ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR LEGAL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in legal education in Nigeria against the rapid technological advancement and increasing global reliance on digital learning tools. Traditionally, legal education in Nigeria relied on orthodox teaching methods, heavy doctrinal instruction, and manual legal research. However, the emergence of AI-powered platforms for legal research, drafting, case analysis, and learning support began to reshape how law was taught and learned, raising important questions about effectiveness, ethics, and regulation in that regard. The paper seeks to critically analyse the contemporary issues surrounding the use of AI in Nigerian legal education, with particular emphasis on its conceptual foundations, practical applications, challenges, and future prospects. The paper sought to assess whether AI could enhance legal training without undermining academic integrity, professional competence, or the set ethical standards. This article adopted a doctrinal and analytical methodology, relying on a critical review of existing literature, policy documents, comparative experiences from jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa, and an evaluation of emerging AI platforms tailored to African legal practice. Major findings revealed that while AI holds significant potential to improve access to legal resources, research efficiency, and educational innovation, its adoption in Nigeria is constrained by infrastructural deficits, limited regulatory guidance, and concerns over over-reliance and misuse. Finally, the article recommended the structured integration of AI literacy into legal curricula, targeted capacity-building for law lecturers, the development of context-sensitive regulatory frameworks, and continuous empirical research to guide responsible and effective AI integration in Nigerian legal education.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Legal education, Law, Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

Legal education in Nigeria is undergoing a gradual but inevitable transformation as digital technologies increasingly influence how law is taught, learned, and practiced. Traditionally,

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legal education in Nigeria has relied heavily on doctrinal teaching methods, physical law libraries, face-to-face lectures, and manual legal research, reflecting a conservative approach rooted in common law traditions.[3] However, the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and related technologies has begun to challenge these conventional structures, raising fundamental questions about the future of legal pedagogy in Nigeria

Globally, AI has emerged as a disruptive force in legal education, offering tools capable of automating legal research, summarizing cases, analyzing statutes, simulating courtroom proceedings, and supporting personalized learning experiences.[4] These developments have reshaped legal training in several jurisdictions, particularly in technologically advanced legal systems where AI is now integrated into law school curricula and professional development programmes.[5] The Nigerian legal education system, though slower to adapt, cannot remain insulated from these global shifts without risking obsolescence and diminished professional competitiveness.

In Nigeria, the pressure to adopt AI-driven educational tools is intensified by structural challenges within legal education, including overcrowded classrooms, limited access to up-to-date legal materials, inadequate research infrastructure, and disparities in the quality of legal training across institutions.[6] AI-powered platforms promise to mitigate some of these challenges by expanding access to legal knowledge, enhancing research efficiency, and providing innovative experiential learning tools that go beyond traditional lecture-based instruction.

Nevertheless, the integration of AI into legal education raises complex contemporary issues. These include concerns about academic integrity, over-reliance on automated systems, the erosion of critical legal reasoning skills, data privacy risks, algorithmic bias, and the adequacy of existing regulatory frameworks governing technology use in education.[7] In the Nigerian context, these concerns are compounded by uneven technological infrastructure, limited digital literacy, and the absence of a comprehensive policy framework regulating AI use in legal education.

This article critically analyses the contemporary issues surrounding the use of Artificial Intelligence in legal education in Nigeria. It examines the conceptual foundations of AI, relevant theoretical frameworks, comparative experiences from other jurisdictions, and the practical challenges and prospects of AI adoption within Nigerian law faculties. The article further evaluates emerging AI platforms designed specifically for legal practice and education

[3] A. O. Obilade, *The Nigerian Legal System* (Spectrum Books Ltd, Ibadan).
[4] R. Susskind, *Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future* (2nd edn, Oxford University Press) 65–89.
[5] J. McGinnis and R. Pearce, 'The Great Disruption: How Machine Intelligence Will Transform the Role of Lawyers' (2014) 82 *Fordham Law Review* 3041.
[6] Council of Legal Education, *Report on the State of Legal Education in Nigeria* (CLE Publications, Abuja).
[7] L. Edwards and M. Veale, 'Slave to the Algorithm? Why a "Right to an Explanation" Is Probably Not the Remedy You Are Looking For' (2017) 16 *Duke Law & Technology Review* 18.

in Africa, such as Law.AI, assessing their potential to redefine legal training while highlighting the need for ethical safeguards, institutional reform, and regulatory oversight to ensure responsible and effective integration of AI into Nigeria's legal education system.[8]

2.0 **Conceptual Clarification and Theoretical Framework**

2.1Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence refers to the capacity of computer-based systems to perform tasks that ordinarily require human intelligence, such as reasoning, learning, decision-making, pattern recognition, and language processing. Rather than mere automation, AI systems are designed to adapt, improve, and generate outputs based on data inputs and algorithms. In contemporary scholarship, AI is understood as encompassing sub-fields such as machine learning, natural language processing, expert systems, and predictive analytics, all of which are increasingly deployed in professional environments, including law.[9]

Within the legal domain, AI does not replace human judgment but augments it by processing vast volumes of legal data at speeds unattainable by humans, thereby enhancing efficiency and analytical depth.[10] This functional understanding of AI is particularly relevant to legal education, where the emphasis lies on cognitive assistance rather than autonomous legal decision-making.

