

Harnessing the Potential of Artificial Intelligence in Nigerian Legal Education: The Imperative of a Regulatory Framework

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming various aspects of life, including legal education. However, AI-powered legal education tools pose significant challenges, including data protection, privacy, transparency, and accountability. Thus, effective regulation is necessary to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of legal education. Unfortunately, Nigeria lacks a comprehensive legal framework governing AI in legal education. This qualitative study examines the current state of AI in Nigerian legal education, aiming to propose a tailored legal framework for regulating AI. The study reveals that despite Nigeria's efforts to regulate AI through existing laws and agencies, such as the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and the National Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (NCAIR), as well as the Data Protection Law and Cybercrime Act, the unique aspects of AI necessitate a specific legal framework. Consequently, this study proposes the adoption of a bespoke legal framework to regulate AI in Nigeria's legal education, ensuring accountability and responsible AI use.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Legal Education, Nigeria, Legal Framework, Regulation

1. Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence¹ in legal education has transformed the landscape of legal learning,² providing numerous benefits to both instructors and students;³ whilst offering unparalleled opportunities for innovation and improvement of academic performance.⁴ AI features, for instance, enable students to study more effectively and creatively, with better results.⁵ As for instructors, AI aids in designing better curricula, increasing interaction with students, and enhancing the learning environment.⁶ However, the increasing adoption of AI-powered tools in Nigerian legal education also raises critical concerns, including data protection, privacy, transparency, and accountability.⁷ Nigeria's legal education system faces unique challenges in addressing these concerns, primarily due to the absence of a comprehensive legal framework governing AI in legal education. Although existing regulations, such as the Data Protection Law and the Cybercrime Act, provide a foundation for addressing AI-related issues,⁸ the distinctive characteristics of AI necessitate a tailored legal framework.

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¹ Hereinafter referred as AI.

² M Legg and F Bell, "Artificial Intelligence and the Legal Profession: Becoming the AI-Enhanced Lawyer", *University of Tasmania Law Review*, (2019) 38(2) p 34.

³ S Onaolapo and T Onifade, "Teaching and Learning in the Cloud: Prospects and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence for Education in Africa", (2020) Conference Proceedings of International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD), 3.

⁴ Ibid, 1.

⁵ S T Rahayu, "Analyzing of Using Educational Technology to Improve the Quality and Equity of Learning Outcomes at Politeknik Maritim Negeri Jurnallqra: KajianIlmu Pendidikan", (2023) 8(1), 100116 <https://doi.org/10.25217/JI.V8I1.323835> retrieved on February 25, 2025.

⁶ J Kim, H Lee, and Y H Cho, "Learning Design to support Student-AI Collaboration: Perspectives of Leading Teachers for AI in Education and Information Technologies", (2022) 27(5), 6069-6104 <https://doi.org/10.1007/S10639-021-10831-6> retrieved on February 25, 2025. D D Mong and H P Thanh, "Relationship between Artificial Intelligence and Legal Education: A Bibliometric Analysis", (2024) 8(2), *Knowledge and Performance Management*, 14.

⁷ J Uba, "Artificial Intelligence (AI) Regulation in Nigeria: Key Considerations, Recommendations, Legal Framework and Policy Development for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Nigeria". OAL www.mondaq.com/nigeria, retrieved on February 25, 2025; G S Anamoji, I A Olubiyi, R Oyedeji-Oduyale, D M Adeniyi, "Artificial Intelligence and the Law: An Overview", (2024) vol 12(1), *Abuad Law Journal*, 1-27, 27.

⁸ J Uba, *op cit.* (above note 8), 27.

This study examines the potential of AI in legal education in Nigeria, with a specific focus on proposing a bespoke legal framework for regulating AI in Nigerian legal education. Employing a qualitative research approach and reviewing relevant literature, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the current state of AI in Nigerian legal education and contribute to the development of a comprehensive legal framework that ensures accountability, transparency, and responsible AI use.

2. Conceptual Framework

The Nigerian legal profession is built on a foundation of legal education,⁹ which has traditionally relied on methods such as textbooks, case studies, and the Socratic approach. The Nigerian Law School and the Council of Legal Education play critical roles in training and overseeing legal education in Nigeria.

The traditional methods of legal education are giving way to more advanced approaches, driven by technological innovations like Artificial Intelligence. AI has the potential to transform legal education by improving efficiency, personalizing learning, and enhancing student outcomes.¹⁰

Artificial intelligence is a novel technology that has been credited to McCarthy.¹¹ AI refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence,¹² such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. McCarthy defines it as “the science and engineering of creating intelligent machines”.¹³ AI systems use algorithms, data structures, and software to mimic human cognition and decision-making processes.

