Artificial Intelligence (AI): A Gift or Curse for Universities? A Student Cyberethics Study

Dr Sefoko Ramoshaba

Hod: Student Life and Development, Nelson Mandela University, South Africa

ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionised and transformed the university education system in a manner unintended by university administrators, academics, and government. It appears that no one was ready for it or saw it coming. The lack of foresight by universities is a lack of vision by management. Nevertheless, universities are now forced to adapt and integrate AI after the fact. AI provides opportunities and challenges for universities when adopting or not adopting it, and there is no middle ground. AI-powered tools enhance learning experiences, personalise education, and improve student outcomes. However, concerns arise regarding job displacement, data privacy, AI abuse by students, academic integrity, and the need for educators to adapt their roles. This study investigates the intersection of AI and university education, highlighting the benefits and challenges of this rapidly evolving landscape.



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Keywords: AI, AI Challenges, AI Opportunities,

INTRODUCTION

Many AI applications exist in cyberspace for use to search for data and information. Examples include ChatGPT, which was released in November 22; Google's Chatbot Bard (now known as Gemini), which was released in July 2022; Dall-E, which was released in January 2021; Synthesia, which was released for use by universities and specialises in creating videos; and Amper Music, which creates music and sound tracts for films and videos. Other AI softwares are Grammarly, Bing AI, and Midjourney (Lee et al. 2024:1-15).

China has its fair share regarding developing AI-powered applications, such as DeepSeek, DeepSeek R1, Ziphu AI, and Manus AI agent. Recently, Ziphu AI launched a new AI application called AutoGLM Rumination. During its launch in China, it was indicated that this new AI application can search websites, make travel plans, and draft research reports (Reuters 2025:1).

It is noteworthy that advancement in information and communication technologies (ICT) has been a pillar in shaping most socio-economic landscapes around the world. It also resulted in employment, which made it necessary for one to have information and technological skills to adapt and survive in the future workplace. Digital skills have also transformed physical learning and teaching at universities to online learning and teaching. The use of AI-powered information and technology tools is transforming higher education's offering of education, and in the process transform learning and teaching methods and practices. ICT re-wired the nature of university from how it was historically designed. It affected old teaching methods, student interaction, and the creation of study guides and materials (Nguyen et al. 2024:105-106).

It has been argued that AI is a positive game changer in education, mostly for the universities. Universities have advised that they need to embrace innovative technologies such as AI, or they will be in the dustbin of history and become irrelevant. Universities need to embrace AI in their learning and teaching methods to be part of the future university. Universities must find a way of integrating their systems with AI-powered technologies as future students will use these technologies. Future students will possess the knowledge and data tools that universities already want. Newly designed educational qualifications must be future ready in the same way that the ever-changing world of work is, and AI will assist in producing such students (Mtshali 2024:1-4; Schonberger 2023:332-333).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative research method was employed for this study, primarily through the application of a systematic literature review as well as secondary content and data analysis. The secondary data were collected and assessed to examine AI in educational institutions, its challenges and opportunities (Bengtsson 2016:4-18 & Shava, Hleza, Tlou, Shonhiwa & Mathonsi 2021:553-554)

The study used Google Scholar, ProQuest, ISI, and ResearchGate to access articles or journals; online newspaper publications were sourced through the Google search engine, and library journals and books received through the assistance of Nelson Mandela University Librarians. The search was done using words like AI, AI in education, its challenges and opportunist, and its impact on society in general.

AI in education: A case study of ChatGPT

The Generated, Pretrained Transformer chatbot (ChatGPT) is a cybernetic helper created by OpenAI. It uses natural language processing (NLP) and mechanics that create human-like language for open-ended questions and answers. ChatGPT was introduced in November 2022, and there have been questions and doubts on its impact on learning and teaching science, research, academic writing, medical science, and various industries (Humble et al. 2023:18).

