

Influence of Artificial Intelligence on Popular Culture among Youths in Eket

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Abstract: This study analysed the influence of artificial intelligence on popular culture among Eket's youths. The objectives of the study are to: find out the extent to which youths in Eket use AI; examine whether AI influences the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket; discover the extent to which AI influences the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket; assess the other factors that influence the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket aside AI. The Uses and Gratifications Theory and Individual Differences Theory were adopted. The mixed method design was adopted. The population projected by the researchers in 2024 is 89,591 youths, and the sample size is 398 using the convenience sampling technique. The findings indicate that the main users of AI among the people of Eket are the youths, as a larger portion of them use AI technologies many times a day. The study also finds that AI influences the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket: a substantial proportion believe that AI has a high or complete influence on their behaviour and preferences regarding the adoption of pop culture. As such, apart from AI, social media platforms, and fashion trends remain the most prevailing factors that drive pop culture adoption among youths in Eket. The study thus calls on content developers, marketers, and policy-return leaders to seize the momentum of AI popularity, social media platforms, and fashion trends by creating appropriate content toward their interests and preferences to effect positive cultural change among young people in Eket. The study, therefore, recommends that policymakers consider designing campaigns that help young people recognize and analyze the different types of pop culture content critically for responsible cultural practices.

Keywords: Influence, AI, Pop Culture, Youths, Eket.

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INTRODUCTION

Popular culture refers to the multitudinous media and expressions catering to and popular among the masses. Popular culture is one of the lived shared experiences; it includes music, movies, television, fashion, technology, and lifestyle, just to name a few notions of daily life. In other words, it is the people's culture, not the elite's. Popular culture, as Storey [1] said, "moves concerning other forms of culture, distinguished by its mass-produced, commercial, and commodified nature, its accessibility and democratic appeal, its ephemeral quality, and its ability to be constantly reproduced and updated." It is something carried out in everyday life, a part of the everyday life of youths. This evolves into what is believed, valued, earned, and practised. It is a powerful influence that moulds their identity and gives

them a sense of community. It reflects popular culture and the social, economic, and political situation the existing society holds. It conveys the youth's aspirations, desires, and fears and thus serves as a window to their world.

As Ikenna and Obiora [2] have observed, "One of the hallmarks of popular culture is its ability to adapt and evolve. It is in constant reinvention to keep it relevant and appealing to changing tastes and trends". This can be seen through how popular music has grown from highlife to juju, afro beats, and now hip-hop. While the traditional attire gave way to Western attire and a fusion of both, the fashion trend equally changed. Little wonder why Apuke [3] explains that:

The evolution of pop culture is a reflection of changing times and several influences bombarding society. People's way of consuming media and

expressions of popular culture manifests evolving tastes and the impacts of globalization. Traditional music rhythms have given way to those influenced by Western styles; today, it is a mix of both. Even fashion has been influenced by Western clothes and has combined them with traditional attire. It is this ever-changing nature of pop culture that makes it a mirror image of society and a mode of self-expression and creativity.

Popular culture is also typified by its ability to spread fast and burrow both literally and globally. This again has been facilitated by the rise of the internet and social media through which information and media cascade quickly and easily. This, in turn, has led to the homogenization of popular culture in that youths have access to the same media and popular expressions as their peers in other parts of the world.

Meanwhile, AI has invaded every aspect of popular culture. AI refers to the impersonation of human intelligence in machines designed to think like a human by emulating the capacity for learning, reasoning, and reaching decisions autonomously [4]. So far, AI has been used in the financial, medical, transport, and entertainment industries. In the field of entertainment, AI is being used to develop more realistic and immersive experiences for audiences. For example, AI is being used by filmmakers to create CGI and special effects that are not distinguishable from actual images. In the music industry, AI is being used to create music through algorithms of machine learning that can analyze and reproduce the styles of popular artists.

AI also personalizes information according to taste and behaviour. This applies when streaming services like Netflix and Spotify use AI algorithms that make recommendations based on what one would likely be interested in and enjoy watching, for example. As noted by Allen [5], this has made the experiences of users more personalized and interactive. In the words of Mmewurum [6], it is stated that "The use of AI in popular culture has also created ethical and social issues". Take for instance the images and videos now produced with the help of AI made public, which raise questions concerning the validity and truthfulness of the media. The use of AI algorithms to personalize content also raised concerns regarding the manipulation of consumer behaviour. Be that as it may, the influence of AI on popular culture among youths is an important issue which has received little attention in the literature. This study consequently is going to show the degree to which AI has influenced popular culture among the youths in Eket.

