

Artificial Intelligence Disclosure in Academic Publishing: Implications for Educational Management and Research Policy in Nigerian Higher Education

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Abstract

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, and Copilot has altered the practice of scholarly writing and, with it, the ethical architecture of academic publishing. In response, a growing number of international publishers and editorial bodies now require authors to disclose whether, how, and for what purpose AI tools were used in preparing a manuscript. This conceptual paper examines that emerging global norm and argues that Nigerian higher education institutions and their affiliated journals have yet to develop comparable disclosure requirements, leaving a policy vacuum with implications for research integrity, authorship accountability, and institutional reputation. Drawing on institutional theory and the diffusion of innovation perspective, the paper situates Nigeria's non-adoption within broader patterns of policy diffusion and organizational change, and reviews Nigeria-specific evidence of both AI adoption and the absence of governing frameworks. The paper concludes by proposing a policy framework that Nigerian universities, journal editors, and regulatory bodies could adapt, and offers recommendations for educational managers responsible for research governance. As a non-empirical, conceptual contribution, the paper does not test hypotheses but synthesizes existing scholarship and policy documents to advance a research agenda and a practical governance model for Nigerian higher education.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence Disclosure, Academic Publishing, Educational Management, Research Governance, Nigerian Higher Education, Research Integrity*

Introduction

Generative AI tools have moved within a few years from novelty to routine presence in scholarly work, used to draft text, refine language, summarize literature, and occasionally assist with data interpretation. This has forced academic publishers to confront a question that barely existed a decade ago: what counts as legitimate authorial labor when a machine can produce fluent scholarly prose on request? The response from major publishers and editorial associations has been broadly convergent: the Committee on Publication Ethics, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, the American Psychological Association, and large commercial publishers have each adopted policies requiring authors to disclose AI use, typically in a methods or acknowledgements section, while denying AI systems the status of author (Committee on Publication Ethics [COPE], 2023; International Committee of Medical Journal Editors [ICMJE], 2024; American Psychological Association [APA], 2025). Medical and scientific bodies moved earliest: JAMA argued non-human systems cannot bear the responsibility authorship implies (Flanagin et al., 2023), and radiology journal editors

across nine countries jointly adopted shared guidelines on treating large language models (Hamm et al., 2024).

Yet a written policy has not translated into disclosure in practice. Most journals had adopted some AI policy by January 2025, yet He and Bu (2026) found no meaningful difference in AI-assisted writing rates between journals with and without one. This gap between formal policy and practice is the backdrop against which the Nigerian case must be read: Nigerian higher education has, for the most part, not yet reached the stage of adopting formal policy at all. Nwali and Udumukwu (2025) found ninety percent of surveyed Nigerian academics reported no institutional AI policy, and ninety-five percent rejected AI co-authorship.

This gap carries direct consequences: Nigerian scholars submitting to international outlets that require disclosure risk rejection, editorial boards risk publishing undisclosed AI-generated content unknowingly, and institutions risk inconsistent practice. This paper treats the gap as a matter for educational management rather than individual ethics, because closing it requires coordinated institutional action: policy formulation, training, monitoring, and alignment with regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission.

This conceptual paper clarifies key concepts, reviews the international AI-disclosure landscape, presents a theoretical framework combining institutional theory and diffusion-of-innovation, examines the Nigerian context, discusses implications for educational management, proposes a seven-element policy framework, and closes with recommendations.

Conceptual Clarifications

Artificial intelligence disclosure, as used across the policies reviewed here, refers to an author's explicit statement, usually in a methods or dedicated AI-use section, identifying which AI tool was used, its version or provider, and its specific purpose, whether editing, drafting, summarization, or data analysis (APA, 2025; COPE, 2023). Disclosure is distinct from authorship: every major policy body insists AI systems cannot be authors because authorship carries accountability a non-human system cannot hold, while human authors remain responsible for verifying anything an AI tool produced (COPE, 2023; Flanagan et al., 2023). Some publishers further distinguish "assistive" AI use, such as refining an author's own text, from "generative" use producing original content, with the latter requiring fuller disclosure (Sage Publishing, 2025; Thesify, 2025).

Educational management, for this paper, refers to the administrative and leadership processes by which universities plan, organize, and regulate academic activity, including research governance and the policies structuring staff and student conduct. AI disclosure sits within this domain because undisclosed AI use raises exactly the authenticity and accountability questions research-integrity frameworks exist to manage. This paper's central claim is that AI disclosure is a research-governance matter properly falling within educational management: it requires institutional policy, resourcing, and monitoring, rather than being left to individual discretion.

The Global Landscape of AI Disclosure Policy in Academic Publishing

The international landscape took shape rapidly between 2023 and 2025. ICMJE updated its recommendations to state AI tools cannot satisfy authorship criteria and their use must be described in the manuscript (ICMJE, 2024). COPE's 2023 position statement took the same

view, requiring authors to disclose how and which tool was used, typically in the methods section (COPE, 2023). These statements have become reference points individual journals cite when adapting their own policies (Hamm et al., 2024).