The introduction of ChatGPT was a crucial moment in the history of aligning AI into the higher education sphere. ChatGPT quickly became a well-known digital software application and had close to one hundred million users just two months after its inception. This clearly shows the thirst the world has for AI-powered/driven solutions. ChatGPT has been widely used in educational settings by students. Many people also indicated that they use this application to look for solutions to their problems, create content, and edit texts. It can also be used for social purposes such as show business.

ChatGPT can enhance personalised learning and support diverse learning and teaching methods. Studies have been conducted to assess the impact of AI-powered technologies on the studying patterns of students. ChatGPT was integrated at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology. The adoption of ChatGPT in some universities in Vietnam transformed the traditional method of teaching into an effective and individualised type of learning and teaching. It also created the need to deal with the ethical challenges of ChatGPT at universities. Additionally, it resulted in a change in the method of grading the academic work submitted by students.

The University of Colombia (USA) used ChatGPT to create interactive exercises for a module called "Critical Thinking". Students were tasked in analysing different assignments in a critical manner (Nguyen et al.

2024:105-113). ChatGPT has the potential to positively influence computer science qualifications by removing the difficulties associated with the evaluations of the discipline. However, there have been serious concerns in terms of data privacy and copyright, information and security, prejudices, equality, interpretations, proficiency, academic cheating, and the over reliance on ChatGPT by educators and students.

There are questions about the veracity of the information produced by ChatGPT and its limitations because of its prejudicial element. Despite many doubts, there is an understanding that ChatGPT can assist in learning and teaching. It can enhance puzzles, rubrics, and science units. It can also enhance the development of skills and involve adaptive learning. ChatGPT can also understand programming languages such as Python, Java, C#, and JavaScript (Humble et al. 2023:18).

It is important for educators to critically evaluate the relevancy and veracity of ChatGPT data. One of the many concerns raised by universities after the launch of ChatGPT was whether AI-powered applications could be used to draft academic papers on students' behalf (Stoerger 2024:1).

Opportunities for students' education

AI can enhance student academic skills development, such as student engagement and academic achievement. Academics and students need to embrace AI and its associated technologies to design effective, efficient, individualised, and inclusive learning opportunities and experiences. AI can also enhance personal learning, research skills, and professional growth. AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can provide students with support and guidance, helping them navigate course materials and administrative tasks (Mtshali 2024:1-4; Nguyen et al. 2024:116). AI creates an opportunity for individualised learning and provide a vast range of engaged learning and teaching opportunities (Clugston 024:1-3).

AI will enhance and hone the design skills of students at universities. The ability to analyse large quantities of data is available in cyberspace. AI can help in designing specialised learning for students that suits their learning and study styles. AI can also provide students with their performance and learning tendencies. Students can also get some drive and zeal to learn more through AI-powered analytics and text. Immediate feedback can be one of the game changers for students. AI can assist in supplementing knowledge and instruction materials such as textbooks and study guides. It can simplify more complex ideas and terminologies. Students can use AI to schedule their learning tasks at universities (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2024:6). ChatGPT can make induvial specific material, data and or information at their student fingertip, for an individualised student experience (Stoerger 2024:1).

Managing and preventing the abuse AI

Students cyberethics guidelines are needed to prevent the damage that can be caused by AI on the integrity of academic qualifications (Vieriu & Petrea 2024:10). Students have started to rely on AI-powered technologies than on their critical thinking and skills. They use AI to do research and find solutions to the problem, instead of their mind, energy, and skills. Research has indicated that over reliance on ChatGPT negatively affect students' critical thinking skills, personalised learning, and general creativity skills. The other negative is that the software provides exact answers that cannot be differentiated to the same groups of students. It also enhances academic dishonesty.

