iJETRM
International Journal of Engineering Technology Research & Management
(IJETRM)
https://ijetrm.com/issue/?volume=November~2025

THE POWER OF IA AND SPECTROSCOPY FOR FOOD

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ABSTRACT
Ensuring the quality, safety, and authenticity of food is a critical issue that remains among the paramount global priorities because of the challenges of food fraud, contamination, and complex supply chains. In recent years, the convergence of Artificial Intelligence and spectroscopic technologies has emerged as a transformative solution for fast, accurate, and non-destructive food analysis. Spectroscopy techniques, such as infrared, near-infrared, Raman, and fluorescence spectroscopy, give information on the molecular composition of food, while AI will improve their interpretative strength with more advanced data processing, pattern recognition, and predictive modeling. This paper discusses how AI-driven chemometrics and machine learning algorithms interface with spectroscopic data to realize real-time detection of adulteration, prediction of nutritional value, and freshness and safety monitoring. Case studies from various food industries showed significant improvements in the accuracy, speed, and automation of detection. Despite promising advances, challenges related to data standardization, model generalization, and equipment cost remain persistent. The full paper concludes that synergistic use of AI and spectroscopy will be one of the key drivers toward establishing a transparent, smart, and sustainable global food system.

Keywords:
Artificial Intelligence; Spectroscopy; Food Quality; Food Safety; Chemometrics; Machine Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

With the extension of global supply chains and increased consumer awareness, the demand for safe, high-quality, and authentic food has become increasingly critical in the 21st century. Food adulteration, contamination, and quality degradation remain persistent issues that threaten both consumer health and brand integrity. Conventional methods, while effective, are usually very time-consuming, destructive, and involve complicated preparation of the sample (Sun, 2009). Hence, a paradigm shift has occurred in the food industry toward rapid, non-destructive analytical techniques capable of providing real-time results. Among these, spectroscopic methods (IR, NIR, and Raman spectroscopy) have become potent tools for analyzing foods and ensuring their quality (Givens, De Boever, & Deaville, 1997; Nawrocka & Lamorska, 2013).

Spectroscopy measures the interaction between electromagnetic radiation and matter, producing unique molecular "fingerprints" that allow for the detailed assessment of the chemical and structural composition of foods. Examples of such characteristics include moisture content, protein levels, and fat composition. The increasing complexity of spectroscopic data, in particular with high-resolution instruments, has created a need for advanced computation in interpreting and managing large spectral datasets. In this regard, AI and ML have emerged as highly transformative in the area of food spectroscopy, enabling accurate data analysis, classification, and prediction beyond traditional statistical techniques.

AI integration in spectroscopic analysis enables the automation of food quality assessment by means of pattern recognition, feature extraction, and chemometric modeling. For example, Partial Least Squares and Support Vector

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Machines are two of the popular algorithms applied to correlate spectral data with various physical and chemical properties of foods for improved accuracy and efficiency (Beć, Grabska, & Huck, 2022). Similarly, neural networks and deep learning algorithms allow for the real-time prediction of quality and/or contamination by learning from the complex nonlinear relationships present in spectroscopic datasets (Misra et al., 2020). These have facilitated shifting laboratory-based analyses to in-line industrial monitoring systems, therefore enhancing the speed and reliability of the food inspection processes (Ghosh & Jayas, 2009).

