

AI-DRIVEN SECURITY COMMUNICATION IN NIGERIA: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF PROMISES, CHALLENGES, AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a critical review of literature on artificial intelligence (AI)-driven security communication in Nigeria, examining its promises, challenges, and ethical implications within the context of emerging national security practices. Anchored in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the study adopts a qualitative approach through the systematic analysis of peer-reviewed articles, policy documents, and institutional reports. Findings indicate that AI enhances security communication through predictive analytics, real-time threat detection, automated misinformation management, and improved inter-agency coordination. These innovations offer significant potential for faster decision-making, data-driven intelligence, and more inclusive public safety communication. However, the review identifies persistent challenges, including algorithmic bias, data privacy concerns, limited transparency, infrastructural constraints, and weak governance frameworks. Ethical issues such as surveillance overreach, inadequate consent mechanisms, and the erosion of public trust further complicate AI adoption. The study concludes that both institutional and public acceptance of AI technologies is largely shaped by perceived usefulness, ease of use, and trust in regulatory accountability. It recommends strengthening data governance frameworks, enhancing transparency in AI deployment, building institutional capacity, and fostering community engagement to balance technological efficiency with ethical responsibility.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence, Security, Communication, Ethical Concerns, Technology Acceptance Model, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has redefined how information is processed, disseminated, and consumed globally. Within the security domain, AI has increasingly been deployed to enhance communication processes, ranging from predictive policing and surveillance analytics to automated emergency alerts and chatbot-based response systems (Adeleke & Adebayo, 2023). In Nigeria, where security challenges such as insurgency, cybercrime, communal conflicts, banditry, and kidnapping persist, the deployment of AI-driven communication systems is gradually gaining attention among policymakers, security agencies, and scholars (Okoro & Ugwu, 2022). AI-based security communication involves the use of machine learning algorithms, natural language processing, and predictive models to detect, analyse, and disseminate security information to relevant

stakeholders, including the public. These innovations promise speed, accuracy, and data-driven decision-making in contexts where traditional human-driven communication often fails due to delays, misinformation, or inefficiencies.

Globally, AI-driven security communication has been employed in diverse forms, such as predictive models for crime hotspots, real-time surveillance with facial recognition, and AI-powered digital assistants for emergency response (Almeida, 2021). In Africa, however, the integration of such technologies has been relatively slow due to infrastructural deficits, low digital literacy, weak regulatory frameworks, and issues of trust (Chilombo & Mensah, 2020). Nigeria, as Africa's most populous country, faces peculiar challenges in balancing the promises of AI-driven systems with the ethical dilemmas they generate, including data privacy violations, algorithmic bias, disinformation, and potential misuse of surveillance for political or repressive purposes (Eze, 2024). The promises of AI in security communication are nonetheless significant. Automated alert systems can ensure timely dissemination of critical information during emergencies such as terrorist attacks, floods, or fire outbreaks (Balogun & Hassan, 2023). Machine learning models can assist security agencies in filtering intelligence and preventing information overload, thereby enhancing operational efficiency. Furthermore, AI-driven platforms can support multilingual dissemination of alerts, bridging communication gaps in linguistically diverse regions of Nigeria. These opportunities, however, must be examined critically against the backdrop of ethical, cultural, and infrastructural realities.

Statement of the Problem

Despite its transformative potential, the deployment of AI in Nigeria's security communication raises pressing concerns. Existing literature acknowledges both the opportunities and risks associated with AI, yet empirical studies in Nigeria remain fragmented and limited (Okeke, 2025). Issues such as algorithmic opacity, data protection, and low public trust in digital technologies pose significant obstacles to effective adoption (Ola & Bello, 2023). Additionally, weak legal frameworks and limited technical expertise undermine the country's capacity to regulate AI applications in security contexts. Without adequate safeguards, AI-driven communication may not only fail to address Nigeria's security challenges but also exacerbate problems of disinformation, human rights violations, and surveillance abuse. Therefore, a critical literature review is needed to synthesise existing debates, identify gaps, and chart pathways for ethical and effective adoption of AI in Nigeria's security communication landscape. How is AI applied in security communication in Nigeria?

what are the benefits/promises of artificial intelligence-driven security Communication strategies in Nigeria? What are the challenges and ethical concerns of AI in Security Communication in Nigeria?

