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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE-RELATED PLAGIARISM IN EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract:
The rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have transformed educational practices, but they have also introduced challenges such as AI-related plagiarism, which undermines academic integrity. This study explores the prevalence, challenges, and effectiveness of AI-based tools in detecting and preventing plagiarism in educational settings. The study employed Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) to explore the behavioral dynamics influencing plagiarism and the role of institutional policies and AI tools in shaping ethical academic practices. Using a systematic review approach, 11 studies were analyzed to evaluate existing tools and strategies. The findings indicate that while AI-driven plagiarism detection tools have improved in identifying traditional and AI-generated plagiarism, they often lag behind the rapidly advancing AI technologies. Additionally, the study highlights the gaps in awareness and policy integration, emphasizing the importance of combining technological solutions with education on ethical academic behavior. The conclusion calls for a multifaceted approach that integrates technological innovation, policy frameworks, and proactive education to combat plagiarism effectively. This study contributes to the academic discourse by providing actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and developers, addressing a critical aspect of AI's role in modern education.

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Keywords: AI-related plagiarism, academic integrity, plagiarism detection tools, Social Learning Theory, ethical academic practices

1. Introduction

The integration of AI in education has revolutionized teaching and learning processes, offering innovative tools to enhance academic performance and streamline administrative tasks. However, alongside its benefits, the rise of AI has introduced complex challenges, particularly concerning academic integrity. AI-related plagiarism, which involves the misuse of AI-generated content in educational contexts, has become an increasingly pressing issue. This form of plagiarism undermines the principles of originality and intellectual honesty that are foundational to education. As AI tools become more sophisticated and accessible, concerns about their misuse for producing unoriginal content have grown significantly (Brown & Foster, 2024).

AI-generated content, often produced through natural language processing tools, enables students to generate essays, assignments, and research papers with minimal effort, raising questions about authenticity and ethical practices in education. Traditional plagiarism detection systems are struggling to keep pace with the capabilities of AI, as these tools can produce contextually accurate and seemingly unique content that evades detection (Lee & Thomas, 2024). Moreover, the lack of standard guidelines for distinguishing between AI-assisted learning and misuse further complicates the issue, leaving educators and institutions grappling with how to address this evolving challenge.

Research on AI-related plagiarism highlights the dual role of AI as both a potential enabler of plagiarism and a tool for its prevention. For instance, AI-based plagiarism detection systems, designed to identify unoriginal or AI-generated content, have shown promise in mitigating academic dishonesty. These systems leverage machine learning algorithms to analyze patterns, structure, and originality in student submissions (Leung & Davies, 2024). However, their effectiveness varies depending on the context and the sophistication of the AI tool being used to produce content.

The growing prevalence of AI-related plagiarism has significant implications for academic integrity policies and educational practices. It calls for a comprehensive approach that combines advanced detection technologies with clear ethical guidelines and educational interventions to promote responsible use of AI in academic settings (Smith & Taylor, 2024). This study seeks to systematically review the literature on the prevalence of AI-related plagiarism and related challenges in education, the effectiveness of current detection mechanisms, and strategies for fostering academic integrity in an AI-driven era.

This study is significant as it addresses the pressing issue of AI-related plagiarism, which threatens academic integrity and the authenticity of educational outcomes. Exploring the prevalence, challenges, and advancements in AI-based plagiarism detection, the findings can guide educators, policymakers, and institutions in developing

effective strategies to combat misuse while fostering ethical practices in the era of AI-driven education. Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on academic integrity in the context of technological advancements to enhance a balanced approach to integrating AI tools in learning environments.

