

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AUTHORSHIP AND ORIGINALITY IN THEATRE ARTS SCHOLARSHIP: RETHINKING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Akoshi, Sunday ISAAC
Department of Theatre Arts
College Of Education Akwanga, Nigeria.
[:akoshiisaac@gmail.com](mailto:akoshiisaac@gmail.com)

&

Gbenga Emmanuel ADEBOYE
Department of Dramatic Arts
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria
geadeboye@oauife.edu.ng
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6324-0035>

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, is increasingly influencing research and academic writing in higher education, raising questions about authorship, originality, intellectual responsibility, and academic integrity. These issues are important in Theatre Arts scholarship, where research depends on interpretation, critical reasoning, creative inquiry, contextual understanding, and close engagement with dramatic texts and performances. This article examines the implications of AI-assisted scholarship for authorship and originality in Theatre Arts within Nigerian higher education. The study adopts a qualitative conceptual approach based on a review and analysis of relevant literature on artificial intelligence, academic integrity, authorship, digital humanities, higher education, and Theatre and Performance Studies. Guided by Media Ecology Theory, the article examines how AI technologies influence research practices, academic writing, knowledge production, and scholarly responsibility. The analysis shows that AI can support legitimate academic activities, including information organisation, language improvement, research planning, idea generation, and access to scholarly materials. However, when students and researchers allow AI systems to undertake substantial intellectual tasks such as developing arguments, interpreting texts, evaluating evidence, or producing complete academic works without meaningful human involvement, AI assistance becomes intellectual substitution. The article argues that responsible use of AI requires clear authorship, human judgement, source verification, transparency, and adherence to academic integrity. It recommends AI literacy, revised assessment practices, responsible-use guidelines, and stronger research training within Theatre Arts education. The article contributes to discussions on AI, authorship, originality, Theatre Arts pedagogy, digital humanities, and academic integrity in Nigerian higher education.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Authorship; Originality; Theatre Arts Scholarship; Academic Integrity; Media Ecology; Nigerian Higher Education

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), has become an important part of contemporary higher education. Systems capable of generating, revising, summarising and organising text are increasingly being used in teaching, learning and research. Their rapid adoption has created new possibilities for access to information, language support,

research planning and educational assistance, but it has also raised questions about authorship, originality, academic integrity, intellectual responsibility and the role of human judgement in knowledge production. UNESCO notes that the rapid development of GenAI has outpaced the ability of many educational systems to establish appropriate policies and practices. (Miao & Holmes, 2023). The organisation therefore calls for a human-centred approach that protects human agency, data privacy, equity and responsible use in education and research. Similarly, the European Commission (2022) identifies both educational opportunities and ethical concerns associated with AI and data use, including the need for human agency, accountability, transparency and responsible decision-making. These concerns have become more pressing as generative AI has moved from specialised technological environments into ordinary academic work.

The emergence of generative AI has also changed the relationship between the researcher and the production of academic text. Large language models can produce coherent passages, summarise information, suggest research questions, reorganise arguments and assist with language editing. Kasneci et al. (2023) identify opportunities for large language models in education while also drawing attention to limitations involving accuracy, bias, assessment and responsible use. Cotton et al. (2024) similarly argue that the use of ChatGPT in higher education presents both educational opportunities and risks to academic integrity. Their discussion shows that the problem cannot be reduced to whether AI should be used or prohibited; rather, universities need approaches that establish acceptable forms of use and protect the integrity of academic work. UNESCO (Miao & Holmes, 2023) also recognises the possible use of GenAI for curriculum development, teaching, learning and research while stressing the need for appropriate human oversight.

The question of authorship becomes particularly important when AI contributes substantially to the production of academic work. Academic authorship involves responsibility for the claims, arguments, evidence and interpretations presented in a scholarly work. AI systems can generate language, but the researcher remains responsible for determining whether the information is accurate, whether sources are authentic, whether arguments are adequately supported and whether interpretations are appropriate to the subject under investigation. The use of AI for language correction, brainstorming or organisation therefore differs from allowing an AI system to construct the central argument, interpret evidence and produce a complete scholarly work that is subsequently submitted as the researcher's own. The distinction is important because originality in scholarship is not limited to the production of new words. It also concerns the intellectual responsibility involved in developing, evaluating and communicating knowledge.