Conversely, AI can serve as a great tool to deter academic dishonesty by learners at universities. Academic dishonesty, whether offline or online, undermines the integrity of academic qualifications and the *raison d'etre* for universities. Student plagiarism by use of ChatGPT is a common occurrence. This kind of academic dishonesty increased during the Covid-19 online learning and teaching period (Nguyen et al. 2024:113; Schonberger 2023:332,336; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2024:2). Universities must source relevant AI- and ICT-powered software that can help detect academic dishonesty and plagiarism in students' academic work. The Chinese University of Hong Kong adopted measures that detect plagiarism in academic projects (Nguyen 2023:113-116).

AI can create a dependency culture in students to rely only on technology to do their academic work, breeding a laziness to conduct individual research and lack of creative thinking. It dehumanises learning and teaching because it eliminates the human touch between students and academics. Currently, the human interaction in the classroom is disappearing (Clugston 2024:4).

The following software may be useful in combating academic dishonesty.

- **Research Integrity Tool (RIG):** Developed by Springer Nature, RIG is able to detect fake references that have been cited by authors and researchers. The aim is to prevent the submission of academic projects generated by AI software applications. RIG has been tested and validated through a rigorous process. This is part of human oversight on the applications of AI and associated software. It is indicated that it is only through reference checks that academic projects which have unethically generated through AI can be rooted out (Springer 2025:1).

- **Kaltura:** Can assist in detecting copied video works submitted by students who utilised AI-powered analytical tools. It can detect plagiarised content just like Grammarly (Kaltura Blog 2025:1).

- **Grammarly**: Can assist in detecting grammar, syntax, and writing styles that helps students write better than what they could have done on their own. It is powered by AI (Kaltura Blog 2025:1).

- **Copyleaks**: A generative AI application with algorithms that can assist in detecting plagiarised videos and text. This application could differentiate between human-written and AI-generated reports (University of Illinois: Springfield 2025:1).

- **ZeroGPT:** This is termed as one of the most reliable content detectors for AI GPT-4, ChatGPT equipment (ZeroGPT 2025:1).

- **Justdone:** It has algorithms that are highly enhanced to compare students' submitted projects against copious quantities of data and information in cyberspace and existing written documents. It helps in checking whether the academic work is original or fake (Justdone 2025:1).

- **Turnitin:** Can help to detect the level of plagiarised content inside the students submitted academic projects. It contains algorithms to determine copied or plagiarised text submissions (Ramoshaba 2017:113)

It is noteworthy that dishonest and/or lazy students will always try to outsmart the formal systems of detecting academic dishonesty by fully paraphrasing their academic submissions and/or using false citations in their text. Therefore, academics must also learn to detect a quick turn of events where a student's work dramatically improves without a probable course, as this may be a sign of academic dishonesty using online sources (Nguyen et al. 2024:109,116; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2024:11).

Opportunities for universities and educators

AI can provide academics with opportunities to take education standards to heights previously unimagined. Academics can use AI to develop the emotional, personal, and social skills of students. However, academic must never forgo the human touch of learning and teaching characterised by online learning and lecture halls. AI can assist in establishing a community of students and academics where they can interact with their educational peers and external communities of learning and teaching (Schonberger 2023:335)

Universities welcomed AI-powered tools and applications with both enthusiasm and cynicism. Their actions tend towards either overlooking or participating with AI technologies. They need upskilling with appropriate and relevant knowledge regarding working with AI-powered technologies (Lee et al. 2024:17-18).

Schonberger (2023:332) indicated that close to 26.4% of universities worldwide are utilising AI in research,

learning, and teaching. Most are incorporating AI in their educational modules, and in the development of multidisciplinary educational content and qualifications. AI applications can assist universities to transform higher education. These AI applications involve intelligent teaching methods, adaptive learning and teaching practices, robotic teachings, individualised learning and teaching practices, learning and teaching analytics dashboards, personalised examination practices, and the provisioning of responses to educators and students. Student– and educator–computer machine collaborations have been developed recently. AI has been designed in such a way that it understands human language development and communication interactions.

