Managing Academic Integrity in the AI Era: ChatGPT Usage and Plagiarism among Malaysian Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

This study plans investigate the factors influencing plagiarism behaviour among undergraduate from Faculty of Busines and Communication at Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). With the advance of technology students are prompt to use AI tools like ChatGPT in completing their assignment. By referring of the Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this study has examined the roles of attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, moral obligations, and past violations in contributing to plagiarism behaviour using ChatGPT. A survey was distributed with 331 responses. Data was analyzed using Statistical Pack for Social Science (SPSS). The findings showed that attitudes, perceived behavioural control, moral obligations, and past violations had an influence of plagiaristic behaviour using AI tools such as ChatGPT However, no significant effect was found for subjective norms. This confirmed that policies and guidelines to address the challenge of AI-assisted plagiarism was required to uphold academic integrity in a university setting.

Keyword- Academic Integrity, Artificial Intelligence in Education, ChatGPT, Plagiarism, Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB).

INTRODUCTION

ChatGPT was developed by OpenAI and launched in November 2022 to the world. Within 2 months it has reached 100 million users and as August 2023 it was used by 180.5 users both the public and academic communities. ChatGPT has assisted users by taking on tasks such as translation, summarization and content creation. Approximately 4.61 billion users visit ChatGPT website monthly (Duarte, 2025). With its ability to assist researchers in preparing and writing the content, ChatGPT has raised concerns as to whether it jeopardize academic integrity. AI-facilitated plagiarism and cheating has increased such as academic integrity risks as more and more students are using AI to write essays, assignments and articles (Lo, 2023; Alser & Waisberg, 2023). While some university banned AI tools like ChatGPT, other has taken initiatives to promote ethical usage of AI in academia (Tlili et al., 2023; Jimenez, 2023).

Debates regarding academic authorship, originality, accountability and proper acknowledgement has influences institutions and scholars to call for clearer ethical guidelines and policy revisions in order to address the usage of AI in academic writing and research (Van Dis et al., 2023; Lund et al., 2023; Perkins, 2023). Concerns regarding plagiarism that was associated with ChatGPT also has become the top related search topics in Google Trends, as public and scholars become aware about academic dishonesty related to AI facilitated publication.

There is therefore an immediate need to understand the behavioural factors that drive students to use AI facilitated tools like ChatGPT in order to prepare for their assignments that may violate academic integrity. By referring to the Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this study will examine whether attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, moral obligation and past violations can influence plagiarism behaviour among undergraduate students in the Faculty of Business & Communication (FPK), Universiti

Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). The study therefore aims to identify predictors of AI assisted academic dishonesty and to inform academic institutions policies and interventions in order to promote ethical academic practices in digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ChatGPT has gained widespread popularity in both general and scientific disciplines in higher education. Previous studies have ChatGPT can be used to personalize instruction to enhance student involvement. ChatGPT adaptation by academicians to help with all their tasks, however, should be approached with cautions as it may affect academic integrity (Rudolph et al., 2023). This created the need to understand and explore the influence of AI tools in education which was emphasized by past research from Williamson et al. (2023) and Cotton et al. (2023). Meanwhile Tlili et al. (2023) has stressed the importance of maintaining academic integrity while using AI tools. At the same time Crawford et al. (2023), Sullivan et al. (2023), and Cooper (2023) propose for clear ethical guidelines with robust frameworks. Naumowa (2023) study further addressed the need for critical thinking application when it comes to the use of AI tools.

Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour

Intention to act that predicts actual behaviour generally are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Beck & Ajzen, 1991; Cronan et al., 2018). This theory will be used to explain about students' ethical decision making while undertaking the tasks, with extensions to include factors like moral obligation and past behaviour in order to predict the accuracy of such behaviour. Previous study by Alleyne and Phillips (2011) has showed that Theory of Planned Behaviour has predicted students' involvement in plagiarism behaviour. Palmer et al. (2019) has used the same theory by including two extra predictors that are peer and institutional influences. This study therefore will adopts an extended TPB model to examine plagiarism behaviour involving ChatGPT.

