CHEATING OR LEARNING? WHAT EVERY STUDENT KNOWS ABOUT OPEN-AI CHATGPT

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Abstract: The lines between learning and cheating have become distorted in a world increasingly intertwined with Artificial Intelligence (AI). Experiencing this rapid change within AI affects teachers' work and how they perceive and assess students' learning and knowledge. Teachers noticed that many students seized the opportunity to cheat using AI to get good marks on exams and finish writing their dissertations instead of using AI to learn more from their mistakes and enhance their knowledge input. This study seeks to expound on students' usage and perspectives towards AI by demonstrating whether it is effective in learning or simply used for copying and pasting texts that lead to academic dishonesty. In order to attain this objective, a group of ten supervisees was interviewed on the employment of AI tools in dissertation writing. Therefore, results showed that students considered AI a cheating tool at the beginning and then recognised it as thesis guidance, assistance, and a tool of learning. It is worth noting that AI is deemed a double-edged tool and used halfway between facilitating cheating and learning; thus, balancing its ethical use in education remains critical for everyone's responsibility.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence (AI), assistance, cheating, guidance, learning; thesis writing

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1. Introduction

Information and communication technologies enhancement has a momentum impact on our everyday lives. Covid 19 pandemic outbreaks have enormously shaped the global educational system where institutions shifted to distance learning, online communication, and flipped classrooms. New teaching methods and various practices in learning were adopted, such as video conferencing, Zoom Meet, and learning management systems (Google Classroom) (Gungea, 2023).

Among these cutting-edge developments that affected the educational spheres is the emergence of AI tools. It should be stated that the phrase AI was first introduced by John McCarthy, a university professor, during a conference in 1956 (Karadağ, 2023). Many scholars attempted to give their perspectives and understanding of that phrase. For McCarthy, AI is defined as "the science of engineering and making intelligent machines" or "a machine that behaves in a way that could be considered intelligent if it was a human being" (2007).

Nowadays, a myriad of AI tools has been created to assist people in their work and everyday tasks, and the field of education is no exception. Among them, ChatGPT is of more paramount importance than others to name a few. It is capable of understanding, processing and producing natural human language with easiness, reasonability, and more significantly accuracy. (Haque et al., 2022) Expanding information, correcting grammar, and answering questions, even personal ones are all different tasks ChatGPT can perform.

It is even unimaginable to see that after its first launch on 30th November 2022, ChatGPT reached one million users. Two months later, it incredibly reached 100 million users (UNESCO, 2023). It is noteworthy that AI tools for teaching and learning will drastically expand in the coming years. UNESCO (2019) stresses the contribution of AI in increasing scientific output. A significant number of studies suggest that AI can improve language learning and teaching (Gao, 2021; Pikhart, 2021, Klimova et. Al., 2022). More importantly, CNBC (November 22, 2023) reported that "Open-AI has the potential to be one of the most consequential companies in the history of computing."

In the literature, studies on ChatGPT have focused mainly on its impact in the field of education (Al-Zubaidi, Jaafari & Touzani, 2024; Aljuaid, 2024; Imran, & Almusharraf, 2023). These studies explored how ChatGPT can assist teachers and students, enhance learning experiences, and facilitate various educational processes. However, studies addressing its relation with writing theses are quite not given much attention. This is an important area because writing a thesis is a complex task that requires critical thinking, research skills, and effective communication. Generally noticed, students might use this technological tool to cheat when they are reading for their theses. Based on a few words, phrases, and sentences as input, different AI tools can generate a myriad of text outputs, such as ChatGPT 4 and Gemini. Many learners seize the opportunity to take for granted the generated texts by ChatGPT in order to finish writing up their dissertations without facing obstacles instead of using AI to learn more from their mistakes and enhance their knowledge. The absence of focused research in this area suggests that there may be unexploited potential for ChatGPT to aid students in this significant academic endeavor.

Writing theses following ethical considerations has become a painstaking task for many students where cheating and facing serious academic misconduct are inevitable. We, the supervisors, have come to the point though software and detectors are available to detect plagiarism, we are unfortunately unable to prove it.

