

AI Literacy in Legal Education and Its Role in Training Law Students for Responsible Research

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Abstract

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into legal research and education is transforming the ways in which law students' access, analyze, and apply legal knowledge. AI-powered platforms have enhanced research efficiency and broadened access to legal information. However, they also pose significant challenges, including risks of inaccuracy, ethical concerns, reduced analytical reasoning, and academic dependency. In Nigeria, where legal education largely emphasizes manual doctrinal research methods, there exists a widening gap between modern AI-driven practices and the preparedness of students to use these tools effectively and responsibly. This paper adopts a doctrinal and comparative research methodology to examine the opportunities, risks, and ethical considerations associated with integrating AI-assisted research tools into legal education. It identifies challenges in the Nigerian context, and proposes a comprehensive AI literacy framework designed to equip law students with technical competence, ethical awareness, and critical evaluation skills. The framework advocates for balanced AI integration, ensuring that students learn to utilize AI tools as research assistants rather than substitutes for independent reasoning. By offering policy-oriented recommendations for curriculum reform, faculty training, and regulatory development, this study contributes to bridging the gap between emerging AI-driven research trends and traditional legal education. It ultimately seeks to prepare law students for the demands of an AI-augmented legal profession in Nigeria.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Legal education, AI literacy, Legal research, Academic integrity

Word Count: 201

1. Introduction

The global landscape of higher education has undergone a technological revolution in the last decade, with artificial intelligence (AI) emerging as one of the most transformative forces across disciplines. AI applications now influence legal reasoning, judicial decision-making, document review, and even predictive justice (Surden, 2020). Within legal education, AI-powered tools such as automated citation systems, legal databases, and natural language models have redefined how students and researchers engage with legal information. However, the proliferation

of these tools raises critical questions about the ethical use of AI, its impact on legal reasoning, and the preparedness of students to use such technologies responsibly (Leung, 2023).

In Nigeria, the structure of legal education remains predominantly traditional, emphasizing doctrinal reasoning, manual case analysis, and textual interpretation (Oyedokun & Adeyemo, 2025). The sudden exposure of students to AI tools has created a pedagogical dilemma with respect to how legal education can embrace technological innovation without compromising analytical depth and academic integrity. Moreso, while AI technologies have revolutionized legal research globally, Nigerian law schools have been slow to integrate them into their curricula, which has created a digital divide between Nigerian law graduates and their counterparts in technologically advanced jurisdictions. Moreover, the absence of structured training on AI ethics and literacy increases the risk of plagiarism, overreliance, and misuse of AI tools (Oyedokun & Adeyemo, 2025). The lack of clear institutional policies and regulatory guidelines further compounds these challenges. This paper seeks to examine the role of AI literacy in legal education, identify the opportunities and risks associated with AI-assisted research in Nigeria, and propose an effective framework for integrating AI literacy into legal education to promote responsible research practices.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 AI in Legal Education

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a broad field of computer science dedicated to creating systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. These tasks include learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and understanding natural language (Olagbegi-Oloba & Mohammed, 2024). AI in legal education refers to the integration and study of AI technologies within the pedagogy, curriculum, and practice of training future legal professionals. This domain encompasses two primary dimensions. First, it involves using AI as a pedagogical tool to enhance the learning experience, for instance, through AI-powered platforms that provide personalized legal research exercises, simulate client interactions, or offer automated feedback on draft legal documents (Garba and Waziri, 223). Second, and more critically, it entails educating law students about the substantive law and ethical implications of AI itself. This includes examining how AI is transforming legal practice through tools like predictive coding in e-discovery and contract analysis software, while also preparing students to address novel legal challenges posed by AI,

such as issues of liability, bias, data privacy, and intellectual property (Ahmed, 2024). Ultimately, the goal of AI in legal education is to produce a new generation of lawyers who are not only proficient users of advanced legal technology but are also equipped to critically evaluate, regulate, and litigate the AI systems that are increasingly embedded in society (Nwaechefu *et al*, 2024).