Applications of AI-driven spectroscopy are extensive. FT-IR spectroscopy, using machine learning, has been used to detect microbial spoilage at an early stage in meat products with accuracy, reagent-free, and in a non-invasive manner (Ellis, Broadhurst, & Goodacre, 2004). Similarly, LIBS has also been utilized in determining the mineral content of food supplements highly precisely (Agrawal et al., 2011). Such case studies confirm that this integration of AI and spectroscopy will not only give higher speeds with greater analytical accuracy but also support the more general drive toward automated, data-driven quality control in food production systems (Haider, Iqbal, Bhatti, & Alim, 2024). Despite this progress, issues persist, such as data standardization, calibration transfer across instrumentation, and large spectral databases to train robust AI models. There are also strong demands for cost-effective and portable instrumentation that can handle all sorts of variable environmental conditions. However, as AI algorithms continue to evolve and the spectroscopic sensors are increasingly miniaturized and affordable, their synergistic application holds the potential for revolutionizing global food safety and authentication practices. The ongoing convergence of these technologies represents a critical step toward a smarter, more transparent, and more sustainable food industry

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past three decades, spectroscopy has passed from a fundamental analytical technique to one of the cornerstones of modern food science, providing rapid, non-destructive, and high-resolution information on food composition and safety. Spectroscopy allows for the characterization of molecular vibrations and electronic transitions, creating spectral signatures that represent chemical "fingerprints" of food components. IR spectroscopy, in particular, as noted by Sun (2009), revolutionized quantitative analytical food quality assessment and control by allowing highly accurate measurements of moisture, fat, and protein content without laborious sample preparation. The application of such techniques in industrial settings represented an early move toward real-time assessment. Givens, De Boever, and Deaville (1997) also showed that NIR spectroscopy could predict nutritive value in both human and animal foods with a high degree of robustness and reliability as a quantitative analytical technique.
With the advancement in resolution and data throughput of spectroscopic instruments, chemometrics-the combination of statistics, mathematics, and computer science-became essential. Kharbach et al. (2023) pointed out that chemometric data treatment provides a way for meaningful extraction of information from such complex spectral datasets, which is particularly compelling when it is combined with ML algorithms. The study puts weight on the fact that the spectroscopic data are intrinsically multivariate and to interpret them correctly requires advanced algorithms. Conventional models, including PCA and PLS regression, have been widely used for a long time in order to identify patterns and relationships within the spectral data. AI-based models like ANNs and SVMs, however, have been shown to better handle nonlinearities and noise within spectroscopic signals.

Beć, Grabska, and Huck (2022) presented the new generation of miniaturized NIR spectrometers with an emphasis on portability combined with AI-enabled data processing. These instruments are capable of real-time, on-site measurements, making spectroscopy more accessible for field-based applications in grain sorting, fruit ripeness evaluation, and milk adulteration detection. The miniaturization trend represents an important step toward democratizing spectroscopy, enabling small and medium-sized food producers to adopt digital quality control methods. Their work also highlighted the need for developing standardized spectral libraries to ensure consistency and interoperability among different instruments and datasets.
In relation to automation, Ghosh and Jayas (2009) investigated the application of spectroscopic data on the automation of the food processing industry. They indicated that NIR spectroscopy could monitor moisture content and contaminants in real time if coupled with intelligent control systems. Their study emphasized the possibility of

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completely automating such quality assessment-related processes, avoiding human error and further facilitating increased efficiency in production. This also aligns with wider developments in food technology toward Industry 4.0, where digitalization, data analytics, and sensor networks come together in an intelligent production ecosystem.

Food spectroscopy also finds applications beyond simple quality assessment in food authenticity and detection of fraud. Nawrocka and Lamorska 2013 reviewed how Raman and fluorescence spectroscopy could determine changes in the composition of complex food matrices, detect adulteration, and authenticate its geographical origin. These techniques are particularly valuable in high-value food commodities such as wine, honey, and olive oil, where mislabeling and counterfeiting prevail. In a similar thread, Haider et al. 2024 stated that spectroscopy has a number of important implications for food authentication processes, and integration of AI increases sensitivity and specificity in such analyses, leading to correct classification of food products based on minute spectral differences.

