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A Systematic Literature Review on Ethics and Artificial Intelligence in the World of Business and Accounting (2024-2025)

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Abstract

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought fundamental transformations to business and accounting practices, improving work efficiency, analytical accuracy, and organizational governance. However, these advancements also raise critical questions regarding ethics, professional responsibility, and human resource readiness. This study aims to conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) of recent literature concerning the relationship between ethics, technology readiness, and AI implementation in business and accounting contexts. The review maps empirical and conceptual studies from 2024-2025, including research conducted in Vietnam, Lebanon, and Indonesia. The findings reveal that AI adoption success is influenced by technology readiness, perceived usefulness, and ease of use, yet it also heavily depends on ethical culture and organizational governance. Previous studies tend to overlook the role of moral factors, data transparency, and ethical oversight in AI implementation. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need for integration between digital ethics and technology readiness as a foundation for sustainable AI development in business and accounting.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Business Ethics, Technology Readiness, Accounting, Systematic Literature Review.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become the driving force behind Industry 4.0 and digital transformation in the business world. In accounting and auditing professions, AI is utilized to automate data analysis, detect financial anomalies, improve reporting accuracy, and accelerate decision-making processes. However, alongside its potential benefits, new challenges arise particularly concerning ethics, data integrity, and professional responsibility.

AI promises high efficiency and reduced human error; yet, the use of algorithms without ethical oversight may lead to bias, data manipulation, and violations of transparency and fairness. Thus, the application of AI in business and accounting must be aligned with ethical values and the users technological readiness.

AI implementation also raises issues such as algorithmic bias, opaque decision-making, privacy violations, and reduced human involvement in accounting roles. Hence, a systematic literature review is needed to understand how ethics and AI interact within business and accounting environments.

This study aims to:

1. Identify how previous research discusses ethics and AI in business and accounting contexts.
2. Synthesize theories, methodologies, and main findings from relevant studies.
3. Identify research gaps and propose future research directions.

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Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this study seeks to provide both conceptual and practical contributions in building an ethical framework for sustainable AI implementation in business and accounting.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1. Artificial Intelligence in Business and Accounting

AI is defined as computer systems capable of mimicking human cognitive functions such as thinking, learning, and decision-making (Hamza et al., 2024). In accounting, AI is applied for data analytics, transaction pattern recognition, and risk and performance prediction. According to Ilugbusi and Nirmal (2025), AI serves as a catalyst for business innovation due to its ability to optimize operations and accelerate decision-making. In accounting, AI-based systems such as machine learning and natural language processing enable intelligent auditing, reduce human error, and enhance financial reporting transparency. However, algorithmic use without ethical awareness can lead to data misuse and unfair outcomes.

AI is one of the most influential technological innovations of Industry 4.0, fundamentally transforming how organizations conduct business and make decisions. It refers to the ability of computer systems to perform tasks that typically require human Intelligence such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving (Russell & Norvig, 2021). In the context of modern business, AI has been widely applied to support operational efficiency, data analysis, market prediction, and risk management.

In accounting and auditing, AI automates data entry, transaction analysis, anomaly detection, and real-time financial reporting. Technologies such as machine learning and natural language processing (NLP) allow accounting systems to review thousands of transactions efficiently (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018), improving both accuracy and speed while reducing human error.

Moreover, AI expands the accountant's role from data recording to data-driven strategic advisory. Modern accountants are expected to analyze AI outputs, interpret complex findings, and provide ethical and strategic recommendations (Kokina & Davenport, 2017).

However, this digital transformation introduces challenges regarding professional accountability, algorithmic transparency, and ethical Supervision particularly because AI-generated decisions often suffer from the *black box problem*.

Thus, AI integration in accounting offers efficiency opportunities while necessitating stronger ethical and governance foundations to maintain professional accountability.

2.2. Ethical Perspectives in Technology and Digital Business

Information technology ethics refers to moral principles guiding the development and use of technology to prevent harm to individuals or society (Floridi, 2019). In the context of AI, ethical principles include:

1. Algorithmic transparency: Users must understand how AI makes decisions.
2. Accountability: Responsibility for AI outcomes must be clearly defined.
3. Non-discrimination: Algorithms must not contain bias against any group.
4. Fairness and data privacy: Safeguarding individual rights in data use.

