

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) VIS -A VIS ETHICS AND INTEGRITY IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming academic research by enhancing efficiency, automating processes, and improving data analysis. However, this transformation raises significant ethical concerns regarding integrity, authorship, bias, and the potential misuse of AI-generated content. This paper, using expository and critical methods, therefore, explores the ethical dimensions of AI in academic research, focusing on plagiarism, research misconduct, data privacy, and algorithmic bias. It also examines the role of AI in maintaining research integrity through plagiarism detection, peer review enhancement, and bias mitigation. While AI presents immense opportunities for advancing knowledge, its responsible use requires clear ethical guidelines, transparency, and human oversight to ensure that academic research remains credible and ethically sound.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, Integrity, Academics, Research

Introduction

We require high academic standards to maintain trust and confidence in our world-leading research and teaching, as well as those working and studying. Our generation is rapidly experiencing higher levels of technological development, which has culminated in Artificial Intelligence (AI). No one doubts that the appearance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is beneficial to humans. Just as there are mostly two sides to everything, or rather, just as nature made things opposite of each other, this too is not exempt. This, therefore, means that since we benefit from Artificial Intelligence (AI), it also means that there are also negative implications associated with it. The objective of this paper is not only about its positive aspects, which enhance research, but its negative aspects too, such as “data fabrication, falsification and text plagiarism using AI algorithms”,⁴⁴ which are depriving this generation of becoming men and women of integrity due to academic dishonesty.

Society has been battling with academic dishonesty. It has been facing situations where many students/people depend solely on internet materials. Many are not interested in reading books. Reading books is gradually becoming archaic and a waste of

⁴⁴Chen Z, et al. (2024). “Research integrity in the era of artificial intelligence: Challenges and responses.” *Medicine* (Baltimore). 103(27). Doi: 10.1097/MD.00000000000038811. pg. 1

time. Therefore, “the principle of research integrity, foundational to the ethical conduct and dissemination of scientific knowledge, commands adherence to the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, and transparency. It ensures the credibility and reproducibility of scientific findings, forming the bedrock upon which public trust in science is built”⁴⁵. But the existing society today is one where many prefer shortcuts to everything, including academics. Writing research papers or projects has become a nightmare for the readers and teachers. We, therefore, advocate for research integrity. “Research integrity is connected to academic integrity as both relate to ensuring the honesty and transparency of academic work”.⁴⁶ “Academic integrity refers to academic written work, and it means being honest in your academic work and making sure that you formally recognize and reference the existing knowledge and ideas on which your work is based”.⁴⁷ It also means a man or woman with a conscience that is alive and not dead.

⁴⁵ Chen Z, et al. (2024). “Research integrity in the era of artificial intelligence: Challenges and responses.” *Medicine* (Baltimore). 103(27). Doi: 10.1097/MD.0000000000038811. pg. 1

⁴⁶ UCL (2025). “About Academic Integrity”. Available at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessment/academic-integrity>. Sourced 30/03/2025. UCL means University College of London

⁴⁷ Chen Z, et al. (2024). “Research integrity in the era of artificial intelligence: Challenges and responses.” *Medicine* (Baltimore). 103(27). Doi: 10.1097/MD.0000000000038811. pg.1

If one's conscience is alive, the person will not steal someone's work, either by not acknowledging materials taken or by appropriating someone's work as his or her own. This, therefore, and other factors yet to be mentioned are the concerns of this paper.

Conceptual Framework

Artificial Intelligence: Before defining Artificial Intelligence (AI), the work tried to explain first the meaning of artificial and intelligence. When humans say something is artificial, it means it is not natural. For example, humans talk about artificial flowers, images, food, etc. It is something made to look real or natural. It is not easy to identify that such things are not natural. In other words, it serves the purpose for which it was made. Its essence is to copy things that are naturally made. Intelligence is defined according to the Cambridge Dictionary as "the ability to learn, understand, and make judgments or have opinions that are based on reason."⁴⁸ Having established this, it is easier now to say that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an artificially created machine made to imitate human intelligence.