This distinction has direct relevance to Theatre Arts scholarship. Theatre Arts research involves the study of dramatic texts, performance, directing, acting, dramaturgy, stagecraft, theatre history, cultural practices, audience responses and other forms of creative and scholarly production. Such work requires interpretation and judgement that are connected to historical, social and cultural contexts. In African theatre scholarship, performance cannot be separated from the cultural and social conditions within which theatrical practices develop. Banham (2004) demonstrates the importance of locating African theatre within its varied historical and cultural contexts, while Jeyifo (1984) places African dramatic and theatrical practices within broader questions of culture, politics and social experience. These perspectives are important in considering AI-generated interpretation because an automated system may produce a grammatically convincing reading of a play without necessarily possessing the cultural experience, research context or disciplinary knowledge required to establish the adequacy of that interpretation.

The problem, therefore, is not the mere presence of AI in Theatre Arts scholarship. The more important issue is the extent to which AI changes the intellectual work expected of the researcher.

A student may use an AI system to identify possible concepts, improve sentence structure or generate questions for further investigation while still reading the primary texts, consulting scholarly sources and developing an independent argument. A different situation arises when the student delegates the reading, interpretation, argument construction and writing of the research work to an AI system and presents the resulting text as an independent scholarly product. The first involves technological assistance; the second involves the displacement of intellectual responsibility. This distinction is consistent with current discussions of academic integrity, which emphasise responsible use, institutional guidance and human responsibility rather than a simple rejection of AI technologies (Cotton et al., 2024; Miao & Holmes, 2023).

The Nigerian higher education context makes this discussion particularly important. AI adoption in Nigerian universities is increasing, while institutional responses to its educational and ethical implications are still developing. Recent research on Nigerian higher education indicates that lecturers and students are already engaging with AI tools and that concerns include academic integrity, dependence, critical thinking, ethics and the need for institutional guidance (Bakre&Tukur-Bello, 2026; Ufearo et al., 2026). Ajani et al. (2025) likewise identify the need to strengthen AI competence among academics in Nigeria and to address ethical issues associated with AI adoption. Ojedeji (2026), examining academic integrity in the context of the University of Ibadan, further demonstrates the importance of institutional responses to AI-mediated academic work. These studies show that the Nigerian debate is moving beyond whether AI exists in higher education towards questions of how it should be used, governed and incorporated into academic practice.

The African context also requires attention because approaches developed elsewhere cannot simply be transferred without considering local educational conditions, institutional capacity and patterns of knowledge production. African higher education institutions operate within contexts marked by unequal access to digital resources, differences in technological capacity and continuing debates about the production, circulation and validation of knowledge. AI therefore raises questions not only about academic misconduct but also about whose knowledge is represented in AI systems, how African cultural materials are interpreted and how automated systems may reproduce assumptions that do not adequately reflect African contexts. A responsible approach to AI in African higher education must consequently include attention to local knowledge, cultural context, source verification and the responsibility of scholars to evaluate rather than merely reproduce machine-generated information.

The theoretical basis for this discussion is Media Ecology Theory. The theory provides a way of examining technologies as environments that influence human communication, perception, behaviour and social organisation rather than treating them simply as neutral instruments. McLuhan (1964) argues that changes in communication media affect the organisation of human experience and social interaction. Postman later developed the media-ecological approach by examining media as environments that influence what people can see, say and do (Postman, 1970). Strate (2017) further explains Media Ecology as the study of media environments and the ways in which technologies, forms of information and communication structures influence human affairs. From this perspective, AI should not be understood only as a tool that assists academic writing. Its increasing presence in research changes the environment in which students and scholars search for information, formulate ideas, construct arguments and communicate knowledge.

