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AI-Assisted Academic Writing: Ethics and Regulation in Scholarly Publishing

Michael M. Ndonye

Kabarak University, Kenya.
Author's email: mndonye84@gmail.com

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Abstract
This study critically examines AI's dual role as both a productivity catalyst and a source of risks to originality, fairness, and credibility. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming academic writing and scholarly publishing, offering new efficiencies while raising significant ethical and regulatory challenges. Using a conceptual and comparative design, the study examines 20 scholarly sources published between 2022 and 2026, selected based on their credibility, recency, and relevance to the study's guiding research questions. The sources were organised into four thematic categories and analysed using a comparative thematic approach: ethics and regulation, peer review and publishing practices, efficiency and research impact, and governance and policy. Findings reveal that ethical concerns, including plagiarism, bias, and diminished originality, demand transparent frameworks and responsible AI use. Peer review practices benefit from AI's efficiency but require sustained human oversight to preserve evaluative rigour. Efficiency gains in translation, citation management, and workflow optimisation are evident, yet they risk narrowing scientific inquiry. Governance responses, including updated publisher guidelines and emerging policy frameworks, highlight the need for institutional regulation and AI literacy. The study concludes that responsible adoption of AI in scholarly publishing requires embedding ethics and regulation into practice, supported by governance structures and critical human judgment. By framing AI within these four clusters, the paper offers a structured pathway for balancing innovation with integrity in academic communication.

Key words: Academic publishing, artificial intelligence, ethics and regulation, peer review, research efficiency.

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a transformative force in scholarly publishing, reshaping how academic writing is produced, reviewed, and disseminated. Its integration into research and editorial workflows offers opportunities to improve efficiency, accessibility, and interdisciplinary communication. However, its growing use also raises questions about academic integrity, originality, accountability, and the credibility of scholarly outputs. These developments create a need to examine how the benefits of AI-assisted academic writing can be balanced against the ethical responsibilities and regulatory requirements that underpin scholarly publishing.

Although existing scholarship discusses the opportunities and risks associated with AI in academic writing and publishing, these concerns are interconnected and require synthesis to clarify their implications for scholarly practice and governance. AI may support researchers by reducing routine writing tasks and improving access to scholarly communication, but its use also raises concerns about transparency, bias, originality, and the appropriate role of human judgment. Similarly, the increasing use of AI in editorial and peer-review processes requires careful consideration of accountability and the limits of automated assessment. These issues highlight the importance of evaluating AI adoption not only in terms of efficiency but also in relation to scholarly integrity and responsible oversight.

Despite the growing body of literature on AI-assisted scholarly communication, there remains a need to bring together existing findings on its potential efficiency gains, ethical challenges, and regulatory responses. Without such synthesis, it is difficult to understand how these dimensions relate to one another and what they collectively imply for responsible AI use in scholarly publishing. This study addresses this need through a conceptual and comparative analysis of existing scholarly literature.

The study aims to assess, through a synthesis of existing scholarship, the reported efficiency gains associated with AI in academic writing and scholarly publishing; identify and synthesise the ethical concerns discussed in the literature regarding AI use in scholarly publishing; and examine the regulatory and policy responses proposed or reported in the literature to safeguard scholarly integrity and credibility. By synthesising secondary literature, the study seeks to provide an integrated understanding of the opportunities, risks, and governance considerations associated with AI-assisted academic writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethics and Regulation

Ethical concerns centre on the conditions under which AI can be used without undermining academic integrity, originality, and accountability. Yoo (2026) highlights plagiarism risks and diminished originality, while Kumar and Dabas (2026) identify the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors' recommendations as a regulatory benchmark. Carobene et al. (2024) caution that unchecked AI adoption may erode scholarly credibility, whereas Lippi et al. (2025) emphasise the need for ethical boundaries when reviewers use AI tools. The *International Journal of Digital Data Communication* (2026) further proposes a policy framework emphasising accountability and transparency among authors, editors, and peer reviewers. Beyond individual responsibility, Ferrara (2024) raises concerns about AI-powered literature reviews favouring dominant theories, while Van Dijck (2023) highlights the risks of misinformation. Taken together, these perspectives indicate that responsible AI use requires safeguards that address both individual conduct and the broader influence of AI systems on the production and evaluation of scholarly knowledge.

