



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: A STUDY OF  
FACULTY PERCEPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

With the dawn of AI in higher education, academic writing has witnessed a paradigm shift, challenging pedagogical practices and giving rise to both an opportunity and concern among educators. This study explores the perceptions of university faculty members in Lahore Punjab regarding AI-assisted academic writing, focusing on its perceived benefits and challenges. Using Qualitative approach, data were gathered through surveys and semi-structured interviews with faculty members across various disciplines. Educators acknowledged the potential of AI to enhance students' writing abilities, language proficiency, and research capabilities. However, they also expressed apprehensions about students becoming overly dependent on AI, along with ethical issues and a possible decline in critical thinking and originality. Additionally, many faculty members emphasized the need for well-defined policies and AI literacy training to ensure the responsible use of AI in academic settings. Based on the findings, the study offers recommendations for pedagogical strategies and institutional policies aimed at harnessing the benefits of AI while safeguarding academic integrity in higher education.

**Keywords:** AI-assisted academic writing, academic integrity, critical thinking, AI literacy, higher education, pedagogical implications, ethical concerns, policy development

Article Details:

Received on 26 March 2025

Accepted on 20 April 2025

Published on 22 April 2025

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## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Undergraduate students are increasingly turning to AI-powered tools such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, and Turnitin to elevate the quality of their academic writing—enhancing grammar, coherence, and the structure of their arguments (He et al., 2023). While these tools offer undeniable benefits in terms of accessibility and writing efficiency, they also bring to the fore critical concerns surrounding academic integrity, originality, and the cultivation of independent thought (Xu et al., 2022).

University educators, who bear the responsibility of evaluating student work and guiding intellectual development, stand at the forefront of this evolving landscape. Their insights are essential in understanding the pedagogical implications of AI-assisted writing—particularly within the undergraduate programs of both public and private universities in Punjab, one of Pakistan's most populous provinces.

Though the integration of AI into academic writing remains a relatively novel phenomenon, it is rapidly gaining ground. Educators' responses to this shift are varied. Some regard AI as a valuable aid, especially for students writing in a second language, helping them refine their work and develop self-editing skills (Chukharev-Hudilainen & Torrance, 2021). Others, however, voice legitimate concerns that an over-dependence on AI-generated content may erode students' abilities to think critically and analytically (Mahlow & Dale, 2022). Furthermore, the ethical complexities surrounding AI-generated texts—particularly issues of plagiarism, authorship, and originality—pose significant challenges to long-held academic conventions (Johnson et al., 2023).

Although much of the existing research on AI in education centers on student usage, there remains a noticeable gap in understanding how teachers perceive this technological shift, especially within the South Asian context. As AI continues to reshape traditional educational practices, it becomes imperative to examine how university instructors in Punjab conceptualize AI-assisted writing—whether as a powerful pedagogical tool or a disruptive force to academic integrity. This study seeks to bridge that gap by exploring the perceived benefits and risks of AI in academic writing and emphasizing the urgent need for its thoughtful and ethical integration into higher education.

## RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The landscape of global higher education is undergoing a profound transformation with the increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into academic writing. Undergraduate students, in particular, are embracing AI-powered tools such as Grammarly, ChatGPT, and Turnitin to enhance the quality, structure, and coherence of their written work. While these technologies offer clear advantages—such as improving language proficiency and providing immediate feedback—they also raise pressing concerns around academic integrity, originality, and the erosion of critical thinking skills.

Given the rising prevalence of AI-assisted writing in universities and colleges across Pakistan, especially in Punjab province, it becomes imperative to understand the perspectives of educators who play a pivotal role in shaping students' academic growth. Despite the growing body of literature on AI in education, much of the existing research centers on students' experiences and the technological capabilities of these tools, often overlooking the viewpoints of teachers.