2.2 AI Literacy

AI literacy refers to the constellation of skills and knowledge that enables individuals to understand, use, monitor, and critically evaluate artificial intelligence technologies and their impact on society (Haruna *et al*, 2025). It extends beyond basic digital literacy to include a conceptual grasp of how AI systems work including core concepts like machine learning, neural networks, and natural language processing and an awareness of their inherent limitations and potential biases (Chandra *et al*, 2024). Importantly, AI literacy is not solely about technical proficiency; it encompasses the critical thinking abilities necessary to interrogate AI outputs, understand the ethical implications of AI applications such as concerns about privacy, fairness, and accountability, and make informed decisions as both consumers and citizens in a world increasingly shaped by intelligent systems (Biagini, 2025).

In addition, AI literacy in legal education is, therefore, the specialized cultivation of knowledge and skills that prepares law students and future legal professionals to navigate the intersection of artificial intelligence and the law. This involves two interconnected dimensions: the ability to *leverage* AI as a tool and the capacity to regulate and litigate it as a subject (Enebeli, 2024). As a tool, it requires law students to develop proficiency in using AI-powered legal technologies, thereby enhancing their own efficiency and effectiveness (Remus & Levi, 2017). As a subject, AI literacy demands that students understand the legal and ethical frameworks that govern AI (Surden, 2020). Thus, AI literacy in legal education is not an optional add-on but an essential component of modern legal training, producing lawyers who are not merely passive users of technology but are astute, critical, and ethical participants in its development and application within the legal sphere.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Digital Literacy Theory

Digital Literacy Theory, as pioneered by Paul Gilster, fundamentally redefined the concept of literacy for the information age. Gilster argued that digital literacy is not merely the mechanical ability to use software or operate a device, but rather a broader intellectual framework of “the ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers” (Gilster, 1997, p. 1-2). Importantly, this theory suggests that the most critical skills are cognitive and evaluative, not just technical. It emphasizes the capacity to critically assess the credibility and bias of digital information, to synthesize ideas from disparate online resources, and to engage in a discerning “critical thinking” process about the content one encounters. For Gilster, being digitally literate means being an active and skeptical consumer of digital content, capable of assembling reliable knowledge from the vast and often unfiltered expanse of the internet. This theory established digital literacy not as a subsidiary skill, but as an essential mode of thinking necessary for effective participation in modern society.

3.2 Constructivist Learning Theory

The Constructivist Learning Theory, with its roots in the seminal work of Jean Piaget, posits that knowledge is not a commodity to be transmitted passively from teacher to student, but is actively constructed by the learner through experience and reflection (Piaget, 1972). Piaget’s model emphasizes that learners build their own understanding by interacting with the world, a process involving the twin mechanisms of assimilation, where new information is incorporated into existing mental models, and accommodation, where those existing models must be altered to fit new, conflicting experiences. This theory places the learner at the center of the educational process, suggesting that effective learning occurs when individuals are engaged in solving authentic problems, manipulating objects, and testing hypotheses. From this perspective, the role of the educator shifts from being a “sage on the stage” to a “guide on the side,” who creates rich learning environments and facilitates experiences that challenge and help students build or construct their own conceptual frameworks.

In essence, the integration of AI into the legal profession is not a distant future but a present reality, making the cultivation of AI literacy among law students an urgent pedagogical imperative. To explain effectively, the theoretical foundations provided by Gilster and Piaget are not merely

helpful but essential. Together, they provide a robust framework for moving beyond simplistic tool-based training and toward fostering the deep, critical, and responsible engagement with AI that the modern practice of law demands. While the digital literacy theory is the bedrock upon which responsible AI research is built, the significance of the constructive learning theory is that literacy is less about technical keystrokes and more about critical comprehension and evaluation which translates directly to the AI context. For a law student using an AI research platform, the danger lies in perceiving the output as an authoritative answer, much like an early internet user might have mistaken a slick website for a credible source. Gilster's theory compels legal educators to train students to interrogate the AI itself. This means developing the skill to deconstruct an AI-generated case summary to question the underlying data set for potential biases, to recognize the probabilistic nature of a case prediction, and to cross-verify synthesized legal principles against primary sources. In essence, Gilster's focus on critical thinking transforms the law student from a passive consumer of AI output into an active, skeptical, and responsible auditor of it. This is the first and most crucial step in ensuring that the efficiency gains of AI do not come at the cost of analytical rigor and ethical practice.

