



THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE ETHICS OF LEGAL RESEARCH: CHATGPT AS A MODEL

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Abstract:

The topic of ethics in legal research is among the most discussed subjects by legal scholars. It pertains to the extent of adherence to ethical guidelines in the preparation of scientific research in the field of law, in accordance with specific standards. The aim is to regulate the relationship between researchers at various stages of preparing legal-scientific research, following sound scientific principles. Undoubtedly, technological advancement has played a significant role in contributing to research preparation, especially with the emergence of numerous applications designed for this purpose, including ChatGPT. Consequently, the objective of this study is to explore the extent to which artificial intelligence impacts the ethics of legal research.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, Legal Research, ChatGPT.

INTRODUCTION:

Scientific research is a comprehensive and precise investigative mental process that spans various fields, including economic, political, social, humanitarian, and others. It follows detailed executive and structural steps that allow for reaching specific results, adhering to an organized methodology employed by the mind to uncover phenomena, rules, or to validate or invalidate hypotheses depending on the nature of the discipline being researched. Undoubtedly, scientific research, in general, must be associated with a novel contribution or address a significant problem related to the researcher's subject of study. Therefore, the quality of research is only achieved through the availability of a set of standards and components, especially in light of current technological advancements and the widespread use of artificial intelligence applications by researchers, including in legal studies.

Based on the above, the importance of this study lies in identifying the regulations governing the use of artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT, in a manner consistent with the ethics of legal research. This is achieved by highlighting the objectives that legal researchers aim to accomplish through the use of artificial intelligence applications in their research topics.

In light of the foregoing, we have formulated the central problem of this study as follows: *To what extent does artificial intelligence impact the ethics of legal research?*

To address this problem, our study relies on the descriptive approach, which involves defining shared concepts, as well as the analytical approach to understand the prospects and challenges of artificial intelligence in the field of legal studies. This includes examining the boundaries of responsibility that may fall on researchers for non-compliance with research ethics on one hand, and on designers of these technologies on the other. Accordingly, our study is divided into two main axes as follows:



I. Legal Research Between Ethical Requirements and Artificial Intelligence (ChatGPT)

This section will define legal research and its ethics, followed by an overview of artificial intelligence to clarify the relationship between the two.

1. Legal Research: Concept and Ethics

In this subsection, we will present a definition of legal research and highlight its unique characteristics, then transition to discussing its ethical considerations.

1.1 Definition of Legal Research

Legal research is defined as: *"The study of legal issues and problems that require specific rulings, involving intellectual effort and investigation, with the aim of answering inquiries related to these issues"*¹. Thus, legal research, in its essence, refers to the investigative process focused on a legal matter established by the constitutional authority or enacted by the legislator, aiming to uncover any flaws or shortcomings in the legal text, whether related to ambiguity, contradiction, or inconsistency in legal provisions.

Legal research is also described as: *"The study of a legal subject or a specific legal issue from all relevant scientific perspectives, through precise scientific analysis of the latest information gathered about it, and presenting it in a clear manner to address all questions and needs for solving a particular problem"*²

Thus, the purpose of legal research lies in:

- Shedding light on newly enacted legislation, analyzing it, and comparing it with repealed or amended laws.
- Identifying legal issues that may arise from legal texts, recognizing legal gaps, and attempting to find solutions and proposals if the study requires it, provided that the research process is organized and rigorous.
- Developing ideas and concepts in line with the developments imposed by law or reality.

2. Ethics of Legal Research

It is well-established that the ethics* of legal research require the researcher to adhere to a set of standards that enhance the quality and legal value of the research. These can be summarized as follows:

A. Credibility

Credibility refers to: *"The quality that a researcher must possess during the stages of gathering, reading, and writing information to eliminate ambiguity"*³. Credibility cannot be attributed to scientific research, especially legal research, unless the researcher introduces new insights regarding the legal issue under study.