In accounting, these ethical principles are vital because the profession relies on public trust and integrity. Ethics guide individuals and organizations in determining what is right or wrong (Crane & Matten, 2019). In digital technology contexts, ethics ensures that innovation aligns with human values, justice, and social responsibility.

In business, AI adoption may create ethical dilemmas such as algorithmic bias, privacy violations, excessive employee surveillance, and human workforce replacement. Hence, technological success is not measured merely by economic efficiency but also by adherence to moral and social responsibility principles (Jobin, Ienca, & Vayena, 2019).

Within corporations, technology ethics form part of corporate governance, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and fairness. Businesses adopting AI should implement clear ethical policies such as customer data usage guidelines, algorithm audits, and social impact assessments making ethics both a moral norm and a sustainable business strategy.

2.3. The Relationship Between Ethics and AI in the Accounting Profession

Studies show that AI implementation without ethical consideration can undermine fundamental accounting values such as honesty, independence, and objectivity (Kamilah & Nasution, 2024). Although AI can automatically generate financial reports, human oversight remains essential to ensure moral interpretation.

Vesa Tiitola and Jalonen (2025) introduced the *Maieutic Machine Theory*, emphasizing that human–machine interactions should be dialogical AI should support, not replace, human moral judgment through transparency and accountability.

According to IFAC (2023), professional accountants are responsible for ensuring that technological use, including AI, aligns with ethical codes integrity, objectivity, professional competence, confidentiality, and professional behavior.

AI assists auditors in fraud detection and identifying abnormal transactions; however, final decisions must remain under human moral and professional judgment. Thus, AI is *assistive*, not a substitute for ethical accountability.

Unethical AI use may lead to data manipulation, algorithmic bias in financial reporting, or customer data misuse. Therefore, organizations must ensure AI systems are auditable, transparent, and explainable (*explainable AI*). Integrating ethics into AI design in accounting is not only a moral obligation but also a risk mitigation strategy (Altawalbeh et al., 2024).

The synergy between ethics and AI establishes a new foundation for *value-based accounting*, emphasizing not only efficiency and profitability but also social responsibility and digital justice.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to collect and analyze data from various scientific sources. The SLR method was chosen because it enables an in-depth synthesis and helps identify trends and gaps within the existing literature.

3.1. Sources and Search Criteria

Data were obtained from reputable international journals such as Economies, Qubahan Academic Journal, WSEAS Transactions on Business and Economics, and the International Review of Management and Marketing. The analyzed articles cover the period 2024–2025, using the keywords: “Artificial Intelligence,” “Ethics,” “Accounting,” “Business,” and “Digitalization.”

3.2. Inclusion Criteria

Selected articles must:

1. Focus on AI applications in business, accounting, or management.
2. Discuss ethics, responsibility, or AI’s social implications.
3. Be published in Scopus-indexed or reputable international journals.
4. Be written in English and available in open-access format.

3.3. Analysis Procedure

The analysis was carried out through the following stages:

1. Identification: Collecting and mapping relevant studies.
2. Screening: Checking topic and methodological relevance.
3. Classification: Categorizing based on theory, variables, methods, and results.
4. Synthesis: Drawing thematic conclusions and identifying research gaps.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Research Trends

Most studies focus on AI’s role in improving accounting efficiency and accuracy (e.g., Hamza Melliani et al., 2024). AI accelerates data analysis, reduces human error, and enhances managerial decision-making quality.

However, few explicitly address ethical dimensions such as algorithmic accountability, data protection, and fairness. For example, Altawalbeh et al. (2024) highlight the need for governance frameworks, while Tiitola & Jalonen (2025) explore moral dilemmas in human–machine collaboration.

4.2. Theoretical Frameworks

Common theories include:

1. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and **Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of** Technology (UTAUT) for AI acceptance.
2. Disruptive Innovation Theory to explain AI's impact on traditional business models.
3. Contingency Theory to evaluate AI's organizational fit.
4. Maieutic Machine Theory for ethical human–machine collaboration.

4.3. Research Methods

Methods vary, including:

1. Quantitative surveys (Kamilah & Nasution, 2024)
2. Conceptual and literature reviews (Ilugbusi & Nirmal, 2025)
3. Qualitative interviews (Vesa Tiitola, 2025)

This reflects methodological diversity but inconsistency, particularly in empirically measuring ethical aspects.

