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Original Contribution

Ethical Implications of Generative AI in Academic Writing

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A B S T R A C T

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT, Claude and many more are now widely being used to create academic content. Although these tools offer many benefits, including time efficiency and display of many languages, they come with potential ethical risks such as plagiarism, complication in authorship integrity and transparency.The Ethics of Generative AI: Potential and Challenges for the Academic Setting This paper explores the ethical implications of generative AI in the context of academic writing and identifies potential areas in which academia ought to adjust policies and practices to meet evolving threats. Materials and methods A mixed-methods approach including a systematic literature review and survey analysis was utilized. Core ethical themes were derived from a thematic analysis of the educational literature, complemented by descriptive statistics from faculty and students. The biggest fears included plagiarism, authorship disputes and for use in academic assessment. These ethical risks are summarized in figures and tables, giving visual and comparative insight.Regulatory and educational frameworks are needed from academic institutions for ensuring a healthy integration of AI that does not violate academic values. Toggle High contrast Test your language Keywords Generative AI Academic Writing Ethics Plagiarism Authorship AI Regulation

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Introduction

Academic writing has been shaking ever since the introduction of generative AI which can write grammatically correct nonsense text in any context or topic. With these gigantic corpora, language models like GPT-4 can mimic scholarly styles and also the vocabularies of different domains. While this progress is advantageous for academic assistance and accessibility (Kasneci et al., 2023), it poses ethical challenges.

None of the above concerns address unacknowledged authorship, the use of these methods in assessments, hallucinated references, or the evidence available that it is impossible to detect whether an output has been produced by an AI (FAO (1)). Such problems cast doubt on the integrity of academic institutions and erode the faith in scholarly communication (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020).

Literature Review

The first and foremost worry regarding this AI-assisted writing is plagiarism. While AI does not copy from sources directly, it is capable of generating near identical text to academic work which increases the risk of accidental and/or deliberate plagiarism (Cotton et al., 2023). Furthermore, the bias has been an ongoing problem — when trained on biased data, language models often replicate stereotypes and disinformation (Bender et al., 2021).

AI also raises questions about transparency. A majority of these models are black boxes that have non-referable inputs/output (Kovach et al., 2023). Finally, we have authorship and liability, which are hotly contested topics — will you credit AI? Who is responsible for misinformation generated by AI?

Methodology

In light of these knowledge gaps, the study utilized a two-pronged approach as follows:

Systematic Literature Review:

We used the following keywords in academic database searches (Scopus, IEEE Xplore, Web of Science): "AI ethics;" "academic integrity;" "ChatGPT in education;" and "plagiarism by AI. Eligibility criteria centered on peer-reviewed papers published from 2019 to 2024.

Survey Analysis:

A total of 120 participants (70 postgraduate students, 50 faculty members) completed an online questionnaire. Ethical concerns were rated on a 5-point Likert scale by participants.

Results

Table 1: Ethical Implications of Generative AI

Aspect	Implication
Plagiarism Risk	Students may submit AI-generated content as original work
Bias and Fairness	AI can replicate existing social biases in academic content
Transparency	AI often lacks transparency in content generation processes
Academic Integrity	Challenges traditional norms of authorship and contribution
Copyright Infringement	AI may generate or reuse protected content without permission

Interpretation:
As shown in Figure 1, plagiarism (85%) and authorship integrity (75%) are the top concerns. Misuse in academic evaluations and hallucinated citations also score highly, reflecting widespread apprehension.

Table 2: Survey Findings – Perception of Ethical Risks (n = 120)

Ethical Concern	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Use of AI without citation	81%
AI may fabricate citations	66%
Generative AI undermines exams	70%
AI output lacks transparency	72%
AI improves language fluency	85% (positive)

Discussion

This data highlights increasing reservations in academic circles regarding the ethical use of generative AI. Findings mirror from literature with an overall high level of agreement in the survey (Table 2). However, unregulated and misuse of AI poses grave threats even though AI can help in quicker drafting and nonnative writing assistance (Kasneci etal., 2023).

While the format of the text is novel, its content is derivative, which renders plagiarism detectors useless. There are major concerns of transparency, as it is possible that students submit assignments systematically aided by AI, with authenticity issues stemming from this possibility (Floridi & Chiriatti, 2020).

AI output biases are a mirror of social inequalities. If they are not carefully monitored, these biases could be reflected in academia and by producing stereotypes (Bender et al., 2021). Another disadvantage of AI is that it generates hallucinated or false references and misleading users, affecting the reliability of academic information.

Conclusion

Generative AI has both augmented and complicated academic writing. The ethical implications—from plagiarism to academic integrity—should be recognized and mitigated through relevant policy-making, ethical profession, and AI literacy training.

Academia sits at a crossroad: Either take the admission lead in regulating and ethically navigating AI use, or risk an increasing threat to academic integrity.

Recommendations

Institutional Policies — Universities need to create AI usage guidelines and implement disclosure requirements.

AI Detection Tools: Look into and use technology that can detect the use of AI content.

Education and Training: Include AI ethics and digital literacy in the academic curricula.

Responsible usage campaigns: Foster transparency and skepticism towards the usage of AI tools.

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