Thus, these theories create a powerful pedagogical synergy for training law students. digital literacy theory provides the "why" which is the ethical and critical imperative to question AI. constructivist learning theory provides the "how" which includes the experiential method for building that critical skill set. A curriculum informed by both would not simply add an AI tool to the library but would design assignments that force students to rely on AI for initial research, then rigorously audit its work, and finally, reflect on how the tool shaped their own legal reasoning. This approach does not just train students to use a new type of search engine, it prepares them for a future where their professional value will hinge on their ability to partner with AI critically, creatively, and responsibly.

4. Global Developments of AI in Legal Education and Research

Legal education worldwide is undergoing a profound paradigm shift, moving from a tradition steeped in precedent and analog research methods to one that actively integrates the tools of artificial intelligence. This transformation is not uniform, but a global tapestry of initiatives reveals a concerted effort to prepare the next generation of lawyers for a fundamentally altered professional landscape. In the United States, elite institutions like Harvard Law School and

Stanford Law School are at the forefront, having embedded dedicated LegalTech and AI courses into their core curricula (Dolidze, 2025). These programs move beyond theory, providing hands-on training in using predictive analytics to assess litigation risks and applying machine learning algorithms to vast bodies of case law for pattern recognition, thereby translating abstract computational concepts into practical legal strategy (Surden, 2019).

Across the Atlantic, the United Kingdom has taken a more regulatory-driven approach. The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), the governing body for lawyers in England and Wales, has explicitly encouraged law schools to weave the threads of AI ethics into the fabric of their professional responsibility modules (SRA, 2022). This ensures that future solicitors are not only technically proficient but also grounded in the ethical dilemmas posed by automated decision-making. Similarly, in dynamic legal markets like Australia and Singapore, national AI literacy programs have been launched with a sharp focus on the responsible and contextual deployment of technology within the legal domain, acknowledging that its use must be tailored to distinct jurisdictional and cultural norms (Surden, 2019).

Collectively, these international initiatives underscore a crucial evolution in the very definition of competence for a modern lawyer. They demonstrate that true AI literacy extends far beyond mere technical competence, knowing which button to press, and encompasses a deeper, more critical understanding of the ethical, legal, and societal implications of these powerful tools. As AI applications for contract review, legal research, and outcome prediction become standard in practice, it is no longer sufficient for law schools to teach only the law itself. They must now equip students with the sophisticated skills to evaluate the black box of algorithmic bias, to navigate the complex data privacy issues inherent in AI systems, and to recognize the inherent limits of machine reasoning when dealing with the nuanced, equitable, and often ambiguous nature of human conflict. This comprehensive form of literacy is what will separate a mere user of technology from a responsible and effective legal professional in the digital age.

5. Challenges of AI Integration in the Nigerian Legal Education

5.1 Limited Digital Infrastructure

The digital divide presents a formidable barrier to the modernization of legal education in Nigeria. Many Nigerian law faculties operate with severely constrained access to the robust digital libraries and specialized LegalTech platforms that are now standard in global legal practice

(Ewuoso, 2024). This infrastructure deficit extends beyond a simple lack of software, it often includes unreliable internet connectivity and insufficient hardware, creating an environment where integrating AI-powered research tools is practically impossible (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2023). Consequently, students are trained in an analog ecosystem, depriving them of the opportunity to develop the necessary competencies to use, and critically evaluate, AI-driven analytics and research synthesis tools. This gap not only hinders the acquisition of technical skills but also prevents the cultivation of a digitally fluent mindset, leaving graduates at a significant disadvantage in a technology-centric legal market (Oba & Usman, 2022).