Media Ecology Theory is therefore useful for examining the relationship between AI and academic authorship. If a technological environment changes the way information is accessed and processed, it can also influence scholarly habits. Generative AI reduces the time required to produce certain

forms of text and makes automated assistance readily available during research and writing. This may encourage new patterns of academic behaviour, including greater dependence on generated summaries, automated paraphrasing and machine-produced arguments. At the same time, the same technology can provide useful assistance when scholars remain responsible for source selection, verification, interpretation and argumentation. The theoretical issue is therefore not simply whether AI is beneficial or harmful. It concerns how the technological environment changes scholarly practices and how those changes affect human responsibility for knowledge production.

This article examines AI, authorship and originality in Theatre Arts scholarship within Nigerian higher education. It adopts a qualitative conceptual approach based on a critical synthesis of relevant literature on artificial intelligence, academic integrity, authorship, digital humanities, higher education and Theatre and Performance Studies. The article focuses particularly on the distinction between responsible AI-assisted scholarship and intellectual substitution. It asks how AI can be used to support research and teaching without transferring essential scholarly responsibilities from the researcher to the machine. It also considers the implications of this distinction for Theatre Arts pedagogy, where interpretation, cultural understanding, creative reasoning and engagement with primary materials remain central to scholarly practice.

The article argues that AI should neither be treated as inherently incompatible with academic scholarship nor accepted as a replacement for human intellectual work. Responsible use requires that the researcher remains accountable for the ideas, evidence, interpretation, sources and final scholarly product. This position has implications for assessment, research training, academic integrity policies and AI literacy in Nigerian universities. For Theatre Arts education in particular, the challenge is to ensure that technological assistance strengthens rather than replaces students' abilities to read, interpret, analyse, research and develop independent arguments. The discussion therefore contributes to the growing debate on artificial intelligence, authorship, originality and academic integrity while placing Theatre Arts and Nigerian higher education at the centre of the discussion.

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Knowledge Production

Artificial intelligence is changing the organisation of academic research by introducing automated systems into activities previously performed directly by researchers. These include information searches, content generation, language editing, data organisation and research planning. Lu (2024) argues that AI is increasingly affecting the production and dissemination of knowledge, creating new relationships between technological systems and scholarly practice. This development raises questions about how academic knowledge is produced, evaluated and attributed when automated systems participate in research processes. Mututa and Tomaselli (2025) examine AI within university research cultures and argue that its increasing use is changing established research processes and raising concerns about the integrity of knowledge production. Their study places AI within the wider African university context, where research institutions must respond to technological change while maintaining standards of scholarly work.

Empirical research across African higher education also indicates that academics are already using AI for research and teaching. A study involving 663 academics from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and other countries found that ChatGPT, OpenAI and QuillBot were among the tools used for information searches, course materials, research and related academic activities (Adu et al., 2024). The study further found that challenges associated with AI use affected academic productivity. Falebita and Kok (2024) report a similar expansion of AI use within African higher education. Their systematic review found that academics use AI for information searches, content generation, paraphrasing, grammar checking, teaching and research. They also identify a shortage

of research on responsible AI integration across disciplines. This gap is significant for Theatre Arts because much existing African research on AI in higher education has concentrated on STEM education and general educational practice.

Eleje et al. (2025) found that lecturers at Nnamdi Azikiwe University expressed moderate views about AI's effectiveness and concerns about its influence on students' learning behaviour. The study also reports a need for institutional training and support for responsible AI use. This establishes an important point for Theatre Arts scholarship, AI has already entered academic knowledge-production processes, but disciplinary responses remain uneven. Oguntona and Emere (2025) found rapid growth in African research on AI in higher education since 2023, while identifying gaps in ethical and policy research. The implication is that Theatre Arts cannot treat AI as an external technological issue. Its use requires evaluation in relation to the specific forms of interpretation, research and knowledge production that define the discipline.