B. Freedom

Freedom in the context of scientific research, particularly legal research, is not absolute. It specifically refers to the researcher's ability to choose the legal problem they aim to address, provided that this freedom does not violate the rules and ethics of scientific research. Scientific research inherently seeks to

¹ BTS Academy. (2024, February 9). All about ChatGPT. Retrieved February 9, 2024, from https://www.btsacademy.com/blog_det.php?page=1892&title=%D8%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B98D8

² About Abdullah Al-Askari. (2004). Scientific Research Methodology in Legal Sciences (2nd ed.). Dar Al-Nameer, Syria, p. 159. Ethics refer to: "Standards of behavior that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable actions." In scientific research, ethics are defined as "a set of principles and moral duties associated with the conduct of scientific research activities." According to this concept, ethics are linked to rules of conduct and standards of behavior that regulate scientific research activities, which researchers, professors, doctors, and graduate students must adhere to

³ Ali Ibrahim Ali Obeido. (2014). Quality of Scientific Research (Ethics, Methodology, Supervision): Writing Theses and Scientific Research (1st ed.). Dar Al-Wafa for Printing and Publishing, Alexandria, p. 9.



achieve positive outcomes that do not negatively impact society, and freedom in research should not be used for personal gain or to spread hate speech⁴.

C. Specialization

Rigorous scientific research must be conducted within a specialized framework, using methodologies appropriate to the field of study. A specialized researcher, with their knowledge and expertise, can identify problematic issues, begin the research (starting point), and reach conclusions (endpoint)⁵. A legal researcher's specialization enhances their ability to achieve precise and valuable results. Specialization is not limited to broad fields but also extends to subfields within legal sciences, such as public law and private law under the LMD system. This division is based on criteria such as organic criteria, interest criteria, and financial criteria.

D. Professionalism

Professionalism involves the researcher's commitment to developing their knowledge, whether through participation in international or national scientific conferences or by engaging in seminars related to their field. This allows the researcher to benefit from discussions that enrich their understanding⁶.

E. Objectivity

Objectivity in legal research requires the researcher to maintain neutrality in presenting ideas and understanding them correctly by showcasing the true results of the research without distortion or falsification⁷. Legal research must be based on abstraction rather than subjectivity, and any criticism must be constructive and relevant to the research.

F. Responsibility

Responsibility refers to the obligation of the legal researcher to ensure that their research contributes positively to society. This includes carefully controlling and objectively managing the research, such as when studying mechanisms for managing medical waste and their impact on sustainable development. The researcher is also responsible for the information they publish and may share responsibility with the institution under which the research is conducted⁸.

G. Accuracy

Accuracy is one of the most important components of legal research. It can only be achieved by supporting the research with solid legal foundations, evidence, and sufficient documentation to make the findings acceptable⁹. Accuracy in gathering information, observations, and evidence is closely tied to the reliability of the source or reference, especially when dealing with online sources, which must be verified as official.

H. Confidentiality of Information

Confidentiality refers to protecting the identity and information of research subjects. Disclosing their identity or confidential information before publication is prohibited to respect the privacy of scientific

⁴ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵ Ali Marah. (2004). *Methodology of Legal Thinking (Theoretically and Practically)*. No edition, University Publications Office, Algeria, p. 69.

⁶ Ali Ibrahim Ali Obeido. (2014). Op. cit., p. 11.

⁷ Deanship of Research and Entrepreneurship. (2015, February 6). Rules Governing the Ethics of Scientific Research. Retrieved February 6, 2015, from <https://www.su.edu.sa/ar/deanships/deanship-research-and-entrepreneurship/standing-committee-ethics-scientific-research/ethicalapproval>, p. 4.

⁸ Ali Ibrahim Ali Obeido. (2014). Op. cit., p. 11.

⁹ Abdullah Zarabani & Abdelkarim Bouhamida. (2020). The role of scientific research ethics and their impact on the quality of scientific research. *Al-Wahat Journal for Research and Studies*, 13(2), p. 757.



research¹⁰. Personal data should only be used for research purposes, and confidentiality safeguards articles, memoranda, theses, or dissertations from academic theft and unauthorized use by others.

I. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of legal research at all stages, from selecting the title to formulating the research problem and structuring the research plan. This is achieved by accurately attributing ideas or information, whether directly or indirectly quoted, to their original authors. In other words, the researcher must document all sources used in their research, respecting intellectual property rights regardless of the type of sources or references utilized.

Documentation, in the technical and precise sense of the word, means: "Proving the sources of information and attributing them to their owners to ensure scientific integrity and to acknowledge the efforts and intellectual rights of others. Therefore, it is necessary to cite the references used by the researcher within the text by mentioning the author's name and the year of publication of the reference relied upon, in order to facilitate the referencing of information." In fact, the method previously mentioned is called the American Psychological Association (APA) style¹¹, and it is widely used in publishing scientific articles, though not exclusively in academic research, particularly in countries that follow the Latin system. In short, documentation pertains to both the main text and the list of sources and references.

Additionally, the researcher must adhere to analyzing data or legal texts or commenting on a judicial decision or ruling, in accordance with the academically recognized legal methodology, and not based on personal inclinations.

Consequently, the legal researcher relies on sources and references during the information-gathering phase, then adds their personal touch by analyzing, discussing, and critiquing ideas. This means that legal sciences are cumulative processes, as the researcher at this stage relies on sources such as legal texts, dictionaries, encyclopedias, as well as studies, academic works, research papers, articles, and more, and then works on documenting them¹².

Second: Defining Artificial Intelligence - ChatGPT as a Sample

Artificial intelligence (AI) is technically defined as: "All systems that mimic human intelligence to perform tasks and can improve themselves based on the information they collect." AI is also viewed as: "A computing technology that helps computers learn from past experiences and enables them to adapt to new data inputs."¹³

Thus, it can be said that AI has the ability to acquire new knowledge and apply it through perception and processing of surrounding elements, in addition to its capacity for reasoning and learning from experiences within the human environment. AI is divided into several types, summarized as follows:

- **Narrow AI:** Pertains to a single field or specialization, such as AI systems designed solely to win chess games, with a single goal they are created to achieve.
- **General AI:** Refers to computers with human-level intelligence, capable of performing intellectual tasks.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 758.

¹¹ Fayez Jumah Saleh Al-Najjar, Nabil Jumah Al-Najjar, & Majid Radi Al-Zoubi. (2009). *Scientific Research Methods: An Applied Perspective*. No edition, Dar Al-Hamed for Publishing and Distribution, Jordan, pp. 247-248.

¹² Assem Khalil. (2012). *Methodology of Legal Research and Its Foundations* (1st ed.). Dar Al-Shorouk for Publishing and Distribution, Jordan, p. 195.

¹³ Magdy Salah Taha Al-Mahdi. (n.d.). Education and future challenges in light of the philosophy of artificial intelligence. Mansoura University, Faculty of Education. Retrieved from: <https://jetdl.journals.ekb.eg/article>, p. 107.

- **Superintelligent AI:** Refers to advanced AI systems with high-level capabilities, including creativity and social skills¹⁴.

From the above, it is clear that AI encompasses various types, differing in their ability to provide research services. Undoubtedly, law is one of the most important fields suitable for research using AI tools, among which the application ChatGPT has become widely used.

Based on the above, ChatGPT is defined as: "A chatbot powered by artificial intelligence, used to create conversations in a chosen language by responding to various questions in the form of written content." AI is described as one of the applications of artificial intelligence that allows users to easily access information, whether through receiving images, written texts, or even video clips. It undoubtedly resembles social media platforms that enable communication with others, but it differs in that the recipient here is a program, not a human. Researchers describe ChatGPT as a generative pre-trained transformer designed to receive requests and formulate responses through interaction. It was created by OpenAI, a research company in the field of artificial intelligence¹⁵.