5.2 Curricula Rigidity

The structure of the Nigerian legal education is bound by the National Universities Commission's (NUC) Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS), a framework that has not kept pace with technological advancements. Scholars have consistently noted that the BMAS for law remains overwhelmingly traditional, with no explicit mandate for integrating AI literacy, data ethics, or LegalTech competencies into the core curriculum (Nwosu, 2023). This curricular rigidity acts as a systemic brake on innovation, as university faculties lack a top-down directive to allocate resources or redesign courses around these emerging areas. Without a formal mandate, AI and digital skills are treated as optional or extracurricular, rather than as fundamental components of a modern legal education. This ensures that technological proficiency remains an exception rather than a standardized learning outcome for Nigerian law graduates (Smith & Eke, 2024).

5.3 Faculty Capacity

The effective teaching of AI literacy is critically dependent on a faculty that is itself confident and competent in the subject matter. A significant challenge in Nigeria is that many law lecturers, who are experts in traditional doctrinal methods, have had limited exposure to the pedagogical applications of artificial intelligence (Haruna *et al*, 2025). This often leads to a reliance on conventional teaching methodologies, as there is a widespread lack of professional development opportunities focused on digital tool integration. Without targeted training and institutional support to build capacity, a pedagogical gap emerges between faculty expertise and student needs.

5.4 Ethical Risks

The most pressing and immediate danger arising from the lack of formal AI integration is the ethical vacuum in which students are increasingly operating. As generative AI tools become more accessible, students are turning to them for assistance with legal research and drafting without the requisite understanding of their limitations (Okediran & Ogunleye, 2025). This uninformed use carries profound risks, primarily due to the tendency of large language models to “hallucinate” or invent plausible-sounding but fictitious legal authorities, a phenomenon well-documented in recent literature (Adewumi, 2024). Furthermore, students often lack awareness of issues of algorithmic bias and data privacy, leading to uncritical reliance on AI outputs. This not only blurs the line between assistance and academic misconduct but also fails to instill the professional judgment and ethical scrutiny required for the responsible deployment of AI in future legal practice, potentially compromising client matters and the integrity of the justice system (Ewuoso, 2024).

6. Comparative Insights and Lessons for Nigeria

A comparative analysis of global approaches to AI in legal education reveals instructive models from which Nigeria can draw valuable, strategic lessons. The journey toward integrating AI literacy need not be one of reinvention but of thoughtful adaptation. For instance, the United States model, particularly as seen in leading law schools, strongly emphasizes experiential learning. This involves immersing students in simulated legal tasks using AI, such as employing predictive analytics to model litigation outcomes or using natural language processing tools for large-scale contract review, thereby bridging the gap between abstract theory and practical application (Smith & Eke, 2024).

Conversely, the United Kingdom has adopted a more regulatory-focused approach, where bodies like the Solicitors Regulation Authority have explicitly integrated the ethics of AI into the core tenets of legal practice training. This ensures that future lawyers are equipped to grapple with issues of algorithmic bias, accountability, and transparency from a professional conduct standpoint (Okediran & Ogunleye, 2025).

Beyond these Western models, Singapore offers a particularly compelling blueprint with its holistic, top-down strategy. The Singaporean government has launched national AI strategies that create a direct and intentional linkage between the skills imparted in educational institutions,

including its law schools, and the evolving needs of the legal industry and economy (Allen *et al*, 2025). This alignment ensures that AI literacy is not an academic abstraction but a targeted competency designed to enhance national competitiveness.

For Nigeria, the imperative is not to import these models wholesale but to engage in a process of critical localization. The Nigeria can adapt these international practices by developing a bespoke AI literacy framework that thoughtfully reflects its unique legal traditions, socio-economic challenges, and current infrastructural realities (Ogunbanjo *et al*, 2025). This would involve designing experiential exercises that address common law principles within a Nigerian context, embedding AI ethics discussions within the framework of the Nigerian Legal Practitioners' Act (LFN, 2004) and local data protection regulations, and aligning curricular reforms with the strategic objectives outlined in Nigeria's own National Digital Economy Policy (NDEP, 2020-2030). By doing so, Nigeria can forge a path that is both globally informed and locally resonant, ensuring its future lawyers are prepared for both domestic practice and the global stage.