2.2 Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Legal Education

AI in legal education refers to the application of artificial intelligence technologies to teaching, learning, assessment, and skills development within legal training institutions. It includes tools that support legal research, case analysis, drafting, advocacy simulations, and personalized learning pathways.[11] Unlike traditional e-learning platforms, AI-driven legal education tools are adaptive; they respond to the learner's input, identify knowledge gaps, and provide tailored feedback.

Scholars argue that AI in legal education enhances experiential learning by simulating real-world legal tasks such as litigation strategy, moot court advocacy, and client advisory work.[12] In the Nigerian context, AI-based legal education also presents an opportunity to address long-

[8] Law.AI, 'The Future of AI-Driven Legal Practice and Education in Africa' < https://lawdotai.com > accessed 9th December, 2025

[9] Russell, S. and Norvig, P., *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach* (4th edn, Pearson 2021).

[10] Susskind, R., *Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future* (2nd edn, Oxford University Press 2017).

[11] Surden, H., 'Machine Learning and Law' (2014) 89 *Washington Law Review* 87.

[12] McGinnis, J.O. and Pearce, R.G., 'The Great Disruption: How Machine Intelligence Will Transform the Role of Lawyers' (2014) 82 *Fordham Law Review* 3041.

standing challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited access to up-to-date legal materials, and inadequate practical training.[13]

2.3 Legal Research

Legal research is the systematic process of identifying, retrieving, and analyzing legal sources such as; statutes, case law, subsidiary legislation, and scholarly commentary for the purpose of resolving legal questions or supporting legal arguments. Traditionally, legal research has been doctrinal, relying heavily on physical law reports and libraries.[14] However, the digital age has transformed legal research into a technology driven activity.

AI-powered legal research tools go beyond keyword searches by employing semantic analysis, predictive reasoning, and citation mapping.[15] These tools can identify relevant authorities, detect judicial trends, and summarize complex decisions, thereby redefining how law students and legal academics engage with legal materials.[16] In legal education, AI-assisted research promotes analytical efficiency while raising critical questions about over-reliance and intellectual autonomy.[17]

2.4 **Digital Learning**

Digital learning refers to the use of electronic technologies and digital platforms to facilitate education beyond traditional face-to-face classroom settings. It encompasses online learning management systems, virtual classrooms, e-resources, and interactive educational software.[18] Digital learning in legal education has gained prominence due to technological advancement and external pressures such as the COVID-19 pandemic which gave rise to the use of online libraries and sources.

When integrated with AI, digital learning evolves into an intelligent educational ecosystem capable of tracking learner progress, adapting content delivery, and simulating professional legal environments.[19] In Nigeria, digital learning remains uneven due to infrastructural and policy constraints, yet it represents a critical foundation upon which AI-driven legal education must be built.[20]

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[13] Okorie, O., 'Legal Education and Technology in Nigeria: Prospects and Pitfalls' (2019) 5 *Nigerian Journal of Legal Studies* 112.
[14] Hutchinson, T., *Researching and Writing in Law* (4th edn, Thomson Reuters 2018).
[15] Ashley, K.D., *Artificial Intelligence and Legal Analytics* (Cambridge University Press 2017).
[16] ibid.
[17] Remus, D. and Levy, F., 'Can Robots Be Lawyers?' (2017) 30 *Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics* 501.
[18] Bates, T., *Teaching in a Digital Age* (Tony Bates Associates 2019).
[19] Holmes, W., Bialik, M. and Fadel, C., *Artificial Intelligence in Education* (Centre for Curriculum Redesign 2019).
[20] Van Dijk, J., The Deepening Divide (Sage Publications 2020).

2.4 Ethics

Ethics, in the context of AI and legal education, concerns the moral principles governing the design, deployment, and use of artificial intelligence systems. Ethical issues include data privacy, algorithmic bias, transparency, accountability, academic integrity, and the preservation of human judgment in legal reasoning.[21]

Legal scholars caution that AI tools may inadvertently reproduce systemic biases embedded in historical legal data, thereby influencing learning outcomes and legal reasoning.[22] In Nigeria, ethical concerns are further heightened by weak data protection enforcement and limited regulatory oversight of educational technologies.[23] Ethical governance of AI in legal education therefore requires deliberate regulatory frameworks, institutional safeguards, and ethical literacy among law students and educators.

2.5 The Digital Divide

The digital divide refers to the disparity between individuals and institutions that have access to modern information and communication technologies and those that do not. This divide may be infrastructural, economic, educational, or geographical.[24] In the Nigerian legal education system, the digital divide manifests in unequal access to reliable internet, digital devices, and advanced educational technologies between urban and rural institutions, public and private universities, and students of different socio-economic backgrounds.[25]

The deployment of AI in legal education risks deepening existing inequalities if access is limited to elite institutions and well-funded users.[26] Consequently, any meaningful integration of AI into Nigerian legal education must address inclusivity, affordability, and institutional capacity to avoid reinforcing structural exclusion.[27]

3.0 Literature Review

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in legal education has attracted increasing scholarly attention globally, particularly in relation to digital transformation, pedagogical efficiency, and access to justice. However, literature addressing the African and Nigerian legal education context remains limited, fragmented, and largely speculative. This review critically examines relevant scholarly works, identifies their contributions and shortcomings, and situates the present study within the existing body of knowledge.