Statement of the Problem

Artificial Intelligence is the creation of intelligence of human beings in machines that possess abilities which, if carried out by a human, would generally require human-like cognition, including learning, reasoning, and decision-making. AI technology has grown very rapidly in recent years, revolutionizing many of the ways human activities are carried out and affecting the

lives and work of people all over the world. For instance, AI has been used in medical diagnosis and investment analysis. AI also affects industries of entertainment through the creation of realistic special effects, including CGI in movies and music. Currently, AI algorithms are employed by streaming services such as Netflix and Spotify to recommend personalized content based on a particular user's preferences.

This is, however, rapid technological evolution combined with the deployment of AI; this produces some very inconvenient side effects concerning the impact it could have on human behaviour and culture within society. For example, AI-generated images and videos have become a subject of controversy on grounds of authenticity, credibility, and reliability. There is also a growing concern about the impact of AI on popular culture which encompasses music, fashion, movies, and lifestyle. It is not certain whether the increased impact of AI technology on human behaviour has resulted in its impact on the pop culture of the youth. Therefore, this study shall unravel the influence of AI on pop culture among youths in Eket to answer the question of uncertainty as to whether AI influences pop culture or not.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- Ascertain the extent to which youths in Eket use AI;
- Determine whether AI influences the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket;
- Find out to what extent AI influences the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket;
- Assess other factors that influence the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket, other than AI.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised:

- i. To what extent do the youths in Eket use AI?
- ii. Does AI influence the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket?
- iii. To what extent does AI influence the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket?
- iv. What other factors influence the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket aside from AI?



LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding AI

Present-day AI is interlinked not only with the areas of science and technology but also with various topics and sectors of society. Even though this debate is not something new, with the expansion of computing power and the current enormous availability of data associated with an inexhaustible storage capacity, the advances have been exponential and without precedent. Artificial Intelligence applications are huge, and thus carry enormous potential to support humankind in several diverse and complex challenges: from health and public safety to education and culture, among others. Large databases, or Big Data, have been used for training algorithms that make up AI systems in inferring patterns and defining the desired actions [7]. With this potential, on the other hand, also come an immense number of concerns that require a closer look at issues with data privacy, transparency, explainability, and accountability [7]. Moreover, the datasets from which algorithms are trained might themselves contain biases that enhance discrimination and inequality. Originated from human thinking, ML techniques and its subset, deep learning, make the machines "learn" themselves independently and improve their performance with time and experience [8]. Their implications must, therefore, be assessed from the perspective of the broad and integrated context of ethical and human rights principles. The agenda of the ethics of AI is an essential item of international debate nowadays.

According to a survey done by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB, 2022), in 2019 alone, over 90 documents on AI principles have been published by governments, enterprises, international organizations, and academic institutions, while the debate has only gained more intensity and importance since then. For instance, the publication of the Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence by UNESCO. This document set principles and guidelines for the human-centred approach of AI, therefore being the first multilaterally negotiated global instrument to guide countries concerning the development of their regulatory frameworks, the eventual need for regulation, and the construction of adequate public policies. The debate is increasing and involves several actors, but the participation of culture in the AI referential frameworks is not very intense.

There are still few sectoral documents discussing AI's impacts on culture or incorporating it into this ethical dimension, as is the case with UNESCO's recommendation. At the same time, AI has become more and more relevant and increasingly present in the cultural sector because of the proliferation of digital platforms used for the dissemination of cultural content. It is present not only in the algorithm-based content recommendation systems, but also in the creation of artistic works by ML mechanisms, in the production,

editing, and adaptation of content, in the mediation of culture during guided tours in cultural institutions, in the provision of services to the public by virtual assistants, in the organization and availability of digital collections, in cultural management and data analysis concerning mapping audiences and developing promotional strategies, among many other uses.

