



# LEVERAGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) FOR JOB CREATION IN EMERGING ECONOMIES: EVIDENCE FROM NIGERIA'S TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION SECTOR

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## ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a set of technologies that enable computers to perform a variety of advanced functions, including the ability to see, understand and translate spoken and written language, analyze data, make recommendations, and many more. It is often assumed that artificial intelligence would eliminate jobs and raise unemployment. The same was assumed when the Internet was in its early stages, but the internet opened far more new doors and provided individuals with new work prospects that no one could have imagined at the time. With the progress of Artificial Intelligence, we can say the same thing is possible. This paper shall examine the concepts of artificial intelligence and the place of job creation, it shall discuss the relevance of job creation and AI perspectives, examine criticism from different scholars regarding the two concepts and the role of artificial intelligence and job creation will be mentioned which are; skill transformation, job displacement, debate, organizational productivity, entrepreneurship development in generating new employment opportunities, while enhancing productivity. However, the effective utilization of AI for job creation requires adequate training, digital literacy, and supportive government policies that encourage innovation and workforce development. Recommendations are; emerging economies should prioritize, Strengthen Technical and Vocational Education (TVET), Promote Inclusive AI Policies, Invest in Digital Infrastructure, Support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Encourage Public-Private Partnerships, Foster Entrepreneurship and Startup Ecosystems. SBTC theory was adopted as a framework for this paper. So therefore, embracing artificial intelligence while investing in human capacity building is essential for maximizing its potential to generate sustainable employment opportunities and contribute to national development.

**KEYWORDS:** Artificial Intelligence (AI), Job Creation, Employment Opportunities, Digital Skills, Entrepreneurship.

**Word count (211)**

## INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most transformative technological developments of the twenty-first century, reshaping industries, economies, and the structure of employment across the world.

AI refers to computer systems designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, problem solving, and decision-making. With the rapid development of machine learning, robotics, and data analytics,

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AI is increasingly integrated into business operations, public administration, healthcare, education, and manufacturing. These developments have significantly altered how organizations function and how work is carried out in modern societies. According to Liu, Chen, and Lyu (2024), the rise of artificial intelligence has “significantly transformed the dynamics of the labour market,” influencing the demand for new skills and changing the nature of many occupations.

The introduction of AI technologies has generated extensive debate among scholars, policymakers, and industry leaders concerning its potential effects on employment. While some analysts fear that artificial intelligence may replace human labor through automation, others argue that AI will also create new employment opportunities by generating new industries, professions, and skill requirements. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and World Economic Forum notes that AI simultaneously produces three major labour-market effects: displacement of some tasks, increased productivity of workers, and the creation of entirely new jobs and tasks (WEF, 2024). This suggests that the impact of artificial intelligence on employment is complex and multifaceted rather than purely negative or positive.

In recent studies by (Tornatzky & Fleischer 2019) further support the argument that AI can contribute to job creation. A global analysis of labour-market trends indicates that artificial intelligence may displace certain routine jobs but will simultaneously create new roles in areas such as data science, robotics maintenance, and digital technology management. For instance, global labour projections suggest that by 2030 AI could create about 170 million new jobs while displacing around 92 million, resulting in a net increase in employment opportunities worldwide (WEF, 2024). This projection indicates that although AI may transform the labour market, it also holds significant potential to generate new economic opportunities and stimulate innovation.

According to (Makela & Stephany 2024), an important dimension of AI-driven job creation is the growing demand for specialized digital and technological skills. As AI systems become more integrated into economic activities, organizations increasingly require workers capable of developing, managing, and maintaining intelligent

technologies. Research examining millions of job vacancies found that demand for AI-related roles has increased significantly in recent years, demonstrating the expanding need for individuals with digital competencies.

Furthermore, artificial intelligence does not only create employment within the technology sector; it also generates opportunities across various industries by enhancing productivity and enabling innovation. In healthcare, AI assists medical professionals in diagnosing diseases and analyzing medical data. In agriculture, AI technologies help farmers monitor crops and improve productivity. Similarly, in education, AI-driven learning systems support personalized learning experiences and educational management. These innovations create new roles for technicians, data analysts, and system managers who are responsible for maintaining and optimizing AI-driven systems. As Makela & Stephany (2024) notes, the integration of AI into industries has improved service delivery and created opportunities for new types of employment, despite concerns about workforce displacement.