7. Developing an AI Literacy Framework for Nigerian Law Students

The integration of artificial intelligence into the legal sector is an irreversible global trend, making it imperative for Nigerian legal education to proactively equip the next generation of lawyers (Nwotite, 2025). A haphazard or reactive approach risks creating a generation of practitioners ill-prepared for the realities of modern practice. Therefore, developing a structured and culturally relevant AI literacy framework is not a luxury but a pedagogical necessity. Such a framework must move beyond simplistic tool-based training to cultivate a deep, critical, and ethically grounded understanding of AI, ensuring that Nigerian law students can leverage these technologies to enhance justice delivery while safeguarding fundamental rights and professional integrity (Nwotite, 2025, p. 23).

7.1 Components of the AI Literacy Framework for Nigerian Law Students

7.1.1 Technical Competence

This foundational component moves beyond mere button-pushing to instill a conceptual understanding of how AI systems, particularly machine learning and natural language processing, function in a legal context. Nigerian law students must comprehend the basic mechanics of tools used for legal research, predictive justice, and document review (Chukwuemeka, 2025). This

involves understanding that these systems operate on probabilistic models trained on data, which inherently shapes their capabilities and limitations (*David Lola v Skaden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Florm LLP*, 2015). For instance, knowing that a case prediction tool analyzes patterns from past judgments allows a student to critically interrogate its relevance to a novel or factually distinct scenario. As Adewumi (2024) notes, without this foundational technical literacy, users are prone to either unfounded trust or unwarranted skepticism, both of which are detrimental to competent legal practice.

7.1.2 Ethical Awareness

As AI becomes a co-pilot in legal tasks, ethical awareness becomes paramount. This component requires students to grapple with the profound ethical dilemmas posed by AI, focusing on ensuring algorithmic fairness, maintaining clear lines of accountability for AI-assisted work, and respecting intellectual property rights in AI-generated content (Ayebo, 2025). Students must understand that the use of AI does not absolve them of professional responsibility, and are ultimately accountable for the advice or document produced, even with AI assistance.

7.1.3 Critical Evaluation

Perhaps the most crucial skill for a lawyer is the ability to critically evaluate AI-generated outputs. This component trains students to approach AI not as an oracle but as a fallible assistant whose work requires rigorous verification. It involves developing a skeptical mindset to assess the accuracy, relevance, and potential biases in AI-synthesized case law or contract clauses (Moppett, 2025). A key risk is “hallucination,” where generative AI models invent plausible-sounding but non-existent legal authorities (Adewumi, 2024). Students must be drilled in the practice of cross-referencing all AI-provided sources with primary legal materials. This skill transforms them from passive consumers into active, discerning auditors of technology, ensuring that the efficiency of AI does not compromise the accuracy and integrity of legal work.

7.1.4 Legal Awareness

AI literacy must include a robust understanding of the existing and emerging legal frameworks governing the technology itself. Nigerian law students need to be conversant with how AI intersects with key areas of law, notably the Nigeria Data Protection Act (2023), privacy laws, and

constitutional human rights provisions. This involves analyzing how AI systems comply with data processing principles, assessing the human rights implications of automated decision-making in the justice system, and understanding liability regimes for AI-related harms (Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Legal Profession in Nigeria, 2024). This legal awareness ensures that future lawyers are not only users of AI but also capable of advising clients on AI regulation, litigating AI-related disputes, and shaping the future of AI governance within Nigeria.

7.2 Framework Implementation Strategies

The design of a robust AI literacy framework is only the first step; its successful integration into the Nigerian legal education system hinges on deliberate, multi-faceted implementation. A top-down mandate without grassroots support will falter, just as isolated bottom-up initiatives will lack sustainability. Therefore, a synergistic approach is required, one that simultaneously updates the curriculum, empowers educators, establishes clear institutional guidelines, leverages external expertise, and instills a culture of ethical responsibility among students. The following strategies outline a comprehensive pathway for translating the theoretical components of AI literacy into tangible educational outcomes (Nwotite, 2025).