Generative AI, Academic Writing and Intellectual Responsibility

Generative AI has changed academic writing by enabling users to generate, revise, summarise and reorganise text with limited time and effort. This development has created a distinction between AI-assisted writing and AI-generated scholarship. Revell et al. (2024), in their comparison of ChatGPT-generated and human-written essays, demonstrate that generative AI can produce academically credible prose while raising questions about authorship, quality and academic integrity. Bozkurt (2024) similarly links generative AI with questions of authorship, ownership, disclosure and academic ethics. The issue of responsibility becomes more serious when AI produces substantial portions of a scholarly work. Formosa et al. (2025) found that perceptions of authorship and responsibility are affected by the extent of AI assistance, while disclosure remains important in determining whether AI involvement is regarded as acceptable. AI systems cannot assume responsibility for claims, evidence or errors contained in academic publications. Human researchers therefore remain responsible for checking generated material and determining what enters the final work. AI-assisted writing can serve legitimate purposes when researchers retain control over the intellectual process. Language editing, brainstorming, organisation of ideas and assistance with routine writing tasks may support academic work. Intellectual responsibility changes when researchers allow AI to formulate the main argument, interpret evidence, construct analysis and produce the final work without substantial human involvement. The distinction is therefore between assistance that supports authorship **and** substitution that displaces authorship (Lund, 2024; Revell et al., 2024).

AI, Authorship and Originality in Humanities Scholarship

Questions of authorship and originality have become more complex with the development of generative AI. Traditional academic authorship connects a scholarly work to identifiable human responsibility for its content, evidence and argument. Lund (2024), examining AI authorship policies across leading academic journals, found that publishers had responded rapidly to the emergence of generative AI, with policies generally separating AI assistance from human authorship. AI systems may contribute to the production of text, but they cannot accept responsibility for published claims. Formosa et al. (2025) further show that the degree of AI assistance affects perceptions of authorship and responsibility. This finding is important for humanities scholarship because originality cannot be measured only by whether the final wording is different from existing publications. It also concerns the researcher's contribution to interpretation, argument and knowledge production.

The humanities present a further concern because scholarly value often depends upon interpretation and contextual judgement. A generated interpretation may reproduce established patterns of

language without adequately accounting for historical, cultural or disciplinary context. Revell et al. (2024) show that AI-generated academic essays can achieve forms of textual coherence that makes the distinction between human and machine-produced writing less visible. This increases the importance of transparency about AI use and of maintaining human responsibility for scholarly reasoning. To this end, originality should be understood in relation to intellectual contribution and responsibility, rather than textual novelty alone. AI may assist the presentation of an argument, but the researcher must remain responsible for the development and defence of that argument.

Artificial Intelligence and Theatre Arts Scholarship

The implications of AI for Theatre Arts extend beyond academic writing to performance creation, dramaturgy, research, documentation and creative practice. Cossette and Salter (2024) examine AI through questions of creative labour and the integration of neural networks into performing arts. Their work demonstrates that AI can become part of creative processes rather than functioning only as a research instrument. Huang-Kokina (2025) provides further evidence through examples of AI-mediated music theatre and opera, showing how AI can participate in interactive performance systems, vocal production and other creative processes. Such applications demonstrate that AI can support experimentation within the performing arts. They also raise questions about the distribution of creative responsibility between human practitioners and technological systems.

For Theatre Arts scholarship, the central concern is the researcher's ability to establish meaning from theatrical materials. Dramatic texts, performances, rehearsals, costumes, stage designs, audience responses and cultural practices require contextual interpretation. AI can assist researchers in organising information or identifying possible lines of inquiry, but generated interpretations require verification against primary materials and relevant scholarship. The use of AI can therefore support Theatre Arts research when it extends the researcher's capacity without replacing the researcher's interpretative responsibility. The discipline requires researchers to read performances and texts within their cultural, historical and aesthetic contexts. AI-assisted research becomes problematic when generated interpretations are accepted without such interrogation.