Moreover, AI also promotes job creation by supporting entrepreneurship and the growth of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs). With the availability of intelligent tools by (Ford 2015), such as automated analytics, chatbots, and digital marketing platforms, entrepreneurs can develop innovative products and services more efficiently. These technologies reduce operational costs, improve decision-making, and expand access to global markets. Consequently, the growth of AI-enabled businesses stimulates employment opportunities in fields such as digital marketing, software development, content creation, and business analytics. Despite the potential benefits of artificial intelligence, its successful integration into the labour market depends largely on the ability of societies to adapt to technological change. (WEF 2024).

According to (Frey & O 2017), his research study on AI and skill demand confirmed that, the growth of AI-related occupations is accompanied by an increasing demand for complementary skills such as creativity, critical thinking, teamwork, and digital competence. This highlights the need for governments and educational institutions to invest in training programs that prepare individuals for the evolving digital economy.

In view of (Kaphan 2020), projections indicate that artificial intelligence may create more jobs than it displaces. For instance, global labor market analyses suggest that although millions of jobs may be automated, significantly more new roles could emerge due to AI-driven innovation, resulting in a net increase in employment opportunities. However, (Susskind & Susskind 2015), confirm that the benefits of AI-driven job creation depend largely on governments, educational institutions, and organizations investing in digital education, training, and policies that prepare workers for the evolving technological landscape. Therefore, understanding the role of artificial intelligence in job creation is essential for policymakers, researchers, and business leaders seeking sustainable economic development. By promoting digital skills development, technological innovation, and supportive policy frameworks, societies can harness the potential of AI to create new employment opportunities while minimizing the risks associated with technological displacement.

### **Concept of Artificial Intelligence and Employment**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has increasingly become a central topic in discussions on future of work, employment. AI refers to computer systems and technologies capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, pattern recognition, and decision-making. Rapid development, adoption of AI technologies across industries have raised significant debates about their implications for job creation, labour productivity, and workforce transformation. (Wilson & Daughaty 2022).

According to Liu (2024), the expansion of artificial intelligence has become “a transformative force in global labour markets,” creating both opportunities for new jobs and risks of job displacement. The integration of AI technologies into sectors such as healthcare, finance, education, and manufacturing has reshaped organizational processes and altered the demand for certain skills in the labour market. As organizations adopt intelligent technologies to improve efficiency and productivity, the nature of work continues to evolve, requiring employees to adapt to new technological environments.

Similarly, (Ford 2015) emphasize that the rise of artificial intelligence has sparked widespread debate about its effects on

employment. The authors note that understanding how AI influences job markets is “an important question for the future of society and technological innovation.” This indicates that AI is not only a technological phenomenon but also a socio-economic issue that requires careful academic and policy attention.

### **Relevance of Artificial Intelligence to Job Creation**

The relevance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to job creation lies in its dual role as both a disruptor and an enabler of employment. On one hand, AI automates routine and repeat tasks leading to the displacement of certain categories of jobs, particularly low-skilled and clerical roles. Also, it creates new opportunities by generating demand for emerging skills, new occupations, and entirely new industries. Fields such as data science, machine learning, robotics maintenance, and AI ethics have grown rapidly as a result of AI adoption.

AI also enhances productivity and efficiency across sectors including agriculture, healthcare, education, and manufacturing thereby enabling businesses to expand and create more jobs indirectly. In developing and emerging economies, AI can stimulate entrepreneurship, support small and medium enterprises, and open up digital job markets such as remote work and online services. However, the net impact of AI on job creation depends largely on factors such as education, skills development, policy frameworks, and the ability of the workforce to adapt to technological changes. Investment in lifelong learning, digital skills, and inclusive policies is essential to ensure that the benefits of AI driven job creation are widely shared. Sly (2025). In summary, AI is not just replacing jobs; it is transforming the nature of work and creating new pathways for employment and economic growth. Sly (2025).

