



THE ROLE OF AI IN ENHANCING THE LEGAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

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Abstract:

The introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) into legal education is moving away from traditional methods of teaching, learning, and research in law. This paper explores the important role of AI in reshaping the way law students learn, research, and develop essential legal skills. The traditional method of studying law often relies on manual research, case analysis, and theoretical learning, which is time-consuming and sometimes limited by human capacity. With the integration of AI-powered tools, students are encouraged to access vast legal databases quickly and efficiently. Furthermore, AI supports personalized learning experiences through adaptive learning systems, which cater to individual student needs and improve engagement in their legal education. While enjoying all these benefits, to a certain extent, the use of AI in legal education and research also raises important challenges, mainly ethical concerns, where students are exposed too much to the technology and rely on it. This paper emphasizes that AI is not a replacement but a complement to traditional legal education and research. With the adoption of AI, students can develop more analytical, efficient, and innovative research skills, preparing them better for their future legal careers. It also gives learning institutions the opportunity to incorporate AI into legal education, hence becoming a dynamic learning environment that aligns with the evolving demands of the legal industry, ensuring students are well-equipped to meet future challenges.

Keywords:

AI, Legal Education, Research Skills.

Introduction

Over the years, the learning pedagogy has undergone significant transformation, and each decade has introduced new educational philosophies, teaching methods, and technological advancements that have reshaped the way knowledge is delivered and acquired in different fields and for career advancement. Rapidly now, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into various sectors has significantly transformed traditional practices, and legal education is no exception.

Legal education has existed since the medieval period, with early foundations in the universities of Bologna and Oxford in the 12th–13th centuries. Over time, scholars have debated whether law should be treated as a science built upon established principles and doctrines. For example, Stropus (1996) described law as a discipline that requires systematic and consistent application of principles to the complex and evolving nature of human affairs. Therefore, the primary goal of every dedicated student learning law is to be able to gain a deep understanding of these principles. Thus, it is indeed important to emphasise that legal education should focus on teaching law as a process of critical thinking and reasoning, rather than merely memorizing rules.

For the past fifty years, the legal education relied on the traditional classroom model, where theoretical knowledge and doctrinal study dominate. The traditional learning by lectures, case studies, and Socratic style is to guide students to deeper understanding of legal principles and cases, aimed to develop a critical thinking and a deep understanding of legal principles. The traditional method of studying law often relies on manual research, case analysis, and theoretical learning, which is time-consuming and limits opportunities for active student participation, in-depth debates, and the development of critical thinking abilities (Ribstein, 2011). Besides, it is understood that traditional learning method do have challenges as to adapt to the dynamic nature of the legal field. Further, the large class sizes tend to hinder lecturer's ability to offer individualized feedback and mentorship to students. As a result, graduates were sometimes well-versed in theory but less prepared for the realities of modern practice, which increasingly requires adaptability, cross-cultural competence, and technological fluency (Llewellyn & Frame, 2012; Baker, 2021).

In recent years legal education has move towards the skills-based approaches. Understanding the importance of preparing students for the practical demands of the legal profession, many schools and educational institutions have incorporated experiential learning methods mainly legal clinics, moot courts, internships, simulations, and problem-based learning (Dao Mong & Phan Thanh, 2024). The schools and educational institutional believes these approaches will help students develop essential skills such as legal research, drafting, negotiation, advocacy, and client counselling. This is to ensure that there is vast exposure to students before they embark to their professional practice upon completion of legal education.

The skill-based approaches were further enhanced by the emergence of new technologies, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a profound global impact. Internet-based education incorporated the use of AI, initiating transformations in legal education. AI-powered tools are now integrated into legal research, predictive analysis, contract review, and case management, providing students with new methods of engaging with legal materials and deepening their understanding of the evolving legal landscape. These developments demonstrate that legal education is encouraged to adopt a more dynamic, interdisciplinary,

and technologically informed approach to ensure students are fully prepared for the future of legal practice.

The latest development shaping legal education is the integration of AI. AI-powered platforms such as ROSS Intelligence, LexisNexis, and other natural language processing tools have redefined legal research and case analysis by providing efficient access to statutes, precedents, and scholarly commentary (Surden, 2025). Virtual and augmented reality applications now enable immersive moot court simulations and experiential training, further expanding the possibilities for interactive learning (Gosai, 2024). However, these rapid advancements also present challenges, including concerns about data privacy, ethical use, algorithmic bias, and the risk of over-dependence on technology (Mohamed, Ali, & Hassan, 2024).