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to critically examine the role of artificial intelligence in the evolution and practice of security communication in Nigeria, with emphasis on its applications, benefits, challenges, and ethical implications. The specific objectives are to:

1. To examine the evolution of security communication in Nigeria in the context of artificial intelligence.
2. To analyse the application of artificial intelligence in security communication in Nigeria.
3. To evaluate the benefits and promises of AI-driven security communication strategies in Nigeria.
4. To investigate the challenges and ethical concerns associated with the use of AI in security communication in Nigeria.

Theoretical Underpinning

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which posits that Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) primarily determine users' attitudes and intentions to use a technology provides a useful analytic lens for understanding how different Nigerian publics, institutions, and security agencies accept (or reject Davis 1989, cited in Ezegwu, Ude-Akpeh, Edim, & Omale, 2024). AI-driven security communication systems (Davis, 1989). TAM helps translate broad debates about AI and security into measurable constructs: whether citizens and agencies believe AI alerts, predictive models, and automated surveillance add value to security outcomes (PU), and whether these tools are accessible, understandable, and easy to act upon (PEOU). The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), explains users' adoption of technology based on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989 cited in Venkatesh et al., 2022). TAM is appropriate here as it frames how security agencies and the Nigerian public may accept or reject AI-driven communication tools.

Applied to AI-driven security communication, Perceived Usefulness maps to beliefs that AI enhances crisis detection, speeds up alert dissemination, improves threat prioritization, or reduces misinformation all crucial for public safety and operational efficiency (e.g., faster,

more accurate alerts increase trust and response). Perceived Ease of Use covers digital literacy, user interface design of alert platforms (SMS, apps, social channels), and the cognitive effort required to interpret AI outputs; low PEOU can depress adoption even where usefulness is high.

LITERATURE REVIEW

AI and the Evolution of Security Communication in Nigeria

The evolution of security communication in Nigeria has moved rapidly from radio announcements, town criers and police bulletins to multi-channel, data-driven digital systems a shift accelerated by mobile penetration, social media uptake and recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI). Historically, security communication in Nigeria relied on hierarchical, institution-led messaging with slow feedback loops; citizens depended on local radio, community leaders, and physical patrols to receive warnings or updates (Salihu, 2024). Over the last decade, however, high smartphone adoption and widespread use of platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and X (Twitter) have given residents new means to receive and share security information in near real-time, creating both opportunities and challenges for formal security actors (ICTworks, 2024). AI technologies are now beginning to shape how security information is generated, filtered and disseminated. Applications include automated threat detection (from social media streams and CCTV feeds), predictive analytics intended to forecast crime hotspots, natural language processing (NLP) for rapid summarisation of incident reports, and automated alert systems that push messages to citizens based on machine-identified risks (Eke, 2025; Topjournals, 2025). In theory, such tools promise faster situational awareness for decision-makers and timelier, targeted communication to communities potentially improving response times for emergencies and optimising scarce security resources (NITDA, 2024).

