

A New Era of Exam Cheating: The Use of ChatGPT and the Rise of Academic Dishonesty

Zakia DJEBBARI* 

University of Tlemcen Abu Bekr Belkaid, Algeria
zakia.djebbari@univ-tlemcen.dz

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ABSTRACT: *Artificial Intelligence (AI) has already made waves in various sectors, and its role in education is expanding rapidly. AI tools offer a range of benefits, including personalization, real-time feedback, and scalability, which can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of language learning. In recent years, AI tools like ChatGPT have transformed how people access information, solve problems, and even engage in creative endeavours. While these technologies offer immense benefits, they also pose new challenges, particularly in academic settings. One of the most pressing issues is the use of AI to cheat on exams. In this article, we will explore the implications of using ChatGPT as a cheating tool, examine its potential impact on education, and present a case study to highlight how this issue is already affecting academic integrity.*

KEYWORDS: AI, Education, ChatGPT, Assessment, Exams, Academic Integrity.

* Corresponding author

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Introduction: AI Revolution in Education

In recent years, artificial intelligence is considered as one of the most transformative forces across all sectors of society, including education. What began as a futuristic concept has rapidly evolved into a dynamic and disruptive reality. From personalized learning platforms and intelligent tutoring systems to automated grading and language translation tools, AI is reshaping how students learn, how teachers instruct, and how institutions manage education.

The introduction of advanced generative AI models such as ChatGPT has accelerated this revolution, offering learners immediate access to information, feedback, and even essay writing. These tools hold the promise of greater educational access, equity, and efficiency, particularly in under-resourced areas. They empower students to learn at their own pace, support teachers in delivering differentiated instruction, and assist administrators in making data-driven decisions. In this sense, (Luckin, et. al., 2016,) state that ‘the integration of AI into education signals a profound shift, where adaptive learning technologies promise to meet individual student needs in ways traditional classrooms never could.’

However, this revolution is not without its challenges. The ethical use of AI, concerns about academic integrity, data privacy, and the potential misuse of AI for cheating in exams are hotly debated topics. At the same time, many educators and policymakers are grappling with how to integrate these tools responsibly while preserving the human essence of education. This article will delve into the different forms of AI-assisted cheating, its implications for education, and how institutions can address this growing concern. It will set a framework on this current issue, offer the main challenges teachers and learners are facing, and propose practical consideration to minimise AI-assisted cheating phenomenon.

The Growing Problem of AI-Assisted Cheating

The proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, has introduced new challenges to academic integrity. While AI has the potential to revolutionize learning and enhance productivity, it has also paved the way for new forms of cheating, fundamentally altering how academic dishonesty manifests in educational environments. In this sense, the misuse of AI in examination settings risks undermining academic integrity, inflating credentials, and eroding trust in educational assessment systems. This is strongly put by Selwyn, (2021) who explains how AI will influence education and its future, he states that: ‘there are genuine concerns that AI technologies could exacerbate problems of cheating, plagiarism and gaming the system in exams and coursework.’

AI-assisted cheating refers to the use of AI-powered tools to gain an unfair advantage in exams, assignments, or academic work by generating content or providing solutions that students would not have produced independently. AI-powered tools like ChatGPT are capable of answering complex questions, providing explanations, and even generating essays or reports. As these technologies become more accessible, students may be tempted to use them during exams or assignments to bypass traditional methods of studying and problem-solving. The use of AI in this way undermines the principles of academic honesty and fairness, leading to concerns from educators and institutions worldwide. While some might argue that AI can be a helpful study aid, the line between academic support and cheating becomes blurred when AI is used to complete work that should be done by the student themselves.

Looking at the matter from an ethical standpoint, one may raise several issues regarding dishonesty. It is a recognisable truth that students who use AI to cheat gain an unfair advantage over those who study and work independently, since they will score better than autonomous learners. Besides, relying on AI to

answer exam questions can prevent students from developing the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for their future careers and this will affect the academic integrity level. In this fashion, Williamson et.al., (2020,p.1090 discuss the risks and concerns about digital technologies and assessment during COVID-19, they posit: ‘Concerns have been raised about how easily assessment processes can be gamed, and the problems of ensuring authenticity in remote examinations and coursework’.