### **Different Roles of AI And Job Creation**

#### **1. Artificial Intelligence and Job Creation**

A growing body of literature by Kaplan (2020), suggests that artificial intelligence can contribute significantly to job creation, particularly through the emergence of new industries and professions. Historically, technological advancements have transformed labour markets by eliminating some occupations while simultaneously creating new ones. AI appears to follow a similar pattern.

Makela & Stephany (2024) argues that the integration of AI systems into industries has improved workforce efficiency and service delivery. The study further indicates that despite concerns about automation, AI demonstrates “the potential of creating more new jobs amidst fears of job losses.” This perspective highlights the complementary relationship between humans and intelligent technologies in modern work environments.

In addition, Frey & O (2017) note that artificial intelligence is reshaping employment structures by replacing routine tasks while simultaneously generating new opportunities in emerging sectors. Scholarly opinion by (VanArk devries 2020) explain that although AI automation may affect certain traditional occupations, it “opens the door to job growth in emerging areas.” These emerging areas include fields such as data science, machine learning engineering, robotics maintenance, and digital technology management.

The emergence of AI-driven industries has therefore created new employment categories that did not exist a few decades ago. For example, jobs such as AI developers, machine learning specialists, robotics engineers, AI ethics analysts, and data analysts have become increasingly important in modern economies. These new occupations require specialized technical knowledge and advanced digital skills, thereby expanding the employment landscape for the youth, manual workers, companies and entire societies at large. (Chui, Mantika & Miremadi 2018).

## **2. Artificial Intelligence and Skill Transformation**

Another important theme in the literature is the relationship between artificial intelligence and the demand for new skills. The adoption of AI technologies has significantly altered the skill requirements of many occupations, making digital literacy and technological competence essential for workers.

Recent empirical studies by (Chui, Mantika & Miremadi 2018). have demonstrated that the growth of AI-related industries which has increased the demand for workers with complementary digital skills as job creator is now in increase in our societies. A large-scale analysis of millions of job postings found out that the demand for AI-related skills has increased

significantly across multiple industries and the study further revealed that skills acquisition is now open to every one through AI, government, NGOS, and even small scale business owners, digital literacy, teamwork, and resilience, which complement technological systems rather than compete with them.

Similarly, Wilson & Daughaty (2022) found that employers are increasingly prioritizing practical skills over formal educational qualifications when recruiting workers in the areas of job placement for AI-related roles. Their research showed that demand for AI skills increased by more than twenty percent in job postings between 2018 and 2023. ( Frey & O 2017) , emphasize that AI-related competencies now command higher labour-market value, indicating that technological expertise plays a critical role in modern employment opportunities. Alfaouri & Aqoula (2024) suggest that individuals must develop competencies such as creativity, problem-solving, communication, and innovation in order to remain in the job in an AI-driven labour market. These skills enable workers to collaborate effectively with intelligent technologies while performing complex tasks that machines cannot easily replicate.

## **3. Artificial Intelligence and Job Displacement Debate**

Despite the potential benefits of AI for job creation, scholars also acknowledge concerns regarding job displacement and labour-market inequality. Automation technologies have the capacity to perform repetitive and routine tasks more efficiently than human workers, which may reduce the demand for certain types of labour. Some studies suggest that AI may particularly affect occupations involving routine cognitive or administrative tasks. Wilson & Daughaty (2022) argue that artificial intelligence has the potential to replace certain jobs due to the rapid advancement of machine learning and automation technologies.

However, (Sly 2025) argue that the overall impact of AI on employment may be more balanced than initially feared. Rather than eliminating work entirely, AI tends to transform existing occupations by automating specific tasks while creating new responsibilities for human workers. A comprehensive review of AI and employment also highlights that technological change historically leads to shifts in job structures rather than permanent unemployment.

The study concludes that the long-term impact of AI depends largely on how societies adapt through education, training, and policy interventions.