2. Statement of the Problem

The increasing accessibility and sophistication of AI tools in education have created new challenges in maintaining academic integrity, particularly with the rise of AI-related plagiarism. Students can now use AI-driven systems to generate content for assignments and research papers, which often mirrors the quality of human-authored work, making it difficult for traditional plagiarism detection tools to identify unoriginal material. This misuse of AI-generated content not only compromises the authenticity of academic work but also undermines the educational process by bypassing critical thinking and the effort required for genuine learning. Although AI-based plagiarism detection tools have been developed, their effectiveness varies significantly across different educational contexts and levels of AI sophistication. Additionally, there is a lack of consensus on policies and guidelines to distinguish legitimate AI-assisted learning from misuse, leaving educators and institutions ill-equipped to address this evolving issue (Brown & Foster, 2024; Lee & Thomas, 2024). This study aims to address these gaps by systematically reviewing the prevalence and challenges posed by AI and strategies for detecting and preventing AI-related plagiarism in education.

Below are two specific objectives that seek to provide more enlightenment on the prevalence and challenges of AI in academic institutions, as well as the effectiveness of current AI detection tools and strategies to address AI-related plagiarism.

1) To explore the prevalence and challenges of AI-related plagiarism in educational settings.
2) To evaluate the effectiveness of current AI-based tools and strategies in detecting and preventing AI-related plagiarism.

2.1 Philosophical Underpinnings and Theoretical Frameworks

This study is rooted in the philosophical perspective of Constructivism, which posits that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences and interactions with their environment. In the context of AI-related plagiarism, constructivism underlines the importance of guiding students to use AI tools as aids in their knowledge construction rather than as shortcuts to bypass authentic learning processes. The study emphasizes the role of educators and institutions in creating environments that encourage critical thinking and ethical decision-making, ensuring that AI is integrated as a supportive element in the learning process rather than a tool for academic dishonesty.

This study is guided by the Social Learning Theory founded by Albert Bandura in 1977, which emphasizes the influence of observation, imitation, and modeling in learning behaviors. The theory is applied to this study by examining how students' exposure to

and interactions with AI tools influence their attitudes and behaviors regarding academic honesty. AI tools can act as models that either support legitimate learning or promote plagiarism. The study uses this framework to analyze how technological tools shape students' learning practices and how educational interventions can mitigate negative influences while fostering positive, ethical behavior.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Prevalence and Challenges of AI-Related Plagiarism in Educational Settings

AI-related plagiarism is becoming an increasingly pervasive issue in educational settings as artificial intelligence tools gain traction among students. Ahmed and Johansson (2024) highlight that the advent of AI tools capable of generating sophisticated content has blurred the lines between assistance and misconduct. These tools enable students to produce essays, reports, and even research papers that mimic human writing, making traditional plagiarism detection tools ineffective. The study identifies an alarming rise in academic misconduct associated with AI, particularly among students with access to advanced technology. For example, a study conducted by the Centre for Democracy and Technology (CDT) established that 70% of high school students used AI in the 2023-24 school year as compared to 58% in the previous year (Merod, 2025).

Brown and Foster (2024) emphasize that AI-related plagiarism presents unique challenges due to the ability of AI systems to generate contextually accurate, seemingly original work. They argue that the lack of robust detection systems and clear institutional policies has created a gap that students exploit. Educational institutions struggle to define the boundaries of acceptable AI use, often resulting in inconsistent responses to cases of AI misuse. The study calls for innovative, AI-driven plagiarism detection tools that can keep pace with evolving AI capabilities.

Moreover, Maass et al. (2024) further explore the technical challenges in detecting AI-generated plagiarism, noting that many AI tools use advanced natural language processing algorithms to produce content that evades conventional detection systems. Their research indicates that educators are often unaware of the sophistication of these tools, resulting in an underestimation of the problem. Further, the lack of training for faculty in identifying and addressing AI-related plagiarism exacerbates the issue.

Singh and Hartley (2024) examine the implications of AI-related plagiarism on academic integrity policies, highlighting the need for comprehensive frameworks that address the ethical use of AI in education. Their findings reveal a significant disparity in how institutions define and respond to AI-related misconduct. The study brings to the fore the importance of creating standardized guidelines to ensure fair and effective responses across institutions. Together, these studies reveal that the prevalence of AI-related plagiarism is fueled by the accessibility and sophistication of AI tools, coupled with gaps in detection capabilities and institutional policies. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including the development of advanced detection systems, faculty training and the establishment of clear ethical guidelines. These findings

align with the Social Learning Theory, as they demonstrate how students model their use of AI tools based on institutional norms and available technologies.