In Nigeria's security context, early AI experiments have focused on counter-terrorism, cyber-security and pilot projects in predictive policing. Researchers have argued these tools could help security agencies detect patterns in insurgent activity, analyse large volumes of intelligence data, and support co-ordination between state and local security actors (Eke, 2025; Salihu, 2024). AI-enhanced social listening and geolocation analysis can also help authorities identify emerging incidents shared on social media, enabling quicker public alerts and community advisories. These capabilities are particularly attractive in urban centres such as Lagos and Onitsha where digital information flows are dense (ICTworks, 2024). Yet the evolution toward AI-mediated security communication raises significant structural, ethical

and practical concerns. First, infrastructural constraints intermittent power supply, patchy broadband, and uneven smartphone access limit the reach and reliability of AI systems, especially in rural areas (Eke, 2025). Second, the legal and data governance environment has only recently begun to catch up: the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023 provides a statutory framework for data handling, but questions remain about implementation, algorithmic transparency and cross-agency data sharing for security purposes (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023; FPF, 2023). Third, international evidence warns that predictive models can embed historical bias and produce unequal policing outcomes; similar risks apply in Nigeria where incomplete or biased datasets could lead to unjust targeting of communities (Topjournals, 2025).

Trust and public perception are central to the success of AI-driven security communication. Citizens will act on warnings only if they perceive messages as credible, actionable and respectful of privacy. Studies of AI adoption emphasise that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use affect uptake; in Nigeria these perceptions are mediated by experiences of state responsiveness and concerns about surveillance abuse (Salihu, 2024; NITDA, 2024). AI marks a decisive phase in the evolution of Nigeria's security communication: it offers capabilities to improve detection, targeting and timeliness of messages, but also exposes gaps in infrastructure, governance and ethics that must be addressed.

Application of AI in Security Communication in Nigeria

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) in security communication in Nigeria has expanded rapidly from experimental pilots to operational tools that shape how intelligence is collected, processed and shared with the public. At the institutional level, Nigeria's National AI Strategy (NAIS) frames AI as a key enabler for public safety, urging the integration of data-driven systems into government services, including security and emergency communication, while emphasising ethics and governance (NITDA, 2024). Practically, AI is being applied across several interlinked areas that influence security communication: automated alerting and filtering, social-media monitoring and misinformation management, predictive analytics for threat anticipation, and surveillance analytics (Eke, 2025; Nasir, 2025).

Automated alerting systems are one of the clearest AI use-cases for public security communication. Mobile network operators and platform providers now deploy machine-learning models to detect fraudulent or malicious messages and to prioritise or block harmful

content before it reaches users; for example, recent AI-driven spam and scam detection services deployed by telcos in Nigeria signal how automated systems can protect citizens from security-threatening communication vectors and improve the signal-to-noise ratio for legitimate security alerts (OECD.AI, 2025). Similarly, civil-protection agencies can use automated rule-based and ML pipelines to push geo-targeted warnings to residents during crises, reducing dissemination delays inherent in manual systems (NITDA, 2024).

Social-media monitoring and misinformation management are another major application. AI tools natural language processing (NLP), image recognition and network analysis are used to scan large volumes of user content for reports of incidents, emerging threats, or viral misinformation. In densely networked Nigerian cities, such systems help authorities and community groups detect emergent security events faster than traditional reporting channels, enabling quicker public advisories and correction of false narratives (Eke, 2025; Nasir, 2025). However, practitioners caution that automated detection must be paired with human verification to avoid amplifying errors or censoring legitimate speech (ParadigmHQ, 2025). Also, predictive analytics and crime-mapping use historical data, sensor feeds and social signals to forecast likely hotspots and inform both resource allocation and proactive communication to affected communities. Pilot studies and academic reviews suggest that predictive policing models could, in principle, improve the targeting of outreach and pre-emptive warnings if trained on representative, high-quality data (Eke, 2025). Yet several scholars warn that biased or incomplete datasets can produce discriminatory predictions, which, if communicated uncritically risk eroding public trust and producing unjustified surveillance of particular communities (Nasir, 2025; GrantsDatabase, 2025).