As key figures in guiding written assessments, designing curricula, and upholding academic standards, university instructors hold valuable insights into both the promise and pitfalls of AI-driven writing. Their perspectives are particularly relevant in Punjab, where there is significant variation in technological infrastructure and digital literacy across institutions. Understanding educators' attitudes toward AI can inform the development of effective institutional policies—ones that not only promote ethical use but also influence curriculum

planning and faculty development initiatives, ensuring that AI is integrated into academic writing practices with responsibility and foresight.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The growing use of AI-assisted academic writing tools among undergraduate students has introduced new dynamics into teaching and learning practices in universities across Punjab. While these tools offer potential benefits such as improving writing quality and supporting learners with diverse needs, their increasing presence also raises concerns among educators about academic integrity, over-reliance on technology, and the diminishing role of critical thinking and original expression.

Despite the rapid adoption of such tools, there is limited understanding of how university teachers in Punjab perceive their usefulness, what challenges they encounter, and how they envision their ethical and effective integration into academic instruction. Without clear insights into teachers' perceptions and concerns, and in the absence of structured pedagogical strategies, the implementation of AI in academic writing remains inconsistent and potentially problematic.

This study aims to explore teachers' views, identify key challenges, and propose pedagogical approaches that support the responsible use of AI-assisted writing tools in higher education settings across Punjab.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1-What are the perceptions of university teachers in Punjab regarding the usefulness of AI-assisted academic writing tools for undergraduate students?
- 2- What concerns do university teachers in Punjab have about the use of AI in students' academic writing practices?
- 3- How can AI-assisted writing tools be effectively and ethically integrated into academic writing instruction within universities across Punjab?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) is changing the face of higher education, but is it blessing or a curse? Students utilize AI-based tools like Grammarly, ChatGPT, and Turnitin to better their writing skills, enhance grammatical correctness, and generate content more efficiently (He et al., 2023). Although these tools provide massive advantages, academic integrity, originality, and critical thinking issues remain. Key themes associated with AI-assisted academic writing, including its benefits, concerns and teachers perception are discussed in this literature review, particularly relevant in Pakistani stance in higher education institute of Punjab.

Students have used AI-assisted writing tools, which offer instant feedback on grammar, coherence and structure. According to studies, AI tools aid in improving the students' writing ability through overcoming certain linguistic difficulties, especially in the case of non-English speakers (Chukharev-Hudilainen & Torrance, 2021). These tools support students in word and grammar-related issues, enabling them to conduct content creation rather than mechanical errors. In addition, AI-based applications like Turnitin not only aid in plagiarism detection but also encourage students to adopt good academic writing habits by teaching citation practices (Johnston et al., 2023).

From a pedagogical standpoint, AI tools encourage self-regulated learning, allowing students to go through iterative writing processes without frequent instructor involvement (Zhang & Yu, 2022). Proponents of this view contend that incorporating AI in teaching writing helps students learn to become self-directed (Mahlow & Dale, 2022) and to engage critically with texts (Elliot, 2023): because nonhuman authors provide near-instantaneous feedback, students receiving it are likely to develop a sense of agency and to engage in revision. However, in Punjab's higher education institutions, where the proficiency in English varies, AI-assisted writing can act as an equalizer as it can also help students in improving their academic writing and enhancing their confidence in scholarly communication.

## AI WRITING CONCERNS IN ACADEMIA

However, automatic writing powered by AI can create serious challenges, especially concerning academic honesty and critical thinking. The first dilemma relates to a strong dependence on AI, which may limit students to generate original ideas and think critically (Xu et al., 2022). This excessive reliance on AI content leads to surface-level revisions, according to one group of educators (He et al., 2023), and might leave students feeling detached from the writing task. Furthermore, AI-generated text introduces ambiguity as to the authorship of writing, which can make it difficult for teachers to evaluate students' actual writing competencies (Johnson et al., 2023).