The study aims to investigate the way ChatGPT is used by supervisees and to raise their awareness by helping supervisees use ChatGPT responsibly and effectively, ensuring that they control the tool to enhance their learning while maintaining academic integrity. Addressing cheating issues requires ethical education and AI ethics integration. The gap in literature presents an opportunity for future studies to explore how AI tools like ChatGPT can support students in the thesis writing process, possibly leading to improved academic performance. This leads us to raise one main question along with a sub-question which is as follows:

How is ChatGPT used by supervisees in dissertation writing? Is it used as a learning or cheating tool?

While some supervisees use abundantly ChatGPT to enhance their understanding of complex topics, generate ideas, and improve their writing skills, there is a concern that others may use it as a means to cheat and overcome the challenges of the dissertation process.

While examining the aims of the study regarding the use of ChatGPT by supervisees in dissertation writing, our primary objective is to understand the various ways this AI tool supports students in the writing process. More particularly, the study aims to find out the extent to which ChatGPT is regarded as a legitimate learning tool that improves students' writing and critical thinking skills or whether it is viewed as an academic dishonest tool that promotes cheating. The study also intends to highlight the ethical aspects of using AI in education, the usefulness of ChatGPT as a resource, and the possible need to restrict its use in academic settings. In simple terms, the objective is to better understand how new technologies are likely to influence dissertation writing, academic support, and teachers' assessment.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Impact of AI Tools on Education: A Double-Edged Sword

The rapid advancement of technology has completely innovated a new concept of intelligence called Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is a wide-reaching phenomenon that has altered different aspects of our lives, and the field of education is no exception. Important subsets of AI have been discussed by experts in the field. They are mainly used to perform, execute tasks, and solve problems. To begin with, Machine Learning (ML) refers to a set of algorithms and techniques that allow computers to learn from previous experiences; predict and make decisions with some human interference (Kanade, 2022). Natural Language Processing is another subset of AI that provides machines with the ability to read, understand, and get meaning from human languages. Both linguistics and computer science fields are combined to decode language structure and break down text and speech.

Technologies like ChatGPT, powered by GPT-3.5/GPT-4, besides other chatbots, such as Google Bard, Gemini, Cloud, and Copilot are simply fascinating in turning simple words and sentences into huge texts as a form of essays, articles, and dissertations. Fitria (2021) admitted that AI could be considered a tutor for language learning. As they evolve, their abilities expand in the blink of an eye. Therefore, students are tempted by these generative AI models and pushed to cheat unconsciously. AI tech report highlighted the increasing use of AI tools by students in the UK which revealed their over-reliance on AI, leading them to cheat. (Cheating with AI tools is a severe trending issue and a heated debate that requires to be tackled rapidly and urgently.

There is no denying that ChatGPT has a plethora of benefits. ChatGPT users are lucky enough to reduce work and save time in answering different assignments. As stated by Mazhara and Melnychuk (2023), using ChatGPT "can help users save time" as it is "a valuable tool for a range of applications" (p. 583). It is sufficient only to ask accurate questions to get adequate answers immediately. According to Pinhui Li et al. (2023),

ChatGPT generates texts that have "a relatively high degree of accuracy" (p. 83). Not only that, ChatGPT is an expert in giving feedback as already advocated by Lee (2024) to those users seeking academic feedback. Surprisingly, ChatGPT can also help in data analysis in different fields using statistics (Kent, 2023, Albarran, 2024). Solving science and math problems, language translation, syllabus, and test design are other extraordinary tasks ChatGPT can perform effortlessly.

In academic writing, namely writing dissertations, AI tools facilitate performing tasks related to human intelligence and cognitive abilities (Kamalov et al., 2023). Marzuki (2023) discussed numerous advantages of integrating AI writing tools in improving the quality of EFL student writing. AI tools assist learners in the writing process and teachers as well in instructing writing activities (Gardner et al., 2021). For example, Grammarly, QuillBot, and Google Translate are much-used AI writing tools that students employ to paraphrase texts, correct them, and enhance their overall writing. In this regard, Kwon et al. (2023) revealed that most experimental group participants in their study who had written their theses using a chatbot claimed that the usage was effective in enhancing their writing abilities.