While its origins extend back centuries, a significant milestone occurred in 1956 when

⁴⁸ Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org › dictionary › english › intelligence>. Sourced on /04/2025.

the American computer scientist John McCarthy organized a summer workshop at Dartmouth University to explore the problem of ‘Artificial Intelligence’, which he defined as that of making a machine behave in ways that would be called intelligent if a human were so behaving. This workshop launched a research program focused on designing machines capable of performing tasks typically associated with the human intellect and intelligent behaviour.⁴⁹

Another author says that,

AI can be defined as “a technical and scientific field devoted to the engineered system that generates outputs such as content, forecasts, recommendations or decisions for a given set of human-defined objectives. AI is a subfield within the discipline of computer science. However, the term ‘AI’ is also commonly used to refer to technologies (or tools) that can perform human tasks that require intelligence, such as perception, judgment, reasoning, or decision-making.”⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Pope Francis (2025). *Antiqua et Nova: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence*. Vatican, Rome. No II, §7, No. Retrieved from https://www.vatican.va/romancuria/congregations/faith/documents/rc_ddf_doc_20250128_antiqua-et-nova_sp.html

⁵⁰ David B. Resnik, et.al, (2024). “The ethics of using artificial intelligence in scientific research: new guidance needed for a new

As presented by Pope Francis, since then, research on AI has developed quickly, resulting in the creation of intricate systems that can carry out extremely complicated tasks. These so-called "narrow AI" systems are usually made to do limited and specialized tasks, like language translation, storm trajectory prediction, image classification, answering questions, and creating visual content upon the user's request. The majority of modern AI systems, especially those that use machine learning, rely on statistical inference rather than logical reasoning, even if the term "intelligence" is used differently in AI research. AI can "predict" events and suggest novel solutions by examining vast datasets to find patterns, simulating some cognitive processes involved in human problem-solving. These accomplishments have been made feasible by developments in hardware (such as specialized CPUs) and computing technologies (such as neural networks, unsupervised machine learning, and evolutionary algorithms). When combined, these technologies allow AI systems to react to different types of human input, adjust to changing circumstances, and even offer creative solutions that their original designers would not have thought of.⁵¹ The challenge now is that Artificial

tool". Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43681-024-00493-8>.
Sourced 13/04/25

⁵¹ Pope Francis, (2025). *Antiqua et Nova: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence*. Vatican, Rome. No II, §8.

Intelligence have come to take over the work of humans, and creativity is dying slowly to the extent that many solely depend on it now and cannot think. This has seriously affected the area of research, especially among undergraduates.

Human Intelligence: The paper deemed it fit to say something about human intelligence in order to balance the discussion for the sake of clarity. What, then, is the difference between human intelligence and artificial intelligence? Human intelligence can be understood as “a faculty that forms an integral part of how the whole person engages with reality. Authentic engagement requires embracing the full scope of one’s being: spiritual, cognitive, embodied, and relational”⁵². This simply means that Human Intelligence (HI) is a natural cognitive ability of humans. Endowed to understand the world and interact with it. The cognitive abilities include:

Reasoning: The ability to think logically, make inferences, and draw conclusions based on available information. **Perception:** The process of interpreting sensory information from the environment, including sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. **Creativity:** The capacity to generate novel ideas, solutions, and artistic expressions through imagination

⁵² Pope Francis, (2025). *Antiqua et Nova: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence*. Vatican, Rome. No III, §26.

and original thinking. **Emotional intelligence:** The ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions, as well as perceive and empathize with the feelings of others. **Social intelligence:** The skill of navigating social interactions, understanding social cues, and adapting behaviour accordingly.⁵³

Artificial intelligence, rather, is an extraordinary technological achievement capable of imitating certain outputs associated with human intelligence. It operates by performing tasks, achieving goals, or making decisions based on quantitative data and computational logic. For example, with its analytical power, AI excels at integrating data from a variety of fields, modelling complex systems, and fostering interdisciplinary connections. In this way, it can help experts collaborate in solving complex problems that cannot be dealt with

⁵³ Maryville University Online, (2024). "Artificial Intelligence vs. Human Intelligence". Retrieved from <https://online.maryville.edu/blog/ai-vs-human-intelligence/>. Sourced on 12/04/2025.

from a single perspective or a single set of interests.⁵⁴

What makes human intelligence unique is the capacity to create, empathy, and emotions. While artificial intelligence is the product of man built to mimic human beings, as already established above.