AI will enhance the culture of learning and teaching through students' creativity, analysing already existing materials, creating learning timetables, and generating innovative ideas. Educators will benefit more if they learn and understand AI and its associated applications, so as to know the advantages and benefits of AI (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2024:2).

Universities can use AI-powered tools to design peer help programs to be used as advisory boards between academics and students. This will assist peer help mentorship programs, providing guidance and support to junior academics and students. Life-long learning can be enhanced by AI where students and academics stay up to date with the AI-powered development ideas in their area of specialisation and new areas of learning (Mtshali 2024:1-5).

Educators can develop AI study guides and/or learning materials as part of integrating AI tools with learning and teaching practices. Academics can work through AI to invent new learning and teaching practices to improve the pedagogy. They can design innovative learning and teaching methods and approaches. AI can assist students in the design and distribution of open-source literature, resulting in accessible content resources to a broader audience inside and outside the university (Nguyen et al. 2024:108). AI must assist educators in amalgamating traditional learning and teaching methods with newly designed methods created by AI-powered technologies (Vieriu & Petrea 2024:10).

Academics can access literature from the wide range of databases available on AI tools when conducting research and analyse big volumes of data. These kinds of data analysis can help academics create, identify patterns, and come to meaningful conclusions. AI can help academics in designing automated assessment and grading methods, which will minimise the time required to collect and assess students' work. Academics can design educational study guides with custom made content through textbooks, videos, and online interactive publications.

AI has developed all-encompassing text analysis and automatic writing skills and has long-term implications on the teaching profession. Universities must be ready to integrate AI applications and associated digital offerings in their learning and teaching methods. Universities can enhance information and communication skills through AI and learn how to use AI efficiently and effectively. Universities must educate their students, faculty members, support staff members, and academics. AI can also be useful in collecting and conducting research in academia. Educators must regard AI as part of learning and teaching and/or a didactic instrument of imparting knowledge to students (Schonberger 2023:332-334). Additionally, educators will need to change their examination methods when assessing students' academic projects (Lee et al. 2024:1).

Universities will benefit greatly if AI-powered technologies can be implemented and integrated into the university for effective and efficient governance and management of university operations, learning, and teaching. AI-powered technologies can enhance the delivery of services to universities' stakeholders, namely the students, staff members and external stakeholders. They will increase access to universities' services, accessibility of education, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency. AI can assist in the transformation and reorganisation of university administrative and academic functions. This will enhance the university experiences of students, staff members, and external stakeholders (Mofokeng et al. 2025:1-2).

Information and communication have created many opportunities and transformed the society at large. AI-powered applications have drastically changed the world in terms of learning and teaching, research, and governance of universities. Therefore, AI cannot be brushed aside by university managers, students, and

academics. Instead, there is a need for universities to master the benefits and challenges of AI. Its impact will be felt as AI continues to grow (University of Illinois Urban-Champaign 2024:2).

In South Africa, the North-West University (NWU) AI Hub visited all its campuses to find out how its staff and students are responding to the rapid and ever advancing AI generative technologies. The visits were termed AI information road shows. After the roadshows, it was indicated that the campuses were unenthusiastic about AI technologies. People had anxieties about AI and were even afraid of its emergence. They did not know what AI holds for them in the university. The university's AI vision is to have training available for everyone to transition to the AI-dominated environment. Accordingly, on 17 February 2025 the university introduced an online AI course for students to understand AI and its usage. The course is termed eFundi, and is on the NWU formal site. All university staff members, both support and academic, will have opportunities when it comes to AI because it will transform how the employees operate. It is acknowledged that AI has changed the way student do their academic projects. It has the capacity to remove academics from miscellaneous repetitive administrative tasks, and thus their focus can be mostly directed to learning and teaching. The students will also be taught about the ethical usage of AI (Jacobs 2025:1).