7.2.1 Curriculum Reform

To systematically embed AI literacy, it must be woven into the fabric of existing core courses rather than treated as a standalone elective. This integration ensures all students, regardless of specialization, attain a baseline competency. The Legal Methods course should introduce AI-assisted research and drafting, teaching students to use these tools while emphasizing critical verification. The ICT Law syllabus must be expanded to include modules on AI regulation, algorithmic accountability, and data governance under the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023. Moreso, Research Methodology courses must be updated to treat AI as a fundamental research tool, outlining protocols for its transparent and accountable use in academic work (Nwosu, 2023). This cross-curricular approach normalizes AI as an essential component of the modern lawyer's toolkit.

7.2.2 Faculty Training

The effectiveness of any curricular reform is dependent upon a confident and capable teaching faculty. Many law lecturers, experts in traditional doctrine, require targeted professional development to lead this pedagogical shift. Institutions must organize ongoing capacity-building workshops and seminars focused on AI-driven teaching methodologies. These sessions should provide hands-on experience with relevant legal AI tools, demystify the underlying technology, and equip lecturers with strategies for teaching both the use and critique of AI. ICT departments should be involved in training of trainers, where these AI tools are used regularly.

7.2.3 Institutional Policy

The ad-hoc use of AI by students poses significant risks to academic integrity (Benke & Szoke, 2024). To mitigate this, law faculties and the Council of Legal Education must proactively develop and disseminate clear institutional policies on the use of AI in academic work. These policies should explicitly define permissible and impermissible uses, drawing a clear line between AI as a research assistant and AI as an unauthorized surrogate for student learning. They must address issues of plagiarism related to AI-generated content and mandate the transparent disclosure of AI use in assignments and examinations (Okediran & Ogunleye, 2025). Such policies provide a necessary regulatory framework, protecting the integrity of legal education while setting professional standards for future practice.

7.2.4 Partnerships

Bridging the gap between academia and practice is crucial for providing relevant, real-world context. Law schools should actively collaborate with LegalTech firms, startups, and the innovation arms of leading law firms. These partnerships can facilitate guest lectures, internships, and live demonstrations of cutting-edge AI applications in contract analysis, e-discovery, and legal prediction (Adewumi, 2024). This exposure moves learning beyond theory, allowing students to see the practical utility and commercial imperatives driving AI adoption in the legal market. It also creates a pipeline for talent and ensures that the academic curriculum remains aligned with the evolving needs of the profession.

7.2.5 Ethics Committee

Beyond external policy, fostering an internalized sense of responsibility is key. A collaborative process involving students and faculty should be undertaken to establish a “Student Ethics Committee for the Use of AI.” This committee would go beyond rules to articulate a set of principles that students pledge to uphold, committing to transparency, critical evaluation, and the ethical application of AI in their studies and future careers. This bottom-up, participatory approach promotes a culture of integrity and self-governance, ensuring that students become not only skilled users of technology but also its ethical guardians.

8. Ethical and Pedagogical Implications

The integration of AI into legal education is not a mere augmentation of existing tools, it represents a fundamental shift that necessitates a profound redefinition of both professional ethics and pedagogical philosophy. This evolution demands a proactive and critical approach from legal educators and regulatory bodies to ensure that the core values of the legal profession are preserved and enhanced, rather than eroded, by technological adoption (Smith & Eke, 2024).

From an ethical standpoint, the pervasive use of AI introduces complex challenges to the foundational principles of the legal profession. Law schools now bear a heightened responsibility to ensure that AI use promotes intellectual authenticity and systemic fairness. The ease with which AI can generate legal text blurs the lines of authorship and plagiarism, demanding new definitions of academic honesty that emphasize transparency and disclosure when AI tools are employed in scholarly work (Okediran & Ogunleye, 2025). Furthermore, the risk of algorithmic bias, where AI systems perpetuate and amplify societal inequalities present in their training data, poses a direct threat to the pursuit of justice. Educators must therefore instill in students a duty to audit AI tools for discriminatory outcomes, ensuring that the use of technology aligns with the profession's commitment to equity and fairness for all clients (Ewuoso, 2024).