Surveillance analytics, including facial recognition, automated CCTV analysis and drone feeds processed by AI, have been introduced in some Nigerian settings to support situational awareness and rapid incident reporting. These tools can feed real-time alerts to command centres and to citizens (where appropriate) to improve response times. But their deployment has raised legal and ethical concerns about privacy, consent and governmental overreach; observers note procurement of several foreign surveillance systems into Nigerian cities without robust transparency or oversight mechanisms (ParadigmHQ, 2025; GrantsDatabase, 2025). Also, two cross-cutting issues shape the effective application of AI in security communication: infrastructure and governance. Technological applications require reliable broadband, power and interoperable data systems, constraints that remain uneven across Nigeria and limit equitable reach (NITDA, 2024). On governance, NAIS and emerging policy

instruments stress the need for algorithmic transparency, data protection and community engagement so that AI-enabled communications are trusted, accountable and rights-respecting (NITDA, 2024; ParadigmHQ, 2025).

Benefits/Promises of Artificial Intelligence-Driven Security Communication Strategies in Nigeria

Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers multiple, concrete promises for improving security communication in Nigeria by accelerating detection, improving targeting, and making outreach more reliable and actionable. It is discussed below.

1. AI enables faster detection and real-time alerts. Automated monitoring of sensor feeds and social media can surface incidents more quickly than manual reporting, allowing authorities and communities to receive near real-time warnings (NITDA, 2024; Eke, 2025).
2. AI supports predictive analytics and proactive communication. By analysing historical crime data and social signals, machine-learning models can forecast likely hotspots, allowing for the issuance of preemptive warnings and targeted public advisories to vulnerable communities (Eke, 2025).
3. It enhances proves ability to detect and correct significant security concerns on platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Automated fact-checking and early-warning systems can identify viral falsehoods and trigger corrective communications before panic spreads (Anadolu Agency, 2025).
4. AI enables geo-targeted and personalised alerts, delivering location-specific safety instructions to residents (e.g., evacuation routes, safe zones), which improves the relevance and actionability of messages (NITDA, 2024).
5. AI augments surveillance analytics and situational awareness through automated video/image analysis, drone feed processing and anomaly detection, feeding synthesised incident summaries to command centres and the public where appropriate (Deloitte, 2025).
6. AI facilitates multilingual communication and accessibility by using natural language processing to translate and adapt alerts into local languages, widening reach in linguistically diverse Nigerian communities (Anadolu Agency, 2025; NITDA, 2024).
7. AI delivers operational efficiency and workload reduction for security agencies: automated triage, prioritisation, and summarisation of large information flows reduce

human filtering burdens and let personnel focus on verification and response (PwC, 2025; Deloitte, 2025).

8. AI enhances data fusion and inter-agency coordination by integrating heterogeneous datasets (telecom metadata, social media signals, sensor feeds) into unified dashboards that improve shared situational pictures and coordinated public messaging (NAIS/NITDA, 2024).

Challenges and Ethical Concerns on AI in Security Communication in Nigeria

The rapid adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) for security communication in Nigeria brings significant challenges and ethical dilemmas that must be confronted if benefits are to be realised responsibly. These challenges are explained below.

- a. First, algorithmic bias and discriminatory outcomes are a central concern: AI models trained on incomplete or historically biased datasets can reproduce and amplify social inequalities, resulting in unfair targeting of particular communities in security alerts or predictive policing outputs (Eke, 2025).
- b. Secondly, privacy and data protection issues arise because security applications often require large amounts of personal and sensitive data. Although Nigeria's Data Protection Act (2023) provides a legal framework, practical compliance, consent mechanisms, and protections against profiling remain weak in many deployments (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023). High-profile enforcement actions against firms for data breaches illustrate both the emerging regulatory environment and ongoing gaps in protections.
- c. Thirdly, surveillance and human-rights risks are acute where facial recognition, persistent camera analytics, or mass metadata analysis are introduced without oversight. Such technologies can erode civil liberties, chill dissent and be used for political surveillance if procurement and use are not transparent and accountable (ParadigmHQ, 2025).
- d. Also, algorithmic opacity and lack of transparency make it difficult for affected citizens and even officials to understand how security decisions are made. Opacity fuels distrust and reduces the ability to audit or contest automated alerts or risk scores (Salihu, 2024).
- e. More so, data quality and representativeness pose practical limits: predictive models and social-listening tools depend on high-quality, representative data streams, but Nigeria's datasets are often fragmented, noisy, or biased toward urban, digitally connected populations reducing model validity for rural communities (Eke, 2025).
- f. Infrastructure and digital divide problems hinder equitable reach of AI-enabled communication. Erratic power supply, uneven broadband and variable smartphone