A case study of China

China is advancing its rollout of AI technologies to rural schools to close the inequalities that exist between them and urban schools. China notes that AI comes with challenges in schools and there is a need for guidelines and policies to manage and enhance ethical behaviour by educators and learners. Ethical behaviour is related to academic honesty, privacy matters, and online security issues. Higher education institutions are regarded as innovative hubs and incubators in China and are expected to integrate AI technologies in their learning and teaching activities. They must become trend setters in embracing AI technologies in the country (Xinhua 2025:1). Below is a display of one of China's schools that have embraced AI technologies:



"New technology enables greater educational experience as a Chinese expert displays brain-machine connection on March 26 in Beijing". (Photo provided by Xiao Yijiu/Xinhua.)

A case study of South Africa

The Department of Childhood Education at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) experimented with ChatGPT in two teacher training modules during the 2024 academic year. This was done in one first-year and fourth-

year module. The first year deals with the preparation of pre-service teachers as part of pedagogical approaches. The fourth year deals with how to integrate and refine principles of the science of learning by learning content design. The students are taught how to quickly generate appropriate answers from ChatGPT. They will later analyse how to integrate generated AI content in the South African context into the curriculum needs and case study lesson guidelines to be used.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) "lekgotla" (gathering) has indicated the need for government level policy initiatives in managing the integration of AI within the education terrain in South Africa. A distinguished visiting professor at the University of Johannesburg mentioned that the South African education terrain, including primary, high school, and higher education institutions, must take the necessary steps to integrate AI into the education systems before AI leaves the country's education system behind (Gravett et al. 2025:1).

The crisis of the abuse of AI technologies such as ChatGPT has engulfed South African universities. Some universities agree that the scale of cheating is rife while others downplay the level of cheating by students. Student are graduating with fake or poor-quality degrees with which they have been unlawfully assisted by ChatGPT. Some universities' academics agree that they have seen academic projects submitted by students that have an element of cheating, but they cannot prove it. Most universities are at a crossroads on how to deal with this urgent matter.

One lecturer at the University of Pretoria indicated that she observed these trends of students abusing AI two years earlier, when she was marking eight hundred student essays. She observed that there was an elevated level of similarity and uniformity amongst most of the students. The similar work was characterised by perfect grammar and impeccable format, which led to the realisation that something was wrong. Their academic projects looked so different from their previous submissions. Seventy to eighty percent of the submissions seemed to be AI generated.

The most trusted antiplagiarism software, Turnitin seems to be unable to detect AI-induced academic cheating. UJ, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and University of Cape Town indicated that academics need to re-work their assessment methods. Rhodes University indicated that the use of AI to generate academic projects or assignments is pure academic cheating (Davis 2025:1).

A case of the United Kingdom

UK Secretary of Education (Bridgette Phillipson) announced the strategy for integrating AI technologies into their education system to improve learning and teaching outcomes. The announcement was made on 22 January 2025 during the British Education and Technology Show. The policy argued that AI will assist in removing the administrative burden from educators, allowing them time to focus on learning and teaching tasks.

This strategy makes it mandatory for teachers to attend AI training course. The guidelines also outline classroom safety concerns while using AI, ethical and security issues emanating from AI, and assistance for their learners. The Skills England Bill was also introduced to deal with the future skills in the era of AI.

The aim of the bill is to transform and overhaul the UK skills systems in its entirety. These developments are intended to make the UK the leader in innovation education (TechSkills 2025:1).

Challenges for universities and educators

The editorial board of the Journal of Human Sciences have resigned in numbers because of allegations and differences with Elsevier regarding who is the journal publisher. These differences emanate from Elsevier's inadequate copyediting, abuse of AI, and article publication fees. Elsevier has denied abusing AI and using unethical publishing methods (Montgomery et al. 2025:1).

The existence of great inequalities in the world creates a hurdle in accessing AI for the people who desperately

need it, such as students from poor and previously disadvantaged communities. The culture of resistance from some internal university stakeholders may hamper the quick adoption of AI technologies. Lack of financial resources may also derail the digital transformation (Mofokeng et al. 2025:4,6-7).