Also, ethical issues related to AI-generated plagiarism and the justice of using AI-assisted writing in assessments in academic writing are emerged. Previously unpublished works can also benefit from uniqueness and originality, even if they are generated via AI tools like ChatGPT; plagiarism detection tools can identify copied work, but it has as of now fallen on student submissions, raising an appropriate level of suspicion (Chukharev-Hudilainen & Torrance, 2021). Additionally, AI tools may generate content that is inaccurate or misleading, necessitating that students critically assess the information they produce (Mahlow & Dale, 2022). Digital literacy levels among students and faculty at Punjab's universities vary significantly, and the challenges of digital learning are different for each institution, but meeting those challenges is necessary to maintain academic standards.

## THE EMERGING LANDSCAPE OF AI-ASSISTED ACADEMIC WRITING: AN EXPLORATION OF TEACHERS' ATTITUDES

Research about teachers' perceptions of AI in academic writing is sparse especially in the South Asian setting. But existing research indicates that educators have divided opinions about AI-assisted writing. On the other hand, some teachers regard AI tools as useful tools to improve students' writing and also lighten their workload when providing feedback (Zhang & Yu, 2022). Another expresses apprehension regarding ethical concerns and the possible drop in originality and cognitive effort among students (He et al., 2023).

Faculty members may have different levels of familiarity with such tools in developing countries like Pakistan, where AI adoption in education is in its infancy. Research shows that teachers working in technologically rich institutions will integrate AI into their pedagogical practices, while teachers in resource-poor environments are less likely to use teaching AI because of insufficient training or insufficient institutional indicators for its use (Johnston et al., 2023). Thus, exploring teachers' perspectives in universities of Punjab will be vital to formulate policies that guide responsible and essential AI application in academic writing.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate university teachers' perceptions of AI-assisted academic writing within the context of higher education institutions in Punjab, with a particular emphasis on perceived benefits, emerging concerns, and pedagogical implications. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of these complex and nuanced perspectives, a qualitative research methodology was adopted. This approach allowed for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, attitudes, and insights related to the integration of AI tools in academic writing.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

Given the exploratory nature of the study, a phenomenological research design was deemed most appropriate. This design is well-suited to uncovering the lived experiences and personal interpretations of individuals, particularly in response to emerging educational phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenological approach facilitated a deeper understanding of how university faculty members perceive and respond to the growing use of AI-assisted tools in students' academic writing practices.

## TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLING STRATEGY

The target population comprised university faculty members at various universities in Lahore Punjab who are directly involved in assigning and evaluating student academic writing. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure the selection of participants who met specific inclusion criteria and were capable of providing rich, relevant insights. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Faculty members teaching at public or private universities in Punjab.
- Instructors responsible for assessing academic writing as part of their teaching responsibilities.
- A minimum of two years of teaching experience in the higher education sector.

Participants were drawn from a range of academic disciplines to capture diverse viewpoints. A sample size of 15 to 20 teachers was targeted, with data collection continuing until data saturation was achieved—defined as the point at which no new themes or substantive insights emerged from the interviews (Guest et al., 2020).

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for both flexibility in response and consistency in topic coverage. This method enabled participants to articulate their thoughts freely while ensuring that core areas of inquiry were systematically addressed across interviews. The interview protocol included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses on teachers' knowledge, perceptions, benefits, and concerns related to AI-assisted academic writing tools.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study based on a thematic analysis of qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with university teachers across Punjab. The primary aim was to explore their perceptions, benefits, and concerns related to AI-assisted academic writing among undergraduate students. The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, allowing for a systematic identification of patterns and themes within participants' responses.

## DATA ANALYSIS PRCEEDURE

The data analysis followed a rigorous and structured approach:

**TRANSCRIPTION AND FAMILIARIZATION:** All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were read repeatedly to gain deep familiarity with the content and to identify initial patterns or recurring ideas.

**INITIAL CODING:** Using open coding, meaningful phrases and concepts related to the research questions were highlighted and labeled.

**THEME DEVELOPMENT:** Related codes were grouped into broader categories, reflecting shared meanings and perceptions among participants.