penetration mean that automated alerts and app-based warnings can exclude vulnerable or offline populations, undermining equity in public safety (NITDA, 2024).

- g. In addition misinformation, adversarial misuse and deepfakes create a paradox where AI both helps detect falsehoods and is used to produce them. Bad actors can weaponise generative AI to create believable false alerts or manipulated multimedia that amplify panic or discredit legitimate security communication (Tomassi et al., 2024; GrantsDatabase, 2025).
- h. Accountability, governance and procurement risks appear when agencies acquire opaque commercial AI systems without procurement transparency, independent audits, or clear redress mechanisms. This fosters unclear lines of responsibility when systems fail or are abused (ParadigmHQ, 2025).
- i. Limited technical capacity and institutional readiness restrict effective deployment. Many security and public-communication agencies lack in-house data science expertise, robust M&E frameworks, or the ability to perform independent algorithmic validation increasing dependence on vendors and raising sustainability concerns (NITDA, 2024; Eke, 2025).

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative library research approach to examine artificial intelligence (AI)-driven security communication in Nigeria. The library research method involved the systematic identification, evaluation, and synthesis of existing scholarly literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy documents, reports, and conference proceedings relevant to the study. This approach was considered suitable for exploratory and critical studies aimed at analysing existing knowledge, identifying gaps, and developing theoretical insights without relying on primary data. The study drew on diverse sources to examine the evolution, applications, benefits, challenges, and ethical implications of AI in Nigeria's security communication landscape. Through thematic analysis of the selected literature, patterns and key debates were identified and critically evaluated in line with the study's objectives. This method provided a comprehensive understanding of the subject and formed the basis for informed recommendations on the responsible adoption of AI in security communication.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that artificial intelligence is reshaping security communication in Nigeria by enabling predictive intelligence, real-time threat detection, and improved coordination between security agencies and the public. These capabilities highlight the transformative potential of AI in enhancing national security outcomes. Consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the adoption of these technologies is largely influenced by their perceived usefulness, ease of use, and the level of public trust in institutional systems. However, the study also finds that the effective implementation of AI-driven security communication is constrained by significant challenges, including algorithmic bias, data insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, weak regulatory frameworks, and limited technical expertise. Ethical concerns, particularly those related to surveillance, privacy, and human rights, further complicate its adoption and raise critical questions about accountability and transparency. Ultimately, the study argues that the success of AI in Nigeria's security communication depends not only on technological advancement but also on the development of robust ethical, legal, and institutional frameworks. Achieving a balance between innovation and the protection of fundamental rights is essential for sustainable and responsible security transformation.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The government and security agencies should document and evaluate the evolution of security communication practices, integrating lessons from past approaches with AI innovations to ensure smoother transitions and better institutional learning.
2. Security agencies should systematically adopt AI technologies for threat detection, real-time monitoring, and inter-agency communication, with clear implementation plans and technical training programs to maximise operational effectiveness.
3. To maximise the benefits of AI-driven security communication, authorities should develop outreach initiatives that educate citizens on the capabilities and limitations of AI systems, fostering trust, cooperation, and the responsible use of AI-enabled platforms.
4. Policymakers should address challenges and ethical concerns by enacting comprehensive regulations, ensuring algorithmic transparency, safeguarding data privacy, and establishing independent oversight bodies to monitor AI deployment in security communication.

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