Su et al. (2023) highlighted ChatGPT's role in assisting students with argumentative writing and content generation, and therefore, re-organising the writing process. Furthermore, although students use ChatGPT to help them find a research topic alongside suitable research questions and structured contents of their dissertation, still, students are exposed to adapt and expand information according to what they learnt about writing dissertations. More importantly, in a study conducted by Melliti (2024) on AI use in MA thesis writing, he found that ChatGPT's various lexical items are recurrently used compared to their use before launching the Open-AI text generator. Another study carried out in Algeria on the causes behind AI use in the dissertation writing of EFL graduates revealed writing difficulties, inadequate guidance, and time management as the major drivers that led to plagiarising from AI tools (Hiouani & Khiari, 2024).

While these cutting-edge artificial intelligence tools have a myriad of advantages, many drawbacks are encountered when using them. Taking for granted texts generated by AI may reduce students' critical thinking, and therefore, the human touch is negligible. Kumar (2023) contended that ChatGPT mainly lacks the human touch, "the human touch that can make a description truly compelling" (p. 48). More importantly, ChatGPT renders evaluating students adequately questionable. Therefore, students' writings are, to some extent, misleading as they are perfectly composed, and assessing their assignments is becoming a burden. This leads some researchers as Ventayen (2023), to declare that ChatGPT "might change the academic community's methodology in assessment" (p.215). What is negative about AI tools is that students' over-dependence on them may diminish their motivation and creativity to write their original compositions.

2.1. Ethical Implications of Using AI Writing Tools in Universities

While AI tools have potential strengths to improve writing, ethical concerns about their use are still raised. Liang et al. (2023) stated the challenges faced by learners when relying heavily on ChatGPT for writing, chiefly among them, plagiarism. In a research done by Francke and Alexander (2019), their participants, who were teachers, claimed that plagiarism was proliferating in higher education. Therefore, solutions should be found to overcome this issue, among them, rethinking assessment in academic writing, finding strategies to use AI tools ethically, and creating workshops to highlight this threat in academia. This leads to undermining critical thinking and writing skills development.

However, Imran and Almusharraf (2023) discussed the ethical concerns of using ChatGPT in research and found that journal editors acknowledge AI-assisted abstract writing as an apt prompt. The need for AI data transparency and academic integrity are crucial as they pose

pertinent risks. As advocated by Tracey Bretag (2016), "Academic integrity is a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action" (p.753).

3. Methodology

3.1 Context

As stated earlier, the main aim of this study is to investigate the way supervisees employ ChatGPT to write their dissertations. More importantly, our objective is to highlight whether it is used as a learning or cheating tool. The study was carried out at Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem, the Department of English, during the academic year 2024\2025.

3.2 Participants

In order to seek the objectives of the study, to answer the research questions, and to confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses, the participants were a cohort of ten supervisees. They were chosen based on their unique position as the only supervisees under our direct supervision in this academic year 2024 to see their perspectives on the use of ChatGPT and whether they consider it a tool for learning or cheating. Our selection ensured an inclusive understanding of their knowledge, skills, and levels.

3.3 Instrument of Research

After completing the writing up of their thesis, students were interviewed. It was used as the primary data collection tool. The questions were delivered via recorded phone calls, which was easier for both the researcher and participants. The interview followed a structured format to ensure each participant was asked the same set of questions and the reliability of the responses. The interview was composed of three paramount themes: perceived thoughts on thesis writing, perceived benefits of AI in thesis writing; ethical concerns and cheating tendencies ; and students' strategies for responsible AI use.

After the interviews were conducted, the data was processed qualitatively and thematically. This means that particular responses were grouped and organized into different themes which helped to obtain meaningful insights from the data. Using a combination of structured interviews and thematic analysis made it possible to rigorously examine the research problem.

4. Results

In order to reach our research aim which consisted of gathering insights into supervisees' perceptions on the use of ChatGPT while writing their dissertations, a set of ten questions were asked which were analysed qualitatively and thematically.