3.2 Effectiveness of Current AI-Based Tools and Strategies in Detecting and Preventing AI-Related Plagiarism

The rapid development of AI tools has prompted the creation of sophisticated plagiarism detection systems, but their effectiveness in addressing AI-related plagiarism remains a topic of significant debate. Brown and Foster (2024) highlight that while existing AI-based plagiarism detection systems have made strides in identifying conventional plagiarism, they often fall short in detecting content generated by advanced AI tools. They argue that the linguistic accuracy and contextual relevance of AI-generated text challenge current detection systems, necessitating continuous updates and advancements in detection algorithms.

Lee and Thomas (2024) evaluate emerging solutions, such as machine learning-powered detection systems, that analyze not just textual similarity but also writing patterns and stylistic consistencies. Their research reveals that these tools show promise in identifying AI-generated content by leveraging contextual analysis and metadata. However, they caution that the effectiveness of these systems depends heavily on the dataset used for training, which can limit their ability to adapt to newer AI-generated text structures. On the other hand, Wang and Lopez (2024) emphasize the ethical considerations surrounding the use of AI in plagiarism detection. While these tools enhance the ability to identify unoriginal content, they also raise concerns about privacy and the potential for false accusations. Their study highlights the need for transparency in how AI-based tools operate, advocating for a balanced approach that considers both the technical and ethical implications of their use.

Wu and Morgan (2024) explore the broader impact of AI-driven strategies on academic ethics and highlight the importance of integrating detection tools with educational initiatives. Their findings suggest that combining detection technology with student awareness programs can significantly reduce instances of plagiarism. They argue that fostering a culture of academic integrity, supported by clear policies and effective detection systems, is more sustainable than relying solely on technology. Overall, in alignment with the Social Learning Theory, these studies suggest that the effectiveness of these tools is enhanced when institutions create an environment that models and reinforces ethical behavior regarding AI use in education.

4. Methodology

This study employed a systematic review methodology to examine the prevalence, challenges, and effectiveness of AI-based tools and strategies in addressing AI-related plagiarism in educational settings. The systematic review adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure transparency and rigor throughout the process. A comprehensive search was

conducted across multiple databases, including Google Scholar, PubMed, IEEE Xplore, and Scopus, using keywords such as "AI plagiarism detection," "academic integrity," "AI in education" and "AI-generated content."

The search yielded an initial total of 132 articles. After removing duplicate records and those deemed irrelevant based on titles and abstracts, 56 articles were shortlisted for further screening. The inclusion criteria required that studies be peer-reviewed, published in English between 2020 and 2024, and focus specifically on AI-related plagiarism in educational contexts. Studies that lacked empirical data, or were unrelated to the research objectives, or addressed plagiarism in non-educational fields were excluded.

In the full-text assessment phase, 45 articles were reviewed for eligibility. Of these, 34 were excluded for reasons such as insufficient focus on AI-related plagiarism or lack of methodological rigor (Mpolomoka, 2024a). Ultimately, 11 studies met all criteria and were included in the final review. These studies provided a diverse range of details on the prevalence of AI-related plagiarism, the challenges faced by educational institutions, and the effectiveness of existing detection tools and strategies to detect plagiarism.

The systematic review process enabled a comprehensive synthesis of findings from relevant literature, ensuring that the results are grounded in credible and high-quality sources. This method also allowed for the identification of gaps in the current understanding of AI-related plagiarism and highlighted areas for future research.

4.1 Limitations

This study faced several limitations that may influence the generalizability of its findings. First, the reliance on secondary data restricted direct engagement with educational stakeholders, potentially limiting contextual insights. Second, the rapid evolution of AI technologies and their applications in education may render some findings quickly outdated. Third, geographic and cultural variability were not fully addressed, as many of the included studies lacked detailed regional context. Lastly, the exclusion of non-English publications may have led to the omission of relevant global perspectives on AI-related plagiarism. Despite these constraints, the study provides a valuable foundation for future research on this critical issue.