Pedagogically, the central objective must be to position AI as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, cultivated human reasoning and doctrinal mastery. The curriculum must be deliberately designed to train students to engage in a critical dialogue with AI outputs. This involves a disciplined process of questioning the sources and logic behind AI-generated summaries, predictions, and drafts, and, crucially, verifying all information against primary legal sources using traditional doctrinal methods (Leung, 2023). This pedagogical approach fosters a

symbiotic relationship where AI handles computational scale and pattern recognition, while the human lawyer provides contextual understanding, ethical judgment, and strategic creativity. Failure to successfully cultivate these higher-order critical thinking skills risks producing a generation of lawyers who depend excessively on automation, potentially leading to a “deskilling” of the profession and an uncritical reliance on potentially flawed algorithmic conclusions (Adewumi, 2024). The ultimate goal is to graduate law students who are not passive consumers of technology, but empowered, critical, and ethically astute partners to it.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The advent of artificial intelligence marks a watershed moment for the global legal profession, firmly establishing AI literacy not as a peripheral skill but as an indispensable pillar of modern legal education. As these technologies fundamentally transform the mechanics of legal research, predictive analysis, and document drafting, the imperative for Nigerian legal education to evolve from its revered doctrinal traditions is both urgent and undeniable. To remain relevant and effective, Nigerian law schools must proactively bridge the gap between their current curricula and the demands of a technologically dynamic profession, ensuring their graduates are not merely observers but active and adept participants in the future of law.

This necessary evolution, however, must be guided by more than just technical ambition. The integration of AI literacy through the structured, multi-component frameworks discussed encompassing technical competence, ethical awareness, critical evaluation, and legal oversight, is the most viable path forward. Such an approach ensures that Nigerian law students achieve more than just mastery over digital tools; it equips them with the critical faculties to use these tools responsibly, upholding the rigorous analytical and ethical standards that form the bedrock of the legal profession. The goal is to create a synergistic relationship where AI enhances human capability without supplanting professional judgment. By embracing this transformation with deliberate and responsible strategies including curriculum modernization, faculty development, and strong ethical policies, Nigeria has a profound opportunity. It can leapfrog legacy constraints to cultivate a new generation of legal professionals who are both deeply competent in the law and innovatively engaged with technology. These future lawyers will be equipped not only to navigate the complexities of a digital justice system but also to shape its development, ensuring that the

integration of AI into Nigerian law ultimately strengthens, rather than undermines, the core principles of justice, equity, and the rule of law.

To effectively integrate AI literacy into the fabric of Nigerian legal education, a concerted and multi-pronged strategy is essential. This begins with foundational policy reform, whereby the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Council of Legal Education (CLE) must revise national accreditation standards to explicitly mandate AI literacy and LegalTech competencies as core requirements for law graduates. This top-down directive must then be operationalized through a comprehensive curriculum redesign within universities, strategically embedding modules on the use, ethics, and critique of AI into existing courses across all academic levels, from introductory classes to final-year capstones. However, the success of this updated curriculum is wholly dependent on parallel investment in faculty development, necessitating continuous professional training programs that equip lecturers with the practical skills and pedagogical confidence to guide students in this new domain.

Concurrently, these pedagogical efforts must be supported by tangible infrastructure investment to ensure reliable access to digital research databases and the computational tools that form the practical bedrock of AI literacy. To navigate the inherent ethical complexities, universities should proactively establish multidisciplinary AI ethics committees, tasked with developing institutional usage policies, auditing tools for bias, and upholding academic integrity. Finally, to bridge the gap between theory and practice, it is imperative to foster robust public-private collaborations with LegalTech firms and forward-thinking legal practices. Such partnerships can provide invaluable real-world context through internships, workshops, and guest lectures, ensuring that the academic cultivation of AI literacy is directly informed by the evolving demands of the legal profession. Together, these actions form a holistic framework for preparing a generation of Nigerian lawyers who are both proficient in technology and steadfast in their ethical commitments.

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