#### **4. Artificial Intelligence and Organizational Productivity**

Topol (2023) explains that, artificial intelligence also contributes to job creation by improving organizational productivity and innovation. Businesses that adopt AI technologies can automate repetitive processes, analyze large volumes of data, and make more informed decisions. These capabilities often lead to business expansion, which in turn creates new employment opportunities.

Research examining the role of AI in organizational systems shows that intelligent technologies can significantly enhance productivity and operational efficiency. In manufacturing, for example, AI applications such as predictive maintenance, logistics coordination, and automated production monitoring improve production processes and enable firms to operate more effectively.

Additionally, AI technologies are increasingly used in recruitment and human resource management. Automated resume screening, AI-assisted interviews, and predictive hiring analytics have improved recruitment efficiency in many organizations. A systematic review of AI in recruitment found that intelligent technologies can enhance hiring outcomes while improving the quality of candidate selection. (Wolfert, Verdouw & Bogaardt 2022)

#### **5. Artificial Intelligence and Entrepreneurship Development**

AI technologies provide entrepreneurs with tools that improve business decision-making, customer engagement, and operational efficiency. As a result, new business opportunities emerge, which contribute to job creation in both developed and developing economies. According to Dwivedi (2023), artificial intelligence has significantly transformed entrepreneurial ecosystems by enabling innovative business models and digital platforms that facilitate the creation of new enterprises. The authors argue that AI technologies allow entrepreneurs to “develop scalable solutions and expand market opportunities in ways that were previously impossible.”

This transformation encourages the establishment of technology-based startups that generate employment opportunities in areas such as software development, digital marketing, and data management.

Similarly, (Brynjolfsson and McAfee 2022) emphasize that technological innovations such as artificial intelligence enhance economic growth by enabling entrepreneurs to create new industries and services. The authors note that while automation may replace certain routine tasks, it simultaneously “creates new forms of work and increases demand for higher-skilled labour.” This perspective supports the argument that AI contributes to employment growth through entrepreneurial expansion and technological innovation. Davenport and Ronanki (2023),

#### **6. Artificial Intelligence and Human–Machine Collaboration**

According to Wolfert (2022), Another important theme in the literature is the concept of human–machine collaboration, which emphasizes the complementary relationship between artificial intelligence and human workers. Rather than replacing human labour entirely, AI technologies often work alongside humans to enhance productivity and performance.

According to Wilson and Daugherty (2022), organizations achieve the greatest benefits from AI when they design systems that enable humans and machines to collaborate effectively. The authors state that “the most productive workplaces of the future will combine human creativity with machine intelligence.” This approach highlights the importance of integrating technological capabilities with human judgment, emotional intelligence, and creativity. Human–machine collaboration is particularly important in professions that require complex decision-making, ethical judgment, and interpersonal communication. This collaborative model suggests that the future labour market will involve workers performing tasks that complement artificial intelligence systems. Consequently, employees will need to develop skills that enhance their ability to work with intelligent technologies rather than compete against them.

AI has the potential to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness as well as the impact of employment in the society according to (Orlando 2023).

### **Negative / positive impacts of AI & Job creation**

1. Job displacement and exacerbated inequality
2. Bias and discrimination
3. Data privacy and security
4. Dependency and technology

### **Positive impact are as follows:**

1. Education enhancement
2. Accessibility and inclusion
3. Predictive analysis
4. Disaster response.

### **Criticisms among scholar on AI and job creation**

The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on employment has sparked extensive debate among scholars, with differing opinions regarding its potential to create or displace jobs. While many researchers highlight the opportunities AI presents for economic growth and job creation, others caution against its disruptive effects, particularly for routine or low-skilled workers.

#### **1. Job Displacement vs. Job Creation**

A major point of contention is whether AI will ultimately destroy more jobs than it creates. Frey and Osborne (2017) argue that up to 47% of current jobs in the United States are at high risk of automation due to advances in machine learning and robotics. They contend that AI and related technologies disproportionately threaten routine and manual occupations, suggesting a potential large-scale displacement of workers without adequate re-skilling initiatives. Similarly, Ford (2015) warns that the rise of automation could lead to structural unemployment if workers are unable to transition into emerging technology-driven roles.