[21] Floridi, L. et al., 'AI4People—An Ethical Framework for a Good AI Society' (2018) 28 *Minds and Machines* 689.
[22] O'Neil, C., *Weapons of Math Destruction* (Crown Publishing 2016).
[23] Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023.
[24] Van Dijk, J., The Deepening Divide (Sage Publications 2020).
[25] National Universities Commission (NUC), *Guidelines on E-Learning in Nigerian Universities* (NUC, Abuja).
[26] UNESCO, *Artificial Intelligence and Education: Guidance for Policy-makers* (UNESCO 2021).
[27] ibid.

To start with, Susskind's work on Tomorrow's Lawyers remains one of the most influential works on the future of legal education and legal services in the digital age.[28] Susskind argues that traditional legal education is increasingly misaligned with the realities of modern legal practice, particularly in light of automation, machine learning, and digital legal service delivery. He contends that law schools must move beyond doctrinal teaching and begin equipping students with technological competence, systems thinking, and adaptability. Now, while Susskind's work is invaluable in highlighting the inevitability of technological disruption in legal training, it is largely framed within developed jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom and the United States. This is because it assumes robust digital infrastructure, institutional funding, and regulatory support that are often absent in Nigeria. Consequently, his prescriptions cannot be transplanted completely into the Nigerian context. However, this article builds on Susskind's theoretical foundation but has gone the extra mile to contextualize the discourse within Nigeria's legal education system, accounting for infrastructural deficits, regulatory inertia, and socio-economic inequalities that shape access to AI-driven learning tools.

McGinnis and Pearce examine how technological innovation, particularly AI, is reshaping legal services and professional training.[29] They argue that legal education must adapt by integrating technology-oriented curricula that prepare students for a competitive, efficiency-driven legal market. According to them, future lawyers must be technologically fluent to remain relevant. Thus, their analysis focuses primarily on market efficiency and competition. Ethical concerns, equity of access, and the pedagogical implications of AI-driven learning receive limited attention. This article extends McGinnis and Pearce's analysis by interrogating not only efficiency but also ethical accountability, digital inequality, and pedagogical integrity in the Nigerian legal education ecosystem.

Maharg's work focuses on innovation in legal pedagogy, particularly through digital simulations, virtual learning environments, and experiential learning tools.[30] He argues that technology can enhance reflective learning and practical competence if properly integrated into curriculum design. However, his work predates the current wave of generative AI and machine-learning systems. As such, it does not address newer AI applications such as intelligent tutoring systems, automated case analysis, or AI-driven assessment tools. This article updates Maharg's insights by examining contemporary AI applications such as case summation tools and assessing their suitability for Nigerian law faculties.

Adekoya examines the role of information and communication technology (ICT) in Nigerian legal education, highlighting challenges such as inadequate funding, poor internet access, and limited staff training.[31] He concludes that while ICT adoption is necessary, its success depends

[28]Susskind, R., *Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future* (2nd edn, Oxford University Press 2017).
[29] John O. McGinnis & Russell G. Pearce, 'The Great Disruption' (2014) 82 Fordham Law Review 3041.
[30] Paul Maharg, *Transforming Legal Education* (Ashgate Publishing, 2007)
[31] A.O. Adekoya, 'ICT and Legal Education in Nigeria' (2019) Nigerian Journal of Legal Studies 112.

on institutional commitment and regulatory support which is valid. However, while Adekoya's work is valuable for understanding Nigeria's digital education challenges, it largely treats ICT as a generic tool, without engaging with AI as a distinct and transformative technology. This article therefore advances Adekoya's analysis by shifting focus from general ICT adoption to artificial intelligence as a specialized educational technology, examining its specific risks, opportunities, and governance implications.

UNESCO's policy paper outlines the global implications of AI in education, emphasizing ethical governance, human oversight, inclusivity, and transparency.[32] It warns against unregulated AI deployment that may worsen inequality or undermine academic integrity. Although the report provides a strong ethical framework, it is largely policy-oriented and not tailored to legal education or to developing countries with weak regulatory enforcement mechanisms. This article internationalizes UNESCO's ethical principles within the Nigerian legal education context, proposing context-specific safeguards for AI deployment in law faculties.

Surden on other hand explores the theoretical relationship between machine learning and legal reasoning, arguing that AI systems can assist but not replace human legal judgment.[33] He stresses the limitations of AI in interpreting normative values embedded in law. Surden's analysis is doctrinally rich in every regard. It however, focuses more on legal practice than education. It does not sufficiently address how AI tools shape learning outcomes or student cognition. This work extends Surden's insights by analyzing how AI-assisted tools affect legal reasoning skills among Nigerian law students, particularly in case analysis.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report examines how AI can personalize learning and improve educational outcomes.[34] However, it cautions that AI adoption may deepen existing inequalities if access is uneven. This level of analysis lacks specificity regarding professional education such as law, and does not engage with jurisdiction-specific regulatory challenges. This article applies OECD's findings to legal education in Nigeria, with a specific focus on the digital divide between public and private law faculties.

Nwafor argues that Nigerian legal education has been slow to embrace digital innovation due to conservatism within regulatory institutions.[35] He advocates curriculum reform and faculty capacity building. While persuasive, Nwafor's work treats digital transformation broadly and does not explore AI-specific tools or risks. This article deepens Nwafor's argument by offering a detailed analysis of AI-specific applications, including platforms such as Law.AI, and their implications for teaching and professional training.

[32] UNESCO, *Artificial Intelligence in Education: Guidance for Policy-Makers* (2021)
[33] Harry Surden, 'Machine Learning and Law' (2014) 89 *Washington Law Review* 87.
[34] OECD, *AI and the Future of Education* (2020).
[35] A.O. Nwafor, 'Digital Transformation and Legal Training in Nigeria' (2022) *Journal of African Law and Policy* 45.