Academic/Research Integrity: The researcher prefers using academic integrity more than research integrity because it covers academics generally, including research. We read these days on social media about fraud from strong personalities in academia. Frauds involving forgery of results, stealing of materials. Among students, examination malpractices occur, in which teachers are sometimes involved. In many of our secondary schools today, both internal and external examinations are compromised. Students get excellent results, but they cannot defend them. So, if the grassroots are contaminated, miracles cannot happen when they fraudulently find themselves in the Universities. This is part of the corruption that has eaten deep into the Nigerian system.

Being a person of integrity generally implies being an honest and trustworthy person, both in words and

⁵⁴ Pope Francis, (2025). *Antiqua et Nova: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence*. Vatican, Rome. No III, §30

in actions. Therefore, academic integrity means the moral obligation and ethical rule that regulates truthfulness, equity, and accountability in academic work. It ensures that students, teachers, and researchers maintain high standards of integrity in learning, teaching, and scholarly activities by embracing principles including honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and accountability. Maintaining intellectual property, avoiding plagiarism, giving correct credit, and carrying out original research devoid of fabrication or falsification are all components of academic integrity. Maintaining academic integrity is crucial for creating a climate of trust, respect, and credibility in learning environments. It also encourages the search for information and the truth and equips students for moral behaviour in the workplace.⁵⁵ Practising these principles while in an academic environment prepares individuals to contribute responsibly to society.

Research Ethics: This is another term that deserves explanation, though not much different from research or academic integrity. Research ethics can be explained as,

⁵⁵ Ashikuzzaman Md., (2024) “What is Academic Integrity? Definition, Importance, and Examples”. Library & Information Science Education Network. Available at <http://www.lisedunetwork.com/what-is-academic-integrity-definition-importance-and-examples/>

the moral guidelines and standards that direct research, as well as the procedures that ensure it is carried out ethically, are referred to as research ethics. This domain covers issues including informed consent, data security, privacy, and animal care. In order to protect participants' safety and stop research from being abused or misused, research ethics are crucial. In fact, research ethics are essential to ensure the safety of participants and to prevent research from being exploited or misused, since, as researchers have noted, there is a significant tendency to ignore ethical considerations when it comes to AI.⁵⁶

The Role Of Artificial Intelligence In Research (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools offer a wide range of benefits that help researchers enhance the quality of their writing and communicate their ideas effectively. AI is playing an increasingly influential role in academic research, transforming how researchers approach problems, analyze data, and generate insights. It can process vast amounts of data collection and analysis faster than human beings. It can also analyze text with heavy sources, such as academic papers, historical documents, etc. AI can

⁵⁶ Elaïess, Ramadan. (2023). "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Academics: A Concise Overview". *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research (IJAMR)* ISSN: 2643-9670 7. P. 220.

supply or write literature reviews and summaries. Its models can suggest potential research questions or hypotheses by analyzing gaps in existing literature or patterns in data. In writing and editing, tools such as Grammarly or even AI writing assistants help to improve clarity and coherence, generate draft sections and abstracts, or even suggest rewordings for academic texts.⁵⁷ Furthermore, the capacity of AI-assisted writing tools to recommend synonyms and other wording remains one of their main benefits. To avoid repetitious wording, this feature helps researchers produce more interesting and varied work. For example, Artificial Intelligence (AI) can recognize overused terms and suggest new ones, which is especially helpful when composing long academic papers. This improvement not only makes the material easier to read but also shows a more sophisticated command of language, which is frequently important in academic contexts.⁵⁸

However, the benefits of AI come with significant challenges. Generative AI systems, including ChatGPT and DeepSeek, have been linked to text recycling, ghostwriting, and

⁵⁷ ChatGPT., (2025). "Response on Detecting AI-Generated Content in Student Research." OpenAI Research. <https://chat.openai.com>. Sourced on 09/04/2025.

⁵⁸ Imed Bouchrika, (2025). "The Role of AI in Academic Research: Benefits and Ethical Considerations". Research. Com. Retrieved from <https://research.com/research/the-role-of-ai-in-academic-research>. Sourced 09/04/2025

fraudulent publications, often through paper mills. There is a growing concern over AI-forged datasets and falsified peer reviews, which may contribute to the publication of fabricated research. Recent scandals involving AI-generated fraudulent datasets and peer reviews highlight a troubling reality: bad actors can exploit AI to flood journals with illegitimate studies. In practice, AI-generated content in marketing campaigns has also raised issues of authenticity and transparency, as businesses risk losing consumer trust when AI-generated messages are perceived as insincere or manipulative.⁵⁹

