



Beyond Plagiarism: ChatGPT and the Changing Meanings of Knowledge, Learning, and Academic Work in Pakistani Higher Education

¹Ali Raza

²Eman Khalid

³Ghulam Fatima

¹⁻³MPhil Scholar

[¹alirazasoc21@gmail.com](mailto:alirazasoc21@gmail.com), [²Emansoc1911@gmail.com](mailto:Emansoc1911@gmail.com), [³Ghulamfatimaa826@gmail.com](mailto:Ghulamfatimaa826@gmail.com)

Abstract

Soon after the launch of ChatGPT and other generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools, the public in Pakistan got very interested in their use in university life. The attention was yet only narrowly given to plagiarism and cheating. Based on this paper, this is a very limited view. Based on a systematic review of recently done studies in Pakistani universities and supported by a wider international perspective on the uses of generative AI in higher education, the work presents a sociological understanding of how ChatGPT is redefying in three connected dimensions what is considered knowledge, how learning is carried out, and what academic work actually consists of. The work sets up a theoretical setup composed of the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) and social constructionist theories of knowledge, which is then applied to interpret student and faculty perceptions, resource shortages, and response policies findings from Pakistani universities that were made public, placing them within a structure analysis of inequality. The paper concludes that higher education institutions in the Pakistani context are facing not just discipline issues, but a deeper sociological challenge: generative artificial intelligence is reworking who is allowed to speak on what they know, and with what proof, through whose work, in a system that was already stratified by class, language, and access. The paper ends with suggestions for future research and policy implications for the Higher Education Commission (HEC) as well as individual institutions.

Keywords: ChatGPT; generative AI; academic integrity; Pakistani higher education; social construction of technology; social construction of knowledge

Article Details:

Received on 20 Feb, 2026

Accepted on 12 March, 2026

Published on 14 March, 2026

Corresponding Authors*

Introduction

When ChatGPT went public in November 2022, the immediate and widespread concern from universities across the world was disciplinary: could students now bypass hard work by copying AI generated content, and how would universities detect them? It was similar in Pakistan: Faculty started whispering about ChatGPT-assisted work among students even before any formal announcement came out, and the HEC established a committee to look into the ethical, legal, and policy dimensions of generative AI in education. The committee was to study the best practices across different universities, and propose a national policy structure to prevent misuses of such generative tools (tnnenglish, 2024). Naturally, the first response to new technology in education has been that of plagiarism detection. Plagiarism detection is the most common tool universities use to catch new writing technologies from photocopier to internet to the essay-mill websites. But research done at an increasing rate, many of the papers focus on Pakistani universities, argue that this perspective is extremely narrow. For instance, students at Pakistani universities report that they mainly use ChatGPT to cope with academic shortcomings such as large classes, poor access to study materials, etc. They say that it works as a tool not so much to cheat but to overcome the existing deficiencies in their education systems. (Ashraf, Alam, & Kalim, 2025).

Studies done across Pakistani universities show that most students, while aware of the risk of accuracy, over-reliance, and integrity, consider ChatGPT helpful towards their learning, even so (MDPI, 2025). Qualitative conversations with university instructors however uncover a similar pattern of uncertainty: they appreciate the use of this software for getting feedback, generating ideas, and saving time, but at the same time, they fear that the ability of their students to write independently will be affected. (Voyage Journal of Educational Studies, 2024) If we consider all these findings together, what the situation is presenting to us is not merely a question of supervision. Rather, the categories through which Pakistani higher education understands knowledge sourcing, legitimate learning and student/scholar authorship are being challenged as a matter of practice. In many circumstances, these new practices develop faster than the policy making process which attempts to catch up with what is already there.