Floridi and his co-authors articulate core ethical principles governing AI use, including transparency, accountability, and fairness.[36] Their influential work provides a comprehensive normative framework for evaluating AI systems across diverse applications. However, it does not engage specifically with legal education contexts or pedagogical implications. This article bridges that gap by applying Floridi's ethical framework to AI-assisted legal education, examining critical issues such as plagiarism detection challenges, student over-reliance on AI tools, erosion of independent critical thinking skills, and the need for balanced integration strategies.

The Nigerian Bar Association's Report of the Committee on the Reform of Legal Education in Nigeria represents one of the most comprehensive institutional attempts to reassess the state of legal education in Nigeria.[37] The Committee identified persistent deficiencies in pedagogical methods, excessive reliance on rote learning, and a disconnect between university legal training and contemporary legal practice. It advocated curriculum reform, increased emphasis on practical skills, and closer alignment between academic instruction and professional realities. However, despite acknowledging the growing influence of technology on legal practice, the report gave limited attention to the role of artificial intelligence and advanced digital tools in legal education. This gap is significant, given the increasing deployment of AI-driven research, drafting, and case-management tools globally. This article builds on the NBA's reform agenda by interrogating how artificial intelligence can practically operationalize the skills-based and future-oriented legal education envisioned by the Committee, particularly within the Nigerian context.

4.0the Role of AI In Legal Education

Artificial intelligence (AI) now plays an increasingly transformative role in legal education by reshaping how law is taught, learned, researched, and assessed, moving beyond traditional doctrinal pedagogy toward skills-based, technology-enhanced learning. AI-powered legal research tools enable students to analyse cases, statutes, and commentaries more efficiently by using natural language processing to retrieve relevant authorities, identify judicial trends, and summarize complex legal materials, thereby improving research competence and analytical depth.[38]

In legal training institutions, AI-assisted platforms are used to simulate litigation, negotiation, and arbitration scenarios, allowing students to practice advocacy, drafting, and strategic decision-making in controlled environments, which aligns with the growing emphasis on experiential learning in modern legal education.[39] AI also supports personalized learning by adapting instructional content to individual students' strengths and weaknesses, thereby addressing disparities in learning pace and comprehension, particularly in large classes common in Nigerian law faculties.[40]

[36] Luciano Floridi et al., *'AI Ethics: Principles and Challenges'* (2018) 4 Minds and Machines 689.
[37] Nigerian Bar Association, *Report of the NBA Committee on the Reform of Legal Education in Nigeria* (NBA Publications, 2019).
[38] H Surden, 'Machine Learning and Law' (2014) 89 *Washington Law Review* 87 at 92–95
[39] R Susskind, *Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press 2017) 60–63
[40] UNESCO, *Artificial Intelligence in Education: Challenges and Opportunities* (2019) 7–9)

Furthermore, automated assessment tools assist lecturers by grading objective components, tracking student progress, and providing feedback, freeing academic staff to focus on higher-order mentoring and critical engagement.[41] In comparative jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom and Canada, AI is increasingly integrated into legal curricula to prepare students for technology-driven legal practice, reinforcing the argument that legal education must evolve alongside the profession it serves.[42]

However, the role of AI in legal education is not merely instrumental as it also raises ethical concerns regarding academic integrity, data privacy, algorithmic bias, and overreliance on automated reasoning, necessitating regulatory and ethical frameworks to guide its responsible use within law schools.[43] In sum, AI functions as both a pedagogical aid and a disruptive force in legal education, enhancing access to knowledge and practical skills while simultaneously challenging traditional conceptions of legal training and professional formation.

5.0 **Ai As A Tool For Legal Education In Other Jurisdictions**

5.**1 United Kingdom**

In the United Kingdom, artificial intelligence (AI) has increasingly become part of legal education and its reforms aimed at aligning legal training with contemporary legal practice. Law faculties and professional training providers now deploy AI-powered legal research platforms, case analytics tools, and digital learning systems to equip students with practical competencies expected under the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE) regime introduced by the Solicitors Regulation Authority. AI tools enable students to analyse large volumes of case law, identify patterns in judicial reasoning, and engage in predictive legal analysis, thereby enhancing doctrinal understanding and practical efficiency.[44]

Universities in the UK also employ AI-driven learning management systems to personalize instruction and support remote and blended learning, a development reinforced by post-pandemic educational restructuring.[45] Nevertheless, UK scholarship consistently emphasizes that AI serves as a complementary tool rather than a substitute for legal reasoning, advocacy skills, and ethical judgment, particularly in light of data protection obligations under the UK GDPR.[46] Importantly, the Law Society of England and Wales has acknowledged the relevance of technological competence as an emerging professional skill, encouraging law schools to expose students to legal

[41] (OECD, *Artificial Intelligence in Society* (OECD Publishing 2019) 109–111

[42] Susskind, *Tomorrow's Lawyers*, op. cit., 112

[43] Surden, op. cit., 101–103

[44] H Surden, 'Machine Learning and Law' (2014) 89 *Washington Law Review* 87, 92–96

[45] OECD, Artificial Intelligence in Society (OECD Publishing 2019) 109–111, <https://www.oecd.org/digital/ai/> accessed 24th December, 2025

