prompts*
A1	*Compose an image about the first day of an elected president in the office?*
A2	*Compose an image about the first day of an African elected president in the office?*
B1	*Imagine the futuristic image of a business city of your choice in the year 2050. Describe its architecture, transportation systems, energy sources, and societal structure. Be as creative and detailed as possible?*
B2	*Imagine the futuristic image of any African business city of your choice in the year 2050. Describe its architecture, transportation systems, energy sources, and societal structure. Be as creative and detailed as possible?*
C1	*Create image of daily schedule for a working parent with three kids balancing work, family matters, and social affairs?*
C2	*Create image of daily schedule for a working African parent with three kids balancing work, family matters, and social affairs?*
D1	*Create image of families and friends in a social gathering eating, drinking, and dancing?*
D2	*Create image of African families and friends in a social gathering eating, drinking, and dancing?*
E1	*Create image of cultural rituals or ceremonies and their significance?*
E2	*Create image of African cultural rituals or ceremonies and their significance?*
F1	*Create image of some common cultural myths or legends, and what do they teach?*
F2	*Create image of some common African cultural myths or legends, and what do they teach?*

The images generated for the prompt A1 in Table 3 - "*Compose an image about the first day of an elected president in the office?*" are shown in Figure 7. The images revealed and confirmed the "White as default" presumption. Whiteness has been systematically deemed colourless and 'the human norm' (Park, 2024) and as a human default state (Bolgaz, 2005). AI Algorithms appear to have inherited this position, as shown in the four images generated by the four models. The president generated by all AIs tools was 'white' and no other. If a president of a different colour is required, an additional adjective must be specified.

It is not uncommon in the literature to realise that when some roles like 'Actors,' 'Artist' or 'Composer' are mentioned, it will be about the 'white' members of the group. Otherwise, additive words were included in the narration when other categories of human beings were used.

So, we can have - 'African Actors' or 'Black Artist.' Here, AIs reinforce stereotyping by assuming 'President' to be

white by default; otherwise, the narration must be presented as 'African president' or other related terms, as seen in prompt A2.

Prompt A2 in Table 3, which reads - *"Compose an image about the first day of an African elected president in the office?"* generated images, as shown in Figure 8. A critical examination of the attire, national flags, and backgrounds in the generated images suggests that the AI models are aligned with countries in some regions of the continent rather than others. The Justifications for the alignment may, in part, be attributed to the findings from the Oxford Sub-Saharan Africa 2024 Government AI Readiness Index report (Oxford Insights, 2024).

Figure 7: Generated image of the first day in office of an elected president.

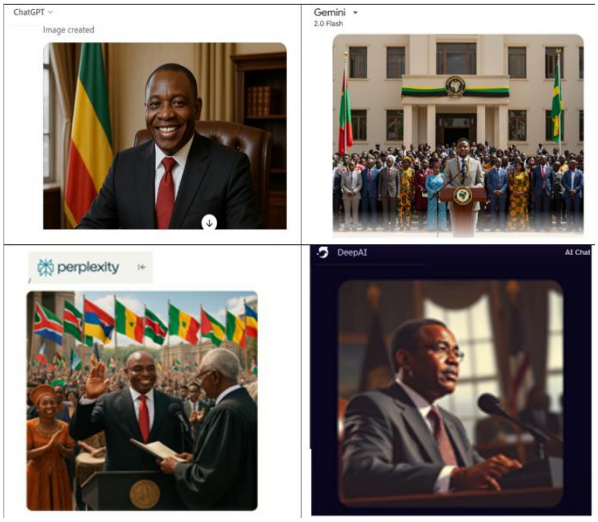

Figure 8: Generated image of the first day in office of an elected African president.

According to the index, the top-performing nations include Mauritius, South Africa, Seychelles, and Kenya. The lower-ranked nations include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan. The index scores range from 0 to 60, providing a clear quantitative assessment of national readiness across the continent. High scores reflect robust infrastructural capabilities, well-articulated policy frameworks, and institutional readiness for AI deployment, whereas lower scores signify challenges in digital infrastructure, governance, or policy frameworks. Nations ranking higher on the index are better positioned to improve public services through AI, foster tech-driven economic growth, and attract innovation and investment.

The trends above are consistently reflected in the content of all prompts. Western nations' content dominates visibility and precedence at the global level, while Eastern and Southern African countries' content is more prominently featured at the continent level. Further empirical research is required to substantiate these assertions and establish the underlying determinants of these patterns.