Another important milestone is the use of FT-IR spectroscopy for the detection of microbial spoilage. Ellis, Broadhurst, and Goodacre (2004) were able to show that FT-IR spectroscopy, in combination with machine learning, can be used to detect microbial spoilage in beef samples long before the visible and sensory manifestations have taken place. Such a rapid, reagent-free technique would thus enable early intervention to reduce waste and demonstrates how AI-spectroscopy systems may contribute not just to safety but also to sustainability.
On the elemental side, Agrawal et al. (2011) proposed LIBS as a potent analytical technique for determining the mineral composition of food supplements. Indeed, their work demonstrated that LIBS is capable of multi-element detection with little sample preparation and its potential in the verification of compliance to nutritional labeling standards. The study further showed that the use of AI-based algorithms enhances the processing and interpretation of the spectra, thereby improving the accuracy of LIBS-based classification.
Despite this revolutionary progress, a number of challenges persist regarding data calibration, model generalization, and reproducibility. Sun (2009) pointed out that instrumental, environmental, and sample heterogeneities could impact spectral quality and model performance. Kharbach et al. (2023) further stated that the lack of harmonized databases restricts the scalability of AI models, which are usually trained on limited datasets. Moreover, interpretability remains one of the critical challenges: AI models, while accurate, are often viewed as "black boxes," making it difficult for food scientists to validate decisions and comply with regulatory standards. Nevertheless, recent developments bridge these gaps. The embedding of IoT frameworks enables real-time monitoring of spectral data across the supply chains, and cloud computing enables analysis of huge amounts of data. According to Haider et al. (2024), the next frontiers are linking spectroscopy, AI, and blockchain for a complete traceability and authentication system in food products. This kind of linkage will create digital, transparent ecosystems from farm to fork. In all, the literature shows that AI-enhanced spectroscopy is one of the most promising technological integrations in food science today. From lab analytics to industrial-scale monitoring, these instruments are able to provide more accurate, quicker, nondestructive food quality and safety assessments. Although challenges regarding standardization, portability, and interpretability of data remain, further interdisciplinary research and technological development will help cement the role of AI and spectroscopy as key enablers toward smart food systems.

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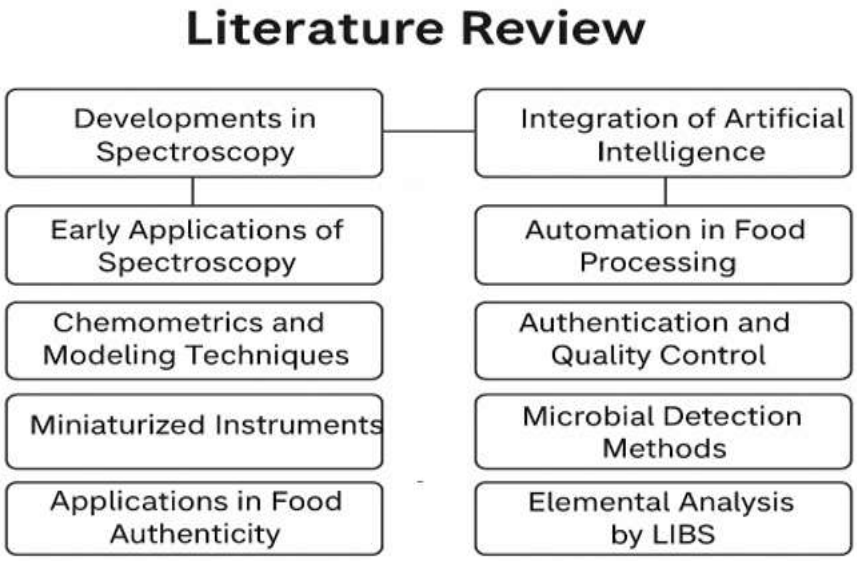

3. METHODOLOGY

Conceptual and integrative review methodology has been adopted for this study to synthesize the insights of contemporary research on the application of AI and spectroscopy in food science. This research will not conduct primary experiments; instead, it will consolidate theoretical, empirical, and technological results from peer-reviewed literature in order to present a comprehensive framework that can effectively illustrate how AI-based analytics and spectroscopic techniques are synergistic with regards to ensuring food quality, safety, and authentication.