Hence, within education and assessment, new terms have been coined within this era such as professional cheating, AI-Assisted Cheating, tech-cheating, to describe the current challenging situation of our classrooms. AI-assisted cheating occurs when students use AI technologies to complete assignments or exams in a way that undermines academic integrity and diminish personal efforts. These tools can easily provide answers, generate essays, rephrase text, and even engage in complex reasoning tasks, making it easier for students to bypass traditional methods of learning and critical thinking.

The widespread use of AI tools for cheating, in general and ChatGPT in particular, has several negative implications for the educational system and the integrity of academic work. Indeed, the primary concern is that AI-assisted cheating undermines the fundamental principle of academic integrity. When students use AI to cheat, it not only affects their learning but also damages the fairness of the entire academic system minimising ‘equal chances’ theory; those who work honestly are at a disadvantage when others exploit AI tools.

Besides, ChatGPT can generate answers and ideas without requiring students to engage deeply with the material. This will hinder students from developing the critical and analytical skills necessary for future careers. With the recent updates of AI-generated contents, it can be hard to distinguish ChatGPT answers from human-written work, especially when the AI's output is grammatically correct, coherent, and relevant. Any attempt to detect plagiarism using traditional plagiarism detection tools is often ineffective against AI-generated texts, making it difficult for instructors to identify instances of cheating. A recent investigation by *The Times* (April, 2025) has revealed that AI-enabled academic cheating is widespread among students at Russell Group universities in the UK, yet official disciplinary action remains minimal. Despite 90% of students reportedly using AI tools and nearly 20% admitting to directly copying chatbot content, less than one in 400 students faced penalties for AI misuse last year. Moreover, universities in Scotland have experienced a 700% increase in incidents of students using AI to cheat on tests, with 1,051 cases recorded last year compared to 131 in the previous academic year, (The Scottish Sun, 2025). These statistics seem to be frustrating and provoking and deserve careful consideration. Contextualising this issue, the Algerian universities are no exception to these trends, as instances of AI-assisted academic dishonesty have also been observed and this is reflecting a global pattern.

It is diagnosed that in onsite exams, students have found ways to misuse ChatGPT to gain unfair advantages. They often rely on hidden devices such as smartphones, smartwatches, and wireless earbuds to discreetly access AI-generated answers during examinations. Some preload ChatGPT responses onto their devices in anticipation of likely questions, while others receive real-time assistance through covert communication with individuals outside the exam room. Additionally, students may use ChatGPT beforehand to create condensed notes or cheat sheets to reference during the test. These practices demonstrate that AI-assisted cheating is not limited to remote settings but has also penetrated traditional in-person assessments. The following table explains the most common examples of ChatGPT cheating and other AI-Assisted cheating tasks.

Example	Explanation
Essay Generation	AI tools like ChatGPT can quickly generate coherent and detailed essays on a wide range of topics. A student could simply input an essay prompt, and the AI would provide a well-written response that might be submitted as their own work.
Answering Exam Questions	During online exams, students can use AI to quickly search for answers or receive detailed explanations of complex concepts, making it difficult for educators to verify the authenticity of the student's knowledge.
Rewriting Text:	AI tools can be used to paraphrase or enhance essays, making the content appear more sophisticated than the student's original writing. This is especially problematic for students who may have limited language proficiency
Research Assistance	AI can assist students by generating citations, suggesting academic sources, or even summarizing academic papers, enabling them to present work that looks well-researched without having engaged with the material themselves
Solving Problems	AI can be used to solve mathematical problems, programming tasks, or scientific equations, which can then be copied directly into assignments without the student actually solving the problem independently

Table 1. ChatGPT Possible Uses in Exams

To combat this new era of cheating, some institutions are implementing measures such as proctoring software, changing exam formats to focus on real-time problem-solving, or even banning the use of certain devices during exams. However, these measures often come with their own set of challenges and can create a tense environment for students.

Oddly enough, attempts are calling for turning all universities into 4th generation university, as this new era of educational development is driven by AI integration; exams and assessment are in subject of scrutiny.

