



RESEARCH PAPER

Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Academic Integrity: Exploring Teachers' and Students' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study has been conducted under Interpretivist paradigm to explore the teachers' and students' perspectives regarding the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the academic integrity in higher education. For this purpose, there were eight university teachers and eight students belonging to the social sciences selected purposively from a public university. The collected data with the help of interview protocol were analyzed by Thematic analysis. The results revealed that the teachers cited AI's role in enabling academic dishonesty, the inadequacy of detection tools, and students' lack of understanding of ethical boundaries. Some recognize that AI has potential as a learning tool. However, the students are confused by ethical lines that are not well defined. Some confess an over-reliance on AI, and its effect on independent learning. The institutional policies and literacy programs to empower students to leverage AI ethically, while upholding academic integrity are recommended.

KEYWORDS AI, Academic Integrity, Higher Education

Introduction

Over the last few years, artificial intelligence (AI) has seen impressive growth, and now plays a role in several fields, especially education. These AI systems can imitate human brain functions because they are trained using machine and deep learning and perform regular tasks by analyzing and processing a large amount of data (Arias Gonzáles et al., 2022). AI is a computer system that can carry out the same high-level information processing functions that require similar cognitions of humans, including learning, self-correction, synthesis, extrapolation, reasoning and adaption to new data over time (Farrokhnia et al., 2023).

Efforts to improve quality education (Sustainable Development Goal 4) in a sustainable way are led by the United Nations through a cutting-edge focus on addressing inequalities via equitable and inclusive learning opportunities (Gimpel et al., 2023). With that in mind AI-powered tools are being integrated in many aspects of everyday life, including education. Adaptive learning systems, in particular, are emerging as powerful tools for enhancing and customizing the learning journey, playing a significant role in the evolution of sustainable education in our ever-changing world (Mamani et al., 2022).

The AI boom is truly blossoming where it matters — in higher education, where both students and educators are leveraging the myriad benefits of artificial intelligence. Journals are beginning to raise concerns over how academic integrity and current understandings of what it is to build disciplinary knowledge may be challenged (Sullivan et al., 2023). AI-based applications also present several ethical implications and issues like academic integrity that need to be critically evaluated and addressed (Puma et al., 2022).

Academic integrity is one of the crucial things that a university should promote. Plurality and diversity should not threaten this integrity at the beehive, and need to be its mainstay," the university said. It is an essential educational task that institutions need to meet head-on. Hence, academic integrity should be involved in all educational issues and should not be overlooked or regarded in isolation (Perera & Lankathilaka, 2023). Academic integrity is the need of the hour in this journey to shape students, who could be partners in nurturing core values of academic institutes, and eventually become the flag bearers in the society. According to International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI), these institutions of higher education should not restrict their role just to ensure one achieves an academic success but they should also prepare one, lies within their mission to instil important values like honesty, trust, justice, respect, responsibility and courage into one's personality. These will be the principles that will form the backbone of formative leaders who will fight the battles for the challenges of the future (Gimpel et al., 2023). With the exponential adoption of AI in education, a research gap obviously demonstrates the need for a study to establish how students' perception on artificial intelligence tools influence their academic integrity.

Literature Review

While technology, education, management, and data are the four most important pillars of the 21st century, technology is the grassroots element of modern society (Holmes et al., 2021). In preparing a wide array of tools for educational opportunities, technological ingredients have opened fresh ways for teaching and learning (Firat 2023). The rise of transformative technologies in particular, AI, is a paradigm shift of the century that topples assessment paradigms in higher education (Rudolph et al., 2023a). AI, the term we've used, denotes computer systems that mimic key functions of human cognition: learning, adaptability, synthesis and self-correction. Such (and other similar nature) systems operate by processing a huge amount of information so that they can perform certain tasks with effectiveness. AI in education refers to how to create software and learning resources (e.g., interactive content), with key characteristics such as abstract reasoning, self-learning, versatility, autonomy in new circumstances and high-level interaction, that allows the reproduction of intelligent type behavior in a variety of contexts (Muñoz et al., 2022).