Plagiarism Behaviour

Plagiarism can be defined as "copying (or using) others' work that (accidentally or otherwise)" which resulting the third party being deceived about the authorship or ownership of the work (Yeo, 2007). With the advancement of AI tools like ChatGPT, students' method to commit plagiarism was made easy and convenient. The original contents are easily modified and shared without the consent of the original author. AI tools has made it easier to users to plagiarize online materials (Stephens, Young, & Calabrese, 2007). ChatGPT used by students can easily copy and paste online materials into their assignments, reports or projects without proper credits (Balbay & Kilis, 2019). Duplication or online paraphrasing tools are also used by students to commit such plagiarism behaviour (Elkhatat et al., 2021). ChatGPT that is capable to use natural language processing in order to generate text therefore has raised concerns about academic dishonesty (Foltýnek et al., 2020). ChatGPT has also been criticized for generating inaccurate, fake and outdated content. Elkhatat (2022) and Foltýnek et al. (2020) believe that academic institutions must implement effective strategies to hinder dishonest academic practices in order to preserve authentic learning.

Attitude Towards Plagiarism

Attitude is defined as "the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation or appraisal of the behaviour in question" (Ajzen, 1991). Attitudes play an important role in making ethical decision as individuals can evaluate ethicality of an action based on their personal belief and values (Namlu & Odabasi, 2007). Previous study such as Bolin (2004) found that attitude, self-control, and perceived opportunity have approximately 40% contributed to academic dishonesty. Hosny and Fatima (2014) had explained that although plagiarism is known to be unethical, students still commit it. Various psychological factors are said to influence students' attitudes toward plagiarism but scholars didn't agree on their exact impact to their learning (Moss et al., 2018). However, students with bigger attention to commit plagiarism have more favourable attitudes toward such behaviour. Motivation can play an important role as if such plagiarism behaviour is accepted among peer, such students will accept it as normal behaviour (Camara et al., 2017).

Subjective Norms

Subjective norms refer to a person's "perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour" (Ajzen, 1991). Fattahi Ardakani et al. (2020) explained that subjective norms occur when on individua adopts specific behaviour due to social pressure. Therefore, peer influences play an important role in shaping student ethical behaviour. This conclusion was supported by McCabe and Trevino (1997), that emphasized that peer influences were among the most powerful influences to commit academic dishonesty. Engler, Landau and Epstein (2008) further explained peer relationship had created temptations to cheat as unethical behaviour is normalized within the group. Only when such unethical behaviour was disapproved by peer will deter students from committing such conduct.

Recently, researchers began exploring the role of subjective norms in relation to AI usage. For example, Gundu (2023), investigated the relationship of subjective norms and information security behaviour involving ChatGPT. Similarly, Jo (2023) also researched the ethical implication of AI tools within an academic setting. Ofosu-Ampong et. Al. (2023) also explored the impacts of social influence in using ChatGPT in education.

Perceived Behavioural Control Towards Plagiarism

Ajzen (1991) defined perceived behavioural control (PBC) as "the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour." According to him, people tend to have greater control over their actions when they believe they have sufficient resources, opportunities, and minimal obstacles. Research has identified PBC as one of the significant factors influencing cheating behaviour (Camara et al., 2017; Cronan et al., 2018).

The introduction of AI tools like ChatGPT has provided students with powerful resources and assistance to produce content. They can easily submit their assignments and scholarly publications even without making significant contributions to the work (Oravec, 2023). The latest AI systems can complete assignments by generating text dynamically, taking into account the context and tone (Floridi, 2023). This technological capability gives students a heightened sense of control and efficiency in academic tasks. Such advantages have raised concerns regarding ethics, particularly the authenticity and integrity of AI-assisted work (Jimenez, 2023). Obviously, the ease of using tools like ChatGPT can significantly influence students' perceived ability to cheat.

Moral Obligations

Moral obligation is one of the variables proposed to extend the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model in order to improve its predictive power. Moral obligation is defined by Beck and Ajzen (1991) as a personal moral responsibility to perform or refuse to perform certain behaviours. This definition explains an individual's personal moral standard of duty or guilt regarding the implications of their actions, which is relevant in the context of academic dishonesty, such as cheating and plagiarism, since moral considerations have the tendency to influence an individual's decision-making process (Cronan et al., 2018).