One of the challenges facing academics is how to design new tools or systems to detect whether students are submitting AI generated knowledge as their own, which may be tantamount to plagiarism. Many academics do not even understand these AI technologies, know the correct ones to use, or how to use them (Lee et al. 2024:15).

Universities must realise that AI development can be tricky for students with learning or specials needs, and those who live in deep rural areas and farms where online connectivity and electricity connections are absent. This also includes students from previously disadvantaged conditions. These matters need to be addressed to create an inclusive environment in AI-powered educational techniques (Mtshali 2024:1-6).

Universities must develop and equip their academic staff and faculty members on how to navigate the world dominated by AI. They must be trained in overcoming the challenges that may be brought into their academic world by AI domination versus the traditional knowledge of prescribed study guides, journals, articles, and books. Academics must be fully equipped with skills and knowledge to manage and prevent the abuse of AI technologies by students who may commit acts of academic dishonesty such as copying and pasting and online plagiarism. The other challenge may be how academics will find time and skills to help in developing students' social, emotional, and critical thing skills. Additionally, it will be a challenge for academics to find the time to investigate whether all submitted academic works have adhered to academic integrity.

AI can create unreliable data content and analysis, and it requires academics to verify the veracity of students' work. Other students make use fake sources for plagiarised work, which is also a daunting task for academics to verify (Vieriu & Petrea 2025:10). Academics and support staff members at universities are likely to be preoccupied with ethical matters or cases related to the use and abuse of AI-powered technologies (Lee et al. 2024:1,14,18).

There is uncertainty and fear that AI-powered tools can remove the jobs of traditional educators at schools. AI may also cause the regression of the role of a teacher and the general educational leadership. It must be recognised that AI may reduce the administrative burden on the shoulders of educators. It can develop new methods of providing pedagogy in the classroom.

AI can digitise the tasks usually physically done by educators, minimising their daily repetitive jobs. It will allow educators to enhance learning and teaching in the classroom. AI must be used to assist in designing new methods of learning, teaching, and interaction with students. It can assist in taking learning and teaching to the highest level of education. It can upgrade assessment from a single activity to a continuous activity (Clugston 2024: 1-3). It is predicted that soon most of the current world of work will change dramatically owing to advances in ICT softwares such as AI and associated technologies (Stoerger 2024:3).

There is an elevated risk that professions such as teaching reinforce already existing inequalities in the world. AI is developed using already existing data, some of which are known to have biased world views that may perpetuate for future generations (Humble et al. 2023:18.) It may also perpetuate inequalities if these online data have been designed with a single story for a particular worldview. AI can produce biased information in relation to gender issues, race relations, tribes or tribalism, political world views, and lack of truth. Its data sources may not have real or original references, or they may be incorrect references. The possibilities of providing fake information to its users, mostly students are highly possible (Schonberger 2023:332-335).

Research has found that ChatGPT contains considerable bias against people who are not first language English speakers. This may lead to a negative impact to non-English speakers because they may be falsely accused of academic cheating while the contrary is true. AI may diminish the natural social and personal interaction between students and educator, including university faculty staff members. There are serious concerns about the encroachment on classified data and/or materials, including information by AI. It will steal away the personal and social emotional linkages within educational settings. It is also indicated that it is expensive to

integrate AI technologies with the entire university systems (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2024:6-11).

On 21 March 2023, Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft Corporation, predicted that AI would change the world of work as we know it today. It is changing the way we move around the world and the nature of the tourism industry, and the entire world will have to be re-orientated around AI. This includes how we learn and work, how we get our medical health care, and how we interact with one another. All industries are bound to redesign their operations based on the advancement of AI in the next ten years. The integration of AI into industries will be a determining factor of business growth. Bill Gates accepts that while AI will make errors and phantasms in its offerings, it will also improve educations systems and the world of work, and save lives (Gates 2023:1)

The worldwide view that AI assists students in conducting academic dishonesty has brought great fear, resistance, and doubt on the value that AI can add and its potential benefits (Humble et al. 2023:18; University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2024:2).