Theme 1 : Perceived Thoughts on Thesis Writing

The first question deals with knowing how supervisees evaluate their level of writing academically. Most supervisees gave a score of 6.5 to gauge their level of writing academically. One of them (supervisee 1) contended that "like any other university student with an advanced English level, I thought my writing skills were good until I became a master's student. Academic writing was a challenging thing for me, especially when it comes to the structure. However, reading research papers and books made the process even easier. So, I will rate my writing skills 6.5 out of 10, because I am still learning and a good researcher must be aware of his flaws". Another student (supervisee 3) claimed that "to be

honest, if there is a score from 1 to 10, I evaluate my writing at 6.5. I struggle a lot with writing academically because there are so many rules you need to respect, as well as the structure and the terms you need to use. Sometimes I use informal words, and that causes me to get a lower grade on my essays". Only one supervisee (supervisee 9) considered "in a scale of poor-good-excellent, I would rate my academic writing as excellent in terms of formal and objective language". One surprising answer (supervisee 10) was as follows: "to evaluate my level in writing academically, I usually start with: proofreading what I wrote myself, checking the coherence of my ideas and whether or not I used academic style. Then, I copy and paste that particular piece of writing in Grammarly or ChatGPT and let it check it again as we often think that what we write is perfect while it is not". This range of responses highlights varying levels of confidence and different strategies for improving academic writing skills.

The second question revolves around students' perspectives on conducting research. There were varied answers. One supervisee (Supervisee 7) claimed "I am not very enthusiastic about conducting research, as I find it challenging and less enjoyable compared to other aspects of my studies. I tend to participate in research only when necessary. The research I only conduct includes my dissertation, which has been both mentally and physically exhausting". Another student (Supervisee 5) believed that conducting research "depends on how organized and productive we are. We need to be consistent in our dissertation writing, even if it means taking small steps. This consistency gives us a sense of achievement and progress, which is what matters most and keeps us going". One supervisee (supervisee 4) noted "To be honest, I would have never imagined saying this but it was fun at some point I did see myself improve through it. However, there are times when I considered quitting. Time management and discipline are real struggles". Only one supervisee (supervisee 9) saw herself engaged and motivated in conducting research. Admittedly, Students' perspectives on conducting research varied significantly; some found it challenging and mentally exhausting, especially when it came to their dissertations, while others saw it as an opportunity for growth, despite struggles with time management and discipline.

The third question aims at knowing whether writing a dissertation is an easy or a daunting task. A supervisee (Supervisee 7) explained that "speaking from a subjective perspective, dissertation writing is not an easy task as it requires mental efforts like concentration, critical thinking and other cognitive skills". Surprisingly enough, one student (supervisee 2) desperately remembered that "it was tiring and overwhelming for me. I felt so lost. Sometimes I was going to give up. I couldn't even write a single word for days, especially when the topic needed a lot of effort, and sometimes I lost interest in my topic". More importantly, for one supervisee (supervisee 3) "after completing my master's dissertation, I think writing the thesis is a difficult process. Yet it is not impossible if you know how to control and organize your time. Particularly in chapter one, the theoretical part is considered the most complex section that requires reading articles, paraphrasing, and a smart design of titles; while, chapter two can be less challenging for me, with clarification of the research methodology details. I already conducted my data collection phase, which facilitated the process. Lastly, the final chapter was very smooth. Since the results were there, I did not find any difficulty in analyzing them. Overall writing a dissertation is simple only if we clarify the steps and have little discipline". Thus, writing a dissertation is undoubtedly a daunting task that requires time, concentration, and mental energy.

Theme 2: Perceived Benefits of AI in Thesis Writing

The fourth question investigates students' consideration of using AI while writing their dissertation. Most of them claimed plainly that they used AI to correct grammar mistakes, paraphrasing and generating ideas. "Yes, I did use AI since I felt so lost that I did not know how to begin, what to do, and AI helped me a lot in creating an outline and a plan to make it