Peer Review and Publishing Practices

The literature identifies a central tension between the potential of AI to support editorial processes and the need to preserve independent scholarly judgment. Bharti et al. (2026) examine AI's capacity to support evaluative tasks but emphasise the limits of replacing human judgment. Russo et al. (2025) report that AI-assisted reviews can inflate paper scores, raising concerns about fairness and the reliability of editorial assessments. Similarly, Buriak et al. (2026) stress the continuing importance of human judgment, while Al Barajraji et al. (2024) and Grebenshchikova (2025) advocate hybrid approaches combining automation with human oversight. The reported experiences of Springer Nature and PLOS further illustrate the use of AI in editorial screening and plagiarism detection (Howard, 2024; Papacharissi, 2023). These contributions suggest that the value of AI in publishing depends not only on its ability to accelerate editorial tasks but also on the reliability, fairness, and transparency of the decisions it supports. Human

oversight therefore remains important when AI-generated assessments could influence publication outcomes.

Efficiency and Research Impact

AI offers opportunities to improve research efficiency by reducing routine tasks and facilitating access to scholarly information. Hao et al. (2026) associate AI use with increased scientific impact but reduced intellectual diversity. Amano et al. (2025) highlight the potential of AI-mediated translation to improve accessibility across linguistic boundaries, while Fuente Ballesteros et al. (2025) describe AI as a "scientific copilot" that reduces mechanical burdens in research. However, Fuente Ballesteros and Zuin Zeidler (2026) caution against allowing efficiency to compromise the depth of evaluation, and Van Quaquebeke et al. (2025) discuss how AI-mediated efficiency may privilege dominant perspectives. The literature therefore presents efficiency as a benefit that must be evaluated alongside its potential consequences for the diversity and quality of scholarly inquiry. Further contributions by Kitchin (2023) and Lewis (2024) address improvements in formatting, citation accuracy, and literature retrieval. Newman (2024), discussing Elsevier's Scopus AI, highlights improved content discovery alongside concerns about algorithmic bias favouring highly cited publications. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that productivity gains alone are insufficient measures of AI's contribution to scholarship; the quality, inclusiveness, and intellectual diversity of research must also be considered.

Governance and Policy

The challenges associated with AI-assisted publishing have prompted calls for institutional policies that establish clear responsibilities and appropriate limits on AI use. Effoduh (2025) considers AI in the context of open-access publishing and the need to preserve scholarly integrity. Ganjavi et al. (2024) document the development of publisher guidelines, while Hoch and Clarke (2025) explore the prospects for collaboration between researchers and AI. Vicario (2026) and Bruno (2026) emphasise the need for publishing policies to address AI's growing role in peer review. Balsamo (2023) discusses the implementation of AI ethics policies by publishers, including the need for human verification of AI-assisted submissions. Reported initiatives involving PLOS and Springer Nature also illustrate the growing use of AI in plagiarism detection and manuscript evaluation. However, the adoption of such tools needs to be accompanied by clear accountability and human oversight. Overall, the literature highlights the importance of transparent policies, AI literacy, and human verification to guide responsible AI adoption across scholarly publishing.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a conceptual and comparative research design to examine how existing scholarship addresses the opportunities, ethical challenges, and regulatory implications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic writing and scholarly publishing. The conceptual approach synthesises ideas and arguments in the literature, while the comparative approach identifies similarities, differences, and contrasting perspectives across the selected studies. This design is appropriate because the study seeks to interpret existing knowledge rather than collect primary empirical data.

A total of twenty scholarly sources published between 2022 and 2026 were selected for analysis. The selection criteria emphasised scholarly credibility, recency, and relevance to the study's research questions: how AI enhances efficiency in academic writing and scholarly publishing, what ethical concerns arise from its use, and how universities and publishing institutions can regulate AI-assisted writing to safeguard scholarly integrity and credibility.

To facilitate systematic analysis, the sources were organised into four thematic categories, with five sources assigned to each category. The ethics and regulation category examined plagiarism risks, algorithmic bias, and threats to originality, highlighting the need for transparent ethical frameworks. The peer review and publishing practices category explored AI applications in editorial workflows and peer review, with particular attention to efficiency gains and the importance of human oversight. The efficiency and research impact category examined the reported effects of AI on research productivity, citation accuracy, translation, and the diversity of scientific inquiry. Finally, the governance and policy category addressed institutional responses, publisher guidelines, and emerging policy frameworks for responsible AI adoption.

The analysis followed a comparative thematic approach, in which arguments, findings, and recommendations from the selected sources were synthesised within and across the four categories. This process identified recurring themes, areas of agreement, differences in

scholarly perspectives, and implications for responsible AI use in scholarly publishing. The resulting synthesis was aligned with the study's three objectives: assessing reported efficiency gains, identifying ethical concerns, and examining regulatory responses. This approach provided a structured basis for interpreting the literature and developing the discussion and recommendations.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of twenty scholarly sources published between 2022 and 2026 reveals a nuanced picture of AI's role in academic writing and scholarly publishing. By clustering the literature into ethics and regulation, peer review and publishing practices, efficiency and research impact, and governance and policy, the study addresses its guiding objectives: evaluating efficiency, identifying ethical concerns, and exploring regulatory responses. The reviewed literature indicates that the implications of AI extend beyond productivity gains to include questions of academic integrity, the quality of scholarly evaluation, and institutional accountability.