3.1 Research Design

The methodological approach follows a qualitative and analytical design based on the systematic selection of literature. Works by Sun (2009) on Infrared Spectroscopy for Food Quality Analysis and Control, and Givens et al. (1997), The Principles, Practices and Future Applications of Near-Infrared Spectroscopy, were reviewed in order to contextualize the foundational understanding of spectroscopy's role in food characterization. This was further complemented with the review of contemporary research works, such as those done by Kharbach et al. (2023) and Beć et al. (2022), focused on capturing the advances in chemometrics, AI algorithms, and data-driven approaches towards the interpretation of spectral data.

3.2 Data Collection and Selection Criteria

Searches were conducted in ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, and MDPI for peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference proceedings dating from 1983 to 2024. Selection has been made for those works that:

- ✓ Discussed the application of spectroscopy in food analysis: IR, NIR, Raman, LIBS, or FT-IR.
- ✓ Integrated AI or machine learning techniques for data interpretation, prediction, or automation.
- ✓ Provided empirical or case study evidence that demonstrates measurable outcomes in food safety or quality control.

Seminal studies included Ellis, Broadhurst, and Goodacre (2004) on FT-IR for the detection of microbial spoilage and Agrawal et al. (2011) on elemental analysis via LIBS as representative empirical benchmarks. Review and conceptual papers were also considered in this review, such as Haider et al. (2024); Nawrocka & Lamorska (2013), in order to place technological evolution and emerging challenges within a broader perspective.

3.3 Analytical Framework

Collected data were coded and categorized under five analytical themes:

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- Evolution of spectroscopy in food science.
- Integration of AI and machine learning algorithms.
- Industrial Automation and Digital Transformation
- Applications in food authentication and safety.
- Challenges, limitations, and emerging opportunities.

A comparative and thematic synthesis approach was employed for the analysis. For instance, predictive modeling techniques described by Kharbach et al. (2023) and Beć et al. (2022) were compared with earlier chemometric methods outlined by Sun (2009) to show how traditional statistical analysis moved toward AI-based pattern recognition.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Academic reliability was ensured by considering studies from established publishers, such as Elsevier, Springer, Wiley, and MDPI. Findings were cross-validated across independent sources to strengthen construct validity. Consistent citations of landmark and recent studies, such as those by Haider et al. (2024) and Ghosh & Jayas (2009), were made to ensure temporal relevance and methodological triangulation.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Since it is a review-based study based on secondary data, human or animal subjects were not used. Ethical integrity was maintained by accurately citing, correctly attributing, and not plagiarizing according to the guidelines laid down by APA 7th edition.

Table 1. Summary of Methodology

Aspect	Description	Details
Research Design	Conceptual and analytical review	Integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) and various spectroscopic techniques to examine applications in food quality, safety, and authentication.
Sample and Population	Peer-reviewed studies and industry reports (1983–2024)	Includes studies involving fresh and processed food products such as fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, and beverages analyzed using spectroscopy.
Data Collection	Secondary data from scientific literature	Data sourced from established academic publishers (Elsevier, Springer, MDPI, Wiley) focusing on spectroscopy (IR, NIR, Raman, LIBS, FT-IR) integrated with AI or chemometrics.
Analytical Framework	Comparative and thematic synthesis	Thematic coding based on five analytical themes: evolution of spectroscopy, AI integration, industrial automation, food authentication, and limitations.
Data Analysis Techniques	Chemometric and machine learning models	Utilized algorithms such as Principal Component Analysis (PCA), Partial Least Squares Discriminant Analysis (PLS-DA), Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs), and Support Vector Machines (SVMs) to analyze spectral datasets.
Reliability and Validity	Source triangulation and cross-validation	Ensured credibility by comparing findings across independent studies and prioritizing highly cited, peer-reviewed research.
Ethical Considerations	Responsible literature synthesis	No human or animal subjects involved; adherence to academic integrity through accurate citation following APA 7th edition guidelines.