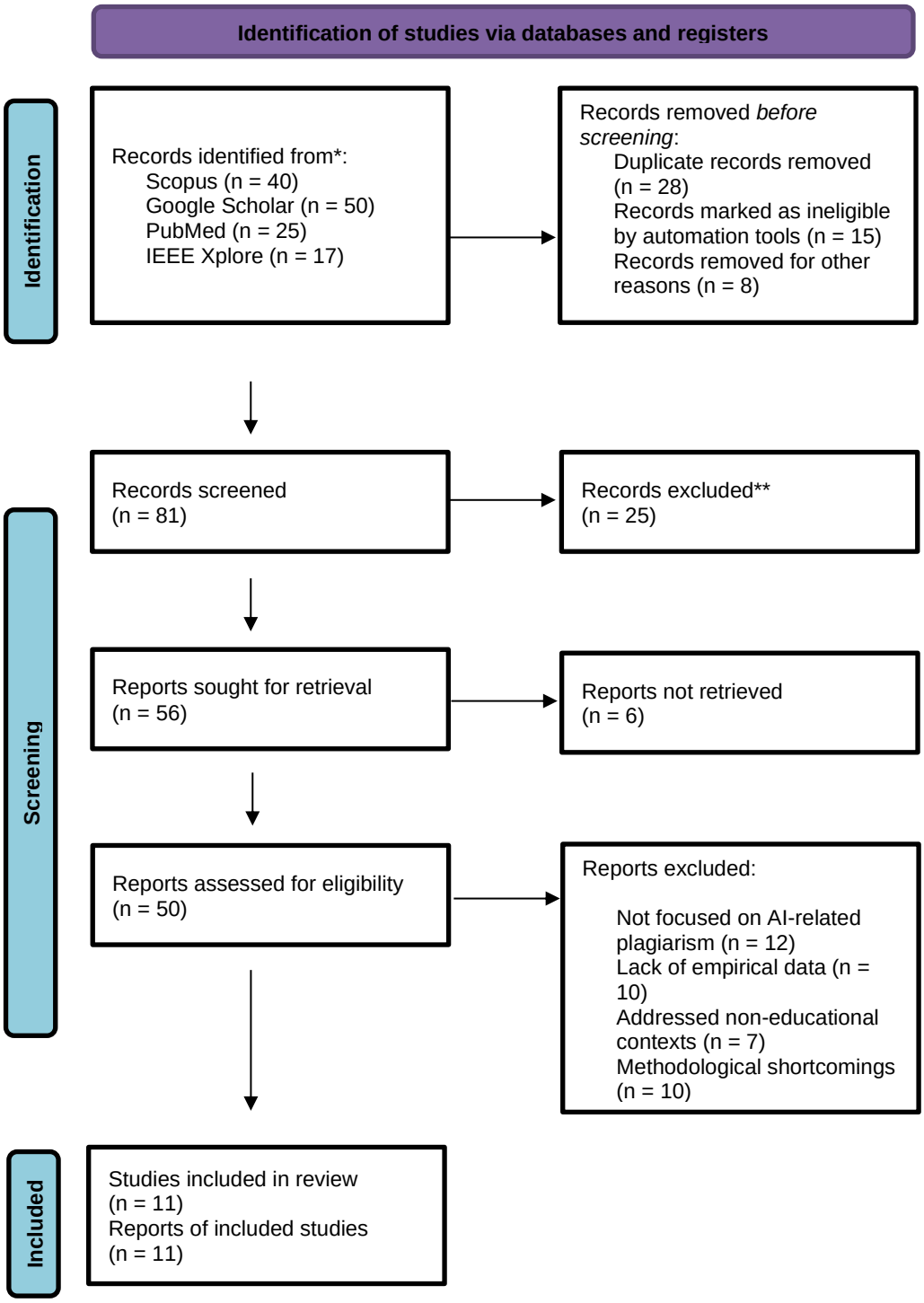

Figure 1: PRISMA Chart

Table 1: Summary of Study Characteristics: AI-Related Plagiarism in Education: A Systematic Review