Studies have supported that moral obligation should be included in TPB, since it could enhance the model's ability to predict an individual's ethical intention (Beck & Ajzen, 1991; Cronan et al., 2018). In the research by Armitage and Conner (1999) they suggested that moral norms should be used in relation to other TPB components. The study by Passow et al. (2006) found that students who viewed cheating as immoral were less likely to engage in it, regardless of the situation. Similarly, students who considered immoral actions were less likely to perform them, which showed the significance of moral obligation in shaping ethics (Stephens, 2018).

Past Violations

Another predictor that supplements the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is past violation (Armitage & Conner, 1999; Bagozzi & Kimmel, 1995). Ajzen (2002) explained that habitual actions might clarify how past behaviour influences future conduct regardless of intention. However, he also argued that the frequency of past behaviour does not necessarily offer insight into behavioural determinants. Nevertheless, several studies have found a strong relationship between prior and future misconduct in academic writing, such as cheating (Passow

et al., 2006). Cronan et al. (2018) found past behaviour to be the second strongest predictor of plagiarism intention, following attitude.

Sullivan et al. (2023) had reviewed 100 studies relating to ChatGPT's impact on academic integrity. They found that cheating using ChatGPT in essay writing could even pass a medical licensing exam. Another research, conducted by Intelligent (2023) also found that 30% of the students in their study were using ChatGPT for written homework, while 60% of them had used it for more than half of their assignments with 5% of students using it for every assignment in an academic setting. This happened despite 75% of them viewed using ChatGPT was considered cheating indicating that most students in the study used ChatGPT as a supplementary tool instead of a substitute, out of the fear of being caught cheating.

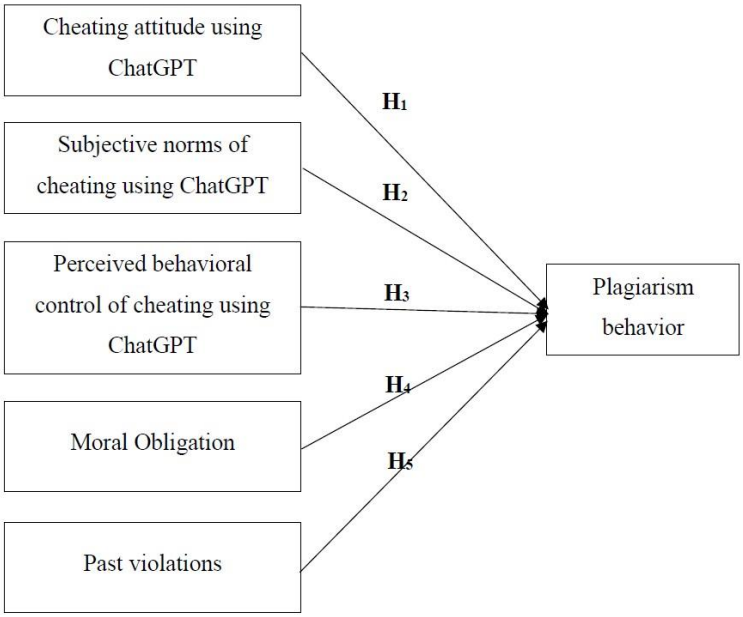

Figure 1: Research Framework

Figure 1 shows the factors influencing plagiarism behaviour using ChatGPT framework. This framework serves as an extension of Azjen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by including moral obligation, and past violations into the mix. This is important as it would be appropriate for academic integrity research, since influence on behaviour encompasses attitude, norms, control, morality and prior action. Therefore, based on the research framework, five hypotheses were developed to examine the factors influencing plagiarism behaviour related to the use of ChatGPT among university students. The hypotheses are as below: -

H_1: Students' positive attitude toward using ChatGPT to cheat will positively influence plagiarism behaviour.
H_2: Students' stronger subjective norms of using ChatGPT to cheat will positively influence plagiarism behaviour.
H_3: Students' stronger perceived behavioural control of using ChatGPT to cheat will positively influence plagiarism behaviour.
H_4: Students' stronger moral obligation regarding the use of ChatGPT to cheat will negatively influence plagiarism behaviour.
H_5: Students with past violations involving the use of ChatGPT to cheat will positively influence plagiarism behaviour.