Despite the incidence of the theme in culture, it has few political and strategic references, few academic publications, and little research. From the national context, it will be through the Brazilian AI Strategy - EBIA, published in 2021, that research is stimulated and innovation and development of AI solutions, as well as calling attention to ethical aspects related to the use of these technologies. Operating under the principles for the governance and use of the Internet, the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee has also been active in promoting initiatives within this field. Among them, one can highlight the incentive for the constitution of Applied Artificial Intelligence Research Centres using the .br.domain register resources, in partnership with the Ministry of Science, Technology, Innovation and Communications and the São Paulo Research Foundation.

In addition, public debates and training about the topic have taken several work fronts of the Brazilian Network Information Center (NIC.br). Milestones in that sense were the UNESCO Regional Forum on Artificial Intelligence in Latin America and the Caribbean held in 2019, and the Regional Workshop on AI and Children promoted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in 2020. Even the NIC.br Annual Workshop on Survey Methodology has debated AI concerning its interface with data production and statistics. Most recently, in 2021, support was granted for a new MOOC on AI for the Judiciary⁹ that UNESCO is developing with The Future Society. In addition, and considering its leading role in the development of these types of projects, the Regional Center for Studies on the Development of the Information Society has encouraged reflections on the subject through publications such as the policy paper Artificial Intelligence and Culture: Opportunities and Challenges for the Global South published by UNESCO, and the Internet Sectoral Overview, which approached AI trends regarding themes such as justice, health, education, and childhood, as well as work. Various surveys that measure and assess the advance of these technologies include, but are not limited to, the ICT Enterprises survey, ICT Electronic Government survey, ICT in Education survey, and ICT in Health survey.

Understanding Pop Culture

Pop culture has been defined as the sum of trends, people, attitudes, and ideas that occur in contemporary society. It encompasses many varied areas such as music, movies, television, literature, fashion, and celebrities. Pop culture is an active form of mass



communication; it continuously changes and shapes the way people think, act, and perceive themselves and the world around them [9]. It was in the 1950s that pop culture was first introduced with the advent of television and consumerism. The introduction of mass media technology allowed for the facilitation of popular culture into many forums, also providing a forum for advertising consumer products. This era heralded the emergence of rock and roll music, and celebrities such as Elvis Presley gave new meaning to popular entertainment [10]. Over the years, pop culture has continued to set trends as a reflection of the times regarding values, beliefs, and attitudes. In the 1960s and 1970s, pop culture uncovered a counterculture movement that involved the rise of political activism, anti-war fervour, and feminist expression. This decade highlighted great musicians including Jimi Hendrix, Joni Mitchell, and The Beatles, all of whom took advantage of their music to comment on social, political, and cultural concerns [11].

Pop culture in the 1980s and the 1990s signalled the rise of neoliberalism and global capitalism. It is part of an era when MTV, cable television, and the Internet became available and opened a completely new perspective for pop culture dissemination [11]. Later, social media started to be introduced in the 2000s and 2010s and began to democratize culture. Media such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok make anyone a celebrity. They allow such people to share their ideas and talents with the world. According to Vatz [10], through pop culture, expressions of culture are made possible. It reflects the tastes and preferences of people. Popular culture allows people to connect, obtain social identities, and express emotion and their material desires [12]. The second point is that pop culture is mainly employed as an entertaining form of escapism that liberates people from various burdens of day-to-day life and their complications. It provides a common space in which people unify through shared interests, activities, and behaviours.

Thirdly, pop culture is an economic force which represents money, stimuli for the entertainment industry, and jobs in such spheres as music, film, TV, and fashion. The entertainment industry covers multi-billion-dollar businesses where companies like Disney, Warner Bros, and Universal take the first positions in the global market share [11].

AI and Popular Culture

The coming of Artificial Intelligence is changing the way humans interact with technology; therefore, it is changing the media and, in effect, the pop culture of the contemporary. In this line, studies indicate that the growing use of AI influences popular culture in new and unexpected ways - according to Manovich [13]. To cite one such example, AI is now being used to create music. In such practice, human composers make music in conjunction with the program for AI in newer forms

of the art of music production. Indeed, the website elaborates that it allows users to compose, edit and customise music pieces through an AI-powered interface [14].

