Generative AI for Supply Chain Optimization: Opportunities and Ethical Risks in Procurement

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI) technology in supply chain management has facilitated the automation of procurement processes, supplier selection, optimization of inventory management and demand forecasting among other benefits. However, the use of Generative AI in procurement processes brings forth several ethical issues including transparency, algorithmic biases, data privacy and security, accountability and displacement of jobs. This study focused on investigating the opportunities and ethical dilemmas posed using Generative AI technology in supply chain optimization, particularly procurement process. The research employed a qualitative approach through the content analysis of academic journals. The secondary data used in the study includes journal articles, conference papers, industrial reports, and policy documents. It is found out that Generative AI technology is highly efficient in improving procurement through intelligent supplier assessment, contract creation, predictive analysis, demand forecasting, inventory optimization, and real-time decision-making processes. On the other hand, the findings suggest that poor governance frameworks, low data quality, algorithm discrimination, lack of transparency, cyber-security threats, and ethical issues associated with accountability can jeopardize the sustainable implementation of the technology. It can be concluded that the incorporation of Generative Artificial Intelligence in supply chain management has many advantages ranging from increased efficiency to better decision-making capabilities, forecasting accuracy, procurement activities, and increased resilience. Unfortunately, there are various challenges facing companies in Nigeria that limit the ability to incorporate generative artificial intelligence in supply chain management.

I. Introduction

As the global supply chain environment grows more complex, organizations have been forced to adopt advanced technologies to improve efficiency, reduce costs, build strong supplier relationships, and remain competitive. One of the most revolutionary innovations in supply chain operations is Generative Artificial Intelligence. Unlike regular artificial intelligence, which is meant for classification, prediction, and automation of routine processes, Generative AI provides the provision for creation of content, procurement reporting, creating supplier agreements, summarization of suppliers' performance, making recommendations on sourcing, and decision-making, among others (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Recent developments in large language models have increased the use of Generative AI within procurement departments, allowing firms to automate supplier interactions, analyze procurement risks, predict market demand, manage inventory levels, and improve negotiation techniques. Firms have begun using procurement assistants that rely on AI technologies to shorten procurement cycles, reduce costs, and improve accuracy (Wamba et al., 2024).

In developing countries such as Nigeria, digital transformation has become more critical as companies seek new ways to increase efficiency (Eduprojectsng, 2026). Ekwueme (2025) states that applying Artificial Intelligence increases engineering, operational, and decision-making efficiency in Nigeria's manufacturing companies through automation and predictive models. Similarly, Ekwueme, Onwurah, and Ogbodo (2024) found that Artificial Intelligence positively influences organizational performance by contributing to efficiency, innovation, and strategic management. This indicates that artificial intelligence is an asset that can transform organizational processes not only in manufacturing but also in procurement.

Moreover, successful supply chain management remains critical to organizational competitiveness. As Ekwueme (2026) states, effective procurement and logistics operations ensure better inventory management, customer service,

and organizational efficiency. Thus, the development of Generative AI can be seen as a logical step in digital transformation aimed at enhancing procurement operations and supply chain responsiveness.

Although these opportunities exist, integrating Generative AI into procurement raises many ethical considerations. Decisions within procurement are becoming more dependent on the recommendations provided by AI, and this brings up issues such as algorithmic bias, unexplainable algorithms, privacy issues, cybersecurity considerations, intellectual property rights, and accountability of automated decision-making. Therefore, this study highlights the opportunities and ethical concerns of using Generative AI in supply chain optimization, with a focus on procurement practices.

A. Statement of the Problem

The fast growth of Generative AI is revolutionizing supply chain management by allowing companies to forecast demand more accurately, plan procurement, and make better decisions on supplier choice and inventory control. While developed countries have already widely adopted Generative AI to become more efficient and competitive, many companies in Nigeria have not yet used the opportunities the technology offers. Sluggish adoption is due to several factors, including inadequate technology, low technical skills, implementation costs, poor data quality, and resistance to change within organizations. As a result, many organizations still use traditional procurement and logistics methods, which can affect productivity and performance in the digital age.

