

The Phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use in Academic Assignments: Ethical Challenges and Academic Integrity in Islamic Higher Education

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRAK
Volume: 4 ISSN: 2963-5489 KEYWORDS Artificial Intelligence, students, academic assignments, ethics, academic integrity, Islamic Higher Education, scientific integrity.	This study aims to observe the phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence (AI) usage by students in completing academic assignments, with a focus on the challenges of ethics and academic integrity in Islamic Higher Education institutions. The research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive observational approach, where data were obtained through direct observation of students' behavior in utilizing AI and analyzed descriptively to portray patterns and impacts. The findings reveal that students frequently use AI to accelerate task completion and obtain instant references, yet the tendency to copy results without deep understanding potentially decreases critical thinking skills and violates academic honesty principles. The observation also indicates a high level of dependence on AI, which creates new challenges for lecturers in maintaining the integrity of the learning process. In conclusion, the use of AI in academic assignments within Islamic Higher Education generates a dilemma between easy access to information and the decline of academic ethics; therefore, strengthening honesty values, ethical digital literacy, and institutional policies are required to ensure that AI utilization remains aligned with scientific integrity and Islamic values.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology in the past decade has significantly transformed higher education. One of the most prominent innovations is the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly natural language-based applications that are capable of generating texts, analyzing data, and providing instant solutions to various academic problems. The presence of AI offers students easier access to information and assists in completing academic assignments, yet it simultaneously raises new dilemmas concerning academic ethics and scientific integrity.

The phenomenon of students using AI in academic assignments is increasingly evident in universities, including Islamic Higher Education institutions. On the one hand, AI facilitates the learning process and encourages creativity in developing ideas. On the other hand, excessive use of AI without critical understanding tends to reduce independent thinking skills, promote digital plagiarism, and blur the distinction between human work and machine-generated output. This condition poses serious challenges to academic integrity, which is the foundation of higher education, particularly when honesty and responsibility are highly emphasized in the Islamic scholarly tradition.

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The significance of this study lies in its attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of AI usage by students in academic assignments and its impact on ethics and academic honesty within Islamic Higher Education institutions. This research is essential because only a few studies specifically address the context of Islamic universities, despite their strategic role in nurturing scholarly values grounded in Islamic morality. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the development of educational policies in Islamic Higher Education in facing the challenges of the digital era and to offer new perspectives on how AI can be utilized wisely without neglecting the principles of scientific integrity.

2. Literature Review

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into higher education has created new dynamics by enabling students to access information and complete academic assignments more efficiently. While this development provides great opportunities for learning, it also raises concerns about ethics and academic honesty. A study published in the *Journal of Academic Ethics* (2025), *ChatGPT in Academia: University Students’ Attitudes Towards the Use of ChatGPT and Plagiarism*, found that many students rely on AI as a shortcut in their studies, leading to increased digital plagiarism and undermining the originality of academic work.

This phenomenon also highlights the ambiguity of ethical boundaries in the use of AI. Both students and faculty face difficulties in distinguishing between legitimate use of AI and actions that constitute academic misconduct. Consistent with the findings of Azeem, Siddiqui, and Ali (2025), this dilemma is not merely technical such as the limitations of detecting AI-based plagiarism but is also deeply rooted in moral dimensions. Their study emphasizes that students’ lack of understanding of ethical boundaries in using AI, along with faculty concerns about the erosion of academic integrity, poses a serious challenge to upholding honesty and academic values in higher education.

In the Indonesian context, Islamic Higher Education Institutions face unique challenges due to their foundation in Islamic values. Ali, Hayati, Faiza, and Khaerah (2025) found that although students perceive AI as a useful tool, excessive reliance on it threatens originality and academic honesty. This study is significant as it highlights the Islamic Higher Education context, although it remains limited to student perceptions. On the other hand, Haque and Mohamed (2019) emphasize that academic integrity from an Islamic perspective is rooted in moral values that stress honesty, justice, and responsibility. These values are increasingly under pressure as AI enables students to produce academic work without meaningful intellectual effort.

