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**MANAGING LECTURERS' ACADEMIC IMPROPRIETY IN AN ERA OF
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION GOALS
ATTAINMENT IN RIVERS STATE**

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Abstract

The issue of academic impropriety is one of the menace bedeviling university administration and this is further aggravated by the emergence of artificial intelligence. This study focused on managing lecturers' academic impropriety in an era of artificial intelligence for university education goals attainment in Rivers State. Three research questions were answered and three hypotheses tested in the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 2,849 lecturers in the three public universities in Rivers State while 351 lecturers were sampled using stratified random sampling technique. The instrument adopted for gathering data was a 15 item questionnaire tagged "Managing Lecturers Academic Impropriety in an Era of Artificial Intelligence for University Education Goals Attainment in Rivers State Questionnaire" (MLAIEAIUEGAQ). The instrument was face and content validated by three Measurement and Evaluation experts from the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling in University of Port Harcourt. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics with a coefficient of 0.82 which showed that the instrument was reliable. Out of the 351 copies of questionnaire administered to the lecturers, 332 copies indicating a 94.6% retrieval rate was gotten from 203 male and 129 female lecturers. The research questions raised were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested at 5% significance level using z-test statistics. The result of the study found that academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence included plagiarism and manipulation of research data with mean values (\bar{x}) of 2.79 and 2.78 respectively. The implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence included

poor research outputs and negative institutional image. The ways of managing this menace included training of lecturers on AI professional use and rewarding professionalism. The study recommended that Universities need to make laws that will punish violation of acceptable academic standards.

Keywords: Academic impropriety, Lecturers, Artificial intelligence, University education, Technology

Introduction

The issue of ethics has been a critical concern in the academic world, especially for lecturers in public universities. With teaching, research, and community development being their primary roles, maintaining ethical standards in these areas has become increasingly challenging. The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools which are capable of generating, paraphrasing, and translating text, has complicated these challenges, with writing no longer being purely a human skill. Moya, Eaton, Pethrick, Hayden, Brennan, Wiens and McDermott (2024) highlighted that AI's increasing involvement in academic tasks raises new ethical dilemmas, particularly in the context of academic integrity. Ethical issues in academia, particularly related to academic integrity, have remained a persistent challenge for lecturers. Ateeq, Alzoraiki, Milhem and Ateeq (2024) pointed out that academic integrity serves as the foundation of any educational institution. When AI tools are used in ways that blur the lines of academic responsibility, such as in research or essay writing, ethical concerns regarding originality, truthfulness, and authorship become more complex.

Popenici and Kerr (2017) defined AI as computing systems capable of engaging in human-like processes such as learning, adapting, synthesizing information, and performing complex tasks. The rapid advancement of these technologies has impacted how lecturers approach teaching and research. While AI can be an asset, it also presents significant challenges when it comes to academic impropriety. Aderiye and Amaewhule (2024) emphasized that academic integrity involves maintaining transparency and honesty in all academic activities, from input to output. However, the introduction of AI tools complicates this, as AI-generated content may not always align with these values.

The rapid proliferation of the internet and technological advancements has made vast amounts of information more accessible to both students and lecturers. According to Smith, David, Timothy and Bob (2023), this ease of access to information can lead to academic impropriety if not properly managed, as students and lecturers can misuse these resources to enhance their work unethically. The growing use of generative AI tools, which can produce text that mimics human writing, further complicates these ethical issues, as AI-generated content may lack originality, transparency, and accountability. Benke and Szoke (2024) discussed how generative AI influences academic values, particularly in an era of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. As AI continues to evolve, it raises critical questions about the future of academic integrity and how educational institutions should adapt to these technological shifts.

Some scholars such as Slimi (2023) argued for the integration of AI in higher education to prepare students for the future workforce while others raise concerns about the potential for academic impropriety. Lund, Lamba and Oh (2024) noted that AI-generated papers sometimes contain fabricated citations and incorrect data, posing ethical issues related to plagiarism and authorship. This highlights the fine line between leveraging AI for educational purposes and enabling unethical behavior. As AI tools become more advanced, lecturers and institutions face increasing pressure to balance innovation with academic integrity.