Key: Authors, Title of Article, Country, Methods, Sample, and Key Findings

1. Authors: Ahmed, Z., & Johansson, E. (2024);
   Title: Academic misconduct in the era of artificial intelligence;
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Systematic review;
   Sample: Studies on AI-related academic misconduct;
   Key Findings: Highlighted increased instances of AI-related plagiarism in higher education, with gaps in institutional policies and detection methods.

2. Authors: Brown, N., & Foster, P. (2024);
   Title: Plagiarism challenges in AI-assisted educational systems;
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Mixed methods study;
   Sample: Educators and students from AI-integrated institutions;
   Key Findings: Found that while AI tools help streamline education, they inadvertently increase opportunities for academic dishonesty.

3. Authors: Lee, F., & Thomas, D. (2024);
   Title: AI and plagiarism detection: New solutions for an old problem;
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Experimental study;
   Sample: AI-based plagiarism detection tools;
   Key Findings: Demonstrated that advanced AI tools significantly improve plagiarism detection accuracy compared to traditional systems.

4. Authors: Leung, T., & Davies, M. (2024);
   Title: Evaluating the effectiveness of AI-based tools in plagiarism prevention;
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Survey-based analysis;
   Sample: Educators and IT specialists;
   Key Findings: Reported that while AI tools enhance plagiarism prevention, overreliance may reduce critical engagement with academic integrity.

5. Authors: Maass, W., Han, H., Yasar, H., & Multari, N. (2024);
   Title: Conceptual modeling: LNCS 15238;
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Conceptual modeling analysis;
   Sample: Frameworks for AI-based educational tools;
   Key Findings: Provided a comprehensive model to integrate AI tools for plagiarism detection, focusing on adaptability and transparency.

6. Authors: Martinez, P., & White, J. (2024);
   Title: AI in education: A double-edged sword for plagiarism?
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Qualitative study;
   Sample: Higher education instructors and students;
   Key Findings: Revealed that AI tools both mitigate and exacerbate plagiarism, depending on their ethical application and user awareness.

7. Authors: Singh, K., & Hartley, B. (2024);
   Title: The impact of AI on academic integrity policies;
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Policy analysis;
   Sample: Academic institutions with AI policies;
   Key Findings: Found that AI integration necessitates updates to academic integrity policies, emphasizing proactive education and monitoring.

8. Authors: Smith, J., & Taylor, A. (2024);
   Title: AI-driven plagiarism detection in academic writing;
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Experimental study;
   Sample: Academic writing and AI detection systems;
   Key Findings: Demonstrated the superior effectiveness of AI-driven systems in identifying complex plagiarism patterns.

9. Authors: Spirgi, L., Seufert, S., Delcker, J., & Heil, J. (2024)
   Title: Student perspectives on ethical academic writing with ChatGPT: An empirical study in higher education;
   Country: Not specified;
   Methods: Empirical study;
   Sample: Higher education students;
   Key Findings: Found that while students acknowledge the benefits of AI tools like ChatGPT, they struggle with ethical boundaries and proper usage.

10. Authors: Wang, R., & Lopez, C. (2024);
    Title: Ethical challenges of AI in higher education assessment;
    Country: Not specified;
    Methods: Thematic analysis;
    Sample: Case studies from higher education institutions;
    Key Findings: Identified ethical dilemmas in AI-assisted assessments, including biases, fairness concerns, and the risk of over-automation.

11. Authors: Wu, C., & Morgan, M. (2024);
    Title: AI and academic ethics: Exploring new frontiers;
    Country: Not specified;
    Methods: Literature review;
    Sample: Studies on AI and academic ethics;
    Key Findings: Highlighted the need for clearer guidelines on AI usage in academia to prevent ethical violations and support academic integrity.