AI, Academic Integrity and Nigerian Higher Education

The growth of AI use in Nigerian universities has intensified existing concerns about plagiarism, authorship and academic dishonesty. Ojedeji (2026), studying undergraduate students at the University of Ibadan, reports concerns about AI-related academic dishonesty alongside educational benefits associated with AI use. The study indicates that institutional responses need to address how students use AI rather than relying solely on attempts to detect generated text. Ajani et al. (2025) identify AI competence as an important requirement for academics in Nigeria and emphasise the need for ethical approaches to AI adoption. Their findings support the development of institutional capacity rather than treating AI as a problem that can be resolved through prohibition alone. Samuel (2025) draws attention to additional concerns within Nigerian universities, including plagiarism, academic dishonesty, data privacy and weak institutional enforcement. These concerns demonstrate that AI-related academic integrity cannot be separated from wider institutional practices governing research and educational technology. Students and researchers should remain responsible for their arguments, sources, interpretations and submitted work. Institutional guidelines should also specify when AI assistance should be disclosed and what forms of use are permitted. Such measures would provide a basis for protecting academic integrity while allowing useful applications of AI within Nigerian higher education.

Media Ecology Theory provides the theoretical basis for understanding how AI changes the environment in which academic work takes place. Rather than viewing technology only as an instrument, Media Ecology examines how communication technologies influence patterns of

communication, perception and social practice. Recent scholarship has applied this perspective directly to AI and higher education. Cinque (2024) uses the concept of information ecologies to examine competing perceptions of AI within higher education, showing how new technologies become embedded within existing educational environments. Connor and Cali (2024) similarly apply media-ecological thinking to AI in communication education and identify questions concerning authorship, reliability, bias and trust. This perspective is relevant to Theatre Arts scholarship because AI changes the conditions under which researchers access, organise and communicate knowledge. The technology can shorten some research processes, alter writing practices and make machine-generated interpretation readily available. Murtuza and Oliullah (2024) argue from a Media Ecology perspective that dependence on ChatGPT can affect students' engagement with information and their development of independent thinking. Thus, The theory helps explain how AI-mediated academic environments can influence scholarly behaviour. Its value to this study lies in connecting technological change with changes in research practice. The concern is not simply that AI produces text; it is that repeated reliance on automated systems may change how researchers approach reading, analysis, interpretation and authorship. For Theatre Arts education, Media Ecology Theory provides a framework for examining these changes while retaining human responsibility as the basis of scholarly work.

Theoretical Framework: Media Ecology Theory

This study is anchored in Media Ecology Theory, associated with Marshall McLuhan and further developed by Neil Postman and later media-ecology scholars. The theory examines how communication technologies shape the environments in which people think, communicate, learn and produce knowledge. McLuhan (1964) argues that media influence human experience through the forms of communication they create, while Postman (1970) treats media as environments that affect the organisation of social and intellectual activities. Strate (2017) further explains media ecology as the study of media environments and their effects on human communication, perception and behaviour. The theory is relevant to this study because artificial intelligence has become part of the environment in which academic research and writing now take place. AI is not used only for producing text. It can influence how students and researchers search for information, formulate ideas, organise arguments, interpret materials and communicate scholarly knowledge. From a Media Ecology perspective, these changes are important because a technology can alter established practices even when users continue to pursue the same academic goals.

The application of Media Ecology Theory to AI-mediated scholarship rests on the relationship between technology, human behaviour and knowledge production. Generative AI provides immediate access to automated responses, summaries, explanations and written formulations. This accessibility can change the sequence through which academic work is undertaken. A researcher who previously had to read several sources before developing an argument may now obtain an automated summary within seconds. The technology therefore changes the research environment within which reading, interpretation and writing occur. This does not mean that AI use automatically reduces the quality of scholarship. Media Ecology Theory allows the study to examine the effects of technological mediation without assuming that every technological development produces negative outcomes. AI can support research planning, language improvement, information organisation and other academic activities. The concern arises when the technology changes the researcher's role from an active producer and evaluator of knowledge to a passive user of generated material.

The application of Media Ecology Theory is relevant to Theatre Arts because the discipline involves interpretation of dramatic texts, performances, theatrical practices and cultural materials. AI-generated explanations can provide preliminary information about a play, playwright,

performance or theoretical concept, but the researcher must establish the relevance of that information to the specific theatrical context. For example, an AI system may generate an interpretation of a Yoruba dramatic work based on general information available within its training data. Such an interpretation may overlook linguistic, historical, cultural or performance-specific meanings. The Theatre Arts researcher must therefore examine the generated material against the dramatic text, performance evidence, cultural knowledge and relevant scholarship. Media Ecology Theory makes it possible to examine how dependence on automated interpretation may change the researcher's engagement with these materials.