Elaiees (2024) further pointed out that students' dependence on AI-generated essays undermines the values of originality and truthfulness. When students rely excessively on AI for academic tasks, they not only compromise their own learning but also jeopardize the academic environment as a whole. AI biases, as well as the tendency to overuse AI in research, exacerbate these ethical issues. To address these concerns, Elaiees stressed the importance of implementing clear AI usage policies and guidelines within academic institutions.

A significant concern that emerges from the literature is the lack of comprehensive guidelines and regulations to govern AI usage in academia. Holmes (2018) noted that the absence of such regulations creates a 'moral vacuum,' where ethical issues surrounding AI in education remain inadequately addressed. The need for policies to guide the ethical use of AI in universities is urgent, particularly as AI

tools become more integrated into academic processes. Institutions must recognize the ethical implications of AI's role in both teaching and research, ensuring that AI is used responsibly to uphold academic integrity.

Studies have been conducted to understand how AI is affecting the academic life of lecturers. Aderiye and Amaewhule (2024) conducted a related study on sustaining lecturers' integrity while adopting AI and they used a descriptive survey design while the study sampled 351 lecturers from public universities in Rivers State, Nigeria, through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a 20-item questionnaire and analyzed with mean, standard deviation, and z-test. Findings revealed that career progression pressures and lack of competence were primary drivers of academic fraud among lecturers. Additionally, the usefulness of AI and its potential for personalized learning were key factors encouraging lecturers' adoption of AI.

Similarly, Abdullah (2025) conducted a related study on academic plagiarism in the AI era and used a questionnaire to collect data from 496 conveniently sampled university students from Humanities and Sciences in Iraq. Results indicated a moderate tendency toward plagiarism, with ghost-writing being the most common form, followed by inappropriate referencing. Severe forms of plagiarism were less frequent. No significant gender differences were found, but science students showed a slightly higher tendency for egregious plagiarism compared to humanities students.

On the other hand, Ateeq *et al.*, (2024) conducted a study on AI and academic integrity and they used a cross-sectional survey of 218 randomly selected participants to examine AI's implications for academic integrity and holistic assessment. The study reported a significant positive association between emotional intelligence (EI) and academic outcomes (AO) with a beta coefficient of 0.490 and a t-value of 4.504, suggesting a notable relationship between EI and academic integrity-related outcomes.

Furthermore, Filson and Atuase (2024) investigated the role of academic librarians in maintaining academic integrity in the AI era. Employing a qualitative phenomenological design, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 academic librarians across six universities in Ghana. Thematic analysis of the data, supported by word

clouds, revealed that academic librarians play pivotal roles in upholding research integrity and guiding students on the ethical use of information in the era of AI-enabled learning tools. These studies show that AI must be properly deployed in order to sustain lecturers' academic integrity in Universities.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the management of lecturers' academic impropriety in an era of artificial intelligence for university education goals attainment in Rivers State. In specific terms, the objectives of the study were to:

1. ascertain the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence in universities in Rivers State.
2. determine the implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence on university education goals attainment in Rivers State.
3. examine the ways of managing the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence for university education goals attainment in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study were as follows:

1. What are the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence in universities in Rivers State?
2. What are the implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence on university education goals attainment in Rivers State?
3. What are the ways of managing the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence for university education goals attainment in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the academic impropriety

perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence in universities in Rivers State.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence on university education goals attainment in Rivers State.