Problem Statement

Despite these innovations, the way law is taught still reveals a persistent gap between academic training and professional expectations. Traditional teaching methods remain dominant in many jurisdictions, focusing heavily on rote learning and doctrinal study. This creates a mismatch between the competencies law schools cultivate and the skills modern legal practice requires, such as digital literacy, AI integration, and global communication.

Moreover, while AI offers promising tools to enhance research, case analysis, and teaching, its adoption raises new challenges for pedagogy, ethics, and professional identity in law. Academic institutions face critical questions: How can AI be integrated without undermining human judgment and critical reasoning? What policies should govern the responsible use of AI in legal education? How can disparities in access to technology be addressed to ensure equitable learning opportunities?

These issues underscore the urgent need to explore AI's role in legal education, not as a replacement for human reasoning, but as a complementary tool that can enhance student learning, research efficiency, and professional readiness. Recent studies show that AI-powered personalized learning tools can improve engagement and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practice by using simulations, intelligent tutoring systems, and data-driven feedback (Adegbite & Suleiman, 2025). Likewise, generative AI has been shown to support deeper learning, improve student writing, and help educators better understand how students think, when used responsibly (Lande, 2025). By analysing the opportunities, challenges, and potential frameworks for responsible adoption, this study seeks to contribute to ongoing debates about the future of legal education in an AI-driven world.

Literature Review

In this section, discussion will involve the gap in legal education. Legal education has long faced criticism for failing to fully prepare students for the competencies required in today's profession. Unfortunately, the way law is taught often does not prepare students well for the skills they need in today's legal world. While these methods have value, critics argue they do not fully equip students with the competencies required for modern legal practice (Ribstein, 2011). As a result, students may not get enough practice in important areas such as using technology, analysing data, understanding international law, or communicating across cultures (Llewellyn & Frame, 2012).

To explain the ongoing transformation in legal education, several learning theories provide useful frameworks. Cognitive learning theory suggests students understand law more effectively when new ideas are connected to prior knowledge. AI supports this by presenting cases and statutes through summaries, charts, and patterns, making complex legal concepts easier to grasp.

Moving on constructivist theory emphasizes that students learn by actively building knowledge through problem-solving rather than memorization. AI tools such as simulations and virtual classrooms encourage interactive engagement with legal issues (Dao Mong & Phan Thanh, 2024). Finally, experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) highlights the value of learning through practice and reflection. AI-driven moot courts, virtual trials, and augmented-reality platforms provide opportunities for students to rehearse legal reasoning and advocacy before entering professional practice (Gosai, 2024).

The move toward clinical programs, internships, moot courts, and problem-based learning reflects a recognition of practice-readiness (Dao Mong & Phan Thanh, 2024). These methods provide opportunities for students to develop drafting, advocacy, and negotiation skills. However, these approaches still require significant resources and may not fully incorporate emerging digital competencies.

Furthermore, conducting research quickly and efficiently with fruitful outcomes encourages students to learn more. Therefore, with the existence of AI, research can be conducted more rapidly, enabling students to utilize powerful tools such as ROSS Intelligence and LexisNexis. AI is increasingly integrated into legal education to address these gaps. Tools like LexisNexis and ROSS Intelligence leverage natural language processing to streamline research and case analysis (Surden, 2025). This approach departs from the traditional method, which is highly time-consuming, requiring law students to spend excessive time searching for solutions.

Perhaps the teaching method will also undergo a shift with the introduction of Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS). The use of ITS is intended to guide students in solving cases within specific domains of law. Indeed, we must acknowledge that relying solely on traditional learning approaches in legal education does not ensure that law students are able to adapt to and comprehend the learning environment. Adopting virtual classrooms and creating courtroom scenarios could provide a more conducive environment for law students. This will further enhance their ability to practice legal reasoning in realistic settings.

Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) create immersive learning spaces where students engage in mock trials and negotiations, enhancing experiential learning outcomes (Gosai, 2024). ITS further individualize learning by providing targeted guidance to students struggling with complex case law analysis (Adegbite & Suleiman, 2025).