The theory further provides a basis for examining academic integrity as a matter of changing research practices. Academic integrity requires honesty in the production and presentation of knowledge. When AI becomes part of the research environment, questions arise concerning disclosure, authorship, source verification and responsibility for generated material. The European Commission (2022) and UNESCO (Miao & Holmes, 2023) emphasise human responsibility, transparency and responsible use in educational applications of AI. For this study, Media Ecology Theory therefore operates at three connected levels: AI as a technological environment, AI as an influence on scholarly practices, and AI as a factor in changing relationships between researchers and academic knowledge. These levels provide the basis for examining responsible AI-assisted scholarship and distinguishing it from intellectual substitution. The theory does not establish that AI inevitably damages originality or academic integrity. Rather, it provides a framework for examining how the presence of AI changes the conditions under which Theatre Arts scholarship is produced. This distinction is central to the study because the objective is to understand the changing academic environment and determine how human authorship, interpretation and responsibility can remain central within AI-mediated scholarship.

Responsible AI Use, AI Disclosure and Detection in University Research

The increasing use of generative AI in universities requires institutions to distinguish between acceptable assistance and the submission of AI-generated material as independent scholarship. AI may assist researchers with language editing, organisation of ideas, preliminary searches and other limited tasks, provided that the researcher remains responsible for the content and verifies the information produced. UNESCO (Miao & Holmes, 2023) recommends human oversight, transparency and responsible use of generative AI in education and research. Academic publishers have similarly maintained that AI systems cannot assume responsibility for scholarly claims and therefore cannot replace human authorship (Lund, 2024). Universities are also developing procedures for declaring AI use in research and academic writing. Where AI has contributed substantially to the preparation of a manuscript, researchers should follow the disclosure requirements of their institution, department, journal or funding body. Such disclosure allows readers and assessors to understand the extent to which automated systems contributed to the work.

The responsibility for checking facts, references, interpretations and arguments remains with the human researcher. The use of AI detectors has also become part of institutional responses to AI-generated academic work. Universities and publishers have adopted or tested detection systems to identify possible AI-generated text. However, detection results should not be treated as conclusive evidence of misconduct. Research has demonstrated limitations in the reliability of AI-detection tools, including false positives and false negatives (Weber-Wulff et al., 2023). Consequently, an AI detector should not be used as the sole basis for accusing a student or researcher of academic misconduct. Detection should be accompanied by examination of drafts, research notes, citations, writing development, oral explanation and other evidence of authorship.

This distinction is important in Theatre Arts education. A student's research project may contain AI-assisted language without being entirely AI-generated. Conversely, fluent academic writing may conceal extensive intellectual substitution. Universities should therefore evaluate the research process and evidence of authorship, rather than relying exclusively on the output of an AI detector.

AI and Theatre Arts Pedagogy

AI can support Theatre Arts teaching through activities such as brainstorming, language improvement, research planning, dramatic-text exploration and the organisation of research materials. Such uses can complement teaching when students are required to verify information and explain their intellectual decisions. Kasneci et al. (2023) identify several educational applications of generative AI while also drawing attention to inaccurate information and overdependence. Theatre Arts assessment should consequently examine students' processes as well as their final written products. Oral presentations, research journals, annotated scripts, performance documentation, reflective accounts and oral defence can provide evidence of students' understanding and authorship. These approaches are useful because they require students to demonstrate knowledge rather than simply submit polished text.