Professional associations and publishers followed with more granular rules. APA requires generative-AI use be disclosed in the method section and, where substantively used, cited in software-citation format (APA, 2025). Sage Publishing distinguishes "assistive" AI use, needing no citation, from "generative" use, requiring formal citation (Sage Publishing, 2025). Elsevier and other large publishers have settled on a disclosure-permitting model: AI use is allowed provided authors verify outputs and disclose use, while AI-generated images remain prohibited (Enago Academy, 2026). A comprehensive review found written AI policies cluster into three types: outright prohibition; permissive-with-disclosure, the dominant approach; and, rarely, fully open policies (Enago Academy, 2026).

Editorial coordination across entire fields shows how quickly this norm spreads: editors from more than thirty biomedical-imaging journals across nine countries met at the 2023 Radiology Editors' Forum to align their treatment of AI before issuing a joint statement member journals agreed to adopt (Hamm et al., 2024).

Despite this apparent consensus, actual compliance is troubling. He and Bu's (2026) analysis of 5,114 journals' policies found 3,556 required disclosure, 1,529 had no identifiable policy, and only 2 had a fully open policy. Full-text analysis found no meaningful difference in AI-assisted writing rates by policy status, and only a tiny fraction of AI-assisted papers explicitly disclosed it. A written policy alone is therefore necessary but insufficient; it must be paired with monitoring, training, and a compliance culture to change author behavior rather than merely exist on a webpage.

Theoretical Framework

Two complementary lenses explain both the international pattern of adoption and Nigeria's non-adoption: institutional theory, particularly institutional isomorphism, and diffusion-of-innovation.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue organizations within a shared field come to resemble one another through shared pressures toward legitimacy, operating via three mechanisms: coercive isomorphism, from dependence on other organizations or regulatory expectations; mimetic isomorphism, imitating peers under uncertainty; and normative isomorphism, from shared professional standards. The rapid, coordinated adoption among biomedical journals (Hamm et al., 2024) and major publishers (Enago Academy, 2026) reflects both coercive pressure, since journals depend on indexing bodies and funders, and mimetic pressure, since editors facing uncertainty found it safer to adopt positions already staked out by COPE and ICMJE.

Nigerian universities and journals largely sit outside these particular pressures. They are not bound by the same indexing relationships or funder mandates, nor have they experienced comparable coordinated mimetic pressure; the Nigerian evidence below describes an absence of policy rather than a delayed but converging one. The pressure they do face is weaker and less coordinated, arriving mainly through individual researchers' encounters with international journals rather than any domestic regulatory body.

Diffusion-of-innovation complements this by describing how a policy innovation might still spread over time. Rogers (2003) models adoption as passing through five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Nigerian higher education as a whole appears positioned at the earliest, knowledge stage for AI disclosure policy, since the evidence describes widespread AI use but almost no policy awareness (Nwali & Udumukwu, 2025; Elems-Ikwegbu, 2025). Left to organic diffusion, the process could take years, suggesting deliberate intervention rather than passive diffusion is required.

The Nigerian Context: An Institutional Policy Vacuum

Nwali and Udumukwu (2025) surveyed 425 Nigerian academics on AI adoption and perceptions. Findings show moderate overall adoption of about sixty-two percent, with grammar and writing-assistance tools used far more than generative AI proper. Eighty-eight percent rated AI tools as highly useful, yet only twenty-five percent reported the facilitating conditions needed to use them effectively. Most tellingly, ninety percent reported no institutional AI policy existed, and ninety-five percent rejected AI co-authorship, indicating Nigerian academics already hold views consistent with international norms even absent formal policy. The gap in Nigeria is therefore not primarily one of ethical awareness but institutional: the absence of any formal mechanism requiring disclosure, monitoring compliance, or guiding borderline cases.

Elems-Ikwegbu (2025) situates this publishing-specific gap within a broader pattern across Nigerian tertiary education, finding data-privacy concerns, algorithmic bias, infrastructural deficits, and weak regulatory frameworks together impede AI's productive use, and recommending a national AI regulatory framework alongside embedding AI ethics within curricula. At the student level, Ojedeji (2026) found a significant relationship between AI tool use and academic dishonesty among University of Ibadan undergraduates, relevant here because institutional AI governance must operate coherently across both student-integrity and faculty-publishing domains.

Reading these Nigerian sources alongside the international evidence, the obstacle is not persuasion at the level of individual belief, since Nigerian academics already hold attitudes aligned with international consensus (Nwali & Udumukwu, 2025); it is the absence of institutional structures able to translate an already-favorable attitude into consistent practice, leaving Nigerian scholars and journals exposed to compliance risk and lost opportunities for building domestic accountability.

Implications for Educational Management and Research Policy

Treating AI disclosure as a matter for educational management carries several implications. Research governance structures (ethics committees, directorates of research, quality assurance units) need an explicit mandate to address AI use in scholarly output, one that in most Nigerian universities does not currently exist (Nwali & Udumukwu, 2025; Elems-Ikwegbu, 2025); without it, responsibility defaults by omission to individual academics and whichever external editors review a given submission.