AI comprises various related areas of computer science, including Machine Learning and Deep Learning. While Machine Learning studies how computers can improve their knowledge, thinking and skills through data analysis, Deep Learning is a subset of Machine Learning that uses artificial neural networks to model complex patterns in data.¹⁴

AI has begun to impact legal education in Nigeria, offering benefits such as automating routine tasks, freeing up instructors to focus on more complex and high-value tasks (improved efficiency). AI can help tailor learning experiences to individual students' needs and abilities (personalized learning); AI can provide real-time feedback and assessment, helping students improve their learning outcomes (enhanced student outcomes).

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into legal education in Nigeria, there is a growing need for a comprehensive regulatory framework to govern its use. This framework should address issues such as data protection, privacy, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that AI is used in ways that support the integrity and effectiveness of legal education.

⁹S S Mustapha, “The Use of Technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Legal Education”, *Fountain University Law Journal*, (2024) 1(2), 70-82, 71. <https://fountainjournals.com/index.php/FULAJ/article/view/546/303> retrieved on February 25, 2025.

¹⁰D D Mong and H P Thanh, *op. cit.* 23.

¹¹I A Olubiyi, R Oyedeji-Oduyale, D M Adeniyi, *op. cit.* p. 2.

¹²N P Padhy, *Artificial Intelligence and Intelligent Systems 3* (Oxford University Press, 2005), Gabriel Harvey, “The Criminal Liability of Artificial Intelligence Entities – from Science Fiction to Legal Social Control”, (2010) *Akron Intellectual Property Journal*, vol 1, issue 2 p.172.

¹³D D Mong and H P Thanh, *op. cit.* 14.

¹⁴I A Olubiyi, R Oyedeji-Oduyale, D M Adeniyi, *op. cit.* 2.



3. AI in Nigeria's Legal Education

Nigeria's legal education has undergone significant transformations, evolving through distinct phases: colonial, post-colonial, and modern.

The colonial era spans from 1860s to 1960. This era remarkably witnessed the establishment of the first Law School in Lagos in 1879, with the primary goal of training lawyers specifically for the colonial administration. During the period under review, the Nigerian legal education was strongly influenced by the British system of law,¹⁵ consisting of common law, among others. However, legal education during this period was limited to Lagos.

The post-colonial era, on the other hand, spans from 1960-1980. The revolutions witnessed during this era include but are not limited to the establishment of Nigerian Law School; increase in the number of faculties of law in the Nigerian universities and the development of indigenous legal education.¹⁶ In 1962, the Nigerian Law School was established with the overall aim of providing practical training for lawyers who will practice in Nigeria. This is quite unlike the colonial era when lawyers were trained for the British colonial administration. Apart from the establishment of the Nigerian Law School, faculties of law were also established in University of Lagos, University of Ibadan and Ahmadu Bello University, thereby increasing the number of faculties of law existing at the time. Again, an indigenous legal system was developed so as to address the peculiarities of Nigeria.

The modern era (1980-date) witnessed even more milestones such as reforms in legal education; establishment of the Council of Legal Education; proliferation of private universities; and emphasis on clinical education, among others.

With respect to reforms in legal education, Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) degree was introduced. The Council of Legal Education was also established as a regulatory body for legal education in Nigeria. The Council was charged with such functions of accrediting Law Faculties in Nigeria, admission and enrolment of law students, conducting of exams for law students, Call to Bar, Continuing Legal Education, curriculum development, and monitoring of law faculties in Nigeria. This was to ensure compliance with the required regulations and standards.

In Nigeria, legal education exists in two stages: post-secondary school stage also known as the University stage; and post-university stage also known as the Law School stage. While students learn the principles of law (substantive law) at the university stage; they are exposed to procedural law (practical application of the law) at the law school stage. The training of law students at both stages encompasses the study of legal theories, concepts and principles, development of practical skills, clinical education- the experience of legal skills through internships, clinics and moot court; and the study of legal ethics, professionalism and responsibility. These traditional tools of legal education are referred to as the Socratic Method.

¹⁵ 'The Evolution and History of Legal Profession in Nigeria' <https://professions.ng/evolution-and-history-of-legal-professions/> retrieved on March 2, 2025.

¹⁶ Ibid.