This paper centers the idea of renegotiation as its focal point. It raises the question: in what way are the definitions of knowledge, learning, and academic work transforming in the Pakistani higher education milieu as generative AI tools gain foothold in the daily life of an academician, and what sociological explanations contribute to this change? Rather than seeing a mostly technical or disciplinary issue, the paper views it as a sociological issue, within the sociology of education, science and technology studies, and the sociology of knowledge. It is argued that the ChatGPT is a disruptive factor whose impact in Pakistan cannot be interpreted independently of the structural conditions of the sector it has penetrated: a sector characterized by huge resource disparities between public and privately funded colleges, drastic rural-urban and class differences with digital accessibility, English-language mediums operating simultaneously with predominantly students who speak Urdu and regional languages, and an assessment culture that is historically focused on exam rehearsal rather than production. The paper is organized in six main sections. This paper explores the existing body of literature and empirical research about generative AI in higher education from the broader world scene to localized studies of Pakistan. This paper outlines the sociology of education, science and technology studies, and the sociology of knowledge to develop a sociological theoretical setup.

Based upon this structure, the paper formulates a conceptual model and research questions. The paper also sets out a blueprint for an empirical study that could be undertaken in future.

Because of this analysis, the paper draws insights from literature on different aspects of knowledge, learning, and work that are gradually changing in Pakistan. Finally, there is one more major area, which the paper will be looking at. This is the area of policy implications

Literature Review

2.1 The Global Landscape: Generative AI as a Disruption to Higher Education

The higher education literature on generative AI has developed quickly over the years, roughly following three overlapping major shifts. The earliest wave centered on capabilities and risks involved with different kinds of large language models such as GPT: what kinds of outputs these models are capable to generate, and in particular, if these outputs can be accurately or reliably detected (Roumeliotis & Tselikas, 2023). Following this trend and the initial wave, the second wave highlighted the institutional reaction by presenting universities' policies, guidelines, and instructor-level rules across regions. A global comparative study covering six world regions and sixty top universities showed Quite a bit uneven policy development; many institutions have been letting each faculty member interpret the guidelines, which has resulted in what is being called an 'interpretive load' problem, where both students and staff have to manage ambiguous and inconsistently enforced rules (ScienceDirect, 2024). A third wave, in which this research article aligns itself, starts to explore sociological and epistemological issues: it is not only about whether or not GenAI should be allowed but also about GenAI's influence on the fundamental activities of teachers, exams, and validation of knowledge

In this research, concerns revolve mainly on three common patterns. Firstly, they define academic integrity as being a rather narrow concept involving plagiarism, unauthorized authorship, and assessment validity (Eke, 2023; Jarrah et al. 2023 through ScienceDirect, 2024). Secondly, they have been cognitive and Pedagogy related: they are questioning whether habitual dependence on GenAI results in a depreciation of abilities in critical thinking, written skill, and the capacity to carry out learning activities independently even if the use of Gen-AI is authorized (Escalante et al. 2023; Song & Song, 2023 also through ScienceDirect-2024). Last of all, in policy, far the most complex and least understand the equity aspect of this issue. The research is trying to find out: Does the use of GenAI reduce or expand the already existing performance differences due to socioeconomic status, language background, or prior digital skills (ScienceDirect, 2024)? The research done in Hong Kong on "policy trajectories" showed that fuzzy or non-existent AI-related institutional policies give rise to invisible work on both students and staff that they have to interpret, resist, or find loopholes from unclear regulations, and the impact on fairness and trust is much more than a simple violation of rules (The literature on higher education policy related to Frontiers-adjacent, 2025).

2.2 ChatGPT and the Redefinition of Plagiarism

One sub-strand of this literature deals with plagiarism as being under threat by the way we conceive of it as a concept. The traditional view of plagiarism is a single-authored text, a clearly delineated work whose originality can be checked against a database of past texts. Still, since generative AI, works are not created from any one retrievable source but synthesized out of many sources together, existing similarity-detection tools will be inadequate and there should be a fundamental shift in how we identify unauthorized help. Studies on the use of ChatGPT for academic purposes have suggested that institutions should no longer operate solely under the punishment-based detection model but instead switch to a set of norms that would make AI-generated texts not a "get or miss" violation but something that could be added to one's work in a transparent and responsible manner (Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education, 2025). Such reconsideration should be relevant to the present paper's case: if we

cannot define plagiarism by the uniqueness of the text alone anymore, what counts as a student's own intellectual work becomes the main issue, i.e. a matter of how knowledge and authorship are socially constructed instead of being technically defined.