Despite these developments, a gap persists between academic training and the competencies demanded by the legal profession. Many law schools have yet to fully embrace AI or lack policies for ethical and responsible integration. Concerns include data privacy, over-reliance on algorithms, and the reproduction of systemic bias in legal datasets (Mohamed, Ali, & Hassan, 2024). AI can help improve legal education, but we must use it carefully. It should

follow ethical rules and be used to support human thinking and not replace the judgment and reasoning of real lawyers.

Methodology

This study adopts a doctrinal legal research approach, focusing on the examination of law as it stands through statutes, judicial decisions, and scholarly commentary. The purpose is to analyse how AI is being integrated into legal education and to assess whether existing legal and educational frameworks are adequate to address both the opportunities and challenges presented by this technological shift.

Primary sources such as statutes, regulations, and case law are examined to understand how legal education and professional training are guided within formal structures. Particular attention is given to provisions and policies that touch on issues of digital literacy, ethical standards, and the responsible use of AI. To complement this, secondary sources including academic writings, textbooks, journal articles, and reports are reviewed to provide critical insights into the broader pedagogical and technological debates. This comparative review spans both international and Malaysian contexts, allowing for the identification of shared challenges as well as context-specific approaches.

The analysis is framed through established learning theories cognitive, constructivist, and experiential which serve as lenses to evaluate how AI tools align with or challenge traditional pedagogical methods. A comparative outlook is also incorporated by considering how other jurisdictions have integrated AI into their legal training systems, thereby highlighting best practices and policy gaps that may inform local developments.

Ultimately, this methodological approach enables a systematic evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks associated with adopting AI in legal education. The findings are intended to highlight areas that may require policy reform, ethical safeguards, or pedagogical redesign, ensuring that law graduates are adequately prepared for the realities of professional practice in an AI-driven environment.

Finding and Discussion

The doctrinal analysis of statutes, case law, and scholarly commentary reveals that the integration of AI into legal education is still in its formative stages. While traditional models of legal pedagogy remain dominant in many jurisdictions, there is a clear shift toward exploring how AI can support legal research, case analysis, and experiential learning. This shift is reflected in the growing body of academic publications on the subject.

According to Dao Mong & Phan Thanh (2024), researchers worldwide have shown growing interest in how AI can be applied in legal education. This trend is evident from the increasing number of academic publications on the topic indexed in the Scopus database, which tracks scholarly research (see Figure1). The doctrinal review of literature further confirms that much of this scholarship focuses on ethical considerations, the reliability of AI tools, and the impact of technology on students' ability to develop independent reasoning skills.

Figure 1 (Below): - Number of Academic Publications on Artificial Intelligence in Legal Education Indexed in the Scopus Database (2019–2024).

Source: Data adapted from Diep Dao Mong and Phan Thanh (2024).



Interest in AI within legal education has grown steadily since 2019. While researchers from many countries have contributed to this field, China leads in the volume of research on AI, both in legal education and in other disciplines (see Figure 2). From a doctrinal perspective, this leadership suggests that Chinese institutions may be shaping the direction of global debates on AI adoption in education, particularly concerning issues of regulation and standard-setting. At the same time, research output from Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia indicates a shared recognition that AI must be integrated into curriculum in ways that preserve the integrity of legal reasoning while improving efficiency and access to information.