Artificial Intelligence designed to simulate human movement and facial expressions is the new way actors do their thing. For example, the movie industry has greatly benefited from AI-generated graphics through the use of CGI when developing films with astonishing special effects, such as "Star Wars: Rogue One" [15]. In addition, AI is now also playing in the field of fashion, where designers use such systems to predict trends, optimize production, and improve retail experiences. AI fashion technology is also making it possible for retailers to enable personalized shopping with smart mirrors, dressing rooms, and virtual assistants [16]. Conversely, the pervasive use of AI in popular culture has raised questions as to whether or not its core implications will truly reflect authenticity, credibility, and the gradual dehumanization of values and cultural practices [17]. For instance, there are concerns about the manipulation of consumer behaviour through AI-generated content, simulation biases that further promote stereotypes and many more. Besides, with an increased number of AI-powered deep fake-making tools that manipulate images into falsified videos, a growing number of people are getting concerned about the breakdown of truth or online information [13]. The influence of AI on popular culture is real, and the possibility of its further transformation of popular culture is great [18]. Nevertheless, ethical and moral concerns associated with AI-generated pop culture will require continued critical engagement and reflection on the part of scholars, policymakers, and industry practitioners [19].

AI and Adoption of Pop Culture among Youths

As an evolving 21st-century technological advancement, it has shaped and influenced many aspects of human lives. One of the many areas is that of the pop culture sector, which nowadays has taken over as the major focal attraction point for the younger generation. In this regard, AI is applied in the gathering of data, analyses, and prediction of patterns of pop culture. Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram use algorithms to recommend trending topics, news, music, and fashion. By applying AI-powered recommendation systems, users of the service would be able to personalize their taste-based content and further develop their experience with ease in following trends.

These music applications, powered through the use of AI, including Spotify and Apple Music, apply machine learning algorithms in the form of analyzing data patterns stored, which predict the type of music users may want to listen to. The recommendation system suggests new artists and playlists based on user preferences. In this way, a personalized listening



experience is created for the user. Applications of AI technology have also been used in film for predictive analytics involving audience engagement. AI can also be used to predict the success of a movie; while analyzing past box office data, it identifies factors that have had success in the past to help movie studios make informed decisions when choosing scripts for profitable films. Indeed, according to PWC [32] with the inclusion of AI and the pop culture industry, it has been easier for youths to adopt and participate in pop culture. The ease with which the AI-powered platforms, such as TikTok, allow for personalized content and trend recommendations puts pressure on teenagers to follow fashion trends, celebrity lifestyles, and music culture. This arguably may lead to the loss of individualism and originality among youth. On the other hand, AI's consequence would create overdependence on technology and reduce the urge to know about the world outside the digital net. AI recommendations for customized content would create an echo chamber that enables just the view being perpetuated and deprives young people of more diverse ideas, hence increasing narrow-mindedness among them.

This is a development in the influence of AI on pop culture and its reception by youth that is ongoing to this day. That integration has further revolutionized conventional ways of entertainment creation and distribution, and the youth are at the centre of this new wave of technological integration in the entertainment industry. More recently, AI has also been applied to assist creators and influencers in developing new marketing strategies that effectively reach their target audience. AI tools of either social media bots or influencers can be used to promote products toward specific target demographics, thus increasing the potential for reaching a larger audience. This is so if the tools are harnessed correctly, allowing the creators and influencers to "hack" the algorithm, thereby increasing the views, likes and shares of whatever content one puts into the web. Ultimately, it provides a larger following and more influence over their fans [20].

However, other analysts have argued that the growth in artificial intelligence-powered pop culture has eroded cultural values since AI mostly propagates a monoculture of pop culture. The pop culture that doesn't fit such patterns will easily be missed out. This is an interesting and disturbing trend, reflecting the very frightening proposition that AI-along with other factors- is increasing homogeneity in world pop culture and making some cultures more significant than others. As Murphy identifies [21], the part AI plays in terms of how the framing of cultural expression and imagination and its consumption itself shapes individual and collective consciousness [21]. It could create a dystopian society ridden by technological addiction, alienation, and erosion of traditional culture.