2.3 The Pakistani Context: Adoption, Perceptions, and Constrained Resources

Papers written In particular on Pakistani higher education in the last few years have increased and present a unique situation influenced by country's own limited resources. One study conducted by a large scale quantitative method through students of Pakistani universities using PLS-SEM approach as an analytical technique found that habitual use and enjoyment (hedonic motivation) resulting from using ChatGPT were significant in students' adoption of ChatGPT while ChatGPT adoption itself was linked with increased academic outcomes (Ashraf, Alam, & Kalim, 2025). Most remarkable is the way the study directly connected ChatGPT adoption patterns to systemic features of the Pakistani education system: institutions grappling with inadequate resources, high student-faculty ratios, and restricted access to good learning materials were found to generate a stronger dependence on ChatGPT as either a substitute or a complement to the lack of institutional resources (Ashraf, Alam, & Kalim, 2025). This finding from an academic perspective makes ChatGPT's adoption not just the individual technological preference of a person but at times also the result of one's structural position in the under-resourced environment. The same pattern of adoption can also be noticed across countries in South-East Asia and Western Asia such as Malaysia and Pakistan, which shows that institutional and infrastructural factors are major determinants of the degree and kind of AI use (Dahri et al. 2024).

Results of a big survey involving four hundred students from different universities in Pakistan indicated that a great number of them felt that their use of ChatGPT was really supporting their study, but they also had reservations about using it too much, the integrity of their academic work when it comes to plagiarism and, more generally, the level of trustworthiness of the information being supplied by the AI (MDPI, 2025). In this study, the researchers didn't find any substantial difference among male and female students for their responses Yet there were differences in student's perception based on their age and kind of university, older students held more favorable attitudes towards the benefits of the ChatGPT so adoption of ChatGPT is accompanied by varying levels of concern given the demographic background and institutional background of the users (MDPI, 2025) Work with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in Sindh province has brought in the light that there are certain factors influencing a Pakistani student or instructor's intention to use ChatGPT in the classroom such as perceived usefulness, ease of use and context-related limitations (among others). Further research in mobile learning, chatting and social networking with ChatGPT in academic environments in Pakistan have shown that the use of these three types of technology mutually affect the academic progress the students make (Shah, Ali, & Shah, 2024; Amjad, Aslam, & Tabassum, 2024).

Although faculty perspectives are not as widely researched as student ones, the story of their point of view seems more conflicting and complicated. A qualitative research consisting of interviews with eight Pakistani university teachers revealed that only half of them had themselves used ChatGPT and that all of them were sure that students were exploiting it already, not with standing In reality it was an institutional restriction. The results of this research indicate a mismatch between official policies and realities in the classroom (Voyage Journal of Educational Studies, 2024). In the survey of the teachers in question, they recognized some real-time pedagogical gains: getting feedback, creating examination questions, resolving students' recurring queries, and decreasing clerical tasks. Even so, they

identified the deterioration on the student writing level and the support of plagiarism and academic fraud as main hazards (Voyage Journal of Educational Studies, 2024). Fascinatingly, the teachers differed in their point of view when it came to policy. While five were against relaxing the prohibitions on the use of ChatGPT by students for academic purposes, the rest, the three, were in favor of having the ChatGPT formally integrated. However, all of them concurred on the necessity of well-thought-out policies by the institution, awareness activities, and training of students to enhance writing and research skills. (Voyage Journal of Educational Studies, 2024).

Contrary to simple morality issues where a cheating student faces a faculty who wants to check the student's behavior at every moment, an interesting narrative comes up from the literature of Pakistan. The higher education system is represented here as one where limited resources are the main driving force that leads to higher adoption of ChatGPT, where the perceptions of both the students and the faculty for ChatGPT are split between the educational values and the risks, and where the policies at the formal level have clearly come out the picture. Evidence-based studies specific to each branch of knowledge reinforce this vision that shows high usage coupled with high worries. A poll conducted among students who studied medicine at a medical university in Pakistan found that nearly all of them relied upon and valued ChatGPT's accuracy as they were convinced by it. Still, nearly as big a percentage voiced worries about privacy and data confidentiality when the same AI assistant was used for academic purposes.