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the ways of managing the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence for university education goals attainment in Rivers State.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design as the focus of the study was on the examination of a phenomenon that currently exists in the University system. Population of the study was all the 2,849 lecturers in the three public Universities in Rivers State out of which 351 lecturers were sampled using stratified random sampling technique. The sample size of the study was determined using the Taro Yamane formula for estimation of study sample size. Instrument employed for data collection was a 15 item questionnaire titled "Managing Lecturers Academic Impropriety in an Era of Artificial Intelligence for University Education Goals Attainment in Rivers State Questionnaire" (MLAIEAIUEGAQ). The instrument was used to collect respondents' demographic data in Section A while Section B contained the questionnaire items which was responded to on a four point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA=4), Agree (A=3), Disagree (D=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1) with an average score of 2.50 which was used as the criterion mean score for decision making. The face and content validities of the questionnaire was determined by three Measurement and Evaluation experts from the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling in University of Port Harcourt while the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha statistics with a value of 0.82. Out of the 351 copies of questionnaire administered to the lecturers, 332 copies indicating a 94.6% retrieval rate was gotten from 203 male and 129 female lecturers. Research questions raised were answered using mean and

standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested at 5% significance level using z-test statistics.

Results

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One: What are the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence in Universities in Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Academic Impropriety Perpetrated by Lecturers Using Artificial Intelligence in Universities in Rivers State

S/No	Items	Male Lecturers n=203		Female Lecturers n=129		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
1	Lecturers engage in plagiarism using AI	2.88	0.81	2.69	0.92	2.79	Agree
2	Manipulation of research data	2.84	0.83	2.72	0.90	2.78	Agree
3	Publishing of fake academic profile	2.77	0.88	2.66	0.95	2.72	Agree
4	Impersonation of prolific scholars for academic gains	2.47	0.97	2.42	1.05	2.45	Disagree
5	Sharing of false research information with the public	2.80	0.87	2.74	0.88	2.77	Agree
	Average	2.75	0.87	2.65	0.94	2.70	Agree

Table 1 pointed out that the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence included plagiarism, manipulation of research data, publishing of fake academic profile and sharing of false research information, but they disagreed that lecturers impersonated other prolific scholars for academic gains.

Research Question Two: What are the implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence on University education goals attainment in Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Implications of Lecturers' Academic Impropriety Using Artificial Intelligence on University Education Goals Attainment in Rivers State

S/No	Items	Male Lecturers n=203		Female Lecturers n=129		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
6	It undermines ingenuity in the academic space which makes it difficult for excellence to be rewarded	2.80	0.87	2.74	0.88	2.77	Agree
7	Poor research outputs are produced from the University	2.85	0.83	2.79	0.86	2.82	Agree
8	Future researchers including students can be misled on how to	2.78	0.89	2.80	0.86	2.79	Agree

9	conduct proper research Reputation of the lecturer can be stained leading to loss of integrity	2.87	0.82	2.84	0.84	2.86	Agree
10	Negative institutional image for the host institution of the perpetrator	2.90	0.80	2.82	0.85	2.86	Agree
	Average	2.84	0.84	2.80	0.86	2.82	Agree

Table 2 showed that the implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence included undermining ingenuity, poor research outputs, misleading of future researchers, stained reputation of the lecturers and negative institutional image.

Research Question Three: What are the ways of managing the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence for University education goals attainment in Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Ways of Managing the Academic Impropriety Perpetrated by Lecturers Using Artificial Intelligence for University Education Goals Attainment in Rivers State

S/No	Items	Male Lecturers n=203		Female Lecturers n=129		Mean Set	
		Mean \bar{X}_1	SD	Mean \bar{X}_2	SD	\bar{X}	Decision
11	Lecturers should be trained to become professionally	2.93	0.78	2.91	0.79	2.92	Agree

12	AI literate Reward should be provided for professionalism among lecturers	2.87	0.82	2.84	0.83	2.86	Agree
13	AI policy should be implemented by the University	2.95	0.77	2.90	0.80	2.93	Agree
14	Internal review boards should be set up to evaluate lecturers' academic activities	2.88	0.81	2.93	0.78	2.91	Agree
15	AI detection tools and software should be installed by institutions to track academic impropriety	2.97	0.76	2.95	0.77	2.96	Agree
	Average	2.92	0.79	2.91	0.79	2.91	Agree

Table 3 indicated that the ways of managing this menace included training of lecturers on AI professional use, rewarding professionalism, enactment of AI policy, setting up internal review boards and provision of AI detection tools for University education goals attainment.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence in universities in Rivers State.