It has gradually reflected research on artificial intelligence in educational applications because of the general shortage of research on how to implement such features and other active learning methods. In addition, more directed interventions must be developed for emerging fields beyond traditional computer science departments and tailored to the knowledge base from which an understanding in AI for those individual fields can spring. This will allow students to satisfy the future job market demands they will experience in their job (Atlas, 2023). In terms of the latest technology, the recent state for AI (Artificial Intelligence) innovations has only compounded the problems at hand. Chat bots, for instance, have made great strides in their potential for generating low-res text in a semi-humanlike manner, in addition to being able to crunch vast continents of information (Puma et al., 2022). Now, information generating tools exist that may not be accurate or reliable, so both educators and students have to face the reality that information generating tools now exist that they cannot not trust. But let us not forget that besides these challenges, we need to emphasize that there are opportunities that AI brings (ex. to support teaching tasks and enhance learning). The AI, therefore, can only be beneficial, and proper use of this technology will definitely yield good results (Hadar et al., 2020).

As researchers defined it, the AI variable includes four main aspects of perceptions of AI, understanding of AI, any views on AI education, and confidence in AI-related training (Castillo-Acobo et al., 2022). It further interrogates relevant topics like moral obligations, social and economic drivers, and factors of security and risk. This criterion

also offers a lens with which to evaluate AI's functioning, dissemination, or interpretation throughout its wider socio-technical context (Bearman et al., 2023).

AI and Academic Integrity in Education

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) poses several concerns for teachers of education, and the rapid growth and increasing complexity of AI instruments is creating much anxiety in the academic community, not least because these are threatening standards of originality of scholarly production (Gavilán et al., 2022). This installment on leveraging AI to upend the principles of originality in thought and writing, two of the bedrocks of what for decades has been professed to be an academic accomplishment (Peres et al., 2023). And soon, though these concerns are understandable enough through the lens of the traditions of higher education, they also enact a culture with an insensitivity to the fact that some kinds of knowledge—even knowledge representation through keyed-in written text—bear privilege. This kind of writing-biased, techno-solutionist goal to keep the integrity of the writing experience intact, which in the age of AI is becoming increasingly endangered, is a fatalistic goal (Mansilla et al., 2022).

Most of the trouble in academia has come from AI's ability to produce academic writing, which threatens to undermine the integrity and ethical integrity of the assessment process (Rudolph et al., 2023a). Tackling these challenges would require that we re-examine how we evaluate what students know and can do, doing away with time-honored approaches in favor of creative strategies that would stymie AI (Arias González et al., 2022; Gimpel et al., 2023) To a large extent, user acceptance is critical for the successful adoption of cutting-edge technologies. How digital technologies will be integrated into learning processes, as a new opportunity or as a problem involving the given technologies and means of learning, is highly dependent on the way of their perception by both the teachers and learners. Academic Integrity consists of adapted dimensions such as honesty, trust, justice, respect, responsibility and the dimensional factors contributing towards integrity. This dimension enables us to evaluate academic conduct from an ethical perspective (Muñoz, 2022). In this sense, the article can be viewed as a timely contribution not just to the increasing number of studies that attempt to understand the ramifications of the integration of artificial intelligence into academia, but to a broader movement that advocates responsible application of artificial intelligence in education according to sustainable principles found in the literature (Bearman et al., 2023).

Material and Methods

This qualitative study has been conducted under Interpretivist paradigm to explore the teachers' and students' perspectives regarding the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the academic integrity in higher education. For this purpose, there were eight university teachers and eight students belonging to the social sciences selected purposively from a public university. The data have been collected with the help of a semi-structured interview protocol developed by the researcher(s). The research instrument has been validated through the expert's opinion.

