

CASE STUDY

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Higher education crisis: Academic misconduct with generative AI

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Abstract

Higher educational institutions (HEIs) are facing a significant challenge in maintaining academic integrity due to the technological integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI). The widespread use of AI tools by college students has resulted in an increase in plagiarism and cheating, highlighting the need for effective implementation of this technology. However, there is a lack of research on the best practices for using AI in academic settings. HEIs must take responsibility for addressing these issues, as the majority of institutions do not have formal guidelines for AI use, leading to confusion among students and instructors. To combat academic misconduct, HEIs should establish clear objectives and policies for the equitable, inclusive, and ethical use of AI. Improving AI literacy among students and faculty is crucial, as it ensures that everyone has equal access to technology, preventing a digital divide. Moreover, proactive education on the ethical use of AI is vital for HEIs to prepare students for the AI-driven future of education and maintain academic integrity.

KEYWORDS

academic misconduct, artificial intelligence, college crisis, crisis management, keystone, technology

1 | INTRODUCTION

The prominence of obtaining a college degree has grown increasingly ambiguous amidst the continuing technological advancements in generative artificial intelligence (AI) and online learning platforms. As a result, higher education institutions (HEIs) especially focused in the United States face difficulties in students maintaining academic integrity while incorporating said technologies into their programs. Being a rapidly evolving technology, HEIs and their stakeholders are struggling to provide clear guidelines for the use of these tools, which poses a new threat to HEIs. On a crisis prevention standpoint, this paper aims to explore the challenges associated with employing generative AI in higher education and offer insights to help institutions make informed decisions on how to navigate these issues.

2 | USE OF GENERATIVE AI IN HEIS

With its high prominence in speedy task managing skills, almost a third of college students have used such AI tools in completing their school tasks (Intelligent, 2023). However, with it being a newly introduced technology, there are lack of research and understanding in implementing it in a college setting. On the other hand, the prominence of technology is bringing a greater good in aiding the students to proceed with a progressive educational setting, in which policies are being implemented in the direction where the HEIs would educate students in utilizing the technology rather than banning it. Innovative attempts are being introduced: the VirtualTA system (Sajja et al., 2023) and issuing digital badges (Alamri et al., 2021) which provides a personalized learning experience for students, interactive

chatbots for academic advice and guidance (Hart, 2019), and EdTech firms adopting AI for effective learning (Alam & Mohanty, 2022).

3 | UNDERSTANDING THE REASONS BEHIND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct has always been a growing concern of HEIs. Using generative AI, the most notable aspects that threaten academic integrity are plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and unfair advantage (Currie, 2023). However, these issues may arise due to a lack of connection to materials or the instructors, stress, skill gaps, or the tolerance of academic misconduct (Berdahl & Bens, 2023), which explains that this isn't a phenomenon to put the blame only on students when the HEIs also holds responsibility in addressing such issues. Despite the prominence of generative AI, the majority of the HEIs' policies do not effectively address the use of generative AI, where less than 10% of schools and institutions have developed formal guidance regarding the applications of generative AI (UNESCO, 2023). The current approach of simply banning it creates the perception of a prohibited technology tool rather than an innovative one, which perpetuates a negative image of the technology. A survey states that 60% of the students reported that there hasn't been clear guidance on using generative AI tools ethically or responsibly from their schools or instructors (Welding, 2023).

4 | IMPLICATION IN UTILIZING AI IN HEIS SETTING

To prevent further academic misconduct using generative AI, several implications need to be made. Firstly, each HEIs must develop clear objectives regarding the use of generative AI. Currently, the lack of resources and understanding of generative AI, makes it difficult for HEIs to implement specific policies and guidelines. However, it is encouraged that policies for "equitable, inclusive, and ethical use of AI" (UNESCO, 2023) are developed in line with each HEIs' core objectives on education. This will be the most crucial step in adapting generative AI to the HEI setting because the majority of HEIs have bestowed the responsibility of establishing proper guidelines to instructors, which creates confusion for both students and instructors. The University of Toronto (2023) has created sample syllabus statements to include in different course syllabi to help shape the message to students about using generative AI tools. This allows HEIs to be responsible for developing the core structure of implementing AI in education while providing freedom for students and faculty to utilize the tools to aid their learning.

Improving AI literacy among students and faculty is crucial at this point in time. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are encouraged to develop curriculum frameworks that incorporate AI, making the technology more accessible. It is important for HEIs to offer technical support, training for students, and guidance for faculty on adapting their teaching methods and content, especially during the stage of

implementing the technology. Moreover, increasing the accessibility of technology and providing adequate tools are crucial, as the use of technology may create a greater digital divide among students, which can jeopardize access to education as the use of learning technologies increases (Brasca et al., 2022). HEIs must provide sufficient supplies for the technology and equipment used in education to give students equal educational authority and accessibility, as the difference in access to technology can lead to discrimination in the educational environment and quality of education.

5 | CONCLUSION

The advent of AI technology has brought about a new era in the field of education. However, although it is crucial for HEIs to respond quickly to this rapidly evolving technology, many institutions in the United States are less concerned with the rising potential of the technology. This lack of action may cause students to hesitate before deciding to attend college, especially given the high tuition fees and the availability of vast knowledge resources online today. Therefore, it is crucial for HEIs to take a proactive approach and educate students on the ethical use of AI technology. Being the new keystone, this will be one of the most significant responsibilities of HEIs, and it is essential for them to consistently discuss and exchange views on the latest technological advancements and find ways to cope with the challenges they pose.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data used to support the findings of this study are publicly available and accessible online, included within the article.

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