5. Results and Discussion

This section provides detailed results and proceeds to discuss the results. It recalls the objectives set earlier, which are used as a yardstick.

5.1 Prevalence and Challenges of AI-Related Plagiarism in Educational Settings

The prevalence of AI-related plagiarism is rapidly rising in educational settings, as evidenced by several studies that highlight the increasing sophistication of AI tools

capable of generating text indistinguishable from human-authored content. Leung and Davies (2024) found that the accessibility and affordability of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, have made it easier for students to produce academic assignments with minimal effort, leading to a significant rise in cases of unoriginal work. This aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which posits that individuals learn behaviors through observation and imitation, particularly in environments where such practices are normalized or rewarded. The proliferation of AI tools, coupled with inadequate institutional safeguards, creates conditions where students may view AI-assisted plagiarism as an acceptable tool for academic study.

Smith and Taylor (2024) further emphasize the challenges faced by educators in distinguishing between genuine student efforts and AI-generated submissions. Their findings reveal that while plagiarism detection tools have evolved, they often struggle to identify content generated by advanced AI models, which are designed to mimic human writing styles convincingly. This gap highlights a misalignment with the principles of Social Learning Theory, which advocates for environments that model ethical behavior. Without robust detection systems, students may not perceive the consequences of AI-related plagiarism, thereby reinforcing such practices.

Additionally, Spirgi et al. (2024) explored student perspectives on using AI tools like ChatGPT for academic writing. They noted that many students view these tools as harmless aids rather than enablers of academic dishonesty. One student remarked, "*Using AI is no different from getting help from a tutor—it's just faster and more efficient*." Such narratives underscore a critical challenge: the blurred line between legitimate AI-assisted learning and unethical practices. This finding resonates with the Social Learning Theory by highlighting the influence of peer narratives and perceived norms on behavior.

From an ethical standpoint, Wang and Lopez (2024) pointed out that educational institutions face significant difficulties in addressing AI-related plagiarism without stifling the legitimate use of AI for learning. They argue that policies must strike a balance between encouraging innovation and maintaining academic integrity. For instance, this balance is crucial for fostering environments where students observe and internalize ethical practices, as Bandura's theory suggests.

Wu and Morgan (2024) highlight a unique challenge: the ethical dilemmas faced by instructors and administrators in assessing AI-generated work. This corroborates with findings by Muvombo, et. al. (2024) regarding nurturing parental involvement in AI literacy among children in multicultural classrooms. They noted that "*the lines between creativity, collaboration and plagiarism are increasingly blurred*," a sentiment that mirrors the complexity of applying Social Learning Theory in modern educational contexts. If instructors struggle to model ethical behavior due to unclear guidelines or insufficient tools, the theory's emphasis on modeling as a primary mechanism for learning is undermined. These challenges are intricately tied to the dynamics of observation, imitation, and reinforcement outlined in Social Learning Theory. To address the prevalence of AI-related plagiarism effectively, institutions must not only invest in

advanced detection tools but also foster a culture of ethical behavior through clear policies, educational campaigns, and consistent enforcement.

5.3 Effectiveness of Current AI-Based Tools and Strategies in Detecting and Preventing AI-Related Plagiarism

The effectiveness of current AI-based tools to detect and prevent AI-related plagiarism is a critical area of focus as educational institutions grapple with the challenges posed by advanced AI technologies. According to Lee and Thomas (2024), AI-based plagiarism detection systems, such as Turnitin and Grammarly, have significantly improved in their ability to identify patterns of text reuse and detect similarities in writing. Chanda et al. (2024) brought out similar challenges in their study on the effect of management information systems on student academic performance in higher learning institutions. However, these systems often fall short when tasked with identifying content generated by sophisticated AI models, which are designed to mimic human writing. This limitation reveals the need for continuous updates to detection algorithms to keep pace with advancements in AI. This could help in aligning with Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which emphasizes the importance of adaptive strategies in learning and behavior reinforcement.