**THEME REFINEMENT:** The emergent themes were carefully reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the perspectives and experiences of university teachers.

**USE OF NVIVO SOFTWARE:** NVivo was employed to organize and analyze the qualitative data more efficiently, allowing for systematic coding, theme tracking, and data visualization.

## EMERGING THEMES AND KEY FINDINGS

### UNDERSTANDING AND USE OF AI IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Many university teachers demonstrated a general awareness of AI-assisted writing tools. Applications such as Grammarly and Turnitin were widely recognized and frequently used in academic contexts. However, familiarity with more advanced tools like ChatGPT, QuillBot, and other generative AI applications was limited.

**PARTICIPANT 1:** "I know we can use Grammarly to check the students' grammar, but I am not very knowledgeable about ChatGPT's ability in academic writing."

**PARTICIPANT 2:** “I think a lot of students are using AI tools, but I also feel many don’t really understand how to use them appropriately.”

## **PERCEIVED ADVANTAGES OF AI-ASSISTED WRITING TOOLS**

Several participants acknowledged the positive impact of AI tools on student writing. These included:

**IMPROVED GRAMMAR AND WRITING STYLE:** AI tools help students produce more polished and grammatically accurate writing.

**Time Efficiency:** Teachers noted a reduction in the time spent correcting basic language errors, which allowed them to focus on higher-order writing skills.

**SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY:** AI tools were seen as particularly beneficial for students struggling with language barriers.

**PARTICIPANT 3:** “AI tools assist students in polishing their drafts before submission, which improves the overall quality of their work.”

**PARTICIPANT 4:** “AI writing assistants are extremely useful for students who struggle with English grammar.”

## **CONCERNS ABOUT OVER-RELIANCE AND ETHICAL MISUSE**

Despite acknowledging the benefits, many teachers expressed deep concerns regarding the misuse of AI in academic writing:

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM:** Teachers raised ethical concerns, especially regarding students submitting AI-generated content as their own, thus compromising academic honesty.

**DECLINE IN CRITICAL THINKING AND CREATIVITY:** Over-reliance on AI was seen as a threat to students’ ability to develop original thoughts and refine their writing skills independently.

**PARTICIPANT 5:** “AI tools have made it so easy to copy and paste, and students are not learning how to write properly.”

**PARTICIPANT 6:** “We need clarity on what level of AI assistance is acceptable in academic writing.”

## **ROLE OF TEACHERS AND THE NEED FOR INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

Participants emphasized that teachers play a crucial role in guiding the ethical and effective use of AI tools in academic writing. Many suggested the implementation of institutional support mechanisms:

**AI AWARENESS WORKSHOPS:** Teachers recommended professional development sessions and student workshops to promote AI literacy.

**ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND POLICIES:** There was a consensus on the need for universities to develop clear policies on the acceptable use of AI tools in academic writing.

**AI AS A PEDAGOGICAL AID:** Rather than replacing traditional instruction, teachers viewed AI tools as supplementary resources that can enhance writing instruction when used responsibly.

**PARTICIPANT 7:** “AI is a great tool if used properly. However, we must teach students how to use it responsibly.”

**PARTICIPANT 8:** “Instead of banning AI tools, universities should establish guidelines on how to integrate them into teaching and learning.”

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The analysis reveals a dual perspective among university teachers regarding AI-assisted academic writing. While the tools are seen as effective in enhancing grammar, clarity, and accessibility—particularly for students with language challenges—concerns remain about ethical misuse, plagiarism, and declining student autonomy in the writing process.

These findings highlight the urgent need for structured institutional responses, including:

- Clear guidelines on the acceptable use of AI in academic writing.
- Training programs for both faculty and students to promote responsible use.

- Integration of AI tools into pedagogical strategies that support rather than replace traditional academic skill development.

By addressing these concerns and leveraging the benefits, AI-assisted writing tools can be meaningfully incorporated into the academic environment, supporting both instructional goals and academic integrity.