Ethics and Regulation

The objective of identifying ethical concerns is addressed by literature examining the risks associated with AI-assisted scholarship. Yoo (2026) and Kumar and Dabas (2026) emphasise plagiarism risks and diminished originality, while Carobene et al. (2024) warn of bias and potential erosion of credibility. Lippi et al. (2025) argue for reviewer access to AI tools within ethical boundaries, while Ferrara (2024) raises concerns about AI-generated reviews favouring dominant theories. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that transparent frameworks and ethical safeguards are important for ensuring that AI use does not undermine scholarly integrity.

Peer Review and Publishing Practices

The literature on AI in peer review highlights both potential benefits and risks. Bharti et al. (2026) discuss the capacity of AI to support, but not replicate, human judgment, while Russo et al. (2025) report that AI-assisted reviews may inflate paper scores. Buriak et al. (2026) stress the importance of human judgment, and Al Barajraji et al. (2024) and Grebenshchikova (2025) advocate hybrid models. Case studies such as Springer Nature's AI-assisted screening (Papacharissi, 2023) illustrate potential efficiency gains. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that AI can support peer-review processes, but its use requires human oversight to address concerns about fairness and the reliability of editorial assessments.

Efficiency and Research Impact

The objective of assessing efficiency gains reveals both opportunities and potential limitations in the reviewed literature. Hao et al. (2026) associate AI with expanded scientific impact but reduced intellectual diversity, while Amano et al. (2025) highlight translation as a potential efficiency gain. Fuente Ballesteros et al. (2025) describe AI as a "scientific copilot" that reduces mechanical burdens, yet Fuente Ballesteros and Zuin Zeidler (2026) caution against superficial evaluation. Van Quaquebeke et al. (2025) argue that efficiency may reshape inquiry by privileging dominant perspectives. Evidence discussed in relation to Elsevier's Scopus AI also points to improved content discovery alongside potential algorithmic bias (Newman, 2024). These findings suggest that efficiency gains should be considered alongside their implications for research quality and intellectual diversity.

Governance and Policy

The objective of examining regulatory responses is addressed by literature on institutional and publishing policies. Effoduh (2025) situates AI within open-access publishing, while Ganjavi et al. (2024) document publishers updating author guidelines. Hoch and Clarke (2025) envision a collaborative future with AI, while Vicario (2026) and Bruno (2026) emphasise the need for policies that address AI's growing role in peer review. Balsamo (2023) discusses ethics policies among publishers such as Taylor and Francis and Sage, including manual verification of AI-assisted submissions. The reviewed literature suggests that governance frameworks need to translate principles of transparency and accountability into practical guidance, supported by AI literacy and appropriate human oversight.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The synthesis of twenty recent studies (2022–2026) confirms that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping academic writing and scholarly publishing in ways that are both transformative and disruptive. Across the four thematic clusters, the literature reveals a dual reality: AI enhances productivity, accessibility, and translation, yet unchecked use threatens originality, fairness, and credibility. Responsible adoption therefore requires embedding ethics, regulation, and human oversight into every stage of scholarly communication.

Recommendations: For scholars, the responsible adoption of AI is essential. As Yoo (2026) and Hao et al. (2026) note, AI can be used to enhance efficiency in translation, citation management, and workflow support, but originality and critical judgment must remain central. Ethical disclosure is equally important: Kumar and Dabas (2026) and Carobene et al. (2024) emphasise that scholars should acknowledge AI assistance in manuscripts and avoid plagiarism by following emerging guidelines. Scholars must also balance efficiency with inquiry, using AI to reduce mechanical burdens while remaining vigilant against the narrowing of scientific focus (Van Quaquebeke et al., 2025). Finally, in peer review, AI should be employed as a supportive tool rather than a substitute, ensuring that evaluative rigour remains human-led (Buriak et al., 2026; Russo et al., 2025).

For institutions, clear policy frameworks are required to regulate AI use in writing and peer review. Springer IJDDC (2026) and Ganjavi et al. (2024) highlight the importance of transparent rules aligned with international standards. Institutions should also invest in AI literacy training, equipping scholars with the skills to understand both the benefits and risks of AI tools (Effoduh, 2025; Hoch & Clarke, 2025). Human oversight must remain a cornerstone of peer review and editorial decision-making, with AI serving only as an aid (Bharti et al., 2026; Grebenshchikova, 2025). Finally, governance should be strengthened through collaboration among publishers, universities, and policy bodies to establish unified standards that safeguard credibility (Vicario, 2026; Bruno, 2026).

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