Beyond adoption hurdles, the growing use of Generative AI in procurement has raised several ethical issues that need to be addressed. These issues include algorithmic bias, data privacy and security, transparency in automation, AI accountability, and role displacement. In Nigeria, where the regulatory framework for AI is still developing, these issues could erode stakeholder trust and pose legal and reputational risks to organizations. While global interest in Generative AI is growing, empirical research on its potential, challenges, and ethical issues remains limited in Nigeria. This information gap makes it difficult for managers, policymakers, and researchers to formulate sound policies on AI adoption. This research aims to evaluate the prospects of using Generative AI for supply chain optimization, the challenges encountered in implementing Generative AI, and the ethical issues related to adopting Generative AI in procurement within Nigerian firms.

B. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- Explore the opportunities that Generative Artificial Intelligence offer for optimizing supply chains in Nigerian firms
- Discuss the ethical concerns related to the use of Generative AI in procurement in Nigerian Organizations
- Examine the challenges affecting the adoption and implementation of Generative Artificial Intelligence for supply chain optimization in Nigerian firms

C. Concept of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Generative Artificial Intelligence involves the use of sophisticated Artificial Intelligence techniques in the generation of original texts, reports, contracts, recommendations, code, pictures, and analysis from big data using deep learning architectures (Dwivedi et al., 2023). The difference between traditional AI techniques and Generative AI is that while traditional AI uses prediction and classification techniques, Generative AI creates human-like answers that aid in strategic decision-making. In procurement, Generative AI helps organizations in creating procurement documents, assessing supplier performance, recommending sourcing, negotiating deals, highlighting procurement risks, and better contract management. Such services help decrease the workload in procurement while improving the accuracy of procurement. According to Ekwueme (2025), Artificial Intelligence increases productivity through automation and predictive analytics in Nigerian manufacturing companies. Such techniques help procurement personnel in their supplier management and sourcing.

D. Supply Chain Optimization

It involves ensuring that the processes of buying, manufacturing, stockpiling, delivering, and distributing the goods in question are well coordinated to achieve organizational effectiveness and reduce costs. The modern-day supply chain uses Artificial Intelligence technology for optimizing functions such as forecasting, collaboration among suppliers, visibility of inventory, coordination of logistics, and consumer responsiveness. According to Ekwueme (2026), effective supply chain management has greatly increased the ability to manage inventory and provide excellent customer service. The introduction of Generative AI in supply chain management has made these easier through decision support, automated documentation, demand forecasting, and supplier intelligence. Recent research suggests that incorporating Generative AI improves procurement efficiency through automated supplier

assessment, demand forecasting, spend analysis, risk assessment, and contract management (Wamba et al., 2024; Min, 2024).

E. Empirical Review

Abaku, Edunjobi, and Odimarha (2024) titled Theoretical Approaches to Artificial Intelligence in Supply Chain Optimization: Pathways to Efficiency and Resilience. This study used a qualitative review methodology by analyzing recent literature on the applications of artificial intelligence in supply chain management. The study collected secondary data from peer-reviewed journals and other academic sources on AI-based supply chain optimization. The results showed that artificial intelligence has a significant impact on demand forecasting, inventory management, supplier relationship management, logistics planning, and efficiency. In addition, the research has shown that AI increases organizational resilience through predictive analysis, real-time decision-making, and proactive risk management in the supply chain process. Conclusion of the study and policy suggestions: The research concluded that AI technology is vital for improving supply chain efficiency and organizational competitiveness. Therefore, the organization needs to invest more in AI infrastructure, develop employees' digital skills, and create a digital transformation strategy to maximize AI benefits.