Furthermore, Brown and Foster (2024) argue that while detection tools are valuable, they are not foolproof. Their study highlights cases where AI-generated content bypassed existing systems, leading to undetected instances of plagiarism. They state, "*The rapid evolution of AI tools challenges the static nature of many detection systems, requiring a shift towards more dynamic and context-aware approaches*." This finding contrasts with the principles of Social Learning Theory, which suggests that effective tools and strategies must evolve in response to observed behaviors to foster ethical academic practices.

Spirgi et al. (2024) provided insights into the perceptions of students regarding the effectiveness of AI-based detection tools. Their findings reveal a mixed perspective: while many students acknowledged the deterrent effect of such tools, others expressed skepticism about their fairness and accuracy. One student remarked, *"The tools sometimes flag original work as plagiarized, which makes us question their reliability."* This feedback emphasizes the need for transparency in how detection algorithms's function, ensuring that students trust and respect the systems in place.

Ahmed and Johansson (2024) explored institutional strategies and found that integrating AI-based detection tools with academic integrity policies can significantly reduce plagiarism rates. They emphasized the importance of educating students on the ethical use of AI, a preventative approach that aligns with the modeling and reinforcement mechanisms outlined in Bandura's theory. As one participant noted, *"When institutions prioritize awareness and training, students are less likely to misuse AI tools."* This highlights the role of proactive strategies in addressing the root causes of plagiarism rather than solely relying on punitive measures. This is similar to what Mpolomoka (2024b) established in his discussion on academic capitalism. Interesting, the SADC Protocol on education covers similar issues and provides a yardstick (Banda, et. al., 2023)

Additionally, Singh and Hartley (2024) examined the impact of AI on academic integrity policies and found that clear guidelines on the acceptable use of AI tools are critical for fostering an ethical academic environment. Their research revealed that students often resort to AI-generated plagiarism due to ambiguous or outdated institutional policies. Comparatively, Chanda et. al. (2024) uncovered dynamics and strategies for effective technology integration in higher education with an aim of working towards curriculum design for the digital age. These findings align with Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism, which posits that behavior, environment and cognitive factors interact to shape outcomes. Institutions must therefore ensure that their policies and tools are designed to reinforce ethical behavior consistently.

Further, Maass et al. (2024) highlighted an emerging trend in conceptual modeling and natural language processing to improve plagiarism detection. They proposed integrating AI systems with machine learning algorithms capable of understanding context and nuance in written content. This approach not only enhances detection accuracy but also aligns with the adaptive learning mechanisms advocated by Bandura's theory, reinforcing ethical practices through consistent and reliable feedback mechanisms.

6. Conclusion

This study systematically reviewed the prevalence, challenges, and effectiveness of AI-based tools in addressing AI-related plagiarism in educational settings. The findings revealed that while AI-driven tools have advanced significantly in detecting and preventing plagiarism, they face challenges in keeping up with sophisticated AI technologies capable of generating human-like text. Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1977) provided a useful lens to examine how adaptive strategies, policy integration, and proactive education can reinforce ethical academic behaviors. Ultimately, addressing AI-related plagiarism requires a holistic approach that combines technological innovation with robust academic integrity frameworks and student education.

This study contributes to the growing discourse on AI's implications for academic integrity by highlighting the gaps and potentials of AI-based plagiarism detection systems. It demonstrates the need for continuous improvements in these tools to adapt to the evolving capabilities of AI-generated content. Additionally, the study integrates Bandura's Social Learning Theory into discussions on institutional strategies, offering a theoretical foundation for understanding behavioral influences in combating plagiarism. It provides actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and developers to foster a fair and ethical academic environment amidst AI advancements.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Dr. Selina Banda is an educationist. Her expertise is in food and nutrition, theatre for development, adult literacy and community nutrition. She has taught at various levels. She is a lecturer at the Copperbelt University with more than 15 years of experience in lecturing.

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