2.4 Institutional and Policy Response in Pakistan

The Higher Education Commission's creation of a committee to study AI and its potential regulations, which will be a mix of university faculty and senior education officials focusing on benchmarking international regulations and formulating domestic policies, demonstrates the realization within the regulatory sector that just having instructors dealing with a new challenge individually is not a solution (tnnenglish, 2024). People claim Pakistani lecturers should follow the institutional response in an orderly manner: that the first thing a university does is make a public policy statement following the human right-oriented principle as described by UNESCO's 2024 recommendations (propakistani.pk, 2025). The deans will next be allowed to develop their regulations that are compatible with their disciplines and will be followed by faculty-wide workshops on becoming AI-literate while the last stage will consist of structured teaching sessions for the students about responsible and critical use of AI. It is worth pointing that this multi-stage approach is similar, on a macro level, to the lessons learned from various global studies about higher education systems (ScienceDirect, 2024). In fact, it was these studies that highlighted the difficulty of designing and applying a one-size-fits-all policy to a higher education system as multifaceted as the higher educations in a country (Higher Education) Unfortunately But as far as our latest information goes, higher education regulations on AI that are comprehensive and coordinated at a national level have not yet been adopted fully as a regulatory practice in Pakistani higher education.

2.5 Beyond Plagiarism: Toward an Epistemic and Sociological Reading

What we get from this is that most of the public and institutional discourse around ChatGPT centers on detecting plagiarism and punishing offenders, but the empirical evidence on how students really use ChatGPT in Pakistani universities is quite different. Students are not just delegating their assignments to Chat GPT. They are using machines to cover scarce institutional resources, obtaining explanations and feedback that are otherwise unavailable, and dealing with an evaluation system whose traditional expectations of handwritten, self-produced content were already a problem before the emergence of ChatGPT. Teachers here are

not just enforcers. They are educators in search of ways to redefine their teaching and evaluation authority when a piece of machine-generated text can be very convincing at first glance and very persuasive at second. This exactly is the issue where a sociological rather than disciplinary point of analysis is needed, and we shall carry out that analysis by turning next, theoretically.

3. Theoretical Framework

To transcend the traditional understanding of plagiarism as merely a form of cheating, the paper adopts two interwoven sociology theories, SCOT (the social construction of technology) perspectives from science, technology and society studies; and the constructionist epistemology social theories of Berger and Luckman. These theories respectively focus on different layers of the event being analyzed and, when combined, give rise to a composite theoretical tool capable of describing not only the systemic inequality features but the semantic generation mechanisms as well that have been evidenced from the Pakistani studies mentioned above.

3.1 Actor-Network Theory and SCOT Approach to the Social Construction of Technology

While the structural aspects of disparities get revealed through Bourdieu's work, the structural processes that shape technologies get unfolded through science and technology studies, i.e. how despite technological design, a piece of technology's use and meaning are open to negotiation with social groups that come together with it. The core principle of SCOT approach is technological 'interpretative flexibility' - in different user groups like students teachers administrators and controllers, the same equipment takes on different meanings and legitimate usage is made of it. As SCOT, the different interpretations that compete for a given artefacts' identity gradually are settled not by characteristics of artefact inherent properties, rather by the result of social negotiation only. To elaborate further, SCOT suggests that the only way these different interpretations can stabilize is through a long process of institutional negotiation, professional norm setting, and policy development. The Pakistani literature is now advocating a change for these same steps. In the same vein as propakistani.pk, 2025).

Actor-Network Theory (ANT) further expands this view by refusing to treat the technology as a passive object onto which humans project meanings but instead, the human-Computer interface is seen as an active non-human entity in an academic network where students teachers institutional policies, assessment rubrics, and facilities are also active. This is one of the areas where ANT fits the situation perfectly since the plagiarism-centered frame completely misses Really ChatGPT gets students' assignment done in one way, but also through active participation, it helps reshape the relationships and practices within the academic system, altering what the student is expected to be reasonably responsible for an assignment, the knowledge base of the teacher about student work produced independently, and how the academic advisor/ tutor supports the student in the process and when/ how to provide the feedback. Sociological writings lately have applied ANT together with critical sociology in discussing AI in education. These scholars have shown that this dual approach captures both micro-level changes, that is, altering individual teaching/ learning moments, and macro-level changes like digital inequalities, algorithmic control, and education commodification via AI-driven markets (Frontiers, 2025). This combination of individual and structural level is exactly what is needed to bridge the empirical findings at the individual level, for example, the widespread student use of AI and the divided faculty stance, with the structural, system-level questions the paper is finally concerned with.