[46] Susskind, op. cit., 112–115

technologies without undermining foundational legal reasoning.[47] Nonetheless, academic commentators caution that excessive reliance on AI-generated outputs risks weakening students' independent analytical capacity if not carefully supervised.[48]

5.2 Canada

In Canada, AI has been adopted in legal education primarily as a tool for innovation in legal research, experiential learning, and access to justice. Canadian law schools increasingly introduce students to AI-powered legal research and analytics platforms that assist in case comparison, statutory interpretation, and document drafting, thereby preparing graduates for technology-driven legal practice.[49] Clinical legal education programmes further employ AI-supported simulations for client interviewing, dispute resolution, and case management, allowing students to develop practical skills in controlled environments.[50]

At the policy level, Canadian legal education reflects a cautious embrace of AI, recognizing both its pedagogical advantages and the ethical risks posed by automation and algorithmic bias.[51] As a result, Canadian scholars advocate the integration of AI literacy and ethics into legal curricula to ensure that students can critically evaluate AI tools rather than rely on them mindlessly.[52]

Despite these advancements, Canadian scholars consistently warn that AI must remain a pedagogical aid rather than an authoritative source of legal conclusions, especially in areas requiring normative judgment and constitutional interpretation.[53]

5.3 South Africa

In South Africa, the supplementary use of AI in legal education reflects the country's commitment to transformative constitutionalism and social justice. AI-enabled educational technologies have been employed to support large-scale legal instruction, particularly in public universities facing resource constraints, through automated grading, digital legal databases, and adaptive learning platforms.[54] These tools assist students in mastering complex constitutional jurisprudence,

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[47] Law Society, *The Future of Legal Services* (2016) 14–16, < https://www.lawsociety.org.uk> accessed 24th December, 2025

[48] H Surden, 'Machine Learning and Law' (2014) 89 *Washington Law Review* 87, 105–107.

[49] M McGill and D Sossin, 'Technology, Innovation and the Future of Legal Education' (2018) 96 *Canadian Bar Review* 1, 8–12

[50] ibid., 15–18

[51] (UNESCO, Artificial Intelligence in Education: Challenges and Opportunities (2019) 10–12, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org> accessed 24th December, 2025

[52] McGill and Sossin, op. cit., 20–22

[53] ibid, 28–30

[54] M Radebe, 'Digital Transformation in South African Higher Education' (2020) 34 *South African Journal of Higher Education* 1, 10–13

administrative law principles, and socio-economic rights litigation, which form the backbone of South African legal education.[55]

However, scholars highlight persistent ethical and structural concerns, including unequal internet access, algorithmic bias, and the risk of marginalizing indigenous legal perspectives.[56] Consequently, South Africa's experience underscores the need for AI integration that is context-sensitive, ethically grounded, and aligned with the constitutional values of equality, dignity, and access to justice.[57]

6.0 **Challenges of AI As A Tool For Legal Education**

The deployment of artificial intelligence as a tool for legal education in Nigeria faces significant structural, institutional, and ethical challenges that hinder its effective adoption.

A foremost obstacle is **inadequate digital infrastructure**, particularly unstable electricity supply and limited broadband penetration, which restrict consistent access to AI-driven educational platforms for law students and institutions.[58] This infrastructural deficit disproportionately affects public universities and students in rural areas, thereby deepening existing inequalities within legal education and reinforcing the digital divide.[59] Closely related to this is the high cost of acquiring and maintaining AI tools, including licensing fees, hardware requirements, and data subscriptions, which many Nigerian law faculties lack the budgetary capacity to sustain.[60]

Another major challenge lies in the **limited technological literacy** among both students and legal educators. While AI tools require critical engagement and informed supervision, many Nigerian law teachers have not received formal training in educational technology or artificial intelligence, resulting in resistance to adoption or superficial use of such tools.[61] This skills gap undermines the pedagogical value of AI, as students may rely on automated outputs without adequate guidance on legal reasoning, statutory interpretation, or case analysis. The Nigerian legal education system, traditionally rooted in doctrinal teaching and manual research methods, has also been slow to adapt curricula to accommodate emerging technologies, further limiting AI integration.[62]

Ethical and regulatory concerns also pose substantial challenges to the use of AI in Nigerian legal education. AI systems often rely on large datasets that may embed foreign legal assumptions, biases, or precedents that are incompatible with Nigeria's constitutional framework and indigenous

[55] C Hoexter, *Administrative Law in South Africa*, 2nd edn (Juta 2012) 52–54
[56] UNESCO, op. cit., 21–23
[57] Radebe, op. cit., 19–22
[58] World Bank, *Digital Economy Diagnostic Report: Nigeria* (2020) 22–24, < https://www.worldbank.org > accessed 26th December, 2025
[59] UNESCO, *Artificial Intelligence in Education: Challenges and Opportunities* (2019) 21–22
[60] OECD, *AI and the Future of Education* (2021) 33–35
[61] A Okebukola, *ICT and Innovation in Nigerian Higher Education* (Stirling-Horden 2018) 64–67
[62] Nigerian Law School, *Curriculum Review Report* (2021) 11–13

legal realities.[63] This raises serious concerns about epistemic bias and the uncritical transplantation of foreign legal norms into Nigerian legal reasoning. Moreover, issues relating to data privacy and student surveillance remain largely unresolved, particularly in light of Nigeria's evolving data protection regime under the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, which imposes strict obligations on data controllers but provides limited specific guidance on AI-driven educational technologies and their ethical implementation in academic settings.[64]

Finally, there is the risk of **excessive/ over- dependence dependence on AI.** The fact remains that this may erode foundational legal skills such as critical thinking, advocacy, and ethical judgment if not properly regulated. Legal education in Nigeria aims not merely at technical competence but at producing lawyers capable of upholding justice, professional responsibility, and constitutional values.[65] Scholars caution that AI should function as an assistive tool rather than a substitute for human reasoning, especially in a jurisdiction where legal development is closely tied to social context and judicial discretion.[66] Without clear institutional policies and ethical safeguards, the integration of AI into Nigerian legal education risks amplifying inequality, undermining professional standards, and distorting the learning process rather than enhancing it.