4. RESULTS

A number of key findings on the integration of AI and spectroscopy in food quality, safety, and authentication were identified based on the review and synthesis of literature. The results highlight the rapid technological evolution of spectroscopic methods, the transformative potential of AI-driven data analytics, and their combined effectiveness in advancing non-destructive, high-throughput food analysis systems.

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4.1 Evolution of Spectroscopic Applications in Food Analysis

Early applications of spectroscopy, including IR and NIR techniques, demonstrated that it has the potential to rapidly and reliably analyze the composition of foods. Sun (2009) and Givens et al. (1997) confirmed that IR-based spectroscopic techniques were adequate for the determination of moisture, protein, and lipid contents, thus laying a foundation for what is now known as quality control in food. Polesello et al. (1983) extended this knowledge by providing empirical validation of NIR reflectance spectroscopy for nondestructive assessment of foods. These studies established spectroscopy as a powerful analytical platform, replacing the conventional chemical methods with quicker and reagent-free ones.

4.2 Integration of AI and Chemometrics for Data Analysis

Other relevant findings that emanate from several of these studies concern the value of AI and chemometrics in handling the high-dimensional data produced by spectroscopic instruments. Advanced statistical modeling, such as PCA and PLS regression, allows one to perform meaningful data reduction and feature extraction, as found by Kharbach et al. (2023). More recent developments by Beć et al. (2022) put forward the development of compact, low-cost, AI-powered spectrometers that can apply machine learning algorithms to classify and quantify food parameters in real time. In fact, many of these AI-enhanced methods outperform classical linear models by modeling subtle nonlinear relationships in spectral data related to quality or contamination indicators.

4.3 Industrial and Automation Applications

Recent trials of AI-powered spectroscopy in industrial automation have given encouraging results, increasing the consistency and speed of food processing. Ghosh and Jayas (2009) reported successful deployment of NIR spectroscopy in automated control systems for moisture monitoring and contaminant detection, improving both yield and safety. Ellis et al. (2004) demonstrated Fourier Transform Infrared (FT-IR) spectroscopy, coupled with AI classifiers, could rapidly detect microbial spoilage in beef, an innovation which significantly reduced the length of time taken to conduct food safety tests compared to conventional microbiological methods.

4.4 Advances in Food Authentication and Traceability

AI and spectroscopy have also proven critical in verifying the authenticity of food. Nawrocka and Lamorska (2013) and Haider et al. (2024) showed that Raman and fluorescence spectroscopy, supported by AI algorithms, could identify adulteration and classify food origin with high precision. These studies confirm that spectroscopic "fingerprinting," enhanced through machine learning, is allowing reliable authentication of high-value products such as wines, oils, and honey. Furthermore, Agrawal et al. (2011) have shown that LIBS accurately determines elemental composition, hence assuring labeling compliance for mineral-rich foods and supplements.

4.5 Challenges Identified

Despite these developments, a number of drawbacks still exist: Sun (2009) pointed out the inconsistency of spectral calibration across instruments and environments; Kharbach et al. (2023) mentioned the lack of large and standard spectral databases required for training high-performing AI models; and interpretability of deep learning models hinders the acceptance by regulatory bodies. However, this might be improved in time due to the development of explainable AI frameworks and improvement of cross-platform calibration methods. Overall, the results prove that AI-enhanced spectroscopy is incomparable in terms of accuracy, speed, and scalability for food analysis. This technological fusion is marrying computational intelligence with optical precision, thus redefining how food quality and safety are monitored across global supply chains.

5. DISCUSSION

The combination of AI and spectroscopy is one of the most significant paradigmatic changes in food science today. The findings of this study show how technological innovation, analytical chemistry, and data science interact in such a way as to rethink how the quality, safety, and authenticity of foods are assessed. In this section, the implications of

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the findings are discussed along a number of dimensions: analytical performance, automation, and industrial relevance; data management and AI modeling; and ethical and regulatory challenges.