AI: A curse to the general society

In the USA, a mother received a frantic phone call from her child who was crying and indicating that she has been in an accident and need money immediately. It was not her child; the child's voice was cloned from the three clips found on Facebook. It was an AI-powered swindle by a cyber scammer, the dangerous new world of fraud. We are in a new era where scammers can defraud someone, and they are not traceable. AI is one of the latest softwares being used to defraud people. According to AI software crime experts, cyber scammers are expected to make US $40 billion in the year 2027 in the USA alone. The USA has experienced an increase of 94% in the cases of cyber scamming since the year 2020 (Knutsson 2025:1).

It is estimated that 40% of the job opportunities that exist today may not exist in future, and that AI will be valued at US $4.8 trillion in 2033. It is also estimated that the value of AI is close to the economic value of Germany. AI could create inequalities around the world. The countries earning the economic benefits of AI are mostly China and the USA. Many companies are considering reducing their workforce in cases where AI can do the job currently being done by human beings (Butts 2025:1).

Microsoft held its 50th birthday celebrations on 02 April 2025. One Microsoft engineer disturbed the celebrations on the basis that the Israel Defence Force is using Microsoft's AI technology to massacre the Palestinians. The engineer indicated that everything that is Microsoft is tainted by Palestinian blood. There was a similar disruption of a Microsoft function by another engineer who regarded Microsoft as complicit in the massacre of Palestinians. These two engineers also sent email messages to all the Microsoft Executives. They were protesting against Israel's use of Microsoft's AI technologies in its war against Palestine (Novel & Field 2025:1).

The threat of AI encroaching the legal system and court rooms all over the world poses a threat on the integrity of the legal system. Fake legal citations cause courts to decide cases based on non-existent precedents, resulting in the issuing of erroneous laws. It threatens the trust and faith people put in courts. The issue of AI and legal ethics is under question in legal systems worldwide (Leg & McNamara 2024:1).

A USA lawyer was subjected to the court of law for utilising ChatGPT for their company's legal research. The lawyer's defence against the charges was that he was not aware the ChatGPT content was false; he thought it was original research work. ChatGPT indicates that it contains real content, but it cannot guarantee the accuracy and reliability thereof. The lawyer in question was representing a person suing an airline for damage sustained while using the airline. It was detected by the defence lawyers of the airline that six of the cases that were used under the law of precedent do not exist in the legal fraternity. The plaintiffs' lawyers pledged that he will never use ChatGPT for his legal research. The lawyer was fined US $5000 for the misdemeanour (Amstrong 2023:1).

The former lawyer of USA president Donald Trump has been accused of sending a legal brief copied from

ChatGPT. Judge Jesse Furman asked questions about the originality of the legal brief with non-existent legal citations, and lawyer Micheal Cohen indicated that he retrieved his legal citations using Google Board (Associated Press 2023:1).

It is not only students who may use AI to commit unethical behaviour or use "Google" for nefarious reasons. The Pietermaritzburg High Court ordered Surendra Sing and Associates to pay the costs out their own pocket because it is alleged that they used non-existent legal citations in their argument's papers submitted in court. Only two citations exist out of the nine utilised legal citations and the lawyers could not explain where they got the other citations. The judge indicated that she would refer the lawyers to the Legal Practice Council for further sanctioning in January 2025 (Broughton 2025:1).

This is the problem with AI; it produces prejudiced and fake data, and it is not predictable as to what kind of information it may provide to students or academics (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign 2024:1). There is a need to encourage students and ordinary people to use ICT and AI in an ethical manner. What is discouraged is the misuse and unethical use of ICT and AI that compromise the integrity of what AI is used for. This may be for academic activities at universities or legal practitioners doing their legal citations (Ramoshaba 2025:1-2).

