

The Influence of AI on Academic Ethics of Students in Indonesian Universities

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ABSTRACT: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and GitHub Copilot has transformed academic behavior in Indonesian universities. While these tools offer convenience and learning support, they also raise critical ethical concerns. This study investigates how AI affects students' academic ethics using a mixed-methods approach: a survey of 300 undergraduate students and semi-structured interviews with 30 participants across five institutions. The findings show that 68% of students regularly use AI for tasks ranging from grammar checks to assignment completion. However, 40% expressed uncertainty about ethical boundaries, and 35% were concerned about plagiarism. Only 20% of respondents reported that their university provided formal guidelines for AI use, highlighting an institutional gap in AI governance. The results reveal a growing tension between learning enhancement and academic integrity, with students often unsure of what constitutes ethical use. Differences were also observed across disciplines, with STEM and humanities students displaying distinct usage patterns. The study calls for universities to establish clear, field-sensitive policies and incorporate AI ethics training into curricula. Without proactive governance, there is a risk of normalization of academic dishonesty through AI dependency.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, Academic Integrity, Higher Education, Indonesian Universities, Student Ethics, AI Governance

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has quickly become a major part of education, especially in higher learning. Tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and GitHub Copilot are widely used by university students to help with writing, coding, and learning. While these tools offer many benefits—such as saving time, improving grammar, and helping students understand complex ideas—they also raise important ethical concerns.

In Indonesia, many students now rely on AI tools to complete academic tasks. However, there is still confusion about what is considered ethical when using these technologies. Some students use AI just to check grammar, while others may use it to write entire assignments. Without clear rules from universities, it is hard for students to know what is acceptable and what could be considered cheating or plagiarism.

Academic ethics refers to the values and principles that guide honest and responsible behavior in learning. As AI becomes more powerful and accessible, these values are being tested. Students may unintentionally cross ethical lines because they are unsure about how much help from AI is too much.

Previous studies have shown mixed opinions. Some students believe AI helps them learn, while others worry it may weaken their academic skills or lead to dishonesty. Still,

not many studies have focused on how Indonesian students feel about using AI, or how universities are guiding them.

This research aims to explore how AI tools influence the academic ethics of university students in Indonesia. By using surveys and interviews, the study hopes to better understand student behavior, ethical concerns, and the need for clear guidelines.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in higher education has sparked extensive discussions regarding academic ethics. Johnston et al. (2024) conducted a survey at the University of Liverpool, revealing that while over half of the students had used or considered using generative AI technologies for academic purposes, a significant portion expressed concerns about their ethical implications.

Similarly, Mutanga et al. (2024) explored the ethical dilemmas faced by IT students when using AI tools like ChatGPT for coding assignments. The study highlighted challenges related to originality, academic integrity, and the potential misuse of AI tools.

Fowler (2023) emphasized the multifaceted implications of AI tools on academic practices and the evolving landscape of academic integrity within higher education.

These studies underscore the necessity for clear institutional guidelines and ethics education to navigate AI's role in academia responsibly.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the influence of AI on academic ethics among Indonesian university students. The quantitative phase involves an online survey distributed to undergraduate students across five Indonesian universities. The qualitative phase comprises semi-structured interviews with selected students to gain deeper insights into their experiences and ethical considerations related to AI use.

B. Participants

A total of 300 undergraduate students participated in the survey, with a balanced representation across different fields of study. From this pool, 30 students were selected for in-depth interviews based on their survey responses and willingness to participate further.

C. Data Collection and Analysis

The survey collected data on students' AI usage patterns, perceptions of academic ethics, and awareness of institutional guidelines. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to identify trends and patterns. Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis to extract key themes and insights.

IV. RESULTS

A. AI Usage Patterns

Survey results show that **68%** of respondents reported using AI tools for academic purposes. Among these, students indicated a variety of use cases, summarized in **Table I**.

Table I. Common AI Use Cases among Indonesian University Students

AI Tool Usage	Percentage (%)
Grammar and spelling checks	45
Generating ideas or writing outlines	30
Completing assignments (drafts)	25
Paraphrasing content	21
Solving coding/programming problems	13
Translating texts	11

Observations:

- Grammarly was most frequently used for language polishing.
- ChatGPT was used mainly for idea generation and paraphrasing.
- GitHub Copilot was mentioned in tech-related fields for programming help.