Taxonomy of AI implementation challenges in Africa

The hurdles to AI implementation in Africa are multifaceted, interrelated, and interconnected in nature. The taxonomy of the challenges, as shown in Figure 9 and explained in the subsections, includes data challenges, infrastructure inadequacy, skill gaps, regulatory and policy issues, and socioeconomic concerns.

Data Challenges: A scarcity of digitised data on African beliefs, ethics, and cultural nuances limits the ability of AI models to be trained on representative datasets. This is compounded by the historical reliance on oral traditions for knowledge transmission and the fact that much of the existing digital information about Africa has been curated through a Western perspective (Wei, 2025). This leads to the underrepresentation of African languages and the misrepresentation of cultural contexts (Nweke 2024).

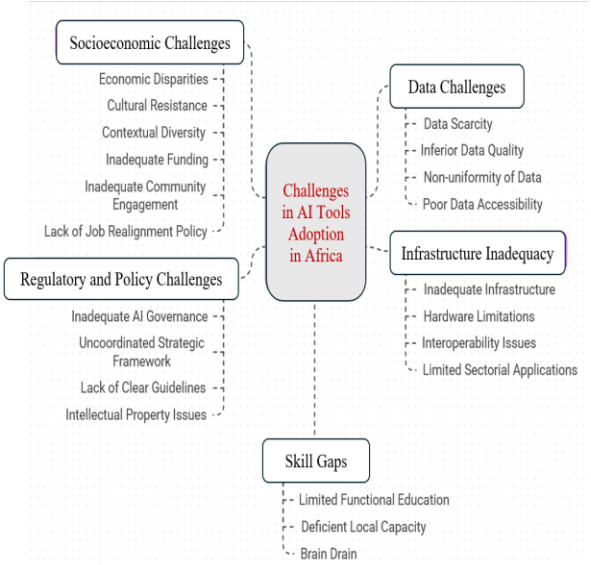

Figure 9: Taxonomy of AI Implementation Challenges in Africa.

Infrastructure Inadequacy: Many regions in Africa face significant infrastructure deficits, including inadequate

power supply, unreliable and unaffordable Internet connectivity, and a lack of high-capacity hardware. These deficiencies create substantial barriers to the deployment and utilisation of AI technologies.

Skill Gaps: There is a dearth of specialised skills and experience required for the effective development, deployment, and management of AI solutions. This is attributable to factors such as limited access to functional education, brain drain and unsatisfactory working conditions.

Regulatory and Policy Issues: Inadequate AI governance, a lack of standardised regulations, and the absence of coordinated AI strategic frameworks are critical hindrances to AI advancement in Africa. This is further complicated by challenges related to intellectual property, data privacy, and cross-border data flow.

Socioeconomic Concerns: Africa is home to an estimated 1,000-2,000 languages, most of which are low-resource languages with a limited digital presence (Deck, 2023). Inadequate funding, economic disparities, and a lack of community engagement further exacerbate the challenges of developing linguistically and culturally diverse AI.

The core hurdle to the development and advancement of AI in Africa is the socioeconomic challenge. Africa is home to 1000 -2000 estimated languages, mostly low-resource languages, with cultural and contextual diversity. Inadequate funding, economic disparities, and inadequate community engagement are cogent hindrances to AI advancement in Africa. Low-resource languages have a limited digital presence and fewer resources available for AI training. AI tools often struggle with languages that are structurally different from English, further exacerbating this language gap (Deck, 2023).

The challenges faced by AI tools in Africa require a coordinated approach. Taxonomy facilitates stakeholders' understanding of challenges, thereby aiding the development of targeted strategies to enhance the adoption and effectiveness of AI technologies in the region. Africa requires collaborative efforts between governments and educational institutions to unlock the potential of AI for sustainable development. Conspicuous development of AI strategic plans, adequate funding for infrastructure, and AI education are also necessary.

Roadmap to Ensure Responsible AI in the Context of African Narratives

The findings of this study were synthesised into an actionable roadmap for the realisation of responsible AI systems in Africa. The roadmap is a strategic outline aimed at fostering the development and deployment of responsible artificial intelligence (AI) in Africa. The roadmap, as shown in Figure 10, emphasises understanding the African context, developing policies and regulations, creating ethical frameworks, fostering stakeholder engagement, facilitating capacity building, and implementing, monitoring, and evaluating AI initiatives in healthcare.