Table 4: z-test Analysis of no Significant Difference between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Academic Staff on the Academic Impropriety Perpetrated by Lecturers Using Artificial Intelligence in Universities in Rivers State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Male Lecturers	203	2.75	0.87	330	0.97	1.96	0.05	H ₀ was Not Rejected
Female Lecturers	129	2.65	0.94					

Table 4 was able to show that at a value of z-calculated of 0.97 which was below the value of z-critical of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected and as such, it was shown that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence in Universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence on university education goals attainment in Rivers State.

Table 5: z-test Analysis of no Significant Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Academic Staff on the Implications of Lecturers' Academic Impropriety Using Artificial Intelligence On University Education Goals Attainment in Rivers State

Variable	n	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Male Lecturers	203	2.84	0.84	330	0.42	1.96	0.05	H ₀ was Not Rejected
Female Lecturers	129	2.80	0.86					

Table 5 was able to reveal that at a value of z-calculated of 0.42 which was below the value of z-critical of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected and as such, it was shown that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence on University education goals attainment in Rivers State.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the ways of managing the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence for university education goals attainment in Rivers State.

Table 6: z-test Analysis of no Significant Difference Between the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Academic Staff on the Ways of Managing the Academic Impropriety Perpetrated by Lecturers Using Artificial Intelligence for University Education Goals Attainment in Rivers State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	z-cal.	z-crit.	Level of Significance	Decision
Male Lecturers	203	2.92	0.79	330	0.11	1.96	0.05	H ₀ was Not Rejected
Female Lecturers	129	2.91	0.79					

Table 6 was able to show that at a value of z-calculated of 0.11 which was below the value of z-critical of 1.96, the null hypothesis was not rejected and as such, it was shown that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female academic staff on the ways of managing the academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence for University education goals attainment in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study showed that academic impropriety perpetrated by lecturers using artificial intelligence included plagiarism, manipulation of research data, publishing of fake academic profile and sharing of false research information, but they disagreed that lecturers

impersonated other prolific scholars for academic gains. Similarly, the implications of lecturers' academic impropriety using artificial intelligence included undermining ingenuity, poor research outputs, misleading of future researchers, stained reputation of the lecturers and negative institutional image while the ways of managing this menace included training of lecturers on AI professional use, rewarding professionalism, enactment of AI policy, setting up internal review boards and provision of AI detection tools for University education goals attainment. This study as in the case of Abdullah (2025) showed no significant difference in academic misconduct by gender.

Result derived and analyzed in the study showed that there was a common opinion among the male and female lecturers that AI poses tangible risks to the ethical standards of academic work. A major concern raised by them was the possibility that lecturers might engage in plagiarism facilitated by AI tools. Given the fact that AI has the ability to generate extensive texts quickly and effortlessly, there is a risk that some academics could present AI-generated content as their original work without proper acknowledgement thereby undermining academic integrity.

The respondents also raised another fundamental issue about the manipulation of research data. They expressed awareness that AI applications could be misused to fabricate, falsify, or selectively alter data to achieve desirable research outcomes. This finding however contradicts that of Abdullah (2025) which pointed out that AI violations were often less aggressive. Such practices compromise the credibility of research outputs and jeopardize the trustworthiness of academic scholarship. Similarly, concerns were raised about the creation and publication of fake academic profiles. AI technologies, particularly those capable of generating realistic but fictitious documents, could be exploited to polish academic qualifications, professional experiences, or publication records, misleading peers, institutions, and the academic community as a whole.