From the qualitative interviews, students described AI as a "silent assistant" that helps simplify tasks, especially under deadline pressure. However, several participants admitted they were unclear about the acceptable limit of AI involvement in their submissions.

B. Ethical Perceptions of AI Usage

The study found **divided opinions** on the ethical implications of AI in academics:

- 60%** of students believed that using AI to generate ideas or check grammar is ethically acceptable.
- 35%** expressed concern that using AI could be classified as **plagiarism**, especially when the output was copied directly without changes.
- 40%** were **unsure** where the ethical boundaries lie

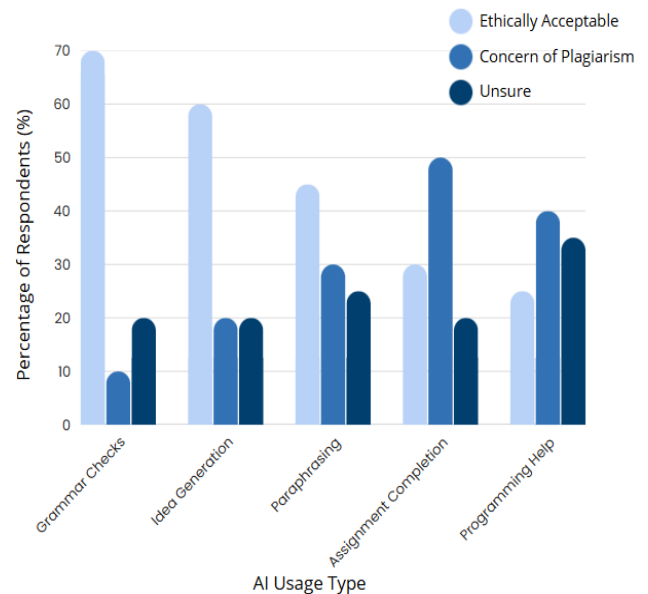


Figure 1 shows the perception of ethical boundaries based on AI usage intensity.

From the interviews, recurring concerns were noted:

- “I use ChatGPT to help brainstorm ideas, but I don’t know if that’s cheating or not.”
- “Sometimes I just copy what the AI says. I know that’s risky, but it’s faster.”
- “My lecturer didn’t say anything about using AI, so I just assume it’s okay.”

These insights reveal a **lack of consensus** among students and an evident **ethical grey zone** regarding the acceptable use of AI tools.

C. Awareness and Clarity of Institutional Guidelines

A concerning result was that **only 20%** of students stated their university had communicated clear policies regarding AI use. Among the rest:

- 42%** said they had **never received any guidance**.
- 38%** said the guidance was **vague or informal**, such as through verbal instructions or lecturer opinions.

Table II. Awareness of Institutional AI Guidelines

Awareness Level	Percentage (%)
Aware of written AI usage policies	20
Heard informal guidance	38
No guidance received	42

Students from institutions that had provided **written AI ethics policies** reported greater confidence in their academic decisions and showed more responsible usage behavior.

Interview responses showed frustration:

- “Our university banned AI last semester but didn’t explain how they would enforce it.”
- “It would be easier if every course included a short module on AI ethics.”

D. Differences by Field of Study

The analysis also showed **variations across academic disciplines**:

- **STEM students** (science, engineering, IT) were **more frequent users** of AI tools like GitHub Copilot and ChatGPT for coding and technical writing.
- **Humanities and social sciences students** used AI more for writing tasks such as essay structuring, summarizing, and paraphrasing.
- Students in **teacher education programs** showed **higher concern about ethical usage**, likely due to direct exposure to education ethics content.

E. Impact on Academic Behavior

Students self-reported behavioral shifts as a result of regular AI use:

- **24%** admitted they are now more likely to **submit work generated by AI** than manually drafted work.
- **18%** said their **critical thinking has decreased** since using AI for brainstorming and drafting.
- **33%** said they felt **guilty** when submitting AI-assisted work without citation but did it anyway to save time.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight a complex and evolving relationship between university students and AI technologies in the context of academic ethics. While a majority of students actively engage with AI tools to support their learning, the lack of institutional guidance and ethical clarity has created a significant gap in responsible academic behavior.

