



Embracing Artificial Intelligence for Smart, Inclusive and Responsive Parliamentary Affairs: An Assessment of Parliament of Zimbabwe in Nurturing Modern Participatory Democracy

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Abstract: This article assesses the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Parliament of Zimbabwe, exploring the potential to create a smart, inclusive, and responsive legislative institution. Despite growing interest, there is limited empirical research on the systematic adoption and impact of AI in Zimbabwe's parliamentary context. This study sought to close that gap in knowledge by examining current AI capabilities, strategic frameworks, and challenges within Zimbabwe's parliamentary processes, situating them within national development goals and regional imperatives. The desk research approach was used, guided by the Digital Governance Model (DGM), and Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), with secondary data collected through a review of official documents, journals, newspaper articles, internet sources, and blogs related to AI and parliament processes/functions at the Parliament of Zimbabwe. The thematic method was used to analyze the data. Findings highlight that the Parliament of Zimbabwe has made the resolve to embrace AI into its legislative processes as demonstrated by the clarity in expected outcomes, incorporation of legal and ethical safeguards, sensitizing its staff and parliamentarians, and fostering strategic partnerships with Universities, Corporates and CSOs. However, Parliament of Zimbabwe is still to come up with a policy framework to guide the process. Furthermore, Parliament of Zimbabwe's AI adoption initiative is threatened by limited digital infrastructure, uneven levels of digital literacy among legislators and staff, lack of local AI models customised for Zimbabwean parliamentary processes, and absence of structured, long-term ecosystem. Recommendations focus on Parliament of Zimbabwe accelerating the development and implementation of an AI policy framework with clear regulatory guidelines, enhancing its digital infrastructure and software (AI models that are customised to Zimbabwe's parliamentary processes), continuous training of staff and parliamentarians, and establishment of a structured, long-term digital ecosystem. It concludes that the Parliament of Zimbabwe is poised to harness AI to become a smart, inclusive and responsive institution. Strategic integration of AI, supported by a well-articulated policy framework, capacity building, ethical governance, and long-term digital ecosystem, can revolutionise legislative processes and citizen participation, advancing Zimbabwe's development aspirations in the digital era.

Key words: Artificial Intelligence, Parliament of Zimbabwe, smart governance, inclusive legislature, AI adoption, legislative processes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has disrupted and transformed governance processes worldwide, offering opportunities to enhance legislative efficiency, transparency, and citizen participation. The Parliament of Zimbabwe (PoZ) stands at a pivotal moment to embrace AI as a strategic accelerator aligned with national visions such as Vision 2030, NDS1, NDS2, regional frameworks like the SADC Parliamentary Forum's agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Africa Union (AU) Agenda 2063 (Mutingwende, 2025a). This article assesses the current state of AI integration in Zimbabwe's Parliament, identifying opportunities and challenges for creating a smart, inclusive, and responsive parliamentary institution.

Zimbabwe's government has recognized AI as a core component of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), embedding it within the Zimbabwe Government Enterprise Architecture (ZGEA) that spans business, application, data, and technology layers as pronounced by Mutingwende (2025a). This is also evident in pronouncements made by some members of the Executive arm, of the Zimbabwe government. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, the President of Zimbabwe and current Chair of the

SADC PF, for instance, addressing Speakers of Parliament, Members of parliament (MPs), and regional stakeholders, on the opening of the 57 Plenary Assembly of the SADC Parliamentary Forum, in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, underscored the importance of AI in governance processes (Magadza and Makubaza, 2025). Mnangagwa passionately appealed to regional parliaments to embrace AI as a tool for transformation and enhancement of democratic governance, inclusivity and efficiency (Magadza and Makubaza, 2025). This therefore, makes it easier for PoZ to adopt AI as it has support at the highest level in the country.