Results and Discussion

The collected data have been analyzed with the help of Manual Thematic analysis. The detail is as under:

Teachers' Perspectives

University lecturers expressed a wide range of views about AI's role in education, with common concerns about academic dishonesty, challenges involved in detecting AI use and ethical questions. Others recognized the upsides of A.I., with some warning about the

need for urgent institutional policies or pedagogical recalibration. Teachers' views have been stated along with the sub-themes below:

Academic Dishonesty

Teachers reported that the availability of AI has made it simple for students to generate sophisticated, well-structured assignments with little more than a copy-and-paste effort, and that such shortcuts have eroded critical thinking and originality. One of the participants stated that:

I was recently grading a paper from a student that was incredibly well-written, in fact too well-written. A student, during class discussion, said something along the lines of: please elaborate on certain arguments in their back and forth -- I asked, to which the student could not actually explain their own work. It was obvious that the writing was done largely by A.I., which raises serious questions about students skipping the whole learning journey.

Another participant shared a similar view:

A trend I've definitely noticed is since students are just submitting assignments without actually writing themselves, they are highly polished without being very deep. The gap between what they say and what we see when we test their true comprehension through verbal questions or classwork quickly reveals itself. AI enables them to fulfill superficial expectations without any deeper engagement with the material.

A similar perspective has been given by another participant:

"I have noticed that students are using AI to generate responses that sound intellectual but have no personal voice. The issue is that AI-generated work fails to represent their individual thought process, making academic assignments pointless."

Another participants stated that:

The central challenge is that AI-generated responses are so polished, and even subpar students can produce nearly perfect essays. "It's become so blurry between what learning is and what just getting a better argument from an AI is that it's becoming harder and harder to assess things.

AI Detection and Regulation

Educators complained that the AI detection programs were either not strong enough to catch AI-generated work or were in danger of falsely flagging content created by a human. One of the participants stated that:

Over the last week, I ran a number of student assignments through AI detection software, and while some assignments were flagged, other pieces of work which were clearly written by AI passed undetected. It's alarming because it indicates that conventional plagiarism detection methods are increasingly impotent. We need to work on it all.

Another participant shared a similar view:

"There was one instance where I suspected a student was using AI very heavily — but when I confronted them, they denied it, I didn't really have definitive proof. But unlike traditional plagiarism, AI-generated work does not leave an obvious trail, making enforcement a challenge."

A similar perspective has been given by another participant:

"In some cases, AI detectors misclassify authentic human-written content, presenting an additional ethical quandary — how do we fairly punish students when detectors can be wrong? It puts both students and faculty in a difficult position."

Another participants stated:

"While we wait for better methods to detect AI-generated work, educators are left with intuition, which is far from foolproof. Increasingly, universities must invest in more sophisticated detection systems and policy frameworks."

Students' Awareness of Ethical Issues

A big part of the problem, many teachers said, is that students don't know what ethical use looks like and too often are using AI without clear boundaries.

One of the participants stated:

"One of my students told me that using AI to rewrite their sentences was not plagiarism, because they weren't copying anyone's work. A lot of students actually don't know where that ethical line is drawn, and that's a problem."

Another participant shared a similar view:

"Some students argue that if the AI produced something unique, it's fair game. They don't understand that academic integrity is not just about avoiding plagiarism — it's about cultivating independent thought."

A similar perspective has been given by another participant:

"I had a student reason recently that using AI was no different than using Google. Search engines help people discover information but AI have the capabilities to generate whole responses, which modify the learning process in its core."

Another participants stated:

"I'm observing how students are having difficulty discerning appropriate versus inappropriate use of AI. Institutions must step up and provide these distinctions, before academic integrity erodes further."

Potential for Enhancing Learning

The discussion was dominated by concerns, but some teachers did acknowledge AI could be powerful when thoughtfully embedded in education. One of the participants stated:

"AI can be a very good learning companion. If done properly, it can help students organize their arguments better, streamline their writing, and think of things they hadn't before."

Another participant shared a similar view:

"Rather than banning AI, we must be teaching students how to use it to learn, rather than shortcut assignments. For instance, AI can offer personalized feedback that aids students in honing their work."