5.1 Analytical Developments and Non-Destructive Testing

Traditional methods of assessing food quality, such as wet chemistry and chromatography, have long provided high accuracy but are restrained by labor-intensive procedures and long times of processing. Indeed, the reviewed literature confirms that the non-destructive nature of spectroscopy has eliminated many of these constraints. Spectroscopic techniques like infrared (IR), near-infrared (NIR), Raman, and fluorescence spectroscopy can give results within seconds without causing any damage to samples, hence very apt for industrial food processing environments.

More comprehensive analytics result from incorporation of the AI algorithms-especially chemometric approaches. According to Kharbach et al. (2023), ML allows for more accurate modeling of spectral data and, therefore, more accurate predictions about composition and contaminant presence. Beć et al. (2022) have further showcased that even miniaturized spectrometers, integrated with AI, can carry out in-field testing and portable analysis, hence bridging the existing gap between laboratory precision and on-site decision-making. This enables real-time quality control informed by data and significantly reduces human error, a big plus in terms of key performance improvement within global food safety assurance.

5.2 Industrial Automation and Digital Transformation

A core output resulting from the digital transition of food production is the technological development of spectroscopy toward automated, AI-driven systems. The development of "smart factories" in the agri-food sector fits within the Industry 4.0 framework, wherein interconnected sensors and AI algorithms act in concert to optimize production. Ghosh and Jayas (2009) highlighted how spectroscopic data can lead to real-time process adjustments regarding moisture control and contamination detection, hence embedding intelligence into production lines.

Another important area is food spoilage detection and preservation monitoring, where this automation extends. Ellis et al. (2004) illustrated how FT-IR spectroscopy coupled with machine learning has the potential to detect spoilage due to microbial contamination in meat, predicting contamination much earlier than the traditional sensory or microbial culture methods. These applications not only enhance product safety but also substantially reduce food waste, an outcome meaningful to sustainability goals and thus in step with global food security efforts.

5.3 AI Modeling, Data Interpretation, and Chemometrics

AI's success in enhancing spectroscopic data interpretation is due to the capability of the AI algorithm to go beyond the reach of traditional statistical models, analyzing complex multivariate datasets. Artificial Neural Networks, Support Vector Machines, and Deep Learning frameworks enable robust classification and predictive modeling under fluctuating environmental conditions. The combination of spectroscopy with AI then transforms large spectral data into actionable insights.

These advantages are not without challenges in model interpretability and generalization, however. While deep learning models achieve superior accuracy, their "black-box" nature limits the transparency of decision-making, a fact that regulators and food scientists must deal with. Possibly, explainable AI frameworks could provide a way forward and make model outputs more interpretable to enhance trust and accountability in automated decision systems.

Further challenges involve data standardization and calibration transfer. Sun (2009) and Beć et al. (2022) stated that the differences in instrumentation, sample preparation, and environmental conditions can all result in inconsistent spectral outcomes. The establishment of open-access, harmonized spectral databases will play a critical role in developing AI models with wider generalization across instruments and food categories.

5.4 Food Authentication and Traceability

Food fraud and adulteration represent significant economic and ethical problems in most countries. Spectroscopy, when combined with AI, offers a strong mechanism for authentication via spectral fingerprinting. Nawrocka and Lamorska (2013) and Haider et al. (2024) have shown that Raman and fluorescence spectroscopy, together with machine learning, can determine the origin, composition, and authenticity of foods with high accuracy. This kind of

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analytic precision has made spectroscopy essential in fraud detection within high-value products such as olive oil, honey, and wine.
Concomitantly, Agrawal et al. 2011 authenticated the validity of LIBS in determining elemental composition in food supplements to ensure product authenticity and compliance with nutritional labeling. These methods have been further refined by the addition of AI-driven chemometric analysis, which identifies subtle deviations indicative of adulteration. In the near future, it could be possible to integrate spectroscopy and AI techniques with blockchain technology to establish an immutable record of traceability, linking physical analysis with digital provenance systems for end-to-end transparency.