In the context of all this, the question that the researchers sought to answer, therefore, was: *How can the Parliament of Zimbabwe effectively embrace and integrate Artificial Intelligence to become a smart, inclusive, and responsive institution that enhances legislative efficiency, democratic participation, and modern participatory diplomacy, while addressing the ethical, infrastructural, and governance challenges inherent in AI adoption?*

The paper will be structured as follows: section one introduces the article by highlighting the main aim and how the article will contribute to the integration of Artificial intelligence in the PoZ, exploring the potential to create a smart, inclusive, and responsive legislative institution.; the second section reviews related literature; while the theoretical foundation that guides the study is in section three. Section four describes the research methodology that was used in the study. The findings and discussion then follow in section five. Recommendations are then proffered. Finally, the conclusion to the study is presented in section seven.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI), was originated by Stanford Professor John McCarthy in 1955, defining it as “the science and engineering of making intelligent machines” (MISA Regional, 2024, p.6). AI is made up of sub-programs, notably Machine Learning (ML), Narrow AI, and Human-level AI or Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) (MISA Regional, 2024). ML is the part of AI that looks at how computer agents can enhance their perception, knowledge, thinking, or actions based on experience or data, while Narrow AI is an intelligent system focused on a single aspect like speech or facial recognition, with Human-level AI, or AGI, pursues largely intelligent, context aware machines needed for effective social chatbots or human-robot interaction, which is currently the only type of AI that exists in the real world (MISA Regional, 2024). A graphical representation of the relationship between data, ML and AI adapted from Shambira (2020) is shown below.

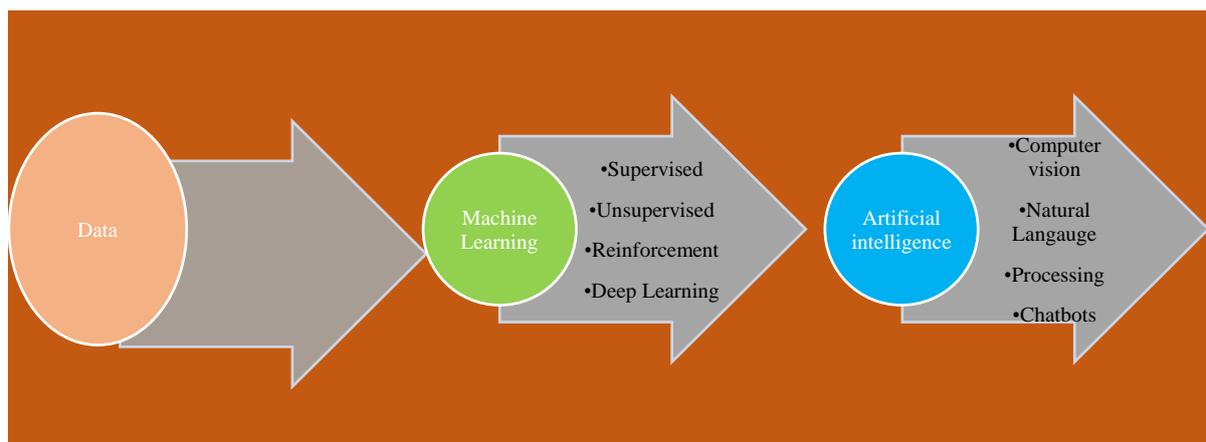


Figure 1. Relationship between AI, ML and Data

Note. Adapted from *Exploring the adoption of AI in the Zimbabwe Banking Sector*, by Leonard Shambira, 2020, *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, 5(6):110-124.

The relationship between data, ML, and AI applications is intertwined. Data serves as the foundation of ML, AI systems, and decisions about data have a bearing on the performance of higher-level systems. Rather than working directly with data, artificial intelligence applications typically rely on a machine learning algorithm to translate data into usable predictions. Finally, artificial intelligence applications use those predictions to make, plan, or do something in the real world.