## DISCUSSION ON MAJOR FINDINGS

This section explicates the major findings of the research pertaining to Punjab universities' teachers' perceptions of AI-assisted academic writing, contextualising them vis-a-vis the established literature. These are awareness and use of AI tools, perceived benefits, concerns about over-reliance and academic integrity, and the role of educators in integrating AI. So let us delve deeper into AI in Academic writing.

**FINDINGS:** AI-assisted writing tools such as Grammarly and Turnitin are known to most university teachers in Punjab, but advanced applications of AI (ChatGPT, Quillbot, etc.) are comparatively lesser-known. This is consistent with earlier studies indicating that despite the growing adoption of AI in academic settings, many scholars in academia have limited training and experience with newer AI technologies (Zhang & Yu, 2023).

This shows that while there is a fair share of AI tools in higher education, generally these tools are used only to check the grammar in an academic text. Gunn et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of ensuring educators are AI literate in order to maximize AI's potential or risk its misuse. That is why Punjab universities must offer AI education programs to prepare teachers and students on responsible AI tool usage.

## ADVANTAGES VOICE FOR AI-POWERED WRITING

According to the study, teachers have identified multiple benefits of AI-assisted academic writing in students, such as enhanced grammar, coherence, and ease of access for non-native English speakers. These findings are in line with research conducted by Luo and Hyland (2021), indicating that AI tools help students improve their writing by providing instant feedback on grammar and style, ultimately leading to less reliance on instructors for minor corrections.

Furthermore, the studies by Bhatia et al. (2022). Teachers noted that having AI help drafts be higher quality upon submission could allow instructors to address deeper issues in academic writing, such as argumentation and structure.

Though AI tools can enhance language proficiency, they ought to complement rather than substitute human feedback, especially regarding critical thinking and analytical writing (He & Zhang, 2023). At least from this study, it follows that AI needs to be absorbed into academic writing as an assistive element rather than a replacement for classical writing instruction.

## THE CONCERN OF OVER-RELYING ON THEM AND THE INTEGRITY OF ACADEMICS

Despite the advantages, overdependence on AI tools and concerns regarding academic integrity were among the main concerns of university faculties. Several expressed concern that students were just accepting AI text without any real understanding or critical thought. This concern is echoed in the study of Park and Howard (2022) which claims that AI-generated writing can promote plagiarism and cause students to score lower in developing the ability to write independently.

**Erosion of originality/critical thinking:** Using AI-generated text means students do not have to think and formulate their own ideas, leading to a loss of originality and critical thought. A key concern discussed in the literature is that AI is capable of generating clear and structured while also formulaic writing, which may limit creativity (Deng et al., 2023). To prevent this, universities must introduce clear ethical measures based on the use of AI in academic writing so that students use AI tools as an assistive means instead of using them to replace their work.

## WHY TEACHERS ARE IMPORTANT IN INTEGRATING AI

These findings emphasize the importance of formalized AI literacy programs to empower both teachers and students to utilize AI tools effectively. Numerous participants focused on the need for developing an ethical and responsible approach to AI instead of banning it entirely; they advocated for universities to create policies and training programs to support ethical and responsible use of AI. Selwyn and Aagaard (2022) believe that educational institutions should actively be integrating AI literacy into their curricula, not resisting the inevitable into the future of technology.

In addition, teachers stressed that AI should be viewed as a collaborative tool, not an autonomous writing system. This view resonates with Warschauer et al. (2023), who argue that AI is a complement to traditional methods of teaching, if used strategically. AI tools, for example, could help with revising drafts, learning new languages and managing citations as educators concentrate their efforts on higher-order thinking skills and development of research.

## POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS

**AI Literacy Programs:** These should be integrated into the higher education curricula at universities across Punjab.

They should outline the acceptable and unacceptable use of these entity models, specifying practices, like grammar correction, as acceptable, and practices like completion of essays using AI as unacceptable.