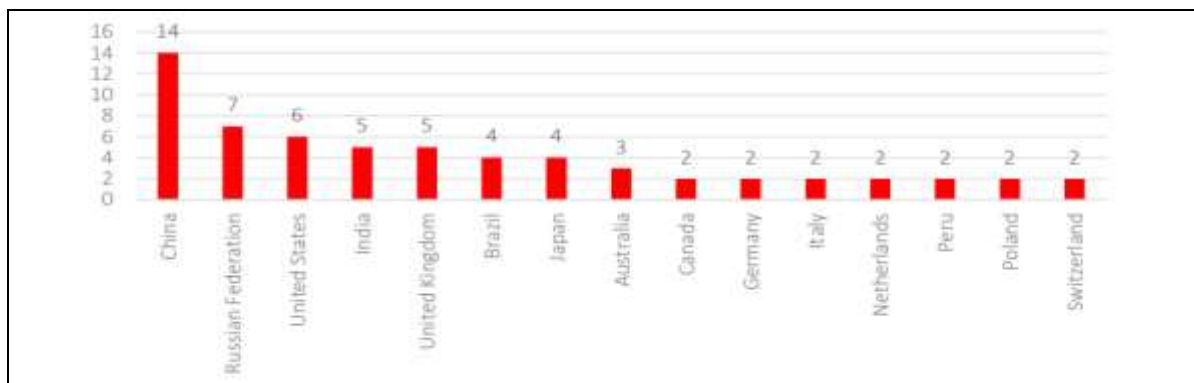


Figure 2 (Above). Leading Countries in Research Output on Artificial Intelligence in Legal Education and Other Disciplines, according to the Scopus Database.

Source: Data adapted from Diep Dao Mong and Phan Thanh (2024).

Overall, the findings suggest that while global research on AI in legal education is expanding, significant gaps remain in addressing ethical safeguards, equitable access, and policy coherence. The doctrinal review underscores that without clear legal and institutional frameworks, the benefits of AI may be unevenly distributed, potentially widening disparities among students and jurisdictions.

Perspective of Legal Academia

From the perspective of legal academia, the integration of AI into legal education raises critical questions concerning pedagogical ethics, technological dependency, and the evolution of legal reasoning. This transformation underscores the imperative to balance innovation with ethical responsibility. The academic community acknowledges that while AI offers unprecedented opportunities, it also introduces complex challenges to traditional legal pedagogy. Adding AI to the curriculum can greatly improve how law is taught, speed up legal research, and help prepare future lawyers to work in a technology-driven legal world.

Firstly, AI enhances research capabilities by providing legal scholars with access to comprehensive resources, including statutes, case law, and scholarly commentary. Furthermore, AI-powered legal databases can refine search results beyond simple keyword matching, thereby enabling more precise and contextually relevant legal research.

Secondly, the adoption of AI systems may personalize instruction based on students' individual strengths and weaknesses. In cases where assessments such as online quizzes are used, instructors can provide timely feedback to help students reinforce their learning. This approach can, to some extent, enhance students' confidence and create opportunities to move beyond traditional modes of learning.

Thirdly, AI can support students in developing efficient legal drafting and case analysis skills. For example, students are encouraged to use AI tools to draft legal briefs, memoranda, and research papers. By consulting AI-generated examples, students can refine their work to align with established legal writing standards, thereby fostering a more personalized and skill-focused learning experience.

Fourthly, AI can facilitate simulation-based and case-specific learning experiences. Students are exposed to moot court simulations that provide real-time feedback, enabling them to refine their advocacy and analytical skills within a controlled, practice-oriented environment. Such simulations are typically introduced during the second or third year of legal studies. This exposure offers valuable experiential learning opportunities and better prepares students for the professional demands they are likely to encounter after graduating from law school (Chen, 2024).

Considering the foregoing, AI should be employed as a tool to assist and guide both students and legal academia, functioning as a support mechanism rather than a substitute for completing final tasks or assessments. While its capabilities can significantly enhance legal research, instruction, and skill development, it remains essential to preserve the human judgment, analytical reasoning, and ethical responsibility that are central to legal practice. From the perspective of academia, the integration of AI into legal education may be overwhelming. However, if misused, it could undermine the integrity of legal education as a whole and, ultimately, create significant challenges for the legal profession in the future.

Limitation and Challenges

The application of AI in legal education presents various benefits. Among others, AI improves efficiency, accuracy, time management, and cost-effectiveness. It can support students in completing their assessments and coursework within the designated time frame by

reducing the time spent on legal research and document preparation. As a result, students can focus on more complex legal tasks that are inherently time-consuming.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the use of AI in legal education and research raises several complex concerns, particularly regarding data privacy and security. When students use AI tools to conduct research, they may handle sensitive legal information, including personal data. This is cause for concern, as students may not be fully aware that they are working with information that could lead to data breaches or cybersecurity vulnerabilities (Mohamed et al., 2024). Therefore, students must take precautionary measures to avoid violating others' privacy when using AI tools. They must also understand that AI systems can be biased or produce inaccurate results, which may lead to flawed research or analysis.