In recent years, AI has been increasingly recognized for its potential to enhance legal education. However, the use of AI in Nigerian legal education is limited¹⁷ and at its infancy stage.¹⁸ Thus, its potential to transform legal education remains largely untapped. Only few law schools have incorporated AI-powered tools and platforms into their teaching and learning processes, given a number of challenges ranging from infrastructure and resource constraints, limited access to AI technology, resistance to change to data privacy and security concerns, among others. These issues notwithstanding, Nigeria has shown commitment to formulating an AI regulatory framework, which will have implications for legal education. For instance, the establishment of the National Centre for AI and Robotics¹⁹ and the National Information Technology Development Agency,²⁰ is a step in the right direction. More so, the adoption of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition and Prevention) Act of 2015 and the Nigerian Data Protection Act are bold steps will enable Nigeria key into the current revolutionary AI technology.²¹

4. Potential of AI in Legal Education

Legal education has been the cornerstone of the legal profession for centuries, providing prospective legal practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills to excel in the global legal world.²² The primary goal of legal education is to equip law students with the requisite skills and knowledge for a successful legal career.²³ Traditionally, legal education relied heavily on the Socratic Method, characterized by rigorous analysis of case law, classroom lectures, moot court participation, and the use of hand-outs and notes, among others.²⁴ This method had helped in the development of critical thinking, analytical capabilities, and legal reasoning skills among law students.²⁵ However, AI has become increasingly pervasive and its impact on the legal sphere cannot be overstated.²⁶ Thus, the Socratic Method of legal education is rapidly giving way to AI-powered legal education tools,²⁷ like AI-powered tutoring systems, virtual reality training simulations, natural language processing-based research tools, and machine learning-powered grading and feedback systems.²⁸ While it may be argued that the state of AI in Nigerian legal

¹⁷Some Nigerian law schools have started using basic AI-powered tools, such as online learning platforms, digital libraries, and automated grading systems.

¹⁸S Onaopola and T Onifade *op.cit.*, 3.

¹⁹ NCAIR.

²⁰ NITDA

²¹ Diep and Thanh, *op. cit.*, 14.

²²A Prakash and V Nai, “Integrating Generative AI into Legal Education: From Casebooks to Codes, Opportunities and Challenges”, vol 6(3) 2024, *Law, Technology & Humans*, 60.

²³*Ibid.*, 61; K Asyia, “Can AI Transform Education?” Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, September 11, 2024. <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/articles/ai-tools-education-technology> retrieved on March 2, 2025.

²⁴ Porter, Elizabeth. “The Socratic Method.” In *Building on Best Practices: Transforming Legal Education in a Changing World*, edited by Deborah Maranville, Lisa Radtke Bliss, Carolyn Wilkes Kaas and Antoinette SedilloLópez, 101–252. New Providence, NJ: LexisNexis, 2015. <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/faculty-chapters/4> retrieved on March 2, 2025.

²⁵ Wilson, Margaret. “The Making of a New Legal Education in New Zealand: Waikato Law School.” (1993) 1 *Waikato Law Review*, 1. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/waik1&id=5&div=&collection=> retrieved on March 2, 2025.

²⁶ D Garingan and A J Pickard, “Artificial Intelligence and Legal Practice: Exploring theoretical Frameworks for Algorithmic Literacy in Legal Information Profession” (2021) vol. 21 (2) *Legal Information Management*, 98.

²⁷ B Madison, “The Elephant in Law School Classrooms: Overuse of the Socratic Method as an Obstacle to Teaching Modern Law Students.” *University of Detroit Mercy Law Review* 85, no 3 (2008): 293–346. <https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/udetmr85&id=303&div=&collection=> retrieved on March 2, 2025.

²⁸ Diep and Thanh, *op. cit.*, 14.



education is still evolving, with many that require urgent attention, the potential benefits of AI in enhancing teaching, learning, and research in Nigerian law schools cannot be overstated. AI-powered education tools offer numerous benefits and potential,²⁹ as set out below:

4.1 Personalized Learning

AI-powered adaptive learning systems have the benefit and potential of tailoring legal education to individual students' needs, interests, abilities, aptitude, pace and learning styles.³⁰ For instance, the legal education platform, Quimbee, uses such key features and resources as video lessons, practice questions, case briefs, study guides, and Bar prep to provide personalized learning plans, adaptive assessments, and real-time feedback to law students.³¹ The platform is engaging, interactive and easy to use. Similarly, the AI-powered learning tool, LexisNexis's Context, uses machine learning algorithms to analyze students' learning habits and provide customized study materials. These tools can make learning interactive, more engaging, immersive, enjoyable, and help students develop practical skills.³²

4.2 Automated Grading and Feedback

AI can help reduce the workload of faculty members by automating the grading process and providing instant feedback to students, thereby giving instructors the opportunity to focus on providing more detailed and personalized feedback.³³ For instance, the AI-powered grading tool Gradescope, uses machine learning algorithms to grade assignments and provide instant feedback to students. On the other hand, the AI-driven assessment platform, Lawskool, uses NLP and machine learning algorithms to assess student performance and provide personalized feedback.