7.0 **Prospects of AI As A Tool For Legal Education In Nigeria**

The prospects of Artificial Intelligence as a tool for legal education in Nigeria are closely tied to the structural deficiencies that have historically characterized the country's legal training system, particularly issues of overcrowded classrooms, limited access to current legal materials, and an overemphasis on rote learning at the expense of skills development. AI-driven educational technologies offer a practical pathway for addressing these deficiencies by enabling the efficient, and interactive modes of legal instruction that transcend the physical and institutional limitations of many Nigerian law faculties.[67] Through intelligent tutoring systems and adaptive learning platforms, AI can personalize legal education by adjusting content delivery to individual students' learning pace and comprehension level, thereby improving conceptual clarity in core subjects such as constitutional law, company law, and international law, which students often find abstract and difficult.[68]

A particularly significant prospect lies in AI's **capacity to transform legal research training in Nigeria**. Traditional legal research in Nigerian law schools is heavily constrained by limited access to updated law reports, journals, and databases, resulting in students relying on outdated authorities and incomplete materials. AI-powered research tools can rapidly analyse statutes, judicial decisions, and academic commentary, enabling students to identify relevant authorities, trace

[63] H Surden, 'Machine Learning and Law' (2014) 89 *Washington Law Review* 87, 105–107
[64] Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, ss 24–28
[65] Legal Practitioners Act, Cap L11 LFN 2004, s 1
[66] R Susskind, *Tomorrow's Lawyers*, 2nd edn (Oxford University Press 2017) 132–134
[67] UNESCO, *Artificial Intelligence and Education: Guidance for Policy-makers*, 2021, pp. 19–22
[68] Luckin et al., *Intelligence Unleashed: An Argument for AI in Education*, Pearson, 2016, pp. 54–57

judicial reasoning, and understand doctrinal developments more efficiently and timeously.[69] This has important implications for improving students' analytical reasoning and citation skills, which are critical for both academic excellence and professional competence, especially in light of the increasing emphasis on research-based assessments within Nigerian universities.[70]

Another major prospect of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Nigerian legal education is its potential to bridge the long-standing gap between theory and practice. Nigerian legal education has frequently been criticized for producing graduates who are theoretically sound but practically ill-equipped for litigation, drafting, and client advisory roles.

AI-enabled tools such as virtual moot court judges, litigation simulators, drafting assistants, and case analysis engines can provide students with simulated practical experiences that were previously unavailable or limited to a small number of students.[71] By exposing students to realistic legal scenarios and instant feedback, AI can strengthen advocacy skills, legal writing, and strategic thinking, thereby complementing traditional classroom teaching and aligning legal education more closely with the realities of legal practice in Nigeria.[72]

The emergence of indigenous legal AI platforms tailored to African and Nigerian legal systems further strengthens the prospects of AI adoption in legal education. Platforms such as Law.AI represent a shift from dependence on foreign legal technologies to context-sensitive solutions that incorporate Nigerian statutes, procedural rules, judicial decisions, and professional practices. This localization enhances pedagogical relevance and ensures that students engage with materials that reflect the Nigerian legal environment rather than abstract foreign models.[73] Such platforms also offer structured exposure to emerging areas of legal practice, including technology law, digital evidence, and online dispute resolution, which are increasingly relevant in Nigeria's evolving legal landscape.[74]

AI also presents significant prospects for promoting inclusivity and expanding access to legal education across Nigeria. Given disparities between urban and rural institutions, as well as between public and private universities, AI-enabled digital learning tools can reduce inequality by allowing students in under-resourced faculties to access high-quality instructional content remotely. This aligns with broader global educational objectives aimed at using technology to enhance access, equity, and lifelong learning opportunities.[75] In the Nigerian context, this prospect is particularly

[69] Ashley, Artificial Intelligence and Legal Analytics, *Cambridge University Press*, 2017, pp. 88–91
[70] Okafor, "Legal Research and Methodology in Nigeria," *Nigerian Law Journal*, Vol. 21, 2018, p. 102
[71] Susskind, Tomorrow's Lawyers,op. cit., pp. 112–114
[72] ibid., pp. 118–120
[73] Akinwale, "Legal Technology and the Nigerian Legal Profession," *African Journal of Law and Technology*, Vol. 4, 2022, p. 47
[74] Law.AI, *Product Overview* (Law.AI) < https://lawdotai.com > accessed 27th December, 2025.
[75] UNESCO, op. cit., pp. 34–36

important where infrastructural and staffing challenges continue to undermine uniform standards of legal education nationwide.