According to Latimore (2018), ML is a fulcrum technology of true AI. Latimore notes that ML occurs when computers alter their parameters/algorithms when exposed to new data without reprogramming from humans. The biggest benefit of ML identified by Latimore is that, a computer processes more data than any human could ever, and then using that data to teach itself by recognizing patterns that, which again, would be difficult for humans to detect, it will then be able to formulate insights that previously would have remained undiscovered. However, Latimore cautions that a number of ML and AI systems may give incorrect or unsuitable answers if used in contexts different from their training environment.

Shambira (2020, p.110) states that AI technology aids computers to imitate human intelligence so that they “can learn, sense, think and act in order to achieve automation and gain analytic insights”.

Transitioning of AI from the Western settings to African contexts poses challenges in terms of deficient AI readiness, architecture, and misuse (MISA Regional, 2024).

2.2. Parliamentary Functions

PoZ core functions are legislative, representational and oversight (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025a).

2.3. Legislative Function

Section 117 (2) (b) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe mandates Parliament and the President to make laws to ensure peace, order and good governance in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe, 2013). Although Parliament has the primary role to make laws it can also delegate this authority to other bodies and authorities. Parliament’s legislative supremacy is exercised through the passing of bills (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025a). Bradley and Ewing (2011) note that democratic governance requires that an elected assembly that represents the citizenry be constituted and bestowed with power to make laws that bind the entire population, State, all institutions and agencies of government.

2.4. Oversight Function

Oversight describes the legislatures’ role, formally or informally, to strategically watch, and scrutinise how the executive implements laws, applies the budget, and observes statutes and the constitution (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025a). This function also extends to the performance and regulations compliance of government agencies in Zimbabwe (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025a; Veritaszim, 2016).

Section 119(2) and (3) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe grant PoZ the power to ensure that the Constitution is upheld and that all state institutions at whatever level act constitutionally and in the national interest, making them accountable to Parliament (Zimbabwe, 2013). Section 299 also extends the oversight role of Parliament to the Office of the President, especially regarding state revenues and expenditures (Zimbabwe, 2013).

PoZ also has its own standing orders that empower it to carry out its oversight role. Standing Order No. 20(d) of the PoZ allows portfolio committees to monitor, investigate, inquire into, and make recommendations on government departments and related matters (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025c).

2.5. Representation Function

Section 119 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe gives Parliament the authority promote democratic governance and see to it that all government institutions act in the national interest, as expected by its citizens (Zimbabwe, 2013).

Members of Parliament (MPs) air the views of their constituencies during parliamentary debates and communicate major national development issues back to them (ZLHR,). MPs, according to ZLHR (2017), are duty bound to ensure that there is effective two-way communication with the electorate to ensure that their pain points are addressed and feedback is given timeously.

2.6. Artificial Intelligence and Parliamentary Functions

The adoption of AI to enhance parliamentary processes and functions begins with a well-articulated policy framework. Lakhno (2023) describes policy framework as a generalized structure, usually summarized in documents or recognized practices, which provide institutions with a guiding architecture for actioning policy across one or several policy areas. The establishment of a broad AI policy framework is vital for capturing the transformative potential of AI in developing countries (Folorunso, et al., 2024), such as Zimbabwe.

Shakemore Chinofunga suggests capabilities that PoZ could enhance by adopting AI as:

- **Enhanced legislative research:** AI tools scrutinize bills, follow amendments, foresee legislative outcomes, and make comparisons of international best practices;
- **Automating Oversight:** Real-time data dashboards avail evidence-based oversight of ministries and agencies;
- **Public Engagement:** Citizens can connect to Parliament through Chatbots and virtual assistants, while sentiment analysis ascertains public reaction to policy;
- **Administrative Efficiency:** Schedules, documents, reports and debate transcriptions are automated shortening the time spent on the activities; and,
- **Transparency and Accountability:** AI tools are able to comprehend legislation, and formulate simplified summaries which makes access by the public easier and convenient (Mutingwende, 2025a).

The AI tools that a parliament chooses and uses determine gains that will be obtained therefrom. Chinofunga identifies some AI tools that could be used by PoZ to become a smart, inclusive and responsive institution (Mutingwende, 2025a).