Theoretical Frameworks



The following theories are considered in this study:

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory was propounded by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974 [22]. According to this theory, individuals are said to seek out media content as a means to satisfy certain needs or gratification. The theory hypothesizes that goals or needs one has for selecting certain media contents exist within the minds of the audience members, per Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974, cited in Asemah [23]. The theory postulates that the audience is active in their own media use and that they choose the media content based on their specific needs and objectives. In other words, the audience has a reason for consuming media content and, further, have certain gratifications that are sought from such consumption, such as entertainment, information, social interaction, and personal expression. The theory supposes that there is not a one-way action in which media users are just passive recipients; rather, they act actively in terms of the type of media used and how to use them. Therefore, the production and distribution of media content must keep in mind the needs and expectations of the audience. This study applies to the Uses and Gratifications Theory in that the theory assumes that individuals actively seek media content to satisfy certain needs or gratifications such as entertainment and information.

Youths in Eket seek media content on artificial intelligence, which would satisfy their curiosity to know, increase their knowledge of technology, and keep them abreast of changing trends in technology. The theory also assumes that people have a reason for consuming media content and involve themselves actively in their choice of media consumption; hence, youths in Eket could be seen as intentionally exposing themselves to the media content involving artificial intelligence which is relevant to their interests and needs. In other words, AI tools are used among youths in Eket to the degree to which they derive gratifications.

Individual Differences Theory

The theory of Individual Differences was propounded by Robert McCrae and Paul Costa in 1987 [31]. The theory postulates that personality traits control individual behaviour and preference for openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The theory of Individual differences assumes that individuals differ in personality traits that influence the type of media content they expose themselves to. It postulates that personality traits modulate individual behaviour and preferences. The theory hence assumes that individuals exhibit different personality traits, and their differences may determine the differences in media consumption. The five broad personalities observed by McCrae and Costa were openness, conscientiousness, extraversion,

agreeableness, and neuroticism. The traits combine to form the OCEAN model.

Different personalities, according to the theory, prefer different types of media content. For instance, individuals high in openness are always more adventurous and inquisitive and hence tend to be attracted to more innovative and unconventional media content. On the other hand, more conscientious persons are always more organized, goal-oriented, and systematic, hence they tend to like informative and educational media content. Individuals high in extraversion are likely to derive their media content satisfaction from those that necessitate social interaction, such as reality shows or social media platforms. Understanding how different people react to media content is important, given the disposition of personality traits in which they differ. Media producers can enhance understanding of individual personality differences by tailoring content to meet the preferences of target audiences. For instance, marketers can create ads matching the personality aspects of the customers being targeted, hence more effective marketing. Relating this to the study, the theory can be applied in

considering that individual traits of personality may impact the nature of the pop culture contents chosen to be consumed by the youths as enabled through AI tools.

For instance, the extroverted young are more likely to watch social or communal videos, while the high-scoring open ones are much more likely to use videos concerning new and innovative pop culture trends. The theory is helpful in explaining why different youths have different preferences when it comes to the consumption of pop culture through AI tools.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for the study is quantitative survey research. The population of the study comprises 89,591 young adults aged 18-28 years residing in Eket, Nigeria as projected by the researcher in 2024. Using Taro Yamane’s formula, the researchers drew out a sample size of 398 respondents. The sampling procedure adopted for this study is multi-stage sampling, which involves a combination of cluster and random sampling. In the first stage, Eket was divided into eight clusters to include:

Names of Clusters
Afia Nsit
Ikot Udoma
Mkpok
Ikot Ibiok
Grace Bill
Ofriyo
Ediam
Ikot Udota

The second stage involved the random selection of respondents from each of the selected areas to make up the sample size of the study thus:

Cluster	Population
Afia Nsit	50
Ikot Udoma	50
Mkpok	50
Ikot Ibiok	50
Grace Bill	50
Ofriyo	50
Ediam	50
Ikot Udota	48

Data was collected from selected respondents using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were administrated to the target respondents electronically. Meanwhile, it was not possible to get back all 398 copies of the questionnaire electronically distributed as the researchers couldn’t reach some of the respondents any longer, maybe due to malfunctioning of their electronic devices or wrong responses to questions on the questionnaire copy. However, out of the 398 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 385 copies were duly filled up and returned. Data analysis was done by

using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used in computing the frequency distribution, mean, median, and mode of responses, while inferential statistics tested the relationship between the variables. Data Reliability and Validity of data were tested using Spearman's Rank Order coefficient. Data, however, was presented in tables and narratives.

Data Analysis

Data gathered are analysed thus:



RQ 1: To what extent do youths in Eket use AI?