Ethical Challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) In Academic Research

Integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) with academic research has brought many positive impacts and challenges, as already indicated above. Our philosophical knowledge not only informs us that man is a rational being but also a social, political, and moral being, among others. Therefore, as moral beings, we are subject to moral responsibilities, which machines do not have. The paper at this point discussed the ethical or moral implications of the

⁵⁹ Gandhi, S., et.al, (2025). “AI’s Impact on Academic Research Integrity: Guidelines from the Editors of Journal of Global Marketing”. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08911762.2025.2488060>

influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic research. It is important to know that artificial intelligence is a product of human ingenuity, and therefore, as a product of man, it should not enslave man. In other words, it should be used responsibly rather than mischievously or recklessly. The paper at this point looked into a few of the ethical challenges associated with Artificial Intelligence cum academic research that are mostly needed for students, such as plagiarism and authorship issues, fabrication, falsification, and manipulation of data, dependency on Artificial Intelligence, bias, and fairness.

Plagiarism and Authorship Issues

Plagiarism has been regarded as a serious moral problem at all levels of academic institutions. “The term plagiarism stems from the root Latin term ‘*plagiarius*.’ Let us look at what Merriam-Webster Dictionary says on this.

If schools wish to impress upon their students how serious an offence plagiarism is, they might start with an explanation of the word’s history. *Plagiarize* (and *plagiarism*) comes from the Latin *plagiarius*, “kidnapper.” This word, derived from the Latin *plaga* (“a net used by hunters to catch game”), extended its meaning in Latin to include a person who stole the words, rather than the children, of another. When *plagiarius* first entered English in the form *plagiarist*, it kept its original reference to

kidnapping, a sense that is now quite obsolete.⁶⁰

*“Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of a source in situations where there is a legitimate expectation of authorship”.*⁶¹ Plagiarism is using another individual’s thoughts, words, phrases, sentences, or facts and taking them as one’s own. It has been classified as “academic dishonesty/misconduct”.⁶² Plagiarism means appropriating someone’s work without the person’s knowledge or permission. It is the “uncredited, knowing, and sometimes wholesale adaptation of work that is not one’s own. These ideas are similar in that each reflects on instances of fraudulent claims, on instances of pretending to present oneself while presenting the labours of others.”⁶³. Even though it has been said that

⁶⁰ Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). “Plagiarism”. In the Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarism>. Sourced 04/ 18/2025

⁶¹ Sozon, Md et al. (2024). “Cheating and plagiarism in higher education institutions (HEIs): A literature review.” *F1000Research* vol. 13 788. doi:10.12688/f1000research.147140.2

⁶² LaGioia, Sarah D., (2024). "Plagiarism and Original Authorship in the Age of AI: Present Complications and Future Directions". Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations. 1881. <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/1881>. Pg. 2

⁶³ Ibid.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) materials cannot be ascribed to be authors, they can be acknowledged. It is a moral offence because it is another method of stealing. Sometimes, someone's material can be stolen and published without the author's knowledge.

Plagiarism is outrageous because it undermines the whole purpose of education itself. Instead of becoming more of an individual thinker, the plagiarist denies the self and the possibility of learning. Someone who will not, or cannot, distinguish his or her ideas from those of others offends the most basic principles of learning.⁶⁴

Due to the seriousness of the moral or ethical implications of plagiarism, many academic institutions impose sanctions such as expulsion or probation, cancellation of materials involved or carry-over courses. To avoid plagiarism, student novices should be taught during orientations what plagiarism is and the need to avoid it.

Fabrication, Falsification, and Manipulation of Data Using Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Fabrication and falsification are two different words and are different forms of academic research misconduct, which can undermine the integrity of scientific research. First, their meanings are to be established.