Table 1. AI tools that PoZ could adopt to become a smart, inclusive and responsive institution

AI tool	Capability
ChatGPT, Claude.ai, Gemini, DeepSeek, Microsoft Copilot	Generation of content and simulating policies
Otter.ai	Transcribing debates
Mentimeter	Interactive engagement with citizens
Google Drive / Dropbox	Enhance security, scalability, storage and sharing of data

Note. Adapted from *Overview of AI capabilities in parliamentary processes: A new vision for Zimbabwe’s digital parliament*, by Brian Adonis Mutingwende, 2025a.

(<https://spikedmedia.co.zw/overview-of-ai-capabilities-in-parliamentary-processes-a-new-vision-for-zimbabwes-digital-parliament/>).

According to Tarisai Mutangi AI tools can assist parliaments in expediting drafting of bills, model laws, and ensuring that there is consistency, legal conformance, or current referencing, as they are able to analyse large data sets. This ultimately improves output and minimises human error in generating legal text (Mutingwende, 2025b).

Citizens are also able to interact with Parliamentarians and provide feedback on bills or consultations, government behaviour, such as spending, implementation of laws, or administrative decisions, in real-time through AI-enabled Chatbots (Mutingwende, 2025b). This makes parliamentary processes to be more accessible, inclusive and accountable (Mutingwende, 2025b). Predictive analytics and real time updates also help parliamentarians to proactively perform their oversight function (Mutingwende, 2025b).

Mutangi also cited legislations and Judiciaries that have adopted AI with transformative success (Table 2).

Table 2. Legislations and Judiciaries that have adopted AI and the benefit realised

Parliament/ Judiciary	AI tool	Benefit realised
Kenya’s Judiciary	speech-to-text AI	-Transcribing court proceedings - saving time and backlog -Technology can also be used to record parliament proceedings
Brazil’s Congress	Ulysses	-scans proposed bills, and, -alerts MPs of duplicate or unconstitutional clauses
Estonia Government	e-government	-automates legal compliance checks in minutes.
South Africa’s Parliament	ML (trials)	-sorting thousands of submissions received during public consultations
Canada Parliament	Legaltech platform	-suggests wording based on past laws, -improves consistency and lucidity.
European Parliament Archives Unit	Software solutions	-to enable the analysis of large amounts of archived data

Italian Senate	AI services based on ML and Deep Learning	-classification of laws and amendments, -similarity checks and, - the use of markup elements (tags)
Finnish Parliament's Future Committee	AI	-Conduct Parliament Hearing

Note. Adapted from *Regulation addresses challenges associated with artificial intelligence*, by Byron Adonis Mutingwende, 2025b, June 3. (<https://spikedmedia.co.zw/re...>), *European Parliament, Historical archives*, by European Parliament, 2022. URL: (<https://historicalarchives.europarl.europa.eu/home.html>), *ITTIG-CNR*, Lincoln, 2016. (URL: <https://ittig.github.io/Lincoln/>) and *Artificial intelligence (ai) in parliaments- preliminary analysis of the eduskunta experiment*, by F. Fitsilis, *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 27 (2021) 621–633.

Strategic partnerships between PoZ, and institutions of higher learning, as well as corporates, and civil society organisations (CSOs) could help in ensuring that AI adoption achieves the desired outcomes. Kenneth (2024) asserts that when parliaments collaborate with experts from academic institutions, technology companies, and civil society organisations specialising in artificial intelligence, in their transitioning journey to AI-enabled legislative processes, they tend to enhance knowledge sharing and gain access to cutting-edge research that informs policy-making related to AI technologies.

Regulation of AI has also come under the spotlight in view of the risks associated with it. Mutangi, addressing the 57th Plenary Assembly Session of the SADC PF, implored SADC PF aligned legislators to formulate regulations to connect AI and legal technology to inject efficiency and effectiveness in parliamentary processes (Mutingwende, 2025b). Mutangi says that unregulated AI can diminish public trust, compromise security, and possibly lead to inadvertent consequences (Mutingwende, 2025b). Technology, he argues, should aid democracy and not diminish it (Mutingwende, 2025b).

3. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The literature reviewed shows that PoZ can benefit immensely by adopting AI to enhance its constitutionally mandated legislative, representative and oversight functions. However, there is need for PoZ to be aware of the impediments that may inhibit the successful adoption of AI into its architecture. In that regard, the Digital Governance Model and Technology Adoption Model were chosen to guide the study.

3.1. Digital Governance Model

The Digital Governance Model (DGM) puts digital technologies at the center of public administration by infusing organizational cultures formed outside government spheres under the influence of information technologies on the Internet (Kosorukov, 2017). The DGM combines principles of disorder and cyber-utopianism in the early years of the Internet and also principles, which inspire the movements to safeguard open data and digital citizens' rights (Kosotukov, 2017). The DGM was chosen to anchor the research as it aptly points to how PoZ can embrace AI to enhance and expedite its processes using open data, and internet, while putting safeguards to protect citizens’ digital rights.

3.2. Technology Adoption Model

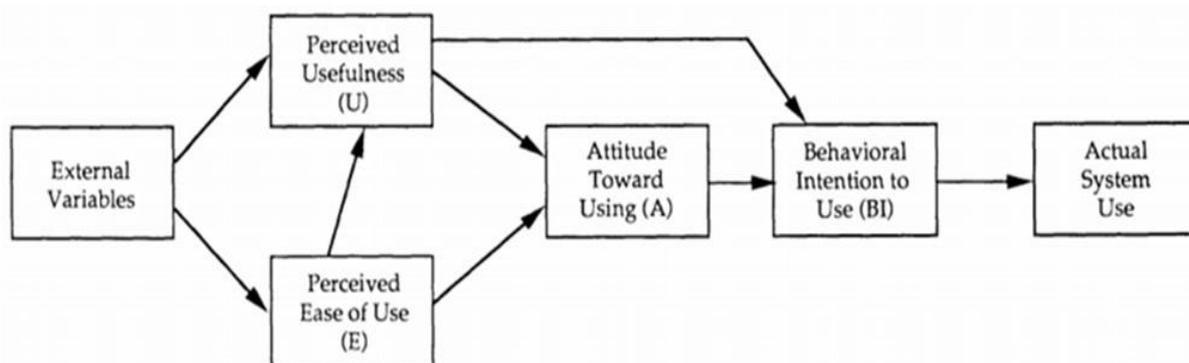


Figure 2. *Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use of the Technology Adoption Model*

Note. From *what is Technology Acceptance model*, by John James, 2023, June 26

<https://www.enablersofchange.com.au/what-is-the-technology-acceptance-model/>

The TAM (Figure 1) was introduced by Fred Davis in 1986 and hinges on the idea that our orientation towards technology revolves around two key factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (James, 2023).

Perceived usefulness describes the extent to which we believe that making use of technology will improve our performance or realise our goals, while perceived ease of use notes the extent to which we think that using a technology will be easy and straightforward. This theory was also found suitable to guide this research as it points to two factors that are critical in determining PoZ staffs' intention to use a technology, and ultimately foresee their actual usage behaviour. James (2023) asserts that when people believe that a technology is valuable and can easily be used, they are more likely to adopt and use it.

4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This research used the desk research approach to scrutinise official documents, scholarly works, reports and internet sources on how PoZ could adopt AI to enhance the performance of its constitutionally mandated functions. The desk approach entails collecting information and data from sources that already exist, such as journals, books, reports, articles, websites, and other published materials (Kiely, 2025). This approach was suitable to the study as it provided researchers with insights into the interaction between AI and Parliamentary functions, with a view to seeing how PoZ could adopt AI to make it smart, inclusive and responsive so as to nurture modern participatory democracy. The Desk research approach enabled researchers to pull important data for the study from already existing sources faster and cost effectively (Kiely, 2025).