The purpose of these hypotheses is to explore the psychological and behavioural factors that lead to student's misappropriate use of AI tools (ChatGPT) within an academic setting.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative approach by measuring the outcomes based on an online questionnaire (via Google form) which consisted of 45 items that were related to the dependent and independent variables. Data

collected used a 5-point Likert scale which measures from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and presented through tables, charts and graphs for the end analysis. The questionnaire used were in English based which consisted of three sections. Section A collects respondents' demographic information and ChatGPT usage experience, 34 questions in Section B examine factors influencing plagiarism behaviour using ChatGPT, focusing on variables such as cheating attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, moral obligation, and past violations. Lastly, 6 questions in Section C investigate students' plagiarism behaviour as the dependent variable. The research targets are undergraduate students from the Faculty of Business & Communication (FPK), UniMAP, as the sampling frame. These students are selected due to their awareness and exposure to ChatGPT usage, while completing the assignments that are multidisciplinary in nature. The pilot test was conducted on 30 students to establish the clarity and reliability of the instruments used. The reliability of measure shows high internal consistency of the data collected. By referring to Table 1, the results are as follows: -

Table 1 Cronbach Alpha Test

Construct	Cronbach Alpha
Plagiarism Behaviour	0.917
Attitudes Towards Plagiarism	0.884
Subjective Norms	0.904
Perceived Behavioural Control Towards Plagiarism	0.954
Moral Obligations	0.857
Past Violations	0.881

The construct ‘Perceived Behavioural Control Towards Plagiarism’, Plagiarism Behaviour and Subjective Norms recorded the alpha value ($\alpha = 0.954$), ($\alpha = 0.917$) and ($\alpha = 0.904$) demonstrates excellent reliability. While Cheating Attitudes ($\alpha = 0.842$), Subjective Norms ($\alpha = 0.899$), and Moral Obligations ($\alpha = 0.825$) also show good to high reliability. These results suggest that the measurement scales are reliable and suitable for further analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	111	33.5
	Female	220	66.5
Race	Malay	121	36.6
	Chinese	111	33.5
	Indian	87	26.3
	Others	12	3.6
	Bachelor of Business (International Business) with Honours	141	42.6
	Bachelor of New Media	83	25.1

	Communication with Honours		
Year of Study	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3	63 98 170	19.0 29.6 51.4
Do you know about ChatGPT?	Yes No	331 0	100.0 0
Do you have experience using ChatGPT in your assignment?	Yes No	331 0	100.0 0

The data for this study were collected through Google Forms and the link to the online survey was distributed to undergraduate students across FPK within the university. Purposed of the study was briefed in the header part of the form. Voluntarily out of the 2822 FPK students, a total of 331 students participated in the study. This meant sample size met the minimum sample size based of the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Results as in Table 2, shows that 220 (66.5%) of the respondents were female and 111 (33.5%) were male. The participants were split into three main programs offered which was International Business (42.6%), Engineering Entrepreneurship (32.3%), and New Media Communication (25.1%). Most students are in Year 3 (51.4%), followed by Year 2 (29.6%) and Year 1 (19.0%). All respondents (100%) are aware of and have used ChatGPT for assignments. Their answers to the question are tested using the Social Sciences Statistical Package (SPSS) program.