AI, Academic Integrity and Nigerian Higher Education

Nigerian universities need institutional approaches that recognise the presence of AI while protecting academic standards. Ojedeji (2026), in research involving students at the University of Ibadan, identifies academic-integrity concerns associated with AI use alongside its educational benefits. Ajani et al. (2025) also emphasise the importance of AI competence among academics in Nigeria. Institutional policies should therefore address AI use in assignments, dissertations, theses, journal articles and other research outputs. They should specify permitted forms of assistance, disclosure requirements and procedures for investigating suspected misuse. Such policies should also recognise that AI detection is an aid to investigation, not proof of misconduct. For African and Nigerian Theatre Arts scholarship, verification is also important because AI-generated material may inadequately represent indigenous languages, performance traditions, festivals, oral histories and culturally specific concepts. Researchers must therefore verify generated information against appropriate primary and scholarly sources. The main implication is that AI should support rather than replace the intellectual work of the Theatre Arts researcher. Interpretation, source evaluation, cultural understanding and argument construction remain human scholarly responsibilities. Media Ecology Theory explains this relationship by showing how technologies can reshape the environment in which knowledge is produced. AI therefore changes research practices, but responsible researchers must determine how those changes affect authorship, originality and academic integrity.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is reshaping academic writing, research and knowledge production. Its value within Theatre Arts depends on responsible use. Human authorship, interpretation, verification and accountability must remain central. AI can assist scholarship, but it should not replace the intellectual work through which original Theatre Arts knowledge is produced. Media Ecology Theory helps explain how AI is changing the academic environment, while appropriate institutional policies, disclosure practices and responsible use can protect academic integrity in Nigerian higher education.

Recommendations

Nigerian universities should establish clear policies governing the use of AI in academic research, teaching, assessment and scholarly publication. These policies should state what constitutes acceptable assistance, when AI use should be declared and what forms of AI-generated work

constitute academic misconduct. Universities should also provide AI-literacy training for lecturers, researchers and students so that users understand verification, citation, disclosure and responsible application. AI-detection systems may be used as part of institutional investigation, but universities should not regard detector scores as independent proof of misconduct. Where AI-generated work is suspected, institutions should consider drafts, research notes, references, oral explanations, writing development and other evidence before reaching a decision. This approach protects academic integrity while reducing the risk of wrongly accusing researchers or students whose writing has been incorrectly classified by automated detectors. Theatre Arts departments should integrate responsible AI use into research-methods and academic-writing courses. Students should be taught how to verify AI-generated claims, identify fabricated references, assess interpretations and acknowledge significant AI assistance. Assessment should include activities that demonstrate individual understanding and research development. Researchers should also verify AI-generated material

References

- Ajani, Y. A., Olaniyi, A. M., Ayegun, I. B., Malik, F. O., Jagaba, I. A., Ahmed, A. O., Busari, S. A., Echezona, R. I., Saidu, Z. A., & Dangana, R. (2025). Artificial intelligence competency among academics in Nigeria: A roadmap for ethical usage in the fifth industrial revolution (5IR). *Alexandria: The Journal of National and International Library and Information Issues*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09557490251393037>
- Bakre, P. E., & Tukur-Bello, F. (2026). Ethical considerations of AI-driven education based on student's AI use in selected Nigerian universities. *Discover Education*, 5, 575. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-026-01545-3>
- Banham, M. (2004). *African theatre today*. James Currey.
- Bozkurt, A. (2024). GenAI et al.: Cocreation, authorship, ownership, academic ethics and integrity in a time of generative AI. *Open Praxis*, 16(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.55982/openpraxis.16.1.654>
- Cinque, T. (2024). Exploring the paradox: Perceptions of AI in higher education—a study of hype and scandal. *Explorations in Media Ecology*, 23, 199–215. https://doi.org/10.1386/eme_00205_7
- Connor, K. E., & Cali, D. D. (2024). Artificial intelligence in departments of communication: A course proposal. *Explorations in Media Ecology*, 23, 175–198. https://doi.org/10.1386/eme_00204_7
- Cossette, M.-A., & Salter, C. (2024). Performing AI: Labor and complexity on the contemporary stage. *TDR/The Drama Review*, 68(1), 70–86. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1054204323000588>
- Cotton, D. R. E., Cotton, P. A., & Shipway, J. R. (2024). Chatting and cheating: Ensuring academic integrity in the era of ChatGPT. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 61(2), 228–239. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2023.2190148>
- Eleje, L. I., Ezeugo, N. C., Esomonu, N. P. M., Metu, I. C., Anierobi, E. I., Mbeledede, N. G., Nwosu, K. C., Ezeonwumelu, V. U., Ufearo, F. N., & Eleje, G. U. (2025). Artificial intelligence adoption in higher education in Nigeria. *Discover Artificial Intelligence*, 5, 335. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44163-025-00452-0>
- European Commission. (2022). *Ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data in teaching and learning for educators*. Publications Office of the European Union. <https://doi.org/10.2766/153756>