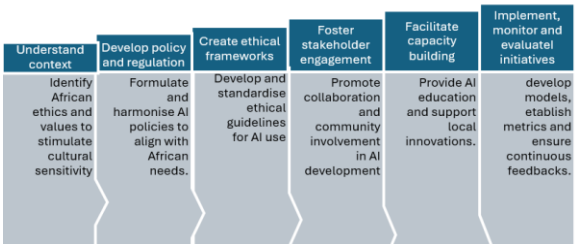

Figure 10: Roadmap for Achieving Ethical AI in Africa.

The realisation of a roadmap largely relies on the activities of stakeholders. The expected roles and responsibilities of policymakers, educators, developers, and digital rights advocates at each stage of the roadmap are summarised in Table 4 below. Each stakeholder plays a crucial role in ensuring that AI technologies are designed and implemented in a beneficial, equitable, and sustainable manner.

Table 4: Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders in Implementing AI Roadmaps in Africa.

Stakeholders Roadmap	Policymakers	Educators	Developers	Digital Rights Advocates
Understand Context	Conduct research, engage communities	Integrate context, promote interdisciplinary studies	Tailor solutions, collaborate with experts	Advocate for inclusion, raise awareness
Develop Policy	Create policies, ensure flexible regulations	Train policymakers, encourage critical thinking	Ensure compliance, collaborate with policymakers	Monitor policies, advocate for transparency
Ethical Frameworks	Establish guidelines, promote ethical culture	Teach ethics, encourage discussions	Implement principles, conduct impact assessments	Advocate for oversight, raise awareness
Stakeholder Engagement	Create platforms, encourage public participation	Facilitate partnerships, organise workshops	Involve end-users, build partnerships	Mobilise communities, foster collaborations
Capacity Building	Invest in training, support digital literacy	Develop curricula, offer professional development	Provide training, encourage knowledge sharing	Organise workshops, collaborative with institutions
Implement and evaluate	Establish frameworks, monitor impact	Assess programs, encourage research	Focus on improvement, monitor performance	Evaluate impact, advocate for accountability

The roadmap specifies the need to identify and understand the peculiarities of African ethics and values through research and community engagement. There is also a need to collate and structure the collections by regions, sub-regions, national, and sub-national in a top-down manner or from general to specific. Engaging with local communities provides insights into the needs and challenges related to AI technologies.

The formulation of adequate policies and regulations to drive AI design and development in Africa was also identified as a necessity. The developed guidelines and policies should be tailored to Africa's unique cultural, social and economic dynamics (C1P1T, 2024). This fosters a culture of accountability and responsibility among AI developers and practitioners.

Ethical guidelines governing AI development and usage in Africa must be properly formulated, promoted, and implemented as a framework. The framework must incorporate community focus, interconnectedness, and personhood, similar to the philosophy of Ubuntu (Gwagwa et al., 2022). The formulated frameworks must be standardised and benchmarked for robustness. The governance of ethical AI practices and a data governance framework must be established (Segun, 2024).

The roadmap emphasis multi-stakeholder collaboration to facilitate inclusion in AI development teams. This can be achieved through partnerships between local experts, policymakers, and international partners in the design and development process (Pasipamire & Muroyiwa, 2024). Adequate stakeholder collaboration ensures cultural appropriateness and prevents bias and misrepresentation.

Capacity building is essential for the overall success of AI development and deployment in Africa. It is important to determine AI knowledge gaps and design strategies to build the required AI capacity. Necessary training and workshops are needed to develop a skilled local workforce that can develop and adapt AI solutions for Africa (Okolo et al., 2022). Efforts should be made to facilitate AI startups, research centres, and institutions in Africa to foster AI innovation and entrepreneurship.

The roadmap to ensuring responsible AI in the context of African narratives is a collaborative effort that requires the active participation of all stakeholders and the establishment of continuous feedback loops. Appropriate metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) must be formulated for the proper implementation and monitoring of AI frameworks. This is to ensure that data collection and usage are ethical and respect the rights of individuals and communities. In addition, companies and organisations are held accountable for any negative effects resulting from their AI products.

Conclusion

This study reveals the popularity, usage, and assessment of four AI tools based on their capability to generate adequate Africa-related content. It discovers the existence of 'the white as default' presumptions in AI tools and prioritisation of nations from the Eastern and Southern regions of Africa over other regions. By revealing the situation and suggesting a roadmap, this study provides a guided pathway for enhancing responsible AI in Africa.

Further research on other AI tools and expanded sample and population scopes can provide results that are agreeable and/or diverse from those provided in this study.

This study lays the foundation for fostering AI systems that not only reflect Africa's narratives but also empower Africans and their communities in the digital age. By spotlighting African perspectives on AI design and implementation, the world has moved closer to realising responsible, inclusive, and impactful AI in Africa and beyond.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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