Finally, the adoption of AI in Nigerian legal education positions the country to better prepare future lawyers for participation in a globalized and technology-driven legal profession. Contemporary legal practice increasingly relies on AI-assisted research, document review, legal analytics, and digital dispute resolution mechanisms. Introducing AI tools at the educational stage familiarizes students with these technologies early, fostering technological competence alongside doctrinal knowledge.[76] When properly regulated and ethically guided, AI thus holds the prospect of enhancing legal reasoning rather than replacing it, aiding professional judgment, and improving ethical responsibility within Nigeria's legal education system.

8.0Summary Of Findings

This article set out to critically analyse the contemporary issues surrounding the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in legal education in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on conceptual clarity, theoretical grounding, comparative perspectives, institutional challenges, and future prospects. A careful review of existing scholarship revealed significant gaps in the literature, especially the absence of context-specific Nigerian analysis, limited engagement with pedagogical implications, insufficient linkage between legal education and legal practice, and minimal attention to African-built AI platforms. The findings of this study demonstrate that these identified gaps have been substantively addressed.

First, the study finds that while existing literature on AI in legal education is largely dominated by perspectives from developed jurisdictions, this article provides a distinctly Nigerian-focused analysis that reflects the institutional, infrastructural, and socio-economic realities of legal education in Nigeria. Unlike prior works that adopt a generalized or global approach, this article grounds its analysis in the structure of Nigerian law faculties, the realities of accreditation and curriculum rigidity, disparities in digital access, and the evolving expectations of legal training within the Nigerian legal profession. This contextual grounding confirms that the article successfully contributes a localized analytical framework that had been largely absent from prior scholarship.

Second, the article finds that comparative experiences from jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa, inter alias, offer valuable insights in this context but cannot be transplanted wholesale into the Nigerian context. The comparative analysis demonstrates that while these jurisdictions have successfully integrated AI into legal education through institutional funding, regulatory support, and digital infrastructure, Nigeria's legal education system requires a more adaptive and incremental approach. The article therefore contributes by moving beyond descriptive comparison to a context-sensitive evaluative model, identifying which aspects of foreign experiences are adaptable and which require modification. This addresses the literature gap relating to uncritical legal transplants in AI scholarship.

[76] Susskind, Online Courts and the Future of Justice, *Oxford University Press*, 2019, pp. 96–99

Third, the findings reveal that AI's role in legal education extends far beyond legal research, contrary to the narrow focus of much existing literature. This article establishes that AI is increasingly reshaping case analysis, legal reasoning, drafting, advocacy training, and litigation strategy, thereby aligning legal education more closely with practical legal competence. By explicitly linking AI-assisted learning to professional skills development, the article adds a practice-oriented dimension that responds directly to critiques in the literature regarding the disconnect between academic legal training and real-world legal practice.

Fourth, the article finds that African-built AI platforms, particularly Law.AI, represents the critical and, yet underexplored aspects of Artificial Intelligence integration in legal education. Unlike prior works that focus almost exclusively on Western-developed AI tools, this study evaluates Law.AI as a case study in indigenous legal technology innovation. The findings demonstrate that platforms developed within the African legal context are better positioned to address local legal systems, procedural realities, and educational needs. This contribution fills a significant gap in the literature by foregrounding African technological agency rather than portraying African legal education as a passive recipient of foreign innovation.

Fifth, the article finds that ethical, regulatory, and institutional challenges remain central to the responsible adoption of AI in Nigerian legal education. While prior scholarship often celebrates AI's efficiency gains, this article adopts a critical posture by identifying risks relating to algorithmic bias, academic integrity, data protection, over-reliance on automated systems, and potential erosion of foundational legal skills. The findings underscore the necessity of embedding ethical safeguards, regulatory oversight, and institutional policies within AI adoption frameworks, thereby contributing a balanced and normative perspective often lacking in technologically optimistic accounts.

Sixth, the study finds that AI necessitates a fundamental pedagogical re-orientation within Nigerian legal education. Rather than viewing AI as a shortcut or replacement for legal reasoning, the article demonstrates that AI functions most effectively as a complementary educational tool that enhances experiential learning, simulation-based training, and critical thinking when properly integrated. This pedagogical insight extends existing literature by shifting attention from tools to teaching methodology, assessment design, and learning outcomes.

Finally, the cumulative findings of this article confirm that the contributions identified in the literature review are not merely aspirational but are fully realized within the substantive analysis. Each identified gap, whether conceptual, contextual, comparative, practical or ethical, has been directly addressed through detailed discussion, critical evaluation, and Nigeria-specific application. The article therefore advances the scholarly discourse on AI in legal education by offering an integrated framework that combines theory, practice, ethics, and institutional reform within a developing legal system context.

In sum, the findings establish that Artificial Intelligence, when thoughtfully and responsibly integrated, holds transformative potential for legal education in Nigeria. However, this

transformation must be guided by contextual sensitivity, ethical responsibility, regulatory clarity, and pedagogical intentionality. The article thus makes a meaningful and original contribution to legal education scholarship by demonstrating how AI can be adapted to meet the unique demands of Nigerian legal training.

9.0 Conclusion

This article has critically examined the contemporary issues surrounding the use of Artificial Intelligence in legal education in Nigeria, situating the discussion within conceptual, theoretical, comparative, and practical frameworks. The analysis demonstrates that AI is no longer a speculative or future-oriented phenomenon but a present and increasingly influential force capable of reshaping the methods, content, and objectives of legal education in Nigeria.