4th Generation University Requirements and Exam Cheating

The concept of the 4th Generation University refers to a new era of higher education that is driven by digital transformation, AI integration, and a globalized, interconnected approach to learning. This generation of universities is characterized by a focus on innovation, flexible learning environments, and the utilization of cutting-edge technologies. Indeed, the Algerian ministry of Higher education is increasingly embracing the 4th generation universities, insisting on integrating digital learning-teaching and remote assessments, renewing the traditional methods of teaching and assessing. It is wiser to highlight the main features of 4th generation universities. They are summarised in the following diagram.

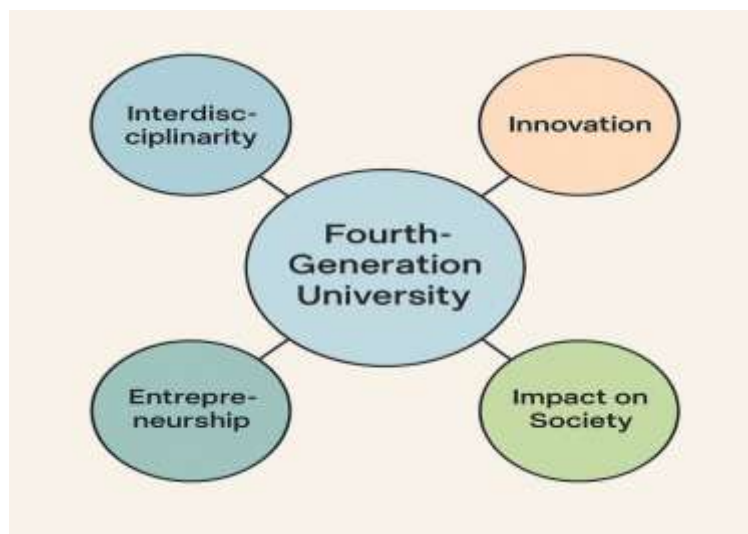


Figure 1. 4th Generation University Principles

As universities transition towards the 4th Generation model, emphasizing innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology-driven education, they also face new ethical and practical challenges, notably the rise of AI-assisted cheating. Tools like ChatGPT are increasingly misused by students to bypass genuine learning and assessment processes. This misuse threatens academic integrity, devalues credentials, and complicates efforts to modernize higher education. Algerian universities, like their global counterparts, must find a balance between integrating AI technologies to enhance education and establishing robust policies, detection tools, and ethical guidelines to curb dishonest practices. The challenge lies not only in adopting new technologies but also in cultivating a culture of integrity and responsible AI use among students.

Case Study: The Use Of ChatGPT in Exams by 3rd Year University Students

Methodology:

The present research is a case study on the use of ChatGPT during exams. This study was conducted when many teachers began to suspect that students were using AI tools like ChatGPT to answer questions, especially since some responses demonstrated an unusual level of sophistication and style compared to previous exams. During the correction process, teachers noticed a sudden increase in the quality and same proposed examples by many students although the question was personal. The issue came to a head when responsible teachers discovered that some student's essay, were strikingly similar to a detailed response generated by ChatGPT.

Upon further investigation, it was found that several other students had submitted work that appeared to be generated by AI. The students had either used ChatGPT to help formulate ideas or, in some cases, had submitted complete AI-generated responses. An informal interview was held with 20 learners and 10 teachers to further examine the suspicious students. The interview was divided into three categories; notably Awareness and use of ChatGPT in exams, perception and ethics, and measures taken upon the use of ChatGPT.