In contrast, Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) present a more optimistic view, asserting that AI acts as a driver of "creative destruction", simultaneously displacing outdated jobs while creating new opportunities in emerging sectors. They argue that AI adoption expands entrepreneurial opportunities, fosters innovation, and generates new high-skill employment in data science, AI development, and technology management. Liu, Chen, and Lyu (2024) also support this position, showing that AI adoption in developing and emerging economies has led to increased demand for skilled professionals and entrepreneurial ventures, suggesting that the

impact on job creation can be positive if skill development is prioritized.

#### **2. Skills Gap and Workforce Preparedness**

Another criticism revolves around the readiness of the workforce to adapt to AI technologies. Autor, Levy, and Murnane (2003) emphasize that technological change is "skill-biased," meaning that workers with advanced analytical, creative, or technical skills benefit disproportionately from AI adoption, while low- and medium-skilled workers may be displaced. Critics argue that this dynamic can exacerbate income inequality and leave significant segments of the population underprepared for emerging job roles. While Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) recognize the skills challenge, they argue that proactive education and training policies can mitigate these risks. Dwivedi et al. (2023) further suggest that the availability of reskilling programs, digital literacy initiatives, and supportive government policies are critical determinants of whether AI leads to inclusive job creation. The disagreement here centers on the feasibility and effectiveness of educational and policy interventions to ensure workforce adaptation.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### **Skill-Biased Technological Change Theory**

The Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) theory is one of the most widely used frameworks for understanding how technological innovation influences job creation and AI. The theory was not proposed by a single individual. It was developed and advanced by a group of labor economists, most notably: Jan Tinbergen (early foundation through his work on income inequality and skills) Lawrence Katz Claudia Goldin David Autor. These scholars contributed significantly to explaining how technological progress affects the demand for different types of labor. The thrust of SBTC theory is that technological progress reshapes the labor market in favor of skilled workers, driving both economic growth and inequality. Skill-Biased Technological Change (SBTC) argues that: Technological advancements increase the demand for skilled workers while reducing demand for low-skilled workers. The relevance of SBTC, AI, and Job Creation; AI is a form of technological change that creates opportunities for educated and skilled individuals, SBTC explains who benefits from that change,

helps us to understand AI, Job creation occurs, but mostly for skilled workers.

According to Autor, Levy, and Murnane (2003), technological change increases productivity by complementing workers with analytical and problem-solving abilities while replacing routine tasks that can be easily automated. The authors argue that modern technologies such as computers and artificial intelligence “substitute for routine tasks but complement non-routine analytical and interactive tasks.” This theoretical perspective suggests that artificial intelligence does not simply eliminate jobs but rather transforms the nature of work. Jobs requiring repetitive activities such as data entry or routine administrative tasks are more likely to be automated. However, occupations that require creativity, complex reasoning, emotional intelligence, and decision-making tend to experience increased demand.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Artificial intelligence and job creation is a dynamic and evolving field that plays a crucial role in fostering job opportunities, productivities and skills acquisition for individual, group or the society at large. The both terms represents both a challenge and an opportunity for modern labour markets. While some traditional occupations may be transformed or replaced by automation, AI also creates new industries, new professions, and new opportunities for economic growth. The key to maximizing the benefits of AI lies in developing policies and educational strategies that promote digital skills, innovation, and inclusive economic development. It is important to ensure that it is used ethically and in ways that promote sustainability by embracing technological advancement while investing in human capacity building, societies can harness the potential of artificial intelligence as a powerful tool for job creation and sustainable national development. To optimally maximize the impact of artificial intelligence, the following recommendations are made:

1. emerging economies should prioritize
2. Strengthen Technical and Vocational Education (TVET)
3. Promote Inclusive AI Policies
4. Invest in Digital Infrastructure
5. Support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
6. Encourage Public–Private Partnerships

7. Foster Entrepreneurship and Startup Ecosystems.

8. Data which is a fundamental assets for job creation and where small scale businesses can only be easily access through data

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