easy to follow. It provided me with articles and books concerning my topic that motivated me to keep on. It also assisted me in knowing how to begin a concept because there were instances when I had an idea but did not know how to put it to paper. The ideas in some of the paragraphs were really complicated and needed so much detail", one supervisee stated (supervisee 5). Another answer (supervisee 10) revealed that supervisees cannot skip AI assistance from their learning. "Yes, to my knowledge AI has become an inseparable part of the academic domain, simply because as students we tend to choose what can facilitate our tasks, especially in writing our thesis. The new intelligent machines are invented to assist the human tasks, the problem with students' AI use, it is how they manipulate unwisely". Another one (supervisee 4) contended "I use AI tools because I need guidance which I don't have. This doesn't mean that they are perfect and without limitations". Students expressed varying levels of reliance on AI for academic support, with many highlighting its usefulness in generating ideas, organizing thoughts, and providing resources. AI was seen as an essential tool for overcoming challenges and guiding research; however, some students acknowledged its limitations and the need for careful, responsible use to avoid misuse or over-reliance.

The fifth question aims at detecting the reasons behind using AI tools in dissertation writing. Different reasons were discussed. Most of the supervisees thought that AI helps save time and make less effort in doing various tasks at once, as for them, the new generation is obsessed with technology and is digital savvy. "I can save time and access a wide range of resources and references. AI makes it easier to gather the information I need for my research, but you need to ask in special prompts so it can answer based on what you need. You need to be clever about how to use them for your topic", supervisee 8 answered.

The sixth question revolves around the usefulness of ChatGPT in dissertation writing. They considered the tool to be useful if used properly and manipulated correctly. Students are aware of everything about AI as claimed by one supervisee (supervisee 7), "no, ChatGPT is not helpful and reliable at all because it was created in 2021, and if you have an article or book from 2000 or 1999, it cannot provide you with it, and sometimes it makes things complicated, and any teacher who reads your essay or paragraph will know it is from ChatGPT". Another surprising (supervisee 2) answer was stated as follows, "the truth is I used other tools. Even though a lot of people believe all AI tools are the same I don't think that. They are somehow similar but not the same other tools such as Gemini AI. Monica, Claude and Chatsonic provide you with link they took the information from. I did use ChatGPT but these were more useful to me".

Theme 3: Ethical Concerns and Cheating Tendencies

The purpose behind the following question is to know how ChatGPT is used in dissertation writing. It is revealed that students relied a lot on it to generate ideas and summarise particular blocks of paragraphs. It is clearly stated in the following quotes (supervisee 6): "I use Chat GPT only to explain to me some ideas; if they were complicated in an easy and simple form, I did not use it in writing. I was asking ChatGPT for academic synonyms, and titles of articles or to rate my academic writing in general. Surprisingly, AI can perfectly accomplish these tasks, even better than a teacher". "For me, ChatGpt is my study mate. I use it to evaluate my writing (grammar, punctuation, coherence, etc). Furthermore, I tend to ask it to give me studying plans and to-do lists. It suggests me articles and papers that are related to my field of study/research. I find it most useful when it checks if my references list is written according to the style I want (APA/ MLA)", supervisee 10 answer. Thus, students acknowledged the effectiveness of AI in these tasks and seen as a helpful tool rather than a replacement for more personalized academic support.

The next question which is the subject of the matter consists of whether students are using ChatGPT for learning or cheating. What was interesting about their answers was that they were aware that it is a useful tool for learning but they admitted that it was used as a cheating tool at the beginning. "When I first saw ChatGPT, it was a saver because our teachers were asking us to write multiple essays in one day, so to submit, I used it to write whole essays, but after that, I was trying to learn from it in terms of my academic writing, which was so weak. It helps me understand complex topics, get ideas for structuring my work, and clarify concepts that really help enhance my learning, but first I did use it for cheating since there was no time and the subjects were new for me and I did not understand them", one student (supervisee 9) replied. One fascinating answer (supervisee 4) was "Not 100% cheating but rather 20% or less. I try to keep myself honest when using ChatGPT in my dissertation writing as much as possible".

Another one (supervisee 8) claimed "I am totally learning when using ChatGPT. I, now, have an academic vocabulary bank because of this tool. We can consider it as cheating when it actually produces a ready-made piece of writing from scratch and people just adopt it not adapt it". Another one (supervisee 2) answered, "To be honest both, at the beginning, I used for cheating then I started to learn how to use it properly because after you read everything you have written from it, you will find how some of the things are silly and not related. But it is a learning tool I now know how to use it a little bit and it is fascinating and sometimes it can lie about the data as well". It is noteworthy, then, that students reflected on their evolving relationship with ChatGPT, initially viewing it as a shortcut for academic work, but eventually recognizing its potential as a learning tool.