The respondents showed from their response that they disagreed that impersonation of prolific scholars for personal academic gain was among the issues being experienced. This suggests that while technological manipulation is seen as a risk, deliberate identity theft in academia is perceived to be less common or harder to execute credibly. This may however be as a result of the awareness and help provided by

IT experts which Filson and Atuase (2024) pointed out in their studies, help to minimize cases of violation. Nonetheless, the sharing of false research information with the public was acknowledged as another pertinent risk. Through AI-assisted content creation and dissemination tools, inaccurate or misleading research findings could be circulated widely, eroding the reliability of scholarly communication and public trust in academic institutions. Collectively, these findings reflect a heightened awareness among lecturers of how AI, while offering efficiencies, can simultaneously open avenues for significant ethical breaches in academic conduct.

On the issues of implications of AI driven academic impropriety for individuals and institutions, the respondents recognized that the misuse of AI has the potential to undermine originality and ingenuity within the academic space. When unethical shortcuts enabled by AI become prevalent, the traditional reward system that recognizes excellence, creativity, and intellectual rigor in research can be compromised. This diminishes motivation among scholars to pursue authentic, high-quality academic work.

Furthermore, there is apprehension that the proliferation of poor-quality research outputs could become more common. As AI-generated work increasingly permeates academic circles without stringent oversight, the overall standard of scholarly contributions from universities may decline, affecting both reputation and the utility of academic literature. Respondents also emphasized the risk of misleading future researchers and students. If improper research methodologies or fabricated findings become entrenched in academic literature, emerging scholars may adopt flawed practices, perpetuating a cycle of compromised scholarship.

The professional reputation of individual lecturers was also a source of worry. Engagement in AI-facilitated impropriety could damage a lecturer's credibility and integrity, with long-term consequences for career prospects and peer relationships. Beyond personal repercussions, the actions of individual lecturers were seen as potentially damaging to the reputation of their host institutions. Misconduct linked to AI misuse could tarnish a university's image, erode stakeholder trust, and diminish institutional prestige. These concerns illustrate a shared understanding that academic integrity breaches created by AI do not only harm the lecturers but can have far-

reaching consequences for institutional legitimacy and the broader scholarly community.

Furthermore, a strong consensus emerged around the need for comprehensive training programs to enhance lecturers' competence and literacy in using AI responsibly. Aderiye and Amaewhule (2024) pointed out that lack of competence is often the reason for academic impropriety among lecturers. Similarly, Ateeq *et al.*, (2024) pointed out that being emotionally intelligent will limit violation which calls for adequate training. Ensuring that educators are well-versed in both the capabilities and limitations of AI tools is seen as a foundational step in preventing misuse. Respondents also advocated for the establishment of reward systems that recognize and incentivize professionalism and ethical conduct among lecturers. By reinforcing positive behavior, institutions can create an academic culture where integrity is visibly valued and rewarded.

The importance of formal institutional policies was underscored through strong support for the implementation of AI governance frameworks by universities. This aligns with the support provided by librarians which was considered essential in the study by Filson and Atuase (2024) going forward. Such policies would provide clear guidelines on acceptable AI usage and establish protocols for handling breaches. The respondents further recommended the establishment of internal review boards dedicated to monitoring and evaluating lecturers' academic activities. These boards would serve as oversight bodies to ensure adherence to ethical standards, providing an additional layer of accountability. The installation of AI detection tools and software by institutions was also widely endorsed as a practical solution for identifying and deterring impropriety. These technologies can help monitor academic work for signs of plagiarism, data manipulation, or other forms of unethical AI use.

Conclusion

The study concluded that both the male and female lecturers did not differ in terms of the kind of academic impropriety existing in the Universities irrespective of their institutions. Similarly, these academic improprieties have implications on the professional skills and output of the lecturers and the need for proper training cannot be overemphasized to change this narrative.

Recommendations

1. University administrators need to implement laws and policies that will punish academic violations in this era of AI as this is needed to serve as a deterrent for further violations among academic staff in the Universities.
2. Lecturers need to be trained and retrained on the responsible use of AI as this is needed to enhance the skills and competence of lecturers to use these technologies to improve on the quality and quantity of their outputs.
3. The quality assurance unit of the Universities must be strengthened both to assess the activities of lecturers as well as to ensure that minimum standard is complied with in the discharge of their duties.

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