II. The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Legal Research - Advantages and Disadvantages

Artificial intelligence can perform numerous tasks simultaneously, as it possesses immense capabilities in providing information across various fields, including legal studies. It is used in the following areas:

1. Advantages of Using Artificial Intelligence in Legal Research

The use of artificial intelligence contributes to providing numerous services in the field of legal studies, including:

- **Assisting in Research:** As a virtual assistant, AI applications can gather ideas and provide answers to questions posed to them. They also simplify complex legal topics, thanks to their ability to analyze language and understand legal terminology and phrasing¹⁶.
- **Summarizing Legal Articles:** Artificial intelligence can summarize articles or documents presented to it.
- **Automated Text Translation:** AI has the capability to automatically translate texts from one language to another, highlighting the role of technological advancement in facilitating interaction between humans and machines¹⁷. Language is often a significant barrier in communication and education, but the development of AI applications has somewhat mitigated this issue, though improvements are still ongoing to achieve more accurate and final translations¹⁸.
- **Preparing Presentations:** Creating PowerPoint presentations using AI, such as ChatGPT, saves effort and time. Its ability to structure content into a design or framework helps clarify ideas and make them more professional and understandable¹⁹.

¹⁴ Ghadeer Drid Mohammed Ibrahim. (n.d.). Artificial intelligence, computer. No volume, no issue, no year, p. 6.

¹⁵ Alaa Taima. (n.d.). Artificial Intelligence and Its Uses in Academic Research and Publishing. No edition, no publisher, Iraq, pp. 13-17. Available at: <https://drasah.com/Description.aspx?id=7619>, retrieved February 3, 2025, at 17:10.

¹⁶ IBS Academy. (2025, February 3). All about ChatGPT. Retrieved February 3, 2025, from <https://ibsacademy.org/knowledge-base/all-about-chatgpt>, at 17:24.

¹⁷ IBS Academy. (2025, February 3). All about ChatGPT. Retrieved February 3, 2025, from <https://ibsacademy.org/knowledge-base/all-about-chatgpt>, at 17:24.

¹⁸ Mohamed Lahleh. (2020). Introduction to Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (1st ed.). Computer Academy, no country, p. 14.

¹⁹ ClassPoint. (2025, February 9). 4 Ways to Use ChatGPT in Education. Retrieved February 9, 2025, from <https://www.classpoint.io/blog/ar/4->, at 15:00.



- **Resolving Legal Issues:** AI is used to address legal questions or issues. For instance, it has demonstrated the ability to predict outcomes in the European Court of Human Rights with 79% accuracy, surpassing human accuracy, which is estimated at 70%. It can also investigate deals, reduce company losses, and process insurance claims²⁰.

Through the above, it can be said that artificial intelligence plays a crucial role in facilitating legal research, both substantively and procedurally. This is highly acceptable, but what raises questions is not just how ChatGPT is used, but rather the accuracy of the legal information it provides.

The ChatGPT program can provide answers to questions posed to it through natural language processing, which allows data to respond to formulated queries. However, the research method must be intelligent to ensure the researcher obtains correct answers. For example, Judge Juan Manuel Padilla in Colombia used AI to rule on a case involving a request to exempt an autistic child from paying medical examination, treatment, and transportation costs to the hospital. On January 30, the ruling was issued in favor of the child, with the judgment explicitly mentioning the judge's reliance on ChatGPT, which supported the idea of exempting the autistic minor from treatment costs under Colombian law²¹.

However, it is worth noting that, despite the judge's use of this application for the first time, it remains highly controversial. Issuing a judicial ruling based on technology is not officially permissible, even if the law allows its use, such as in the digitization of judicial services. As for judicial rulings, it remains a contentious issue.

On the other hand, the more accurate the information provided by this application, the more likely it is to face legal challenges. For example, in 2014, the University of Toronto developed an AI-powered legal research platform, Ross Intelligence, which could provide instant answers with their sources and update users on the latest judicial rulings. However, it was discontinued due to a lawsuit alleging copyright infringement and the theft of key features from Westlaw²², another legal research platform.