In addition to concerns surrounding privacy and security, issues of bias and fairness in AI algorithms pose significant challenges for students. For example, historical case law datasets used in academic research may inherit systemic biases from the original legal records. If the data reflects disparities against certain demographic groups, AI systems may reproduce biased or inaccurate information, potentially leading to misleading analytical conclusions in student work. Furthermore, AI algorithms often lack transparency, making it difficult for legal researchers and educators to detect and correct embedded bias. When the decision-making process is opaque, it becomes challenging to evaluate the accuracy or fairness of AI outputs. This opacity also complicates efforts to teach students how to use AI tools in an ethical and responsible manner.

The lack of interpretability and transparency in AI algorithms presents a significant challenge. In educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities, rules and standards require reasoning and decision-making processes to be clear and understandable. This creates difficulty in applying AI tools in legal education and research when the underlying mechanisms of AI decision-making are opaque. To address this challenge, there is a need for AI systems that can provide interpretable explanations of how decisions are made. Such systems would enhance transparency, accountability, and trustworthiness in academic work.

When educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities attempt to integrate AI into legal education and research, some students, educators, and institutions may be reluctant to embrace it. For instance, while AI tools can assist with legal research and case analysis, some students express hesitation due to concerns about becoming overly dependent on technology. Many fear that AI may take over tasks they believe should be performed by students themselves. Additionally, there is a risk that AI-generated responses may be inaccurate. These concerns raise important questions about how AI should be used in legal education and the extent to which students should rely on it in completing their research and assessments.

Suggestion and Recommendation

Based on the challenges identified, legal education institutions can adopt several strategies to ensure responsible and effective integration of AI into teaching and research.

First, institutions should offer training programs to help students understand how AI functions and how to apply it in their academic work. This should include training and support for faculty members on integrating AI into classroom instruction. Promoting a culture of openness to innovation, where students and educators collaborate, can also help students feel more confident and comfortable using AI in legal education and research.

Second, legal education institutions should establish clear policies and ethical guidelines governing the use of AI in academic work. This can be achieved through collaboration among legal scholars, technology specialists, and policymakers to ensure that the use of AI aligns with both educational objectives and broader societal values. These guidelines should address issues such as data privacy, algorithmic fairness, and the responsible use of AI within learning environments (Adegbite & Suleiman, 2025).

Third, legal education institutions should collaborate with technology companies specializing in AI to support the development and integration of AI-powered learning platforms tailored to the needs of legal education and future legal professionals (Adegbite & Suleiman).

Finally, continuous evaluation of AI tools and strict adherence to institutional policies are essential to prevent misuse and to foster fair, ethical, and responsible use of AI in legal education. Such practices are critical, as they shape students' professional judgment and readiness for the legal field after graduation.

Conclusion

The integration of AI into legal education evokes a complex set of responses, ranging from enthusiasm to apprehension. This study set out to examine how AI is transforming legal pedagogy, to evaluate its benefits and challenges, and to propose strategies for responsible adoption. These objectives have been achieved by highlighting the gap between traditional teaching methods and modern practice requirements, analysing the potential of AI tools in research, drafting, and experiential learning, and presenting recommendations for academic institutions.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations. It relies primarily on secondary literature and bibliometric analysis, without empirical fieldwork such as surveys or interviews with students and lecturers. The data also reflects a global trend dominated by publications from certain jurisdictions, such as China, which may limit the generalizability of findings. Despite these boundaries, the findings have important implications. They suggest that AI can improve efficiency, personalize instruction, and expand experiential learning, but only if accompanied by strong ethical safeguards. For legal educators, this means embracing AI not as a substitute for critical reasoning but as a support mechanism that enhances professional readiness. For policymakers, the findings underscore the need for guidelines that balance innovation with accountability, fairness, and equity in access.

Future research should therefore move beyond literature synthesis to empirical studies involving direct engagement with students, lecturers, and practitioners. Comparative research across regions would provide a more nuanced understanding of AI's role in diverse legal systems, while experimental studies of AI-powered simulations, clinics, or moot courts could generate practical evidence of its pedagogical value.

In the end, AI should be viewed as a tool for promoting innovative thinking, enhancing teaching strategies, and creating learning experiences that are more personalized and engaging not as a replacement for human judgment. A tool is only as good as its user, and while AI can process vast amounts of information, students must continue to cultivate analytical reasoning, ethical responsibility, and critical judgment as they transition into the legal profession.

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