Options	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Significantly	192	50
Moderately	86	22
Slightly	46	12
Not at all	61	16
Total	385	100

According to the data in RQ 1 above, 50% of youths in Eket use AI significantly, 22% use it moderately, 12% use it slightly, and 16% do not use it at all. This

suggests that a majority of the youths in Eket have some level of engagement with AI technology.

RQ 2: Does AI influence the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket?

Options	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Yes	263	68
No	35	9
Not at all	87	23
Total	385	100

Data in RQ 2 above revealed that 68% of youths in Eket believe that AI influences the adoption of pop culture, while 9% believe it does not and 23% believe it does

not influence at all. This suggests that a significant number of youths in Eket believe that AI plays a role in shaping their pop culture preferences.

RQ 3: To what extent does AI influence the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket?

Options	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Significantly	177	46
Moderately	92	24
Slightly	71	18
Not at all	45	12
Total	385	100

According to the data in RQ 3 above, 46% of youths in Eket believe that AI significantly influences the adoption of pop culture, while 24% believe it influences it moderately, 18% believe it influences it slightly, and

12% believe it does not influence it at all. This suggests that a significant percentage of youths in Eket believe that AI plays a considerable role in shaping their pop culture preferences.

RQ 4: What other factors influence the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket aside from AI?

Options	Frequency	Percentages
Personal interest and preference	27	7
Influence of friends	41	11
Media exposure	98	25
Availability and accessibility	12	3
Socio-economic status	3	1
Cultural background	59	15
Educational level	7	2
Parental approval	10	3
Fashion trend	46	12
Celebrity influence	82	21
Total	385	100

The data in RQ 4 above shows other factors than AI that influence the adoption of pop culture among the youths in Eket. These include media exposure, 25%; cultural background, 15%; celebrity influence, 21%. Other factors influential in the adoption of pop culture will include the influence of friends, 11%; fashion

trends, 12%; personal interest and preference, 7%. Other factors such as socio-economic status were mentioned by only 1% of the respondents, educational level by 2%, and parental approval by 3%. Generally, with there being numerous factors that influence the adoption of pop culture among the youth in Eket other



than AI, it, therefore, suggests that pop culture preference is influenced by the interaction of individual, social, and cultural variables.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

RQ1 data indicates that a majority of the youth engage with AI technology to some extent: 50% use it "very much", 22% use it "moderately", 12% slightly, and 16% do not at all. These results indicate the increasing pervasiveness of AI technology among youths in Eket, a position that augurs well with studies that have indicated AI and its associated technologies have been widely adopted by young people worldwide. In agreement with this finding are several studies [24-26], that reported an unprecedented adoption rate of AI and related technologies among the youth across the world. The probable reasons for the adoption of AI and its related technologies by young people may include convenience, speed, efficiency, and the possibility of personalization. Furthermore, these technologies are increasingly being applied in industries and job sectors. Thus, qualified people in their concepts and applications will also be in demand. Again, emerging innovations and applications of AI may make it appealing and relevant to the younger generation. A report by the Pew Research Center in 2023 indicates that more than half of all teens in America believe they spend too much time on their smartphones 54%. The report further indicates that AI technology is an important tool for making life easy for teenagers. According to Dare [9], AI is increasingly becoming part of the lives of young people across the globe. A study by Cookey and Row in the *Journal of Youth Studies* indicates that young people in the UK increasingly resort to AI technology for entertainment, education, and even communication. In another study, MIT has come up with findings showing how young people in the US are engaging AI in everyday life at an unprecedented rate [33].

The theory of uses and gratifications explains how AI and its other technologies are adopted by the youth. It purports that members of the public use media and technology to satisfy certain needs, such as cognitive, affective, social, and personal needs. A good example is where young people leverage AI technology to enhance their ability for cognition-for example, in learning new things or solving complex problems. The same people will be using it for their social needs, for talking to friends and family members, or even for personal needs for entertainment or relaxation.