3.2 Social Constructionism and the Sociology of Knowledge

The fourth component of the structure deals directly and openly with the paper's main conceptual thesis namely that the legitimate knowledge is a social and not just a purely epistemic thing. Berger and Luckman's classic work in the field of sociology of knowledge posits that what a particular society or institution regards as objective, a sort of reality, is a result that comes through, among many social processes, the process of repeating, legitimizing and setting in stone those elements that are seen as typical, through which the objectification takes place, rather than it is some category given naturally from the start.

A special characteristic of legitimacy for an academic knowledge lies in legitimacy being ensured by specific institutional procedures, among them the exams, the way of citing references, the peer review process and graduation ceremonies, which historically all assumed that there was an individually authorial trail to the intellectual work of a student or scholar whose knowledge claims were put into question by their work. But at the same time, these institutional procedures assumed, at least subconsciously, that the work was done by an individual whose thinking and work were not just copied. What is different about generative AI is that it actually breaks that chain in a novel way: at an unprecedented level of mass, AI can deliver good academic-style articles without having gone through the traditional ways of individual cognitive labor, the engagement with sources, and synthesis.

3.3 Integrated Framework

This is a combination of traditional practices. The joint explanation of SCOT and ANT is about how the meaning and use of the ChatGPT software in academic contexts are determined by students, faculty, and the institution through their interaction, and this very piece of software However modifies the relationships and academic practices of the network of actors, and is Because of this not simply adopted by an unchanged system as such. The idea of social construction further elaborates why such discussions have a broader significance that goes beyond the single classroom: they are together re-shaping the socially sanctioned definition of what is acceptable as knowledge, learning and academic work in context of higher education as an institution in Pakistan. Such an overall perspective serves Sections 4 to 6 as a conceptual setup, a research design proposal and a commentary on the significance of the literature reviewed.

4. Discussion: The Changing Meanings of Knowledge, Learning, and Academic Work

4.1 Knowledge: From Verified Origin to Negotiated Legitimacy

From a social constructivist perspective, the cases from Pakistan indicate that the old standard by which it was legitimate to produce academic knowledge was that the idea was originally derived from source material via a chain that was traceable to the author's individualized synthesis. In daily use still if not yet formally, the old criterion of legitimation is being quietly replaced by a new and much lesser studied criterion: the judge of the reader on fluency and plausibility. The Faculty fear of ChatGPT providing 'inaccurate information' (MDPI, 2025) is a clear example that this change was happening. Fear of Truth is a fundamental pillar of academic legitimation, verifiable source, may not be straightforward anymore is registered while there is not an alternative legitimation process offered yet. This is the kind of institutional gap Berger and Luckman's system would predict during a period of legitimate debate, and it explains why so many of the current institutional responses of Pakistan remain at the level of general policy statements and committees (tnnenglish, 2024) rather than the settled, detailed assessment practices.

4.2 Learning: From Independent Struggle to Scaffolded and Unevenly Distributed Practice

The findings of the study on the determinants of adoption through resource provision (Ashraf, Alam, & Kalim, 2025) suggest that for a wide number of Pakistani students, ChatGPT is a substitute to tutoring, access to library, or the presence of faculty, which they only got in an imperfect, inequitable manner, previously. Interpreted through a Bourdieusian lens, this scenario presents a two-side development. Those students who already possess a good amount of cultural and digital capital, probably will find this support only as an addition that liberates their time for higher-level critical engagement. But, students lacking those resources (and even more so, students who have been already at disadvantage in English-medium education) will probably use this tool in the same manner as before but only a different one without actually building the necessary skills. Such behavior aligns the finding that in a situation when students' technological capital is low, AI-powered learning instruments may either help students with low cultural capital by compensating them for their lack or further deepening the differences in learning results between the students with strong and weak backgrounds in cultural capital (Kurban & ahin, 2024 as recently discussed).