2. **Disadvantages of Using Artificial Intelligence in Legal Research**

- **Limited Accuracy in Research:** Research conducted using ChatGPT may not be highly accurate, especially when using the Arabic language, unless it involves searching for concepts or characteristics, for example. In reality, legal research using AI tools, particularly ChatGPT, amidst a vast amount of diverse legal information from various sources, takes only a few seconds compared to traditional and largely reliable methods. In traditional research, the researcher personally collects information using sources and references, including electronic ones, relying on search engines like Google, Google Scholar, and others. While this method is time-consuming, it is considered more accurate.
- **Limitations of the Free Version of ChatGPT:** The free version of ChatGPT does not offer all features. Once a certain limit of outputs is reached, the site prompts the user to subscribe for a paid service. Additionally, testing ChatGPT by inputting two summaries from a journal and two from the program into a plagiarism detection tool revealed that the first was identified as human work, while the second was flagged as generated by ChatGPT²³. Consequently, the use of artificial intelligence may expose legal researchers to the risk of plagiarism, especially if they are less aware of its dangers or misuse.
- **Risks to Intellectual Property Rights and Data Privacy:** Artificial intelligence poses risks to intellectual property rights and data privacy.

²⁰ Mohamed Lahleh. (2020). *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

²¹ Bilal Mahmoud Othman Abdullah. (2023). Access to legal information in the age of artificial intelligence. *Arab Researcher Journal*, 4(1), pp. 90-91.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

²³ Aya Allah Fayez Abdul Malik. (2024). Measuring the accuracy and reliability of programs detecting the use of ChatGPT in scientific research abstracts: The field of libraries and information as a model. *Scientific Journal*, Part 1, No. 43, p. 866.



➤ **Debate Over Liability for AI-Generated Content:** There is ongoing debate regarding the liability for content created by AI developers and the extent to which legal protection can be provided to them. In this context, AI developers have advocated for a specific legal framework to protect them from legal responsibility for the decisions and actions of these advanced technological programs, as these systems operate independently and beyond their control. On the other hand, developers have also called for the recognition of intellectual property rights, given AI's ability to innovate and invent. However, in reality, the implications of these demands may not align with existing legal frameworks²⁴.

CONCLUSION:

Through our analysis of the topic "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Ethics of Legal Research: ChatGPT as a Case Study," we have reached a set of conclusions and recommendations, which can be summarized as follows:

FINDINGS:

- Legal research, like other forms of research, is based on a set of ethics and standards that ensure its quality. These include accuracy, objectivity, confidentiality, specialization, professionalism, and scientific integrity. However, the use of AI tools like ChatGPT without adhering to these ethical standards can undermine these principles, leading to breaches of integrity, violations of data privacy, and intellectual property rights. This may cast doubt on the researcher's work and could unintentionally result in academic plagiarism.
- ChatGPT, as an AI tool, plays a significant role in preparing legal research. It helps provide legal information and offers solutions to legal issues presented to it in a short time, thanks to its ability to understand natural language. It can also translate and summarize legal research papers.
- ChatGPT contributes to the dissemination of legal information and culture, as it can be used by researchers and even the general public. This allows for the development of scientific research in general and legal research in particular, as well as enhancing the qualifications of legal researchers and raising awareness of human rights and freedoms.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ **Commitment to Ethical Use:** ChatGPT should be used within legal frameworks to protect intellectual property rights in the field of legal research. Researchers should not rely entirely on it to produce research, as this could lead to serious errors due to misuse of the application or miscommunication of ideas to the tool.
- ✓ **Enactment of Laws:** International and national legal texts should be developed to align with technological advancements. This would clarify the nature of liability arising from the use of AI programs, particularly ChatGPT, and define the responsible parties and the consequences of their actions.
- ✓ **Establishment of Oversight Mechanisms:** International mechanisms and regulatory bodies should be created to promote research ethics while considering the rapid development of AI. These bodies should ensure the optimal use of AI programs and applications to protect the privacy of legal research. Additionally, international and national conferences and seminars should be held to raise awareness of the risks associated with AI, including ChatGPT.

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