Data was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis refers to a qualitative research method used by researchers to methodically organize and scrutinize intricate sets of data so as to identify themes that can capture the tales available in the account of data sets (Dawardi (2020). *First*, the researchers familiarized themselves with the data obtained. This was meant to fully acquaint the researchers with the whole data set (Chamberlain, 2015), as well as bring out the richness in the data. *Second*, codes of the data set were then generated. These helped the researchers to further understand the nature of the data generated in the study. *Third*, potential themes were then crafted. *Fourth*, the potential themes were then subjected to refinement. *Fifth*, the final themes were then formulated taking cognizance of the narratives the themes presented.

5. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The research philosophy that guided this analysis is Pragmatism. Pragmatism puts emphasis on practical outcomes and real effects as important components of meaning and truth (Prime, 2024). As a paradigm, pragmatism when conducting research puts focus on those things that work rather than researchers limiting themselves to a single philosophical posture (Prime, 2024). It aligns well with this research as it enables the assessment of AI's role in enhancing participatory democracy by allowing flexibility in synthesising diverse sources of data such as policy documents, theoretical frameworks and case studies to come up with actionable insights (IPU, 2015; Savaget, Chiarini and Evans, 2019). In addition, it also enabled the researchers to assess AI's impact on inclusivity and responsiveness within PoZ's context.

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was used as the research design for the analysis of the potential of using AI to modernise PoZ by making it smart, inclusive and responsive. The SLR is a research methodology that gathers, identifies and critically analyses available research studies such as articles, conference proceedings, books, and dissertations, in an orderly manner (Correra-Rivera et al., 2022). The SLR stipulates the criteria for inclusion/ exclusion, structures data extraction (using themes), and critically appraises the sources of data for partiality, significance and vigor (Correra-Rivera et al., 2022). This design was suitable for this analysis as it enabled comprehensive and transparent coverage of existing evidence on how AI can transform PoZ to make it smart, inclusive and responsive.

7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides a summary of some of the key findings of the research. In the study, the potential of PoZ incorporating AI into its parliamentary processes is interrogated against how other legislations

have walked this road. The study findings were examined using the thematic technique of data analysis, where several codes were used to recognise themes from the study results. The following subthemes emerged and will concurrently be used to discuss the findings.

7.1. Policy Framework

PoZ is still to develop a policy framework to guide the adoption of AI into its legislative processes. Of interest is that PoZ has already drafted a roadmap for AI adoption into its legislative processes that includes collaboration with its proposed partners, namely Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services, all Universities in Zimbabwe, Private sector tech partners ie Econet, Net One, and UNDP Zimbabwe and UNESCO -for technical assistance and funding support, commencing in July 2025 to February 2026 onwards (Table 3) (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025d).

Table 3. Implementation Plan for AI adoption into legislative processes at PoZ

Phase	Key Activities	Timeline
Phase 1: Launch	-Convening of the Post-Plenary Assembly workshop on AI -Signing of MoUs between Parliament and Universities -Adoption of a joint research agenda	July – August 2025
Phase 2: Capacity Building	-AI training for Parliament Staff and Members of Parliament	September – October 2025
Phase 3: Prototyping	-Organization of innovation hackathons (In the context of Parliamentary processes, including in the Parliament of Zimbabwe, hackathons can be adapted as collaborative, time-bound innovation challenges where diverse teams, comprising University Lectures/students, tech experts, civil society, Legislators and Parliamentary staff come together to rapidly develop practical solutions to improve legislative, oversight and public engagement functions). -Development of student-led AI solutions -Pilot testing of prototypes within Parliament of Zimbabwe	October – February 2026
Phase 4: Scaling	-Refinement and national rollout of successful prototypes -Knowledge exchange with SADC Parliaments, African Union and the Inter- Parliamentary Union	February 2026 onward

Note. Concept note for post-SADC PF Assembly symposium on academic-legislative collaboration for Artificial Intelligence integration into Parliamentary processes, by Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025d.