- Falebita, O. S., & Kok, P. J. (2024). Strategic goals for artificial intelligence integration among STEM academics and undergraduates in African higher education: A systematic review. *Discover Education*, 3, 151. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-024-00252-1>
- Formosa, P., Bankins, S., Matulionyte, R., & Ghasemi, O. (2025). Can ChatGPT be an author? Generative AI creative writing assistance and perceptions of authorship, creatorship, responsibility, and disclosure. *AI & Society*, 40, 3405–3417. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-024-02081-0>
- Huang-Kokina, A. (2025). Creative artificial intelligence for music theatre: AI mediation and artificial–human co-creativity in contemporary science-fiction opera. *Performance Research*, 29(6), 145–152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2024.2537573>
- Jeyifo, B. (1984). *The truthful lie: Essays in a sociology of African drama*. New Beacon Books.
- Kasneci, E., Sessler, K., Küchemann, S., Bannert, M., Dementieva, D., Fischer, F., Gasser, U., Groh, G., Günemann, S., Hüllermeier, E., Krusche, S., Kutyniok, G., Michaeli, T., Nerdel, C., Pfeiffer, F., Poquet, O., Sailer, M., Schmidt, A., Seidel, T., Stadler, M., & Kasneci, G. (2023). ChatGPT for good? On opportunities and challenges of large language models for education. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 103, 102274. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2023.102274>
- Lo, C. K. (2023). What is the impact of ChatGPT on education? A rapid review of the literature. *Education Sciences*, 13(4), 410. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13040410>
- Lu, C. (2024). Rethinking artificial intelligence from the perspective of interdisciplinary knowledge production. *AI & Society*, 39, 3059–3060. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-023-01839-2>
- Lund, B. D., & Naheem, K. T. (2024). Can ChatGPT be an author? A study of artificial intelligence authorship policies in top academic journals. *Learned Publishing*, 37(1), 13–21. <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1582>
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. McGraw-Hill.
- Miao, F., & Holmes, W. (2023). *Guidance for generative AI in education and research*. UNESCO.
- Mututa, A., & Tomaselli, K. (2025). Research cultures in the modern university: Artificial intelligence and its imperatives on scientific knowledge. *Education as Change*, 29, Article 18958. <https://doi.org/10.25159/1947-9417/18958>
- Oguntona, O. A., & Emere, C. E. (2025). Mapping the landscape of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning across African higher education. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research*, 7(2), Article a17. <https://doi.org/10.38140/ijer-2025.vol7.2.17>
- Ojedeji, S. O. (2026). Navigating academic integrity in the age of on-demand artificial intelligence: Implications for globalizing higher education at the University of Ibadan. *Frontiers in Education*, 11, 1862601. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2026.1862601>
- Postman, N. (1970). The reformed English curriculum. In A. C. Eurich (Ed.), *High school 1980: The shape of the future in American secondary education*. Pitman.
- Revell, T., Yeadon, W., Cahilly-Bretzin, G., Clarke, I., Manning, G., Jones, J., Mulley, C., Pascual, R. J., Bradley, N., Thomas, D., & Leneghan, F. (2024). ChatGPT versus human essayists:

An exploration of the impact of artificial intelligence for authorship and academic integrity in the humanities. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 20, 1-19.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-024-00161-8>

Samuel, N. (2025). Ethical implications of artificial intelligence in education: Safeguarding plagiarism, academic integrity, and data privacy in Nigerian universities. *Journal of Education, Communication, and Digital Humanities*, 2(1), 123–129.
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17272660>