Results were interesting and promising, as most teachers are familiar with ChatGPT and its functions, 70% of teachers suspected AI use in the written exam. All teachers agree that AI use during exams is unethical. Concerning measures taken by teachers and institutions, 80% said there was no clear institutional policy and no measure is taken as it is the beginning of a new era of cheating. The solutions

offered are to use AI detectors and to ask more challenging personal questions in exams so that to limit learners use of AI-assisted cheating tools. The following graph demonstrates the results:

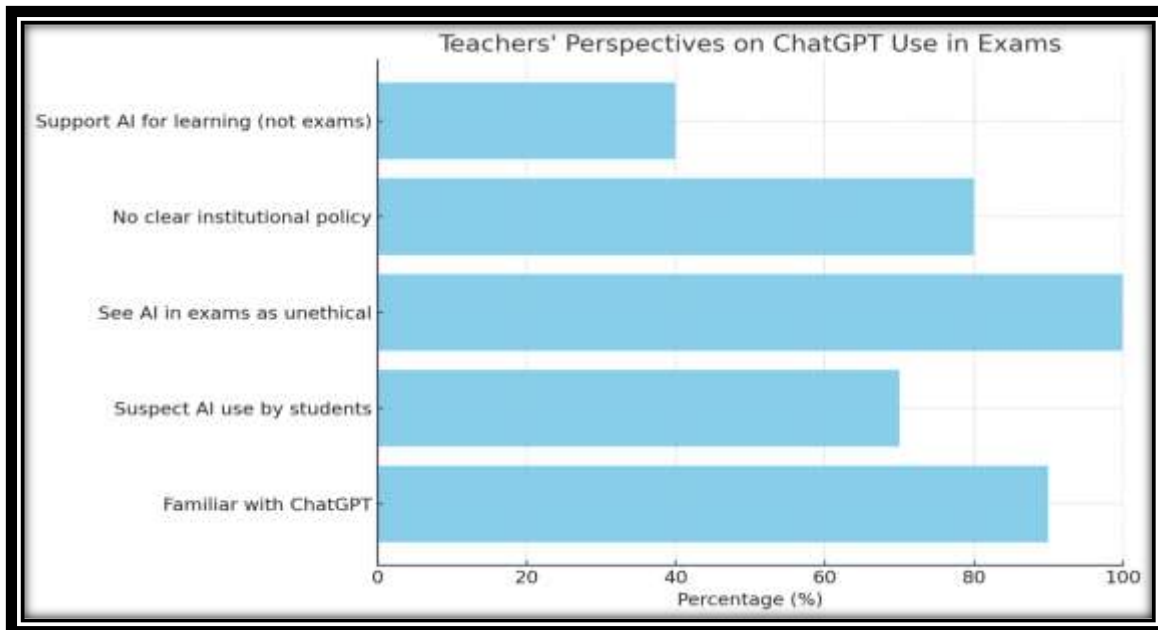


Figure 2. Teachers' Perspectives on ChatGpt Use in Exams

Looking at the matter from learners' perspective, results reveal that 75% use ChatGPT for their homework and 25% during exams. When asked about ethics of AI use, 55% viewed it as cheating and 45% said learners can use it smartly. Learners also posit that they feel confident when using ChatGPT as this source is trusted and easy to use. Students confessed relying on ChatGPT in all their assignment and they know that all their peers use it unless they deny using it. The subsequent chart shows learners' perspectives on ChatGPT use in exams.