Amusa et al. (2024) conducted research on "Digital Procurement 4.0: Rethinking Government Procurement Systems through AI-Powered Ethics, Compliance, and Optimization." The study used a qualitative research approach based on documentary analysis of government procurement systems, policies, existing literature in AI governance, and digital procurement procedures. Ethical and governance challenges in the adoption of Artificial Intelligence in procurement systems were explored. The results showed that although AI makes the procurement process more efficient and compliant, many ethical issues remain, including biased algorithms, lack of transparency in decision-making, data privacy, cybersecurity risks, accountability, and legal compliance. The study found that a lack of an ethical governance framework may lead to a lack of trust among stakeholders in AI-enabled procurement decisions.

Eteyen (2024) conducted a study on "Digital Transformation in Supply Chain Management: Utilizing Artificial Intelligence and Big Data for Improved Efficiency in the Nigerian Oil Industry." This study used a descriptive research design and collected secondary data from published materials, government reports, industry magazines, and empirical research on the adoption of Artificial Intelligence in the Nigerian oil and gas supply chain. The results revealed that poor digital infrastructure, unstable power supply, high costs of implementing AI systems, a lack of Artificial Intelligence experts, poor data quality, cybersecurity concerns, and organizational reluctance toward technology adoption are major barriers to AI adoption in Nigerian supply chains. The study also highlighted that weak regulatory structures and inadequate investment in digital technologies hinder the application of AI across organizations. The study found that although Artificial Intelligence is likely to revolutionize supply chain operations in Nigeria, infrastructural, financial, technological, and institutional challenges still hinder its application. The study suggested that to facilitate the adoption of Artificial Intelligence, more investments should be made in digital infrastructure and improved Internet access, among other recommendations.

F. Theoretical Framework

1) Technology Organization Environment (TOE)

The TOE framework was formulated by Tornatzky and Fleischer in 1990. According to the TOE framework, three key elements are needed for the successful implementation of technology innovation: technology readiness, organizational readiness, and the environment. Although the TOE model predates the advent of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI), it remains one of the most common theoretical frameworks.

From a technological perspective, advanced Generative AI capabilities include intelligent automation, natural language processing, predictive analytics, supplier intelligence, and decision support systems, among others. By reducing manual labor, improving supplier assessment, and streamlining contract management, Generative AI has made procurement processes more efficient. Research shows that firms using Generative AI have achieved operational excellence, high customer satisfaction, greater automation, and effective supply chain management. Nonetheless, there are technology-related constraints, such as data quality, cybersecurity, and integration, that have limited its implementation. Organizational factors include management commitment, employee competence, IT infrastructure, governance, and organizational readiness. Companies with high digital skills have an advantage of being able to integrate Generative AI into procurement processes. Factors that limit successful integration of Generative AI into procurement include low employee competence and weak organizational change management.

II. Method

Asika (2009) states that research designs are usually termed the structure of an investigation that attempts to determine variables and the relationships among them. In this research, the research design used is systematic

qualitative content analysis. Consequently, the data sources are newspapers, textbooks, journals, articles, and other written texts on generative AI for supply chain optimization, opportunities, and ethical risks in procurement. Thus, the research design is secondary.

III. Results and Discussion

A. Opportunities that Generative Artificial Intelligence can offer for optimizing supply chains

GenAI offers tremendous potential to improve supply chain performance through better decision-making, operational efficiency, and business resilience. Unlike conventional AI, which processes only structured data, GenAI can process both structured and unstructured data, enabling organizations to predict demand and stock requirements and anticipate supply chain disruptions. Moreover, GenAI performs repetitive procurement tasks such as supplier assessment, contract negotiation, purchase order creation, and expenditure analysis, so procurement specialists can focus on strategic decisions. GenAI technology enables better management of supplier relations by providing real-time analysis of supplier performance, market trends, and procurement risks. Furthermore, GenAI helps create scenario plans by modeling different sourcing and logistics scenarios, enabling responses to unforeseen events such as supply chain disruptions. In the context of Nigeria, implementing GenAI is expected to improve supply chain visibility, increase competitiveness, shorten procurement cycles, and support digital transformation across various sectors of the economy. As companies increasingly adopt intelligent technologies, GenAI will likely play a pivotal role in building resilient, sustainable, and innovative supply chains in an environment defined by uncertainty and evolving markets (Abaku et al., 2024; Eteyen, 2024; McKinsey & Company, 2024).