Theme 4: Students' Strategies for Responsible AI Use

Question number nine deals with what supervisees have learnt after using ChatGPT as an assistant tool for their dissertation writing. One answer (supervisee 9) was "I did not use ChatGPT to write my dissertation; I used other AI tools like Google Bard, which helped me create an outline and provided me with articles and books with references, whereas ChatGPT could not provide references. I also used Claude AI to help analyze my data because I was clueless. Plus, ChatGPT, when writing, repeated the words in only one paragraph multiple times and can give you accurate information; it can correct your grammar mistakes, but it is not for writing a dissertation". Another answer (supervisee 1) was demonstrated as "I have learnt that every technological antidote has downsides, one of which is the decline of critical thinking and building over-reliance of users on ChatGPT. That particular reason made me learn not to use ChatGPT too often but rather in rare situations when needed urgently". All these answers showed but students' complete awareness and reliance on AI tools and most importantly their mastery of these tools. More stunning answers (supervisee 6,3) were: "I learned that we should always stay up-to-date with these kinds of technologies, as they evolve in the blink of an eye. This helps us understand the power of these tools effectively and also makes us aware of their drawbacks. If we are not up-to-date, we can risk using them merely as cheating tools without even realizing it". "I learned that AI tools are valuable resources, but they should not be relied on because I found that originality is precious and my thoughts are somehow valuable too". Therefore, the complex relationship between students and AI tools like ChatGPT acknowledges that while it is difficult to prevent misuse, responsible usage can be encouraged. It is also suggested that universities should offer classes to help students learn how to effectively integrate AI into their learning processes without relying on it for cheating.

The last question indicates the measures those supervisees think they may take in order to avoid using these AI tools. Their answers were combined as follows.

"You cannot stop students from using ChatGPT for cheating, but to avoid using it as a tool for cheating, it's important to use it responsibly. This means using it to learn and understand topics rather than copying responses directly. The university can manage to create classes concerning AI so the students can learn how to use AI effectively without copying everything because now there are a lot of AI programs that can humanize your writing. Also, you can make strict decisions using AI by writing the essays in class and being creative with the assignments. I remember our writing technique teacher asking us to write multiple essays for the exam. It was an online class, but he said if I found any of you using AI, he or she would get a zero, so of course none of us used it. Sometimes you need to be strict, but there must be classes that teach AI", supervisee 8.

"Students should be educated by their mentors about the importance of academic integrity. They need to be encouraged on how to use ChatGPT to their benefit. For instance, they can improve their writing using the shadowing technique. In other words, they can imitate the style of writing suggested by any language model and adapt it to their writing objectives. In this case, using ChatGPT is seen as learning, not cheating", supervisee 10.

To sum up, it is suggested that teaching students about academic honesty is necessary together with proper ChatGPT usage alongside other similar platforms. Moreover, it is suggested that students learn to use AI to better their work through a technique known as shadowing, where the writer changes the recommended writing style from the tool. This approach positions AI as an educational aid instead of a cheating tool, supporting the idea that ChatGPT could foster self-growth when used thoughtfully and creatively.

5. Discussion

The study aims to investigate supervisees' use of AI and whether they consider it a tool of learning or cheating. At the beginning of the interview, supervisees tended to see writing a dissertation as a daunting and challenging task, especially when organizing their ideas and expanding the chapters. That is why they use AI tools as an alternative to save them. However, this leads to academic dishonesty, which can be caused by different conditions, such as personal issues, high stress levels, workload, and time management, as stated by most of the supervisees. This is in line with Amigud and Lancaster (2019), who mentioned five conditions that cause academic dishonesty: aptitude, perseverance, personal issues, competing objectives, and self-discipline (Cited in Abdelaal et al. 2019, p.5).