Data from RQ 2 shows that AI does play a role in shaping the pop culture preferences of the youths in Eket, as 68% of the respondents asserted. This agrees with earlier studies showing that AI and related technologies are capable of shaping human behaviours, or at least our understanding and expectations of them, as seen in Buckley & Fox [27] and Hauben & Hauben [29]. The one important way AI can influence human

behaviour is through personalization. AI systems will be able to gather data on individual online behaviour, preferences, and interests to offer experiences tailored to their choices. Users would, therefore, get used to such an experience and perhaps start believing that their interaction with everything around them should also be customized. This belief itself can change human behaviour in finding more personalized experiences. AI can also influence human behaviour by driving decision-making processes. For instance, Machine Learning algorithms analyze huge volumes of data to find patterns and predict outcomes of certain events. Moreover, they are capable of learning from new data fed into their systems to update their predictions and, as such, find perfect applications in critical decision-making processes, such as medical diagnosis, fraud detection, and security risk assessment [29]. With this ability, AI can make humans further dependent on these algorithms for decision-making and thereby alter human behaviour. Also, AI shapes our understanding of social norms and inequality. AI algorithms reinforce biases in the data. This means algorithms can also reinforce the inequalities in society [30]. This might have a very strong influence on human behaviour, because people may act following what is seen as the social norm caused by algorithms of AI or expect less from themselves due to biases that exist in algorithms. That is why AI will influence pop culture acceptance by introducing new content and preferences.

Expanding from the results in RQ 2, data in RQ 3 further illustrates that AI alone contributes a lot to the adoption of pop culture among youths in Eket. This is because a total of 46% of the respondents reported that AI has a great influence on their pop culture preferences. This would mean that AI is something worthwhile in shaping pop culture preferences among youth in Eket. AI is finding its place in popular culture, and that cannot be overlooked even in the youth of Eket. Pop culture ranges from music, movies, TV shows, fashion, and other forms of entertainment common to young people. AI continues to be inculcated into popular culture through recommendation systems, personalized content, and algorithms on social media shaping youth preferences in Eket. A good example is that recommendation systems, some form of AI technology, on Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime are presently being used to make suggestions based on the user's history and preference. These personalized recommendations are very often decisive or even the sole factor in choosing what to watch next, and over time will play a big role in influencing the preference of what young people in Eket will like to watch. AI technology is also being implemented in music streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music, whereby the service will provide personalized playlists following the individual's taste of music. The playlists feature songs that the user may have never known existed, and with time may influence young people in Eket concerning their taste in music. Besides, AI-driven



social media algorithms on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat use machine learning to automatically offer content personalized to the interests of the user, behaviours, and location in real-time. This technology can lead to endless consumption and liking of content with impacts that are targeted toward young people in making choices regarding their social media platforms.

RQ 4 data indicates that AI does not stand alone in influencing the adoption of pop culture among the youths in Eket. It can be inferred from the results that media exposure and cultural background are strong factors that influence the preference for the adoption of pop culture, standing at 25% and 15%, respectively, while celebrity influence also has 21%. Uses and gratifications theory suggests that the consumption of media is based on personal needs, cognition, and motives. The results of RQ 4 are supportive of this because the most influential factor in the adoption of popular culture was media exposure. On the other hand, individual difference theory presumes that personality traits and characteristics determine what people like and do; such may also explain why cultural background and celebrity influences are the other two major factors in pop culture adoption [31].

CONCLUSION

The study has established that AI technology among the youth in Eket is increasingly becoming pervasive because a greater percentage of the people interviewed reported a high level of engagement with the technology. The study has also established that the youths in Eket shape their pop culture through AI, as identified by a significant percentage of the respondents. Most importantly, AI plays a huge role in the adoption of pop culture among the youths in Eket. Recommendation systems, personalized content, and algorithms applied to social media eventually change youth preferences. In the same way, it has been found that influential agents other than AI, such as media exposure, cultural background, and celebrity influence, hold great significance for the expression of such culture.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward:

- The relevant stakeholders must develop publicity to educate the youths on the benefits and consequences of using AI and related technologies.
- There must be an increase in the regulation of AI and related technologies to prevent misuse and manipulation of the youths.
- The content providers and creators shall use the latest developments in AI technology in the enhancement of their

various products and services by creating personalized and engaging experiences among the users.

- Parents, schools, and communities need to engage the youths and find out why certain aspects of pop culture appeal to them, hence have to guide them through the process of adopting the healthy aspects of pop culture.
- More research is needed concerning this aspect that deals with the impacts AI technology has on popular culture and human behaviour: its ethical, social, and cultural impacts.

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