B. Generative Artificial Intelligence opportunities optimizing supply chains

Table 1. Researchers' conceptualization (2026)

Generative Artificial Intelligence	opportunities optimizing supply chains
09 Solution Digital Brain	Decision making platform
Coupa Supply Chain Modeler	Procurement & Risk
DAT UP	Conversational Intelligence
Interos Ai Supply Chain Risk Platform	(Resilience & Compliance)
Fourkites Real-Time Visibility	(Logistics & Route Optimization)

The above shows the list of Generative Artificial Intelligence in supply chain and their opportunities

C. Ethical concerns related to the use of Generative AI in procurement

While Generative Artificial Intelligence offers several advantages for procurement processes, implementing AI in procurement practices also presents ethical challenges that must be addressed. The first challenge is algorithmic bias, which occurs when AI systems develop discriminatory recommendations because of biased or incomplete training datasets. Bias can significantly affect supplier selection, contract assessments, and purchases. Data privacy and confidentiality are also equally important; transparency matters because most GenAI models are "black boxes," making it difficult for procurement officers to understand and justify the mechanisms behind recommendations. Explainability issues may undermine accountability if AI use in decision-making leads to financial losses or disputes in the procurement process. In addition, over-reliance on AI systems will likely reduce human control and, therefore, increase the risk of misleading recommendations or information. Hence, companies need to develop strong AI governance frameworks that stress transparency, human involvement, ethics, security, and regulation for responsible and reliable AI integration in the procurement process (Amusa et al., 2024; McKinsey & Company, 2024).

Table 2. Researchers' conceptualization (2026)

Generative Artificial Intelligence (For supply chain)	Ethical challenges
09 Solution Digital Brain	Algorithmic bias: AI decisions may favor certain suppliers, regions, or business priorities based on biased training data
Coupa Supply Chain Modeler	Lack of transparency: Managers may not understand why AI recommends certain decisions, creating accountability problems
DAT UP	Data ownership issues: Questions arise over who owns and controls the data collected from conversations and logistics interactions.
Interos Ai Supply Chain Risk Platform	False risk identification: AI may incorrectly classify suppliers as risky, damaging reputations and business relationships.
Fourkites Real-Time Visibility	Job displacement: Automation of routing and logistics decisions may reduce demand for some human roles

The above shows ethical concerns and problems when applying generative AI in the supply chain

D. The challenges affecting the adoption and implementation of Generative Artificial Intelligence for supply chain optimization in Nigerian firms

Although there is much to be gained from Generative Artificial Intelligence, certain elements still make integrating this technology challenging for companies in Nigeria. A lack of digital infrastructure is one of the major obstacles to using GenAI in business. This includes electricity problems, poor broadband access, and a lack of adequate cloud computing capacity for GenAI. Another issue is the scarcity of professionals with skills in artificial intelligence, data analytics, and supply chain digitalization. Moreover, low-quality data, fragmented databases, and poor data governance reduce the effectiveness of AI solutions because they require high-quality data to produce accurate results. A lack of willingness among organizational members to adopt new technologies, along with a low understanding of GenAI's strategic importance, slows the transition because many employees fear losing their jobs. In addition, there is evolving regulation in Nigeria, which is why the problem of AI governance arises (Eteyen, 2024; Hassan, 2024; Abaku et al., 2024)

The above results indicate that generative AI offers opportunities for the supply chain through better decision-making, greater operational efficiency, and organizational resilience. The main advantage of using GenAI over traditional AI is its ability to analyze not only structured but also unstructured data, allowing organizations to forecast demand accurately and manage inventories to anticipate supply chain issues. It supports proactive planning, lowers operational costs, and reduces stock shortages and overstocking, aligning with the study by Abaku, Edunjobi, and Odimarha (2024). In the study on the "Theoretical Approaches to Artificial Intelligence in Supply Chain Optimization: Pathways to Efficiency and Resilience," The results showed that Artificial Intelligence greatly increases demand forecasting, inventory management, supplier management, logistics planning, and operational efficiency.