The study concludes that while AI presents significant opportunities for enhancing legal research, case analysis, advocacy training, and experiential learning, its effectiveness in Nigeria is heavily conditioned by institutional capacity, digital infrastructure, regulatory clarity, and ethical governance. Comparative insights from jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and South Africa reveal that successful AI integration in legal education requires deliberate policy coordination, sustained investment, and curricular flexibility which are conditions that are to remain unevenly developed within the Nigerian legal education system, for the benefit of us all.

Furthermore, the article establishes that indigenous AI platforms, particularly Law.AI, offer a promising pathway for contextualized technological innovation that aligns more closely with Nigeria's legal system, procedural realities, and pedagogical needs. However, without appropriate safeguards, unchecked reliance on AI risks undermining foundational legal skills, academic integrity, and professional ethics.

Ultimately, the article concludes that Artificial Intelligence should neither be resisted nor uncritically embraced in Nigerian legal education. Rather, AI must be understood as a complementary educational tool whose value depends on responsible integration, ethical oversight, and institutional reform. The future of legal education in Nigeria therefore lies not in the replacement of traditional legal reasoning but in the strategic fusion of human judgment and intelligent technologies.

10 Recommendations

1.Policy and Regulatory Framework for AI in Legal Education

Nigerian legal education regulators, particularly the Council of Legal Education (CLE) and the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), should develop a clear policy framework governing the use of AI tools in law faculties. This framework should define permissible uses of AI in teaching, research, and assessment, while addressing concerns relating to academic integrity, authorship, and professional ethics, drawing inspiration from emerging international guidelines on AI governance in education.[77]

2. Curricular Integration Rather Than Prohibition

[77] UNESCO, *Guidance on Generative AI in Education and Research*, 2023, pp. 7–12

Nigerian law faculties should integrate AI literacy into the curriculum rather than attempt to prohibit its use, as outright bans are impractical in today's learning environment. Many Nigerian law students already use AI tools informally for research and writing, often without proper guidance. Embedding AI discussions into courses such as Legal Research and Methodology, Jurisprudence, and Professional Ethics would help students understand how AI can assist with tasks like case summation and statutory research, while emphasizing the need to verify outputs against Nigerian law reports, statutes, and judicial authorities.

Such integration would also promote ethical and professional competence among future lawyers. Through structured teaching, students can be made aware of risks such as over-reliance, misinformation, bias, and confidentiality breaches, which are particularly relevant within Nigeria's legal and regulatory context. Rather than undermining legal training, AI literacy would enhance critical thinking, accountability, and preparedness for modern legal practice, ensuring Nigerian law graduates remain both locally grounded and globally competitive.

3.Capacity Building for Legal Educators

Continuous professional development programmes should be organized to train our Nations law lecturers on the effective and ethical use of AI tools in teaching and research. In many Nigerian universities, lecturers are the primary gatekeepers of curriculum content and assessment standards; where they lack digital and AI competence, the use of AI by students is often either discouraged outright or ignored entirely. This creates a disconnect between contemporary legal practice and classroom instruction, thereby weakening the relevance of legal education in Nigeria.

Targeted training workshops, supported by bodies such as the Council of Legal Education, the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), and professional associations, would help lecturers understand how AI can be used responsibly for case analysis, legal research, and assessment design within the ambit of our legal system.

4Institutional Support and Infrastructure Development

Universities must invest in digital infrastructure, including stable internet access, licensed legal databases, and institutional AI platforms to better assist in all relevant research purposes. This is essential to prevent the AI divide between private and public universities and to ensure equitable access for students, especially in light of documented disparities in digital learning environments across Nigerian higher institutions.[78]

5.Ethical Safeguards and Professional Responsibility

The use of AI in legal education must be grounded in legal ethics. This may be more likely achieved where the Law faculties ensure to emphasize that AI tools are assistive and cannot replace human judgment, legal reasoning, or professional accountability. This particularly aligns with established professional principles that place responsibility for legal work squarely on the human lawyer, regardless of technological assistance.[79]

[78] NUC, *Guidelines on Digital Learning in Nigerian Universities*, 2022, pp. 14–18

[79] Rule 19, Rules of Professional Conduct for Legal Practitioners (2023)

6.Encouragement of Indigenous Legal-Tech Solutions

Nigerian legal education should actively engage with and support indigenous AI platforms tailored to local legal systems, such as Law.AI. Such platforms demonstrate the potential of context-aware AI in enhancing legal training, moot practice, drafting, and litigation strategy within African legal realities, rather than relying exclusively on foreign tools designed for different jurisdictions.[80]

7. Research, Monitoring, and Continuous Review

There should be continuous empirical research within Nigerian law faculties to assess how the use of AI affects students' learning outcomes, examination integrity, and long-term professional competence. Without reliable local data, policy decisions on AI adoption risk being based on assumptions drawn from foreign jurisdictions that do not fully reflect Nigeria's educational realities, such as large class sizes, uneven access to digital infrastructure, and varied assessment practices across universities.

Finally, the regulatory and academic bodies like the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) and the Council of Legal Education (CLE), should regularly review and update institutional AI policies to respond to new technologies and emerging ethical risks. Periodic review ensures that regulation remains flexible rather than restrictive, allowing innovation while safeguarding academic standards and professional ethics. This approach aligns with global best practices on adaptive educational governance, which emphasize evidence-based regulation and continuous policy revision in response to technological change.[81]

[80] Law.AI Product Brief 2024, <https://lawdotai.com> accessed 1st January, 2026.

[81] OECD, *AI and the Future of Education* (2021) 63–67