Meaning the trend in Pakistan is that learning under ChatGPT is not becoming universally easier and more leveled but is turning out to be a product of a kind of capital which was not equally distributed amongst different groups of people before the era of AI.

4.3 Academic Work: Redistributed Labor for Students and Faculty Alike

At the end, for both the students and the teachers, the very idea of the term "academic" is also changing. Students are increasingly making the effort of writing in favor of a different form of labor - prompting, assessing, and editing AI-generated text. This is a very different ability from writing that current grading schemes do not often mention or reward. When it comes to faculty, the same trend has been shown through qualitative research. ChatGPT is appreciated because it takes away the administrative and repetitive tasks of academic work, which are things that generate draft feedback or assessment items. In the same breath, it raises the burden of evaluating students' works to see if they really reflected the learning process. Based on Voyage Journal of Educational Studies (2024), ChatGPT is valued for the timesaving features that it brings for the repetitive tasks while it is also an evaluative tool when it comes to checking for student involvement. If we look further, we may get an interesting view. If you get a hold of the Actor-Network theory, the situation here is a typical one. When you introduce a new non-human element in the academic realm, it does not only add a new tool that people can still use for their unchanged activities but it changes the tasks, responsibilities as well as the areas of expertise, and the roles that students, teachers and the technologies within the network have in the entire academic system.

4.4 Synthesis

As a combination, these three aspects help the author prove a point made in the paper through the paper: the challenge to Pakistani higher education by generative AI cannot be properly assessed if we use a plagiarism-detection model because at heart the problem is neither just a question of broken rules nor an incident of rule violation but is rather an ongoing renegotiation, one that is structurally uneven and institutionally unresolved in practice, of the meanings of what makes up knowledge, learning, and academic work. A policy response solely based on detection and punishment takes care of the symptom, the provision of unauthorized assistance, but does not really get at the heart of the matter: a sociological process of contested legitimation playing out in a landscape of inequality.

5. Policy Implications for Pakistani Higher Education

Several implications can be drawn from the analysis above that directly concern the HEC, universities at large, and departmental leadership.

- Change from a mere detection model. In line with findings from a wider academic integrity research area (the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education, 2025), policy-making should include and transparently disclose pedagogical integration of ChatGPT use with plagiarism rules. It is important that policy-making does not rely only on similarity detection tools, which are rather poor at detecting AI-generated text.
- Recognize equity issues. If it is true that in Pakistan the use of AI is highly related to resource scarcity (Ashraf, Alam & Kalim, 2025) then a policy that equates the use of all AI as being the same might unfairly disadvantage students from low-resourced backgrounds who are using AI to fill their needs while better-resourced students rely on family support, libraries, or even tutoring. To avoid this situation, institutions' provision of support like AI-literacy sessions embedded in both the orientation programmers and the writing center services must be emphasized alongside implementing restrictions.
- Encourage the phased institutional model that was proposed in Pakistani policy discussions (propakistani.pk, 2025): public institutional policy statements based on human agency, departmental-level structures accounting for varied disciplines, faculty AI-literacy programs, student education programmers, all being carried out with clear timelines and accountability instead of being left as just guiding principles.
- Understand different ways in which instructors will use AI and provide resources Because of this: Given that there was almost an even division of opinion among interviewed Pakistani teachers as to whether they would allow students to use AI (Voyage Journal of Educational Studies, 2024) treating that ambivalence as just a problem that can be dealt with from above without getting a faculty's involvement seems not only disrespectful but also ineffective. That is why, it is more likely that a dialogue on such issues between faculties will lead to the establishment of norms rather than a single top-down directive.

6. Limitations

Limited by the nature of a conceptual and literature-based paper, this study clearly has its boundaries. Rather than introducing primary data, the work summarizes existing published studies, which are limited. In addition, the Pakistani investigations cited are themselves of varied geographic coverage and methodological approaches, leaning mostly on quantitative, self-reporting, cross-sectional designs, and a limited amount of published qualitative research. The model used here, though based on sociological traditions, is just one of several ways it could be presented; e.g., one could take it through a critical pedagogical or postcolonial lens that would reveal different, but equally valuable, aspects by addressing, for example, in reality ChatGPT itself originates in English-medium and Global North environments. In any case, given the rapid changes in technology and in the policies on Pakistani Higher/Education Institutions, this kind of review of literature can easily become somewhat out of date quite soon, which is another reason why the paper emphasizes the need for a continuous, rather than a single shot, empirical research line.