As writing becomes increasingly intertwined with AI, educators can work to balance AI and higher-order thinking in writing instruction by creating assignments that require students to think critically about AI-generated writing and provide mechanisms to make it transparent that students are thinking critically about and through AI-generated parts with their own writing rather than simply accepting the output and submitting it as their own.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

These findings have led to the following recommendations:

### TEACHER AND STUDENT AI LITERACY TRAINING

Universities should run up workshops, training and seminars for teachers and students on what constitutes proper use of AI assisted writing tools.

Teachers need the AI literacy embedded in faculty development programs to guide students in ethical and productive use of AI tools.

### INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES ON AI

To prevent further misuse of AI tools, universities should define the boundaries for acceptable use on applications when humans will eventually review the application materials, and thereby distinguish between acceptable AI assistance (e.g., grammar checks, paraphrasing suggestions) and unethical use (e.g., AI-generated reviews, plagiarism).

Policies should facilitate academic integrity, originality of thought, and responsible use of A.I., ensuring that students think critically about what they write.

### THE ROLE OF ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY IN AI USE FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

Teachers must fashion assignments that will prod students to critically grapple with A.I.-produced work — asking them to analyze, revise and reflect on drafts that used A.I. for assistance, for instance.

AI tools must be integrated into academic writing classes at universities, but research, argumentation and originality should remain the core subjects of the courses.

### WALKING THE LINE BETWEEN AI USES AND DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING

There is an opportunity to also consider how generative AI can complement key aspects of traditional academic writing by prioritising critical engagement, creativity, and analytical reasoning.

So teachers need to have students in writing tasks that require them to justify, critique and refine AI-assisted content to achieve a deeper level of learning.

## CREATING AI AWARENESS PROGRAMS

Universities should conduct awareness campaigns explaining both the advantages and dangers associated with the use of AI-written aids, enabling students to distinguish between AI assistance and academic misconduct.

Furthermore, it will pave the way for students to have a responsible way to use AI in academia and work, developing a AI literacy that can be implemented in university curricula.

## FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

More research can be done on student attitudes of AI writing to have a more holistic look at whether or not AI writing is detrimental to academic learning.

Further research should explore whether AI literacy programs boost students' writing skills and promote the ethical use of the technology.

Shifts in educational focus, adaptive culture and addressing disparities can inform how colleges can best integrate AI into their learning environments.

## CONCLUSION

The perceptions of university teachers in Punjab about the effective advantages and concerns of AI-assisted academic writing were explored in this study in the context of higher education. While educators had noted potential benefits of using AI tools to students — such as improved grammar, argument coherence, and accessibility to non-native English speakers — they expressed overwhelming apprehension about over-reliance on AI, academic integrity issues and the effects on students' critical thinking skills.

Are teachers to believe that AI should be treated as an indispensable assistive tool, rather than a substitute for the centuries-old art of writing? Unfortunately, the effective use of AI in academic writing is hampered by a lack of awareness and training among faculty [4] and a fear of inappropriately using chatbots such as Microsoft's ChatGPT [5]. Moreover, proper institutional policies for ethical AI use in academia are underdeveloped, thus resulting in ambiguity in its usage not only from students but also teachers.

The study underscores the relevance of formalised AI literacy initiatives, ethical frameworks, and judicious pedagogical approaches that guarantee AI serves to foster—rather than undermine—students' academic writing development. Punjab's universities need to be more proactive in capitalizing on the potential of AI while responsibly tackling its challenges.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

This AI is remapping academic writing in higher education — with potential benefits and perils. Rather than resisting AI, universities in Punjab should strategically adopt it to use AI tools ethically, effectively, and in ways that enhance the students' learning experience. Through enabling AI literacy among teachers and students, in tandem with clear guidelines, universities can adopt a balanced approach where they harness AI's advantages without sacrificing academic integrity and the cultivation of critical thinking.

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