Furthermore, AI is changing the landscape of education. Students are abundantly being caught using ChatGPT, already highlighted in many studies (Mc Cue, 2023; Tangermann, 2023; Melliti, 2024), which is deemed a violation of academic integrity. Though they know that using such tools leads to dishonesty in research, supervisees cannot stop using them as they are not self-confident in undertaking research, and the time devoted to submitting their dissertation is so limited that the only way to escape stress and academic pressure is to take for granted texts as generated by AI. Moreover, they regard AI as a tool of learning and a mechanism for cheating; however, it all depends on one's way of using it and whether considered a supportive resource or a tool for dishonesty. This goes with the results of the Stanford survey where it was found that students thought AI should be used as an aid to understanding concepts rather than a fancy plagiarism tool (Lee and Pope, 2023).

In order to avoid the unethical use of AI, students suggested creating special classes that teach the ethical use of AI in order to get ready for dissertation writing in a proper way. It is consistent with Jonathan's suggestion (2022), who called for a new sub-discipline for AI

ethics and proposed an integral framework for studying this discipline. It is also congruent with Nattrass who stated, "Teaching students about safe and ethical AI use is a part of our responsibility to help them become contributing digital citizens" (Prothero, 2024).

More significantly, students favoured academic integrity that encompasses honesty, responsibility, and courage to undertake research. According to Tracey Bretag (2016), "academic integrity means acting with the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in learning, teaching and research. It is important for students, teachers, researchers and professional staff to act in an honest way, be responsible for their actions, and show fairness in every part of their work. All students and staff should be an example to others of how to act with integrity in their study and work. Academic integrity is important for an individual's and a school's reputation" (p.753). Similarly, Teng (2024) questioned the effect on AI-generated texts on academic integrity and critical thinking skills (cited in Melliti, 2024). Finally, it is also advocated to punish those AI copy-paste writers, prohibit them from submitting their dissertations, and promote the importance of originality.

Higher education teachers are making excessive efforts to find solutions to supervisees' cheating. Different plagiarism detectors have been created to unveil AI-generated text despite their inability to differentiate generated text from students' original work. To reduce the risk of students' misbehavior through the use of AI tools, institutions can follow a few recommendations that aid in strengthening their academic integrity. Supervisors should highlight the importance of maintaining honesty in academic work and guide students on citation methods and AI tool usage. They should also instruct students on how to employ AI tools ethically and within acceptable standards by encouraging debates on the role of AI in education and the need for originality in ideas. Last but not least, designing workshops that focus on peer learning and interaction so that individual dishonesty is minimized. Further suggestions are listed below :

−   Teachers should raise students' awareness raising on thesis writing.
−   Educators should conduct workshops on the ethical use of AI through teaching digital literacy, where demonstrating examples of generated and non-generated AI texts is primordial.
−   Supervisors should devote much time to guidance and supervision.
−   Policy makers should reframe and rethink assessment in the age of Artificial Intelligence.
−   Students should be engaged in activities that help them learn from AI instead of copying texts that will only lead to detrimental results.
−   Teachers should be trained on the trendy AI tools and the different detection methods.
−   Students should attend conferences to be updated about risks related to AI cheating.
−   It is high time teachers encouraged critical thinking when using AI tools and understood both their potential and limitations, and shift from focusing on cheating to boosting learning

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal promising facts about AI and can benefit researchers, lecturers, and students. Artificial intelligence is drastically changing the education landscape, promoting both cheating and learning. There is no denying that AI can enhance students' thesis writing; nevertheless, it also leads to various challenges and concerns, chiefly among them, originality, dedication, and honesty. Furthermore, overreliance on AI tools may prevent students from developing important 21st-century learning skills such as creativity and critical thinking. It is high time educators and teachers reviewed the ethical use of AI by raising students' awareness and fostering AI literacy. More importantly, educational institutions

should create strategic guidelines to address issues related to plagiarism, honesty in research, and academic integrity.

Interestingly enough, the integration of AI tools, namely, ChatGPT into dissertation writing is undoubtedly transforming how students approach their work, and therefore, this offers them both challenges and opportunities. AI tools will definitely assist in literature review, data analysis, and hypothesis generation by enabling deeper insights and perspectives. However, concerns are raised with regard to originality, critical thinking, and plagiarism. Consequently, AI's future in thesis writing is promising, yet its use must be guided by ethical principles and considerations.

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