⁶⁴ LaGioia, Sarah D., (2024). "Plagiarism and Original Authorship in the Age of AI: Present Complications and Future Directions". Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations. 1881. <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/1881>. Pg. 8

Falsification essentially involves manipulating or changing data, research materials, processes, equipment, and, of course, results. This can include altering data or results in a way that the research is not accurate. For example, a researcher might be looking for a particular outcome, and the actual research does not support their theory. They might manipulate the data or analysis to match the research to the desired results. Fabrication, on the other hand, is more about making up research results and data and reporting them as true. This can happen when a researcher, for example, states that a particular lab process was done when, in fact, it wasn't. Or that the research didn't take place at all, in the case of a study, results from previous research were copied and published as original research.⁶⁵

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has also transformed synthetic data generation, making it more advanced and harder to catch. Deep learning models, in particular, can be used as AI algorithms to create realistic and completely fake datasets. The use of this technology has already caused the retraction of several research-published (SCI) papers, which produced authentic biomedical images and experimental results, and it is a great threat to the

⁶⁵ Elsevier, B, V., (2024). "Research Fraud: Falsification and Fabrication in Research Data". Retrieved <https://scientific-publishing.webshop.elsevier.com>. Sourced 15/04/2025

integrity of research. Falsified data can distort research findings as well as result in incorrect scientific theories and implementations. For example, on August 9, 2023, a paper published in *Physica Scripta* was retracted for this reason.⁶⁶

Dependency On Artificial Intelligence

Though there are a lot of benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to students and researchers, such as personalized learning experiences, it can be engaging, it gives instant help with homework and answering of questions, it helps with interactive lessons, it gives better preparation for future careers, it also Improved digital literacy, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, etc. in all these, depending on Artificial Intelligence (AI), make students lazy to read books. It becomes more of a copy and paste. This reduces the culture of reading, which was already an existing problem. “Overreliance on AI tools may hinder the development of critical problem-solving skills, while the digital divide may exacerbate educational inequalities. AI-driven content recommendations could potentially spread misinformation, thus creating challenges for students in discerning credible information”.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Chen Ziyu, et.al (2024). “Research integrity in the era of artificial intelligence: Challenges and responses”. *Medicine*. 103. e38811. 10.1097/MD.00000000000038811. retrieved from

⁶⁷ Donatus, Uzoma Okwara, et.al., (2024) “The Ethical Implications of Artificial Intelligence in Education” *AMAMIHE: Journal of Applied Philosophy*, ISSN: 1597 – 0779, Vol. 22, No. 2. Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.21082.35528

Bias and Fairness In Artificial Intelligence (AI) Algorithms

An algorithm is a process, or rather a step-by-step set of rules or instructions, established or designed for a particular task. For more clarification, “an algorithm is a procedure used for solving a problem or performing a computation. Algorithms act as an exact list of instructions that conduct specified actions step by step in either hardware- or software-based routines. It works by following a set of instructions or rules to complete a task or solve a problem.”⁶⁸ The essence of its task is to solve the problem it is made for. Thus, AI Bias is “an important ethical concern. In training AI systems, large datasets that may have contained societal prejudices related to gender, race, social class, etc., are often used. If these biases are present in the data sets, the AI may reproduce or amplify such errors”.⁶⁹

Conclusion

The paper tried to highlight that Artificial Intelligence is good in many ways, which means that it is not only

⁶⁸ Alexander S. Gillis, (2025). “What is an Algorithm?”. TechTarget. Retrieved from <https://www.techtarget.com/whatis/definition/algorithm>. Sourced 16/04/2025.

⁶⁹ AlSamhori AR. and F Alnaimat F. (2024). “Artificial intelligence in writing and research: ethical implications and best practices”. Central Asian Journal of Medical Hypotheses and Ethics. Vol. 5(4). Pg 260. Available at <https://doi.org/10.47316/cajmhe>. Sourced 16/04/2025.

detrimental to the students but also beneficial. It is a higher level of technology that has come to stay. What is required is how to balance the two. How do students use AI to address its ethical concerns? That is to say, how do we balance the benefits and the risks? It is important to let the students know that there are acceptable AI tools that can assist them in their research and produce better work. For example, Grammarly has been useful to me in checking spelling and correcting wrong sentences.

There is also an “AI-based Plagiarism Check tool, such as Turnitin. These algorithms analyze a paper instantly and compare it with vast databases containing records of previously written articles to detect any anomalies relating to originality and citation.”⁷⁰. Therefore, there is an urgent need for academic institutions to educate and train their students through seminars, conferences, and workshops in creating awareness of AI’s unethical practices. At the end of such academic exercises, resolutions will be made to tackle future occurrences. This will go a long way to help in upholding the integrity of scientific research at various institutions.

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⁷⁰ AlSamhori AR. and F Alnaimat F. (2024). “Artificial intelligence in writing and research: pg.261

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