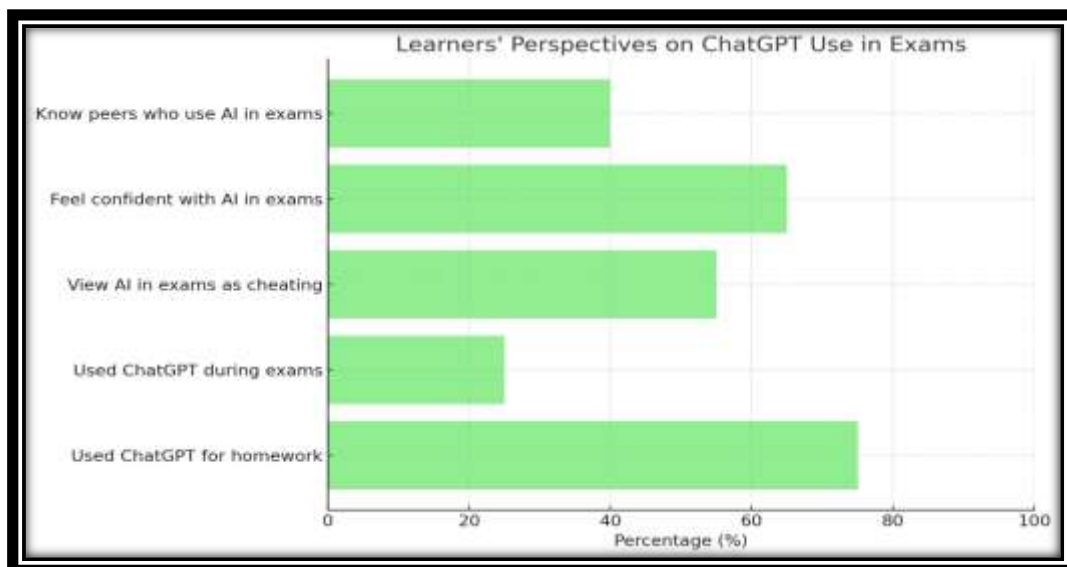


Figure 2. Learners' Perspectives on ChatGpt

Recommendations and Further Queries

In fact, the problem is still a challenging and exigent issue, to avoid the over reliance of ChatGPT in exams, teachers should rethink about their assessment strategies. Exams must be more interactive, open, and real-time that require students to engage with the material during the exam, reducing the potential for AI assistant- tools. Teachers need to redesign assessment methods, and foster a strong culture of ethical conduct to maintain academic standards and ensure that students are truly gaining the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their lives. By combining practical strategies such as personalized assessments and proactive classroom management, universities can minimize the risk of AI misuse in overloaded exam environments. While this case study revealed a significant concern regarding the use of AI in exams, it also highlighted the importance of adapting to new technologies in the education sector.

Conclusion

Is AI a curse or a blessing? As we navigate this new frontier, it is essential to assess not only the technological capabilities of AI but also its socio-economic impact, accessibility, and the long-term implications for educational quality and fairness. The AI revolution is not just about machines, it is about reimagining education for a digital age.

As AI tools like ChatGPT become increasingly accessible and sophisticated, the academic world faces a new set of challenges in maintaining integrity during exams. While these technologies offer potential benefits for learning and problem-solving, their misuse in academic settings raises serious ethical concerns. Institutions must adapt by updating policies, incorporating new types of assessments, and educating students about the responsible use of AI. Only then can we ensure that academic achievements are a true reflection of a student's ability, not the work of an artificial intelligence.

AI-assisted cheating is an emerging challenge in education, and its potential to undermine academic integrity cannot be ignored. As AI tools like ChatGPT continue to evolve, educators and institutions must adapt their strategies to ensure that academic standards are upheld. By combining technological solutions, innovative assessment formats, and ethical education, we can minimize the misuse of AI while preserving the integrity of academic work.

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Appendices

Interview Questions for Teachers and Learners

Rubric 1: Awareness and Use

1. Are you familiar with ChatGPT or similar AI tools?
2. Have you noticed any signs of students using AI tools in their exams?
3. Have you ever used AI tools in your own teaching or grading practices?

Rubric 2. Perception and Ethics

4. Do you consider the use of AI tools during official exams cheating?
5. What challenges do AI tools pose for maintaining academic integrity?
6. Do you believe AI can be integrated positively in assessment settings? How?

Rubric 3. Measures Taken

7. Do you have clear policies on AI use during exams?
8. What measures would you suggest to prevent AI-assisted cheating?
9. What type of training or tools do you need to deal with this issue?

Interview Questions for Learners

A. Awareness and Use

1. Have you ever used ChatGPT or other AI tools for school-related tasks?
2. Do you think it's acceptable to use AI during official exams or take-home assignments?
3. Have your teachers talked to you about AI tools in class?

B. Attitudes and Ethics

4. Do you see using ChatGPT in exams as a form of cheating? Why or why not?
5. Do you feel more confident in exams with access to AI tools?
6. What do you think should be the rules around AI in education?

Rubric 3. Experience and Future Outlook

7. Have you ever seen or heard of someone using ChatGPT during an official exam? 8. Would you use AI in exams if it wasn't forbidden? Why?
9. What kind of support or tools would help you use AI responsibly?