4.4. Main Findings

1. AI enhances efficiency and reporting accuracy.
2. Ethics remains a minor concern, rarely quantified.
3. Developing countries (e.g., Indonesia, Morocco, Jordan) lack empirical studies.
4. There is a need for ethical AI governance models balancing efficiency and integrity.

5. CRITIQUES AND RESEARCH GAPS

The literature analysis reveals several critical issues and research gaps:

1. Lack of empirical studies most existing research remains conceptual and does not quantitatively examine the ethical impacts of AI.
2. Limited geographical context much of the research focuses on developed countries, while developing nations are rarely included as research subjects.
3. Unstandardized ethical indicators there are no valid instruments yet to measure integrity, transparency, and algorithmic fairness.
4. Lack of integration between business ethics and information technology theories most frameworks remain technocentric and fail to incorporate moral or social dimensions.

Although research on ethics and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the fields of business and accounting continues to grow, the results of this **Systematic Literature Review (SLR)** indicate that there are still significant limitations and gaps methodological, theoretical, and practical alike.

5.1. Methodological Gaps

Most previous studies have focused on descriptive qualitative approaches or conceptual papers that explain phenomena without empirical testing. For example, many articles discuss AI ethics from a normative perspective, emphasizing moral principles such as fairness and transparency; however, few have quantitatively measured their impact on organizational performance, accounting efficiency, or professional accountants' perceptions (Rahman et al., 2021; Altawalbeh et al., 2024).

In addition, only a few studies have employed longitudinal or experimental designs to observe the dynamics of AI implementation over time. Given the rapidly evolving nature of technology, longitudinal studies are essential for researchers to continuously understand changes in ethical perceptions and the effectiveness of corporate policies.

Another limitation lies in the theoretical aspect. Most studies still rely on classical theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) or Deontological Ethics, which do not fully capture the complexity of the relationship between humans and intelligent systems. Few studies have integrated newer frameworks such as AI Governance Theory or Socio-Technical Systems Theory, which position AI as an integral part of an interconnected social and organizational ecosystem.

In addition, few studies have directly linked the ethical values of the accounting profession such as integrity, objectivity, and accountability with algorithmic bias and automated decision-making in AI systems. This gap highlights the need for a new conceptual model that explains the interaction between professional ethics and digital technology.

5.2. Practical and Contextual Gaps

Most studies originate from developed countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. The context of developing countries, including Indonesia, has rarely been explored in depth. In fact, ethical and regulatory challenges surrounding AI in developing nations are far more complex due to limited digital infrastructure, differences in organizational culture, and weak data and privacy regulations (Hadi, 2024).

Therefore, contextual research in Indonesia is still needed to examine how accounting professionals understand and apply ethics in the use of AI within local work environments. Such research is also important to develop national ethical guidelines that align with global advancements while remaining consistent with Indonesian cultural values.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) conducted on 32 academic articles, this study concludes that the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides a highly significant contribution to improving efficiency, accuracy, and the overall quality of business and accounting processes. AI has been proven to simplify routine tasks, accelerate the processing of complex data, enhance the precision of financial reporting, and reduce the level of human error. These improvements not only influence operational performance but also strengthen organizational capabilities in making faster, more objective, and data-driven decisions.

Furthermore, the use of AI enables accounting professionals to shift from mechanical tasks to more strategic and analytical activities, thereby increasing the value they contribute to organizations. Thus, the findings of this study affirm that the integration of AI in business and accounting not only offers additional efficiency but also drives structural transformation in modern work practices.

Aligned with these developments, it becomes increasingly evident that AI has the potential to strengthen corporate governance, enhance monitoring quality, and expand analytical capabilities needed to respond to the dynamics of the business environment. Therefore, this study supports the utilization of AI as a key technology that can foster innovation, improve competitiveness, and enrich the functions and roles of the accounting profession in the future.

Recommendations

1. Develop ethical AI governance models for business and accounting organizations.
2. Integrate ethical theories (e.g., deontology, utilitarianism) into AI implementation frameworks.
3. Conduct cross-country studies comparing ethical perceptions in AI use.
4. Encourage collaboration between academia and regulators to establish AI ethical standards in the accounting profession.

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