University-based journal editors carry distinct responsibilities from individual authors. The coordinated approach taken by radiology journal editors (Hamm et al., 2024) offers a

transferable model: Nigerian university-based journals could similarly convene to adopt a shared minimum standard rather than each developing an idiosyncratic policy.

There is also a reputational dimension: evidence that AI-assisted writing is growing fastest in non-English-speaking countries (He & Bu, 2026) warns that Nigerian scholarly output risks disproportionate future scrutiny. Capacity building is itself a management function, since only twenty-five percent of academics who found AI tools useful also reported adequate facilitating conditions (Nwali & Udumukwu, 2025), policy adoption and capacity building must be a single, linked intervention. Finally, alignment with national regulators such as the National Universities Commission matters: absent a national mandate, individual universities are left to weaker, slower mimetic pressure (Rogers, 2003).

Toward a Policy Framework for AI Disclosure in Nigerian Higher Education

Drawing on the international models and Nigerian realities reviewed above, this paper proposes seven elements a workable Nigerian AI disclosure framework should include.

1. **Disclosure requirement.** Any Nigerian university journal or research policy should require authors to state, in a designated section, which AI tool was used, its version or provider, and its specific purpose, whether editing, drafting assistance, summarization, translation, or another function (COPE, 2023; ICMJE, 2024; APA, 2025).
2. **Authorship prohibition.** The policy should state unambiguously that no AI system may be listed as author or co-author, consistent with the international consensus that authorship requires accountability AI cannot bear (COPE, 2023; Flanagan et al., 2023), a position already commanding near-universal support among surveyed Nigerian academics (Nwali & Udumukwu, 2025).
3. **Assistive versus generative distinction.** Following Sage Publishing's (2025) model, the policy should distinguish AI used merely to refine an author's own material, requiring brief acknowledgement, from AI used to generate substantive original content, requiring fuller, citable disclosure of what was generated and how it was verified.
4. **Author verification responsibility.** The policy should make explicit, as APA (2025) does, that authors remain fully responsible for verifying the accuracy of any AI-generated content or citation before submission.
5. **Editorial and peer-review provisions.** The policy should also address how AI may or may not be used by peer reviewers and editors themselves, an issue several international bodies have addressed separately from author disclosure (Hamm et al., 2024), given that confidentiality concerns around submitted manuscripts differ from those around authored text.
6. **Institutional oversight mechanism.** Rather than leaving enforcement to individual editors, universities should designate a specific office, either an existing research-ethics committee or a new research-integrity unit, responsible for monitoring compliance, adjudicating disputed cases, and reviewing the policy as AI capabilities evolve (Elems-Ikwegbu, 2025).

7. **Capacity building and periodic review.** Given that facilitating conditions lag behind perceived usefulness among Nigerian academics (Nwali & Udumukwu, 2025), any rollout should pair structured training for staff, postgraduate students, and editorial teams with scheduled periodic review of the policy itself.

These seven elements are deliberately modeled on, rather than copied from, the international examples reviewed earlier, because a Nigerian framework must account for infrastructural constraints, an already-favorable but underdeveloped attitudinal base, and the absence, so far, of coercive pressure from a national regulator.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that the international shift toward mandatory AI disclosure in academic publishing, however imperfectly observed in practice, has not yet been matched by comparable policy development within Nigerian higher education. Reviewing the international landscape established by COPE, ICMJE, APA, and major publishers, alongside Nigeria-specific evidence on AI adoption and institutional readiness, the paper has shown the gap is not primarily one of attitude, since Nigerian academics already share the core international consensus against AI authorship, but one of institutional infrastructure. Using institutional theory and diffusion-of-innovation, the paper has suggested this absence reflects weaker, less coordinated isomorphic pressure than international counterparts experience, and that closing the gap requires deliberate institutional intervention rather than passive diffusion. The seven-element framework and recommendations offered here are intended as a starting point for that intervention, one that educational managers, journal editors, and regulatory bodies within Nigerian higher education can adapt as AI capabilities and international norms continue to evolve.

Recommendations

Individual universities and their leadership should treat AI disclosure policy development as an immediate research-governance priority, assigning it explicitly to an existing research-ethics committee or directorate of research with a defined timeline for adopting an institution-wide policy statement.

University-based journal editors and editorial boards should convene, whether within a single institution or across a cluster of affiliated Educational Management journals, to adopt a shared minimum disclosure standard modeled on the seven elements above, rather than each journal developing its own policy in isolation.

At the national level, the National Universities Commission and equivalent regulatory bodies for polytechnics and colleges of education should consider issuing a minimum national guideline on AI disclosure, which would exert the kind of coercive isomorphic pressure that has driven faster, coordinated adoption internationally (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Individual researchers, particularly postgraduate students and early-career academics, should proactively check target journals' AI policies before submission and adopt personal disclosure practices even where their home institution has not yet made this mandatory. Future researchers are encouraged to extend this conceptual argument with empirical work measuring Nigerian journal editors' own awareness of and attitudes toward AI disclosure requirements.

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