Descriptive Statistics Results

Table 3 Descriptive Analysis

Factor	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**
Plagiarism Behaviour	3.6520	0.76335
Cheating Attitudes using ChatGPT	3.7432	0.55898
Subjective norms of cheating using ChatGPT	3.7966	0.58567
Perceived Behavioural Control of Cheating Using ChatGPT	3.8586	0.59945
Moral Obligation	3.7437	0.56275
Past Violations	3.7266	0.78142

An analysis of the central tendencies indicated that the mean scores between all the factors were clustered closely to each other due to the narrow range from 3.65 to 3.86 as shown in Table 3. This suggested there a slight disagreement between the students across the measures used. Factor with the highest reported mean score was Perceived Behavioural Control of Cheating Using ChatGPT (M = 3.8586, SD = 0.549945), suggested that students on average felt a high degree of control of their use of ChatGPT for cheating. The lowest observed mean scores was for Plagiarism Behaviour (M = 3.6521, SD = 0.76335), The means of Cheating Attitude (M = 3.7432, SD =.055898), Subjective Norms (M = 3.7966, SD = 0.58567), Moral Obligation (M =3.7437, SD =

0.56275) and Past Violations (M = 3.7266, SD = 0.78142) falls between these two means.

On variability, the standard deviation revealed that Cheating Attitudes using ChatGPT (SD = 0.55898) had the lowest standard deviation which indicated the high degree of homogeneity response in the students. The greatest variability of responses was from two measures which Past Violations (SD = 0.78142) and Plagiarism Behaviour (SD = 0.76335) which suggested that self-reported engagement of these behaviours varied significantly across the student sample. In conclusion, the descriptive analysis serves as the basis for the next analysis which is the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient analysis.

Table 4 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Analysis

		ATT	**SN**	**PBC**	**MO**	**PV**	**PB**
ATT	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 331	.724** < .001 331	.665** < .001 331	.768** < .001 331	.692** < .001 331	.715** < .001 331
SN	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.724** < .001 331	1 331	.573** < .001 331	.699** < .001 331	.533** < .001 331	.495** < .001 331
PBC	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.665** < .001 331	.573** < .001 331	1 331	.649** < .001 331	.622** < .001 331	.606** < .001 331
MO	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.768** < .001 331	.699** < .001 331	.649** < .001 331	1 331	.674** < .001 331	.659** < .001 331
PV	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.692** < .001 331	.533** < .001 331	.622** < .001 331	.674** < .001 331	1 331	.821** < .001 331
PB	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.715** < .001 331	.495** < .001 331	.606** < .001 331	.659** < .001 331	.821** < .001 331	1 331

Table 4 shows the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient analysis which indicated that all the variables were positively and significantly correlated $p < 0.001$ level.Plagiarism Behaviour (PB) demonstrated a strong positive relationship with all the other factors. The strongest correlation observed was with Past Violations (PV) (r =0.821 p <0.001) which indicated that past violation was strong predictor to future plagiarism behaviour.

Moreover, PB also demonstrated a strong positive correlation with Cheating Attitudes using ChatGPT (ATT) (r=.715, p<.001), Moral Obligation (MO) (r=.659, p<.001), and Perceived Behavioural Control of Cheating (PBC) (r=.606, p<.001). This suggested that students that engaged in plagiarism, were likely to hold favorable attitude towards using ChatGPT, since they perceived that using ChatGPT was within their control and more likely had lower morality stance in using I (Moral Obligations were reversed coded). Subjective Norm (SN) (r =0.495, p = 0.001) was found to have a moderate to strong significant relationship with PB suggesting that perceived social pressure had a weaker influence than the student's own attitudes, perceive control and past actions.

Significant inter-correlation was also noted amongst the predictor variables. The strongest between these predictors were ATT and MO (r = 0.768, p = 0.001) that created an overlap between what the students believe as acceptable and what they believe was morally right. Strong relationships were also found between ATT and SN (r = 0.742, p <0.001) and MO and SN (r = 0.669, p < 0.001) which suggested consistency in the student's attitudinal and normative construct.