7. Conclusion

In this article we have been advocating the view that the prevailing characterization of ChatGPT when talking about Pakistani HEC is as a device that needs to be plugged into the system through detection and punishment as a plagiarism and academic integrity problem is a sociologically simplistic frame that does not match the magnitude of the change that is happening. Bed on an extensive repertoire of empirical Pakistani literature covering

perceptions of students teachers faculty adoption, institutional response together with an interpretation of the data through a theoretical matrix that consists of the Actor-Network Theory, Social Construction of Technology and a socio-historical constructionist sociology of knowledge, we have argued that generative AI is constantly involved in a negotiation of what makes up the legitimate knowledge, the methods of practically implementing the learning process, and the academic activities carried out by both students and faculty, i.e. what the academic labor really consists of. This reconfiguration is taking place in an already hierarchical system of higher education and that's why its consequences are very likely to be far from being uniform: those students and institutions that have better financial, cultural, and digital capital will probably be better off in transforming AI to an actual gain, while those who are not in that position may get entangled in increased dependence with an almost insignificant skill development. Tackling this problem calls not for more plagiarism detection systems but instead for a comprehensive response by the government of Pakistan's higher education department, which would be equity-sensitive and be integrated into teaching, together with a long-term, well-supported research plan that combines quantitative and qualitative methods.

References

- Amjad, A. I., Aslam, S., & Tabassum, U. (2024). Tech-infused classrooms: A comprehensive study on the interplay of mobile learning, ChatGPT and social media in academic attainment. *European Journal of Education*, 59, e12625.
- Ashraf, M. A., Alam, J., & Kalim, U. (2025). Effects of ChatGPT on students' academic performance in Pakistan higher education classrooms. *Scientific Reports*. Nature Publishing Group.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.
- Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J.-C. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (R. Nice, Trans.). Sage. (Original work published 1970)
- Calderón Gómez, D. (2021). The third digital divide and Bourdieu: Bidirectional conversion of economic, cultural, and social capital to (and from) digital capital among young people in Madrid. *New Media & Society*, 23(9), 2534–2553.
- Dahri, N. A., et al. (2024). Investigating AI-based academic support acceptance and its impact on students' performance in Malaysian and Pakistani higher education institutions. *Education and Information Technologies*, 1–50.
- Frontiers in Education. (2025). AI in education: A sociological exploration of technology in learning environments. *Frontiers in Education*.
- Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education. (2025). ChatGPT in academic assessments: Upholding integrity.
- MDPI Education Sciences. (2025). Exploring ChatGPT's role in higher education: Perspectives from Pakistani university students on academic integrity and ethical challenges. *Education Sciences*, 15(2), 158.
- Pitzalis, M., & Porcu, M. (2024). Digital capital and cultural capital in education: Unravelling intersections and distinctions that shape social differentiation. *British Educational Research Journal*.
- PMC. (2025). Exploring the ethical implications of ChatGPT in medical education: Privacy, accuracy, and professional integrity in a cross-sectional survey. PMC / National Center for Biotechnology Information.
- propakistani.pk. (2025, May 6). AI literacy and regulation in higher education.

- ScienceDirect. (2024). Generative AI in higher education: Seeing ChatGPT through universities' policies, resources, and guidelines. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*.
- ScienceDirect. (2024). Generative AI in higher education: A global perspective of institutional adoption policies and guidelines. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 55, 90–112.
- Shah, M. H. A., Ali, Z., & Shah, A. (2024). Challenging factors towards the effective use of ChatGPT in education in Province Sindh, Pakistan: Application of TAM model. *International Journal of Academic Research in Humanities*, 4, 86–94.
- tnnenglish.com. (2024). A policy framework to guide artificial intelligence in higher education.
- Voyage Journal of Educational Studies. (2024). Challenges and opportunities about ChatGPT in higher education: A qualitative study about university teachers in Pakistan. *Voyage Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(2).