A similar perspective has been given by another participant:

“AI literacy needs to be woven into university courses. And if students learn to use AI as a tool instead of a crutch, we can work to stop the risks while maximizing the benefits.”

Another participants stated:

“The trick is to use AI to complement human effort instead of replace it. Instead of accepting a loss of academic integrity, we should look for ways to responsibly incorporate AI.”

Students’ Perspectives on AI and Academic Integrity

Students had mixed feelings that some found AI to be a great learning tool, others confessed to leaning on it for many school-related things. Others voiced skepticism about ethical lines and demanded that institutions clarify AI policies across the board. Their perspectives are stated below in detail:

AI as a Learning Aid

Students described AI as a useful tool that assists with understanding complex concepts, organizing assignments and enhancing writing. One of the participants stated:

“I rely on AI to summarize key points when I am having difficulty with complex readings. It doesn’t supersede what I learn, but it allows me to process it faster and hones in on what matters.”

Another participant shared a similar view:

“AI is like a teacher for me. I use it for clarifying concepts I don’t understand during lectures. It gives me a fresh perspective before I do assignments.”

A similar perspective has been given by another participant:

“I use AI mainly for brainstorming ideas. It does help guide my essays, but I always rewrite it and do my own analysis.”

Another participants stated:

“Some of my professors praise AI to use for research aid, and I think that is really helpful. It’s a tool that, if used correctly, can help rather than impede learning.”

Confusion About Ethical Boundaries

At least some students were confused about where the line is between ethical use of AI, and academic misconduct. One of the participants stated:

“One professor said it’s OK to use AI to make a sentence better, while another said it’s unethical to use it at all. It’s not consistent, and that’s confusing for students.”

Another participant shared a similar view:

“I don’t copy and paste AI-generated text, but I use it to rewrite things in a clearer way. The jury’s still out on whether that’s cheating or simply an enhancement of my writing.”

A similar perspective has been given by another participant:

"We need policies, we need clear university-wide policies about AI use. Right now there are different rules from different professors, and that creates uncertainty."

Another participants stated:

"If AI doesn't directly copy from a text and generates original text, is it still plagiarism? A lot of students — myself included — don't know where the ethical lines are."

Dependence on AI for Academic Work

Some students acknowledged using AI heavily, at times to the detriment of their own critical thinking. One of the participants stated:

"I have used AI for nearly everything I've done. It's a time saver, but I sometimes wonder whether this is making me less engaged in real learning."

Another participant shared a similar view:

"It's easy to turn to AI because it can produce well-structured responses quickly. But I feel like I'm not building my own analytical abilities as much as I ought to."

A similar perspective has been given by another participant:

"AI is lifesaving when working on tight deadlines. I know I ought to be doing the work myself, but AI makes it too tempting to take the shortcuts."

Another participants stated:

"There's a fine line between using AI as a tool and using it as a substitute for actual effort. I think a lot of students, even myself, sometimes crosses that line without thinking about it."

Conclusion

It has been concluded on the basis of the results that the complex effects of AI on academic integrity are highlighted in this study, where both teachers and students expressed concerns. Teachers cited AI's role in enabling academic dishonesty, the inadequacy of detection tools, and students' lack of understanding of ethical boundaries. Some recognize that AI has potential as a learning tool, but emphasize that there has to be clear institutional policies around how it's used responsibly. Students, who acknowledged AI's advantages in clarifying complicated ideas and even making writing more erudite, are confused by ethical lines that are not well defined. Some confess an over-reliance on AI, and its effect on pedagogy, critical thinking and independent learning.

Recommendations

The results highlight an immediate need for clear institutional policies and literacy programs to empower students to leverage AI ethically, while upholding academic integrity. Universities need to overcome this mindset and rather than thinking solely in the context of an AI threat, it must re-strategies its pedagogy approach, detection and provide proper integration of AI to support better learning without undermining academic honesty.

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