Table 5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.851[a]	0.724	0.720	0.40386	1.995

Table 6 ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	139.282	5	27.856	170.790	< 0.001[b]
1	Residual	53.009	325	0.163		
	Total	192.291	330			

Table 7 Coefficients

Variable	Beta	t-Ratio	Significance
(Constant)		-1.224	< 0.001
Cheating Attitudes using ChatGPT	0.619	10.265	< 0.001
Subjective Norms of cheating using ChatGPT	-0.095	-1.739	0.083
Perceived Behavioural Control of cheating using ChatGPT	0.249	4.916	< 0.001
Moral Obligation	0.193	4.677	< 0.001
Past Violations	0.691	16.721	< 0.001

The model summary as shown in Table 5, indicated that the model had a strong fit for the data. The multiple correlation coefficient was high **(**R=.851), and the model were able to explain 72.4% of the variance in Plagiarism Behaviour (***R*²**=.724). The adjusted R2 value suggested (Adjusted ***R*²**=.720) confirmed the model's robustness in explanatory power. The Durbin-Watson statistics of 1.995 indicated that the assumptions errors were met. The ANOVA results as shown in Table 6, further confirms the statistically significant of the model with F (5, 325) = 170.790, p < 0.001. This indicated that the predictors combined were able to predict the dependent variable.

By referring to Table 7, past violations appeared as the most significant predictor to Plagiarism Behaviour, with largest standard coefficient (β = 0.691, t = 16.721, p < 0.001). Cheating Attitudes using ChatGPT, also demonstrated a strong, significant positive relationship with the dependent variable (β = 0.619, t = 10.265, p < 0.001). Perceived Behavioural Control of Cheating using Chat GPT (β = 0.249, t = 4.916, p < 0.001) and

Moral Obligations (β = 0.193, t = 4.677, p < 0.001) were also found to be significant positive predictors to the dependent variable with less influence than past behaviours and attitudes.

Meanwhile, Subjective Norms of Cheating using ChatGPT (β = -0.095, t = -1.739, p < 0.083) was not statistically significant predictor to this model. This suggested that when controlling personal attitudes, perceived control, morality, and past behaviour was stronger in predicting plagiarism behaviours, while social pressures from others did not contribute to explanation of plagiarism.

Therefore, the regression coefficient provided a direct test to the hypotheses that were presented in this study. H5 was strongly supported since Past Violation (β = 0.691, t = 16.721, p < 0.001) was presented as the most powerful predictor which meant that past behaviour as the most dominant factor of future behaviour, which surpasses all attitudinal and normative factors in the model. H1 was also supported with Cheating Attitudes using ChatGPT since it showed a strong and significant positive influence on plagiarism (β = 0.619, t = 10.265, p < 0.001), which showed that positive attitudes towards cheating predict plagiarism, even when taking account for social norms, controls, morality, and past behaviours. H3 was supported, as Perceived Control of Cheating using

ChatGPT was also a significant predictor (β = 0.249, t = 4.916, p < 0.001), where it showed that student confidence in their ability to use ChatGPT for cheating increases the significance of them conducting plagiarism. In addition, H4 was also supported as Moral Obligation was a significant predictor (β = 0.193, t = 4.677, p < 0.001). This showed students with higher levels of morality were less likely to participate in plagiarism using AI tools such as ChatGPT

CONCLUSION

In conclusion this highlighted the efficacy of TPB in explaining plagiaristic behaviour amongst students in FPK, in the context of using AI Tools such as ChatGPT. The key findings of this research had demonstrated that attitude towards cheating, perceived behavioural control, moral obligation, and past behaviour had a significant impact on plagiaristic behaviour amongst students. Prominently, lackadaisical attitudes towards the implications of abusing AI tools increased the likelihood of behavioural misconduct, while morality functioned as deterrent. On the other hand, subjective norms had no significant interaction with plagiaristic intent. This showcased the need for interventions to mitigate risk of using AI tools, shift student's attitudes, enhance integrity, and foster ethical code of conduct. This could be achieved by training students in improving citations, information literacy, and maintaining ethical integrity. This meant that early intervention should be a campus wide strategy rather than emphasizing only punitive measures. This is to ensure a culture of honesty and ethical integrity could be maintained in an academic setting. Social desirability biased may have influenced the overall results, however, consistency of the findings with previous research validates this research. Therefore, future research should be focused on expanding the research to include other academic disciplines, institutions, and diverse demographics to improve the overall findings. Other than that, more efforts are needed in the study of plagiaristic behaviour, and a specific discipline approach should be developed to further improve academic integrity in a digital era.

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