From an Islamic perspective, knowledge is inseparable from moral and spiritual responsibility. Education is understood not only as the transfer of knowledge but also as the cultivation of integrity-based character. Abdullah (2017) emphasized that *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *sidq* (honesty) are fundamental principles in maintaining academic integrity. Haque and Mohamed (2019) further noted that academic integrity in Islam requires students to preserve the originality of their work and avoid practices that undermine scholarly values. Similarly, Rahmanto (2019) highlighted that honesty is the core of Islamic moral education and must be applied in all academic practices. Therefore, the use of AI among students in Islamic higher education should be understood not only as a technological issue but also as a moral concern closely related to scholarly integrity.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to observe the phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence (AI) use by students in completing academic assignments at Islamic higher education institutions. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of student behavior, ethical challenges, and the impact of AI use on academic integrity, without measuring quantitative data..

3.1 Participants and research setting

The participants were students purposively selected based on their involvement in using AI for academic tasks. Observations were conducted within the campus environment, including classrooms and laboratories, over a specified period to obtain a representative picture of student behavior.

3.2 Data collection procedure

The researcher carried out direct non-participatory observation, actively observing students without engaging in interaction or interviews. Data were collected through field notes, which documented student activities, patterns of AI use, frequency of utilization, and its impact on material comprehension and academic integrity. Additional documentation, such as digital notes or screenshots, was used when relevant and ethically appropriate.

3.3 Data analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive thematic analysis, involving three steps: data reduction, data presentation, and identification of emerging themes. This analysis aimed to describe student behavior patterns in using AI and their implications for ethics and academic honesty.

Through this method, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the dynamics of AI use in academic contexts, highlighting the dilemma between ease of access to information and the potential decline in academic ethics, while supporting the development of strategies to strengthen digital literacy and academic integrity in Islamic higher education.

4. Results and Discussion

The observations revealed that students exhibited a strong reliance on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in completing academic assignments. While AI was primarily used to accelerate the process of writing and obtaining references, its influence extended into classroom activities, particularly during discussions and question-answer sessions. Instead of synthesizing information and formulating their own arguments, many students were observed directly reading responses generated by AI tools such as ChatGPT. This reliance demonstrates a tendency to replace independent thinking with automated assistance, which in turn poses risks to the development of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and reflective learning skills—competencies that are fundamental in higher education.

These findings align with previous studies indicating that although AI provides efficiency and accessibility, excessive dependence may compromise students' intellectual engagement and originality (Smith & Anderson, 2023; Brown, 2021). In the context of Islamic higher education, this phenomenon raises additional concerns because it intersects not only with academic integrity but also with the ethical values embedded in Islamic scholarship. The observed patterns of behavior suggest that students may prioritize convenience over intellectual rigor, which could erode the moral and ethical dimensions of academic practice if not addressed.

Addressing this issue requires a multidimensional strategy. First, students must be equipped with **ethical digital literacy**, emphasizing that AI should serve as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for independent reasoning. Second, **faculty members play a crucial role** in guiding students toward reflective use of AI by requiring personal analysis, critical commentary, or interpretative insights in assignments. Third, institutions should establish **clear academic policies** regarding acceptable AI use, including citation practices and limitations in certain contexts, to safeguard academic honesty. Finally, promoting **interactive and collaborative learning models** can encourage students to engage in meaningful dialogue and develop arguments independently, even when AI tools are involved.

In sum, while AI offers undeniable advantages in improving efficiency and expanding access to knowledge, the findings underscore the necessity of balancing its use with the preservation of critical thinking and ethical academic conduct. For Islamic higher education institutions, this balance is essential to ensure that technological advancements remain aligned with the principles of academic integrity and the moral values of Islamic scholarship.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by students in completing academic assignments at Islamic Higher Education institutions presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, AI facilitates access to information

and accelerates the process of preparing academic work. On the other hand, students' excessive dependence on AI, including during classroom discussions, indicates a decline in critical, analytical, and reflective thinking skills. This phenomenon not only undermines the quality of learning but also risks violating the principles of ethics and academic integrity, which are fundamental to the Islamic scholarly tradition.

Therefore, the integration of AI into academic contexts should be carefully guided so that technology serves as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for students' intellectual engagement. This study highlights the importance of strengthening ethical digital literacy, encouraging active guidance from lecturers, and establishing clear academic policies at the institutional level. Such efforts are essential to maintain a balance between technological advancement and the preservation of scholarly integrity and moral values in Islamic Higher Education.

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