The absence of a policy framework on AI adoption at PoZ is contrary to the assertion made by Folorunso et al., (2024) that the establishment of a broad AI policy framework is vital for capturing the transformative potential of AI in developing countries.

7.2. Expected Outcomes

PoZ is clear on what it intends to gain by incorporating AI into its legislative processes. This is aptly stated in its concept note that it intends to use at a workshop to sensitise its key staff and Parliamentarians on the subject. PoZ asserts that by incorporating AI it can:

- Streamline legislative drafting;
- Automate record-keeping and Hansard production;
- Enhance Parliamentary oversight through data analytics;
- Improve citizen engagement via intelligent digital platforms; and,
- Strengthen policy research through AI-enabled information synthesis (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025d).

This agrees with the following legislations’ adoption of AI into their legislative processes (Table 4).

Table 4. Legislations’ adoption of AI into legislative processes

Legislation	AI tool adopted	Benefit derived	Source
Brazil’s Congress	Ulysses	Streamline legislative drafting	Mutingwende, 2025b

Brazilian Chamber of Deputies;	AI	Automate record-keeping and Hansard production	McCaffrey, 2024
Argentina Chamber of Deputies; Estonia Parliament	HANS	Automate record-keeping	McCaffrey, 2024
United States Congress	AI	Enhance Parliamentary oversight through data analytics	McCaffrey, 2024
South Africa’s Parliament	ML (trials)	Improve citizen engagement via intelligent digital platforms	Mutingwende, 2025b
Brazilian Chamber of Deputies	Ulysses	Strengthen policy research through AI-enabled information synthesis	McCaffrey, 2024
Taiwan	vTaiwan (virtual Taiwan) and Pol.is platforms	Improve citizen engagement via intelligent digital platforms	McCaffrey, 2024

7.3. Safeguards

PoZ is alive to the importance of having legal and ethical safeguards in its journey of integrating AI into its parliamentary processes (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025d). This is supported by sentiments echoed by Tarisai Mutangi that if AI systems are implemented short of regulation to enforce accountability, they could endanger human life, privacy, and ethical standards (Mutingwende, 2025b). Mutangi further warns that unregulated AI diminishes public trust, threatens security systems and potentially lead to inadvertent consequences (Mutingwende, 2025b). Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly, of Zimbabwe also lends weight to the importance of having adequate safeguards to ensure successful adoption of AI in PoZ’s parliamentary processes. Mudenda argues that AI can transform parliamentary processes to enhance democracy, inclusivity and efficiency, if the conduct does not compromise ethical standards (Mapako, 2025). In his address to a *Mini-Symposium on “Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for Effective and Efficient Parliamentary Processes,”* Mudenda cautioned that if parliament adopts AI without putting in place robust safeguards this could weaken the democratic principles that it seeks to achieve (Mapako, 2025). Mudenda specifically identified data privacy, algorithmic bias, digital divide and sovereignty as issues that needed to be considered in this regard. To that end, Mudenda assured attendees to the Symposium that PoZ’s AI adoption would adhere to the IPU’s Guidelines for AI in Parliaments (2023) which require legislative bodies to be transparent, protect data privacy, prevent algorithmic discrimination and maintain human oversight (Mapako, 2025). Furthermore, Mudenda emphasised that PoZ would build its AI capabilities as well as ensuring that AI is modelled to accommodate the local realities.

7.4. Capacitation

PoZ’s concept note, which will be presented at a follow-up and sensitisation workshop to be held with its key staff, and parliamentarians, having successfully hosted the 57th Plenary Assembly of the SADC PF in the Victoria Falls city from 31 May to 7 June 2025, and the AI Replica-Symposium hosted at the New Parliament Building in Mt Hampden, underscores PoZ’s resolve to embrace AI into its legislative processes (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025d). The initiative seeks to bridge the gap between policy ambition and practical implementation of AI in parliamentary processes by anchoring the process in research, innovation and capacity building. Expertise from Universities will be solicited to co-create sustainable, locally relevant AI solutions for Zimbabwe’s parliament, leveraging their strong Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) capabilities. This seeks to avoid the risks associated with AI raised by Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, Speaker of the National Assembly, of Zimbabwe that AI generally powered from foreign information sources were likely to misinform, perpetuate biases, spread hate and undermine the country’s sovereignty (Mapako, 2025).