Bill Gates stated that AI is rapidly immersed in the sphere of human daily activities such as education and medical provisioning services. He also acknowledged the concerns about the fast pace at which AI is developing and growing and the propensity for mistakes and fake information. He recognised that despite AI growth, some services will still be require human abilities and involvement (Zilber 2025:1)**.**

According to the Pew Research Centre Report, many experts in AI agree that the USA will benefit more from AI in the coming twenty years. They also agree on the types of jobs that will be highly affected by the adoption of AI technologies. These include the jobs of cashiers, truck drivers, journalist, factory employees, and software engineers. Some USA citizens are anxious about the rapid development AI because it seems as if AI will steal their jobs and/or professions. It is also indicated that AI will advance and enhance medical care for everyone (Liu 2025:1).

A study on AI applications' reliability

Research indicates that people who rely on AI-powered tools such as Perplexity, Gemini, and ChatGPT as their online search engines are simply wasting their time. It is argued that the correctness of these applications is not always guaranteed. Sometimes the output is just hallucinations without value to the user. The Columbia Journalism Review agrees with the assertions mentioned above regarding the accuracy and reliability of AI-powered applications. The following AI applications were checked, namely: ChatGPT, Perplexity, Copilot, Grok, and Gemini. The test of each application produced similar problems such as false information and the retrieval of incorrect data. For most of the applications, nearly 60% of the answers they provided were false; Perplexity AI performed the best, with 37% false information. At close to 94% false answers, Grok AI provided the most unreliable data (Candy 2025:1).

Recently, Google AI research produced a story that was written as part of April's fool's day as true news. It was written five years earlier as a joke but the AI application produced it as true news. Following is the April's fool's day article that Google AI produced:

"In 2020, Mr Black published a fake story claiming Cwmbran had been recognised by Guinness World Records for having the most roundabouts per square kilometre". It was written by Ben Black who writes April's fool day story every year. Apple AI has produced a fake story that later won the dart competition, which is for fake news (Griffiths 2025:1).

Human beings versus Generative AI

AI is part of the future, and it can assist with automation, producing and analyzing large quantities of data

quickly. AI could transform the workplace with great speed, and has the skills to resolve problems with its automated systems. However, human beings can foresee the future and AI does not have that capacity currently. Employees create workplace culture and contemporary trends. The workplace requires interconnectedness of employees, which AI cannot do. AI's future depends on the human mind that created it.

Employees have the skills to navigate through change and the power of emotional intelligence to create a more human-friendly workplace; AI does not have such capabilities. AI was designed by humans according to their creativity—it could not have created itself. AI aptitudes are human driven; it cannot drive and advance its own capabilities. For AI to advance in its performance requires direction by human capabilities. AI cannot succeed with the resilient labour force on its own. It does not have its own workplace culture except automation, and requires strategic direction from human abilities (Nixon 2025:1).

CONCLUSION

AI can be both a game changer or curse in the education sector if it is not managed well by universities. AI can enhance the students' learning opportunities and also destroy the quality of learning and teaching if not professionally managed. It is in hands of the universities and academics to upskill themselves in managing the dangers that can be posed by AI. Dangers such as online academic cheating and plagiarism.

Universities must enhance the usage of AI in the academic development and growth of both academics and their students. Most importantly, strict usage of AI-powered technologies is required to manage the academic abuse of AI technologies. A compulsory digital literacy course for all academics and university students can enhance the positive usage of AI by both parties. Academics and students must learn to be critical of any information they receive online. The critical assessment will help determine the accuracy of information and real value of the online based knowledge sources.

The too much reliance on AI-powered technologies for knowledge accumulation and consumption may create a new breed of lazy thinkers, intellectuals, theorist, scholars, and general world leaders. These people may lack critical analysis skills and general problem solving capabilities. They will become knowledge consumers rather than knowledge creators that can resolve the problems that the world is facing today.

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