

PLAGIARISM IN CHATGPT ERA

Monalisa-Andreea Gheorghe

Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies, doctoral school of Economic Informatics (Romania)

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence currently represents a focal point of global discourse, as individuals actively investigate innovative modalities for its integration into everyday practices, with the objective of streamlining routine processes and enhancing efficiency through the automation of replicable tasks. The educational sphere has not remained isolated from this trajectory of automatization, with artificial intelligence progressively consolidating its role in pedagogical architecture from the instructional perspective, as well as in knowledge acquisition, independent study and academic task execution from the learner's standpoint. Within this conceptual framework, a rigorous examination of the ethical implications attendant to the utilization of artificial intelligence becomes imperative. This paper aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the impact of artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT on academic processes, with a particular focus on the ethical implications, the quality and reliability of the information they generate within specific disciplinary contexts and examines contemporary perceptions of plagiarism in relation to their use.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, plagiarism, education.*

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence may be conceptualized as the capacity of computational systems to emulate complex human cognitive functions, including reasoning, learning, strategic planning, and creative problem-solving. Such systems ingest data, either pre-structured or acquired through embedded sensory apparatuses, such as visual capture devices, process this information through algorithmic architectures and generate responsive outputs. Moreover, artificial intelligence systems demonstrate a measurable degree of behavioral adaptivity, within the limits that they can evaluate the outcomes of prior actions, recalibrate subsequent operations and function with a significant level of autonomy (European Parliament, 2020).

Over the past years, the paradigm-shifting advent of Generative Pretrained Transformers (GPT) within the domain of artificial intelligence has catalyzed both the proliferation and the democratization of generative AI (GenAI) applications, particularly in the form of interactive conversational agents. Contemporary AI engines including ChatGPT, InferKit and DeepAI have attained widespread adoption, while novel architectures such as Google Bard, Chinchilla AI DeepMind and GPT-4 continue to emerge, signaling an ongoing acceleration in the evolution and accessibility of generative computational modalities (Dashkevych & Portnov, 2024).

Although artificial intelligence instruments afford unparalleled potentialities for individualized learning trajectories and the optimization of operational efficiency, their deployment in the absence of regulatory frameworks engenders profound ethical dilemmas.

Ethics is not detached from AI competency but rather it is construed as one of the five foundational pillars of the AI competency framework, alongside technological proficiency, impact assessment, collaborative praxis, and reflexive self-evaluation. Within the education sector, five key ethical challenges were identified:

- securing informed consent for AI deployment
- ensuring operational safety and algorithmic transparency
- mitigating algorithmic apprehensions and systemic biases
- safeguarding data privacy and informational integrity
- intellectual integrity and plagiarism (Ravi, 2025)

Owing to its pervasive adoption among students, ChatGPT has become a prominent instrument within contemporary academic praxis, with students engaging recurrently with the platform to augment their cognitive and scholarly activities.

2. ChatGPT use and students perception of plagiarism

ChatGPT assumes a significant role in the academic trajectories of students, providing a resource through which they obtain support with homework, gain clarification of complex concepts, and engage in personalized learning experiences.

Students tend to perceive this tool as an inexhaustible and authoritative source of information, often without interrogating the veracity of its outputs; the epistemic quality of the responses is rarely subjected to critical scrutiny.

As so many studies show, the increasing reliance on generative text tools, such as ChatGPT, within academic contexts has elicited concerns regarding the preservation of scientific integrity. Academic dishonesty, which constitutes a direct violation of the principles underpinning scholarly conduct, encompasses practices whereby individuals gain an unfair advantage in their academic work through unethical means, including cheating or unauthorized replication of others' work. While the concept of academic dishonesty is broadly recognized, its perceived severity and prevalence are mediated by individual beliefs and contextual factors. Plagiarism, a distinct manifestation of academic dishonesty, arises when one presents the intellectual output of another as their own without appropriate attribution. Such conduct may be intentional, involving a deliberate act of deception in claiming another's work as one's own, or unintentional, resulting from insufficient knowledge of proper citation protocols and established academic standards (Fajt & Schiller, 2025).

Owing to ChatGPT's promise of generating original outputs and its user-friendly interface, students concentrate primarily on formulating comprehensive, sophisticated, and precise prompts to elicit the desired response, closely aligned with the expected academic standards. In practice, verification of the AI-generated content is infrequent, as students often accept the responses uncritically, treating them as authoritative without further question.

As de Winter stated in "Personality and acceptance as predictors of ChatGPT use. Discover Psychology", students tend to perceive ChatGPT as a valuable instrument for supporting academic endeavors, which fosters a more favorable appraisal of the tool and may contribute to its more frequent utilization relative to adult learners with professional experience. In this scenario, students are prone to misunderstanding the results originality and therefore, are prone to plagiarism (de Winter, Dodou,&Eisma, 2024).

3. Example of ChatGPT usage in order to enhance learning abilities

For educational purposes, I asked ChatGPT to consider that I am a 5th grade student in Romania and I need a 4-week learning plan, at the end of which I will have all the knowledge stipulated by the current curriculum in computer science and ICT. The result it provided is listed down below:

WEEK 1 - TOPIC:Computer Basics & Operating System - OBJECTIVES: Understand computer components (hardware & software). Learn OS basics & file management - ACTIVITIES: Study computer parts, Start computer, open apps, Create folders, save, copy, move files, Explore desktop & Start menu

WEEK 2 - TOPIC:Word Processing & Editing - OBJECTIVES: Develop skills in text writing & formatting - Create documents with text, images, tables - ACTIVITIES: Write short text on a topic, Format text, Insert & resize images, Save & print documents

WEEK 3 - TOPIC:Internet, Email & Multimedia - OBJECTIVES: Use the internet safely, Learn to send emails, Introduction to multimedia apps - ACTIVITIES: Search online and identify reliable sources, Create email & send message (with adult supervision)

WEEK 4 - TOPIC:Algorithms & Programming - OBJECTIVES:Understand algorithms, Solve problems using pseudocode/Scratch, Develop logical & computational thinking - ACTIVITIES:Paper exercises: write steps of an algorithm, Scratch: create simple animations or games, loops, conditions, variables (OpenAI, Chatgpt)

Although this elaborate plan seems correct at first glance, ChatGPT's limitations come into play when the questions are specific to a domain. For example, the current curriculum for the Computer Science and ICT discipline in Romania, for the scholar year 2025-2026, does not require the study of Microsoft Office in fifth grade.

4. Conclusion

Given the prevailing perceptions surrounding artificial intelligence with respect to the quality and originality of the content it produces, it is essential not only to promote responsible usage but also to cultivate awareness among users that, even when outputs are not directly replicated from existing work but are generated through AI, the absence of transparent attribution may nonetheless constitute an act of plagiarism.

Acknowledgments

This paper was co-financed by the Bucharest University of Economic Studies during the PhD program.

References

- Dashkevych, O., & Portnov, B. A. (2024). How can generative AI help in different parts of research? An experiment study on smart cities' definitions and characteristics. *Technology in Society*, 77, 102555.
- de Winter, J., Dodou, D., & Eisma, Y. B. (2024). Personality and acceptance as predictors of ChatGPT use. *Discover Psychology*, 4(1), 1–16.
- European Parliament, E.P. (2020) Ce este Inteligența artificială și cum Este utilizată? | Teme | Parlamentul european, European Parliament.
- Fajt, B., & Schiller, E. (2025). ChatGPT in academia: University students' attitudes towards the use of ChatGPT and plagiarism. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 23(3), 1363-1382. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-025-09603-5>
- OpenAI (2022). *Chatgpt, ChatGPT*.