First, the high percentage of AI usage (68%) suggests that students perceive these tools as mainstream educational aids. Applications such as grammar checking (45%) and idea generation (30%) are often considered harmless or even beneficial. These activities align with assistive technology principles and reflect global trends in AI adoption in higher education. Similar trends were reported by Johnston et al. (2024), who found that students see AI as a productivity enhancer, particularly when it helps reduce cognitive load and improve writing structure.

However, the ethical interpretation of such usage is far from uniform. A key concern emerging from the data is the blurred boundary between acceptable assistance and academic dishonesty. For instance, 25% of respondents

admitted to using AI to complete assignments, yet 35% of the total sample also feared that this might constitute plagiarism. This contradiction underscores a critical ethical dilemma: the widespread availability of AI is not matched by sufficient ethical literacy or clear institutional policies.

Qualitative interviews revealed deeper concerns. Many students described using AI out of necessity due to time constraints, lack of understanding, or peer pressure. Some were unaware of the academic consequences, while others believed AI-generated content was not original enough to be considered cheating. These statements point to a normalization of borderline academic misconduct, influenced by vague institutional messaging and inconsistent enforcement.

Another major finding is the **low institutional engagement** with AI policy-making. Only 20% of respondents indicated that their university provided clear, written guidelines on AI use. The remaining 80% either received unclear verbal messages or no guidance at all. This policy vacuum forces students to make ethical judgments on their own, often without a strong foundation in academic integrity principles. As a result, behaviors vary widely across institutions and individuals.

Furthermore, disciplinary differences suggest that field-specific approaches may be needed. Students in STEM disciplines used AI more for programming and automation, while students in humanities used it for writing and language assistance. Teacher education students showed higher ethical sensitivity, likely due to prior exposure to educational ethics. These variations imply that a “one-size-fits-all” ethical policy may not be effective, and universities may benefit from developing customized guidelines based on discipline-specific AI applications.

Finally, the study found a concerning impact of AI on academic habits. Nearly one-quarter of respondents acknowledged a decline in critical thinking and research effort due to over-reliance on AI. Students described how they once read source materials and developed original arguments but now default to AI for summarization and drafting. This indicates a shift from **active learning** to **AI-assisted output generation**, which may weaken intellectual development if left unchecked.

Together, these findings support a growing consensus in the academic community: while AI can enhance learning, its responsible integration requires **explicit institutional policies, targeted training, and ethics education**. Universities must not only teach students how to use AI but also **why, when, and to what extent** its use is ethically permissible.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored how AI technologies influence the academic ethics of university students in Indonesia. The results reveal both the widespread use of AI and significant gaps in ethical understanding and institutional support. Most

students use AI tools for everyday academic tasks, but there is confusion and inconsistency in how these tools are perceived from an ethical standpoint.

Students generally view grammar checks and idea generation as ethically acceptable. However, when it comes to tasks like paraphrasing and completing assignments, concerns about plagiarism and unfair academic advantage emerge. These concerns are intensified by the fact that **only 20% of students** received clear institutional guidelines on AI use. Without formal guidance, students are left to navigate ethical decisions alone, leading to inconsistencies in academic behavior.

The impact of AI goes beyond simple usage—it is also changing how students learn. With a growing reliance on generative tools, there is a risk that students may lose motivation to engage deeply with academic material, weakening critical thinking and original thought.

To address these challenges, Indonesian universities must take a proactive role. This includes:

- **Developing clear and accessible policies** on the ethical use of AI tools.
- **Integrating AI ethics into the curriculum** across all disciplines.
- **Providing regular training and workshops** for both students and academic staff.
- **Encouraging transparency** by defining acceptable and unacceptable AI use explicitly in academic codes of conduct.

Future research should explore the **long-term effects** of AI use on academic behavior, including how students' reliance on technology evolves over time and how institutional policies affect ethical outcomes. There is also a need for comparative studies between universities with robust AI governance and those without to assess the effectiveness of different strategies.

In conclusion, AI is a powerful educational tool, but its integration into academic life must be managed responsibly. With thoughtful policy, ethics education, and support, universities can ensure that AI enhances learning without compromising academic integrity.

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