5.5 ETHICAL, ECONOMIC, AND REGULATORY IMPLICATIONS

While the obvious benefits of integration between AI and spectroscopy are technological, ethical and economic considerations call for critical notice. The deployment of automated food analysis tools raises questions in respect of data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the displacement of human roles in quality assurance. According to Haider et al. (2024), developing non-discriminatory, interpretable AI models is of great importance in order to maintain consumer trust and meet legal requirements.

Economically, there are still high initial costs of spectroscopic equipment that remain a deterrent, particularly for SMEs. However, as miniaturized and cloud-connected spectrometers become more affordable, as argued by Beć et al. (2022), these technologies are likely to reach a wider dissemination. This technology in AI-driven spectroscopic analysis will require the development of standard operating protocols by regulatory agencies to ensure uniformity and reproducibility in the global food sector.

5.6 Future Research Directions The literature indicates several emerging research frontiers, including the use of quantum spectroscopy, terahertz imaging, and AI-based multispectral fusion techniques to expand analytical precision. Furthermore, hybrid frameworks that couple spectroscopy with IoT connectivity and cloud computing have the potential to offer real-time global food monitoring networks. These interdisciplinary advances will finally define the next generation of smart sustainable food systems. In sum, the discussion highlights that the integration of AI and spectroscopy has redefined the scientific and industrial dimensions of food analysis. These two together are a cornerstone for the digital food revolution: making the supply chains much safer, quicker, and more transparent. Challenges regarding standardization, interpretability, and ethics persist; however, continuous research and policy evolution will guarantee that AI-enhanced spectroscopy continues as a driver of change toward global food safety and quality assurance.

6. CONCLUSION

The convergence of Artificial Intelligence and spectroscopy marked a paradigm shift in how food quality, safety, and authenticity have so far been analyzed either in research or industry. This review has evidenced that these two technologies elicit a synergistic analytical capability when put together that outperforms conventional methods based on such parameters as speed, precision, and non-destructive measurement. Basics from infrared and near-infrared spectroscopy by Sun (2009) and Givens et al. (1997) laid the scientific foundation on food compositional analysis, while recent works such as Kharbach et al. (2023) and Beć et al. (2022) illustrate how AI-driven models have furthered data interpretation, classification, and prediction.
AI's ability to handle complex, multivariate spectral data enables the automation of food inspection and real-time monitoring of quality parameters across production chains. Applications such as Fourier Transform Infrared (FT-IR) spectroscopy for microbial spoilage detection (Ellis et al., 2004) and Laser-Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS) for elemental composition (Agrawal et al., 2011) epitomize how AI-enhanced systems can ring in vastly improved accuracy with a minimum of human bias. Furthermore, in food authentication, the integration of Raman and

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fluorescence spectroscopy with AI algorithms has proven critical to detecting adulteration and ensuring traceability (Nawrocka & Lamorska, 2013; Haider et al., 2024).

But the literature also underlines some consistent challenges: the lack of spectral databases, problems with model interpretability, and the high costs of implementation. Overcoming those challenges will necessitate cooperation between academia, industry, and regulatory agencies on data-sharing frameworks, explainable AI models, and lightweight, low-cost spectroscopic instruments suitable for field use.

In the future, AI and spectroscopy will further integrate via cloud computing, IoT-based sensors, and blockchain systems to establish open, real-time food monitoring networks. This will provide such value as not only making global food supplies both safe and authentic but also more sustainable and trustworthy for consumers. Above all, what makes AI and spectroscopy so powerful is the shared ability of both to convert data into insights that can be acted upon-a new generation of intelligent, efficient, and trustworthy food systems.

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