4.3 Simulation-Based Learning/ Virtual Learning Environments

AI-driven legal education facilitates simulation-based learning experiences that can provide students with access to real-world data and scenarios,³⁴ enabling them to develop practical skills and apply theoretical knowledge. On the other hand, AI also provides virtual learning environment, thereby overcoming geographical, space, and time barriers.³⁵

4.4 Enhanced Research Capabilities

AI-driven research platforms can help law students in conducting quick, efficient and accurate legal research, analyzing large datasets, and identifying relevant precedents, cases, statutes, and

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Strongbytes. "AI Brings Smart Learning Experiences in Schools" (2019) <https://strongbytes.ai/smart-learning-experiences-are-the-future/> retrieved on March 2, 2025.

³¹Quimbee, Quimbee Bar Review Mobile App.' <https://www.quimbee.com> retrieved on March 2, 2025.

³²J Kim, H Lee, and Y H Cho, 'Learning Design to Support Student-AI Collaboration: Perspectives of Leading teachers for AI in education.'. (2022) *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(5), 60696104. <https://doi.org/10.1007/>; retrieved on March 3 2025. SS, Mustapha, "The Use of Technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Legal Education". (2024) 1(2) *Fountain University Law Journal*, 70-82.

³³A P Getman, O M Yaroshenko, R V Shapoval, R Y Prokopiev and MI Demura, "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Legal Decision-making," *International Comparative Jurisprudence* (2023) 9(2)155–169. D Katz, M J Bommarito, S Gao, and P Arredondo, 'GPT-4 passes the bar exam.' (2024) *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*, 382(2270). <https://doi.org/10.1098/RSTA.2023.0254> retrieved on March 3 2025.

³⁴Diep and Thanh, *op. cit.* p 14.

³⁵J Watson, "Blended Learning: The Convergence of Online and Face-to-Face Education". Promising Practices in Online Learning. North American Council for Online Learning, (2008), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509636.pdf> retrieved on March 3 2025.

regulations, thereby saving time and improving research efficiency.³⁶ For example, the AI-powered research tool, Westlaw's Edge, uses natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning algorithms to analyze legal documents and provide relevant search results. Similarly, the legal research platform, *LexMachina*, uses AI to provide law students with data-driven insights and analytics on legal cases and trends.

4.5 Accessibility and Inclusion

AI-powered tools can help make legal education more accessible to students with disabilities.³⁷ For example, the AI-powered accessibility tool, ClaroRead, uses NLP and machine learning algorithms to provide text-to-speech and speech-to-text functionalities, and other accessibility features to law students. Similarly, the AI-driven language support tool - Language Tool, uses machine learning algorithms to provide language translation and support services to law students who may not be fluent in the dominant language of instruction.

4.6 Better Preparation for Practice

AI-driven tools have a future of offering law students personalized career guidance, helping students identify potential career paths and develop relevant skills. Thus, AI can help prepare students for the increasingly technology-driven legal profession and better prepare them for the challenges of the 21st-century legal profession.

4.7 Improved Access to Justice:

AI can facilitate access to justice by providing automated legal assistance, such as online dispute resolution platforms and chatbots that offer basic legal advice.

4.8 Continuous Learning and Professional Development

AI-driven tools facilitate ongoing professional development, enabling lawyers to stay up-to-date with the latest developments in their field. It can also support continuous learning and professional development for legal educators and practitioners.

5 Pertinence of the establishment of a Legal Framework for the Regulation of AI in Nigeria's Legal Education

There is no gain saying that the emergence of AI in legal education has revolutionized all aspects of the society,³⁸ including legal education. This notwithstanding, the use of AI-powered tools in legal education raises some critical issues³⁹ as set out below:

5.1 Accountability and Transparency

AI-powered legal education tools depend on data availability and Machine Learning.⁴⁰ As such, they can be complex and difficult to understand. Again, the tools may be fed with incomplete or inaccurate or even outdated information, thereby leading to biases that could affect the outcome of legal research, legal judgments and analysis,⁴¹ or even discriminate against certain groups of users.