Insights obtained from a Replica Symposium on AI adoption held by PoZ for its staff and parliamentarians as well as the 57th Plenary Assembly meeting of the SADC PF highlighted key challenges impending practical AI implementation in Zimbabwe’s Parliamentary processes (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025d). These include:

- Limited digital infrastructure;
- Uneven levels of digital literacy among legislators and staff;

- Lack of local AI models customized for Zimbabwean parliamentary processes; and,
- Absence of a structured, long-term ecosystem (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025d).

7.5. Strategic Partnerships

PoZ also realises the need to tap into the vast reservoir of AI knowledge and infrastructure possessed by institutions of higher learning, and corporates in Zimbabwe. It has, therefore, targeted these institutions to provide specialized AI knowledge and infrastructure depending on their respective capabilities (Table 5).

Table 5. *Envisaged AI Knowledge Sharing Partnerships between PoZ and Institutions of Higher Learning in Zimbabwe*

Institution	Specialized Role in Parliamentary AI Integration
University of Zimbabwe (UZ)	Legal and constitutional frameworks for AI governance in Parliament.
Harare Institute of Technology (HIT)	AI systems design for document automation and legislative tools.
Bindura University of Science Education (BUSE)	Showcase and scale TITUS AI for legislative research and Hansard automation.
Africa University (AU)	Global and Pan-African frameworks on AI in governance.
Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT)	Design user-friendly AI interfaces for MPs, including dashboards and chatbots.
Lupane State University	Develop AI platforms for rural outreach and feedback.
Solusi University	Focus on ethics and community-driven AI deployment strategies.
Great Zimbabwe University (GZU)	Support AI tools for participatory governance and civic engagement.
Midlands State University	Prototype testing in Committees and oversight support.
National University of Science and Technology (NUST)	Lead applied AI research for data mining, big data governance and cybersecurity in legislative systems.
Econet – AI Division	Provide AI infrastructure, smart platforms, and data systems for Parliament.

Note. From *Concept note for post-SADC PF Assembly symposium On academic-legislative collaboration for Artificial Intelligence integration into Parliamentary processes*, by Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2025d.

This thrust is supported by Kenneth (2024) who asserts that when parliaments collaborate with experts from academic institutions, technology companies, and civil society organisations specialising in artificial intelligence, in their transitioning journey to AI-enabled legislative processes, they tend to enhance knowledge sharing and gain access to cutting-edge research that informs policy-making related to AI technologies.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above findings, the study recommends that PoZ harnesses AI to become a smart, inclusive, and responsive institution by:

- Accelerating the development and implementation of an AI policy framework with clear regulatory guidelines;
- Enhancing its digital infrastructure and software (AI models that are customised to Zimbabwe’s parliamentary processes),
- Continuously training staff and parliamentarians, and
- Establishing a structured, long-term digital ecosystem.

9. CONCLUSION

The Parliament of Zimbabwe is poised to harness AI to become a smart, inclusive and responsive institution. Strategic integration of AI, supported by a well-articulated policy framework, capacity building, ethical governance and long-term digital ecosystem, can revolutionise legislative processes and citizen participation, advancing Zimbabwe’s development aspirations in the digital era.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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CODE AVAILABILITY

Not Applicable

CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION

Not Applicable

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

Data is readily available in the public domain and was transparently obtained. The corresponding author is amenable to assist with any data required by interested parties through his e-mail contact.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors collaboratively worked on the conceptualisation, data gathering, analysis, compilation, and editing of the paper.

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