According to the results, the ethical problem that comes with using Generative AI in procurement is bias, since these algorithms can make recommendations based on biased or incomplete datasets. This can create an unfair advantage in selecting suppliers and contracts. Another ethical issue that may arise from applying Generative AI in procurement is data privacy and confidentiality. Similarly, transparency is also crucial, as most GenAI models operate as "black box systems," rendering it hard for procurement experts to comprehend and explain how certain recommendations were made, as stated in the works of Amusa, Mike-Olisa, Ogeawuchi, Abayomi, and Agboola (2024), which examined "Digital Procurement 4.0: Redesigning Government Contracting Systems with AI-Driven Ethics, Compliance, and Performance Optimization." Their study showed that although AI has improved procurement performance and compliance, serious ethical issues remain, including algorithmic bias, lack of transparency in automated decisions, data privacy, cybersecurity, accountability, and legal compliance.

Generative AI can optimize procurement by improving decision-making and enabling real-time risk mitigation, but it also poses several ethical risks. One of the most important is that platforms such as 09 Solution Digital Brain can have algorithmic biases that lead to discriminatory vendor choices. Socio-cultural realities and regional nuances in developing markets such as Nigeria can compound this risk, as certain groups may feel excluded by biased historical data (Okezie, 2021). Moreover, the "black box" nature of tools such as Coupa creates transparency problems that affect managerial accountability for automated decision-making and can lead to financial disagreements. Data ownership issues in conversational tools and generative learning processes also pose risks to confidentiality and corporate privacy (Obikezie et al., 2023). Also, predictive platforms such as Interos can identify risks that may be false and tarnish supplier reputation. Automating logistics tracking systems will also increase job losses, and the workforce must proactively develop the skills required to meet those job requirements (Onyiorah, 2025). To fill these gaps, organizations need to adopt a flexible structure by leveraging internet technologies and effective risk management frameworks (Emeasoba et al., 2026; Oguejiofor & Onyiorah, 2021). Increasing digital marketing, entrepreneurship education, and technical literacy is critical to navigate automated supply chains efficiently while keeping pace with global competition (Oguejiofor et al., 2022; Okoro et al., 2025).

The findings above also show that the problems identified in the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in optimizing supply chain management in Nigerian companies are in agreement with the findings of Eteyen (2024) in the study titled "Digital Transformation in Supply Chain Management: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence and Big Data for Enhanced Efficiency in the Nigerian Oil Sector". The findings revealed that the major factors hindering the efficient use of AI in Nigerian supply chains include inadequate digital infrastructure, unstable electricity supply, high implementation costs, a lack of AI experts, poor data quality, security threats, and failure to integrate AI within the organization. It was also revealed that a lack of proper regulation and investment in digital technology constrains the use of AI

IV. Conclusion

The incorporation of Generative Artificial Intelligence in supply chain management offers many advantages, from increased efficiency to better decision-making, improved forecasting accuracy, enhanced procurement activities, and greater resilience. Unfortunately, companies in Nigeria face several challenges that limit their ability to incorporate generative artificial intelligence into supply chain management. In addition, ethical issues such as algorithmic bias, data privacy, and accountability must be addressed to ensure AI is adopted responsibly. As a result, companies should put in place a strong AI governance framework, build digital capabilities, and adopt ethical practices to maximize the advantages of Generative AI and minimize the risks involved.

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If ethical approval was not required, provide a clear justification in accordance with applicable regulations or institutional guidelines. Additionally, state whether consent for publication was obtained where relevant, particularly if any identifiable information is included.

Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

AI was used only to improve readability and language under strict human oversight; AI did not generate any content, ideas, analyses, or conclusions.

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