³⁶ M Singh, "Review on Role of Artificial Intelligence in The Life of Legal Profession", (2024) 6(3) *International Journal of Legal Science and Innovation*, 1087–1089. [https://ijlsi.com/wp-content/uploads/Review-on-Role-of-Artificial-Intelligence-in-The-Life-of-Legal-Profession .pdf](https://ijlsi.com/wp-content/uploads/Review-on-Role-of-Artificial-Intelligence-in-The-Life-of-Legal-Profession.pdf). retrieved on March 3 2025.

³⁷ Strongbytes. "AI Brings Smart Learning Experiences in Schools". (2019).

<https://strongbytes.ai/smart-learning-experiences-are-the-future/> retrieved on March 3 2025.

³⁸ G S Anamoji "Ethical and Regulatory Framework of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Nigeria: The Dilemma of Global Adaptation for Sustainable Growth," (2024) 12(3) *Int. J Innovative Soc. Sc. & Hum. Res.* 55-65, 55.

³⁹ J Uba, *op. cit.*; G S Anamoji, *op. cit.* p 55; I A Olubiyi, R Oyedeji-Oduyale, D M Adeniyi, *op. cit.* 27.

⁴⁰ G S Anamoji, *op. cit.* 58-59.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 58.



On the other hand, AI-powered legal education tools may not provide clear information about how student data is collected, stored and used,⁴² thereby making it challenging to determine responsibility when an error occurs in AI-driven decisions. For the above reasons, it becomes imperative to adopt a legal framework to ensure accountability and transparency; and to maintain academic integrity and standards. This way, the responsible use of AI will be guaranteed and the society protected against harm.⁴³

5.2 Data Protection and Privacy

The increasing use of AI-powered tools in legal education raises significant concerns about data protection and privacy. These concerns include: unauthorized data collection and use. To that effect, AI-powered tools may collect and use personal data without users' knowledge or consent. AI-powered tools may also be vulnerable to data breaches and cyber-attacks, thereby compromising sensitive user data.

5.3 Accessibility and Inclusivity Barriers

AI-powered tools may have incompatible assistive technologies (such as screen readers or keyboard-only navigation); inaccessible user interface; lack closed captions and audio descriptions contents; thereby excluding students with visual or hearing impairments. On the other hand, AI-powered tools may perpetrate existing biases and stereotypes, lack cultural sensitivity; and widen the digital divides.

6. Conclusion

The integration of Artificial Intelligence in legal education in Nigeria presents a transformative opportunity. It has the potential to revolutionize the way law is taught, learned, and practiced. AI can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of legal education, improve student learning outcomes, and better prepare law graduates for the complexities of the 21st-century legal profession. However, the successful harnessing of AI's potential in Nigerian legal education requires a comprehensive regulatory framework. The lack of comprehensive legal framework governing AI in legal education underscores the need for urgent regulatory intervention. This study has demonstrated that the integration of AI in Nigerian legal education is inevitable, and its regulation is imperative.

7 Recommendations

7.1 Establishment of a Regulatory Framework

To ensure that AI is leveraged to improve the quality and effectiveness of legal education in Nigeria; and to navigate the interplay between technological innovation, legal regulation, and educational transformation, the Nigerian government, the National Universities Commission, the Council of Legal Education, policy makers and other important stakeholders must work together to establish a robust comprehensive regulatory framework for the development and deployment of AI in legal education. The proposed regulatory framework should address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by AI such as data protection and privacy, transparency and accountability, accessibility and inclusivity. By prioritizing the development of regulatory

⁴²Ibid, 59.

⁴³I A Olubiyi, R Oyedeji-Oduyale, D M Adeniyi, *op. cit.* 1.

framework, Nigeria can unlock the full potential of AI in legal education and produce law graduates who are equipped to succeed in an increasingly complex and technology-driven world.

7.2 Development of AI-Related Policies

The National Universities Commission and Council of Legal Education should develop policies that promote the responsible use of AI in legal education.

7.3 Provision of Training and Support

Law teachers and students should receive training and support to develop the skills needed to effectively integrate AI in legal education.

7.4 Encouraging Collaboration

The Nigerian government, the National Universities Commission (NUC), and the Council of Legal Education (CLE) and other relevant stakeholders must work together to promote the development of AI in legal education and to address the challenges and opportunities associated with its integration. By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can harness the potential of AI in legal education and produce law graduates who are equipped to succeed in the 21st-century legal profession.