

A critical reflexivity on my doctoral journey

LCDB7012 –ADVANCING TO DOCTORAL RESEARCH STAGE

Executive Summary

This reflective portfolio captures my ongoing journey through the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD). My research focus evolved significantly, starting with an interest in employees satisfaction, but as I progressed, I found myself drawn towards the broader question of institutional readiness for artificial intelligence (AI) integration in education—particularly in relation to non-traditional students.

Several turning points shaped my academic trajectory. One pivotal moment came during the quantitative methods module, where I began exploring the relationship between student satisfaction and retention. However, it was the 'Visions for the Future' module that really shifted my focus. This module required me to examine organisational and managerial impacts, which led me to realise that institutional readiness, rather than student satisfaction alone, was a critical factor in AI adoption.

My engagement with staff during a pilot study was a key reflective moment. I discovered that many educators were hesitant to embrace AI due to concerns about both personal and institutional preparedness. This insight pushed me to explore not just the technical aspects of AI, but the cultural and psychological readiness of those involved.

In this research, I aim to evaluate the attitudes, knowledge, and willingness of academic staff to adopt AI technologies. By identifying the main challenges and facilitators of AI adoption, my goal is to provide practical recommendations that can enhance institutional readiness for AI integration. My work also reflects on the broader implications of AI, including ethical concerns about equity and the potential to exacerbate existing inequalities.

Through qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, I explore how AI can be effectively integrated into the existing company structure. This research is not just about identifying technical solutions; it's about ensuring that AI adoption is responsible, sustainable, and inclusive, while also addressing the lived experiences and concerns of those who will be most affected by it.

In reflecting on this journey, I see how each phase of the research has deepened my understanding of the complexities involved in integrating AI into education, and how my own positionality has shaped the direction and focus of my study.

Key words:

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Abbreviations

1. Introduction

It was a chilly, grey morning when I found myself on the train for the first time from Birmingham to Swansea, wrestling with the weight of my dual commitments. Balancing a full-time lecturing job and part-time doctoral studies seemed like a Herculean task even before I have started. The continual travel, combined with the demands of academia and personal life, had pushed my work-life balance to the brink. Looking back, I realise how navigating these challenges led to constant shaping of my experiences and growth. This reflective portfolio narrates my journey, filled with dilemmas and decisions, offering a vivid tale of my path as a developing researcher with limited prior experience.

At the heart of my research lies the complex and evolving problem of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIEd). It was not a straightforward choice though. The following sections of this report will capture the evolution of my thoughts during the journey. Being an academic, I grappled with understanding the historical, sociocultural, and political contexts that underpin it the various topics I came across until I finally settled with investigating my institutional readiness for AIEd adoption. Delving deeper into this final choice of the topic I note that much of the existing literature reflects a range of tensions from pedagogical autonomy and automation (Bozalek 2017; Kumar et al., 2023; Veletsianos et al., 2024) to ethics and equity (Holmes, and Porayska-Pomsta, 2023; Han, et al., 2023; Jones, 2024). On hind sight, this realisation has compelled me to situate my research within a broader context, aiming to highlight and challenge these disparities of using AI in Higher Education (HE).

This report highlights significant other challenges which has shaped y journey. I recall one evening, after a long day of lectures and a tiresome journey back from Swansea, I sat at my desk, surrounded by notes and materials on epistemology and ontology. These philosophical concepts—epistemology, the study of knowledge, and ontology, the study of being—seemed almost impenetrable at first. With limited research experience, my most significant academic work being an applied management project at the master's level, I found these abstract ideas daunting. Yet, they are fundamental to research paradigms and influence methodological choices (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Understanding how these philosophical foundations align with my research questions and methods required extensive reading and deep reflection (Crotty, 1998).

I will also highlight the significant milestones of my journey in this report. For example, defining my research objectives, questions, and scope was not an easy but was a such a

significant process of my learning. Influenced by philosophical concepts such as, ontology, epistemology, and axiology, my initial understanding of the research problem began to take shape (Bryman, 2016). However, as I engaged more deeply with empirical data and reflected on my own positionality, these objectives continued to evolve. The dynamic nature of research became evident as I continually refined my focus in response to new insights and understandings.

Reflecting on my positionality as a researcher, I became acutely aware of the biases, assumptions, and tensions that shape my work. As someone who identifies as a lecturer, my perspective is inevitably influenced by my own experiences and worldview. This positionality brought certain insights but also imposed limitations. Engaging in reflexive practice allowed me to surface these biases and strive for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to my research (Berger, 2015).

In sum, this portfolio encapsulates a research journey that is as complex as it is enlightening, underscored by a commitment to critical inquiry and ethical responsibility. Each section of this portfolio delves deeper into these dilemmas and decisions, offering a detailed narrative of my path as a developing researcher. Through a nuanced synthesis of theoretical and empirical evidence, I strive to produce research that is both impactful and conscientiously attuned to the diverse realities it seeks to understand.

The portfolio is organised into five main sections.

- Origins and Development of the Research topic
- Rationale for Research objectives, Questions, and Scope
- Choosing Data Collection and Analysis Techniques
- Researcher's Positionality and Reflexivity
- Future Impact and Practical Applications of the Research

The following sections of the portfolio will synthesise multi-faceted theoretical concepts to justify the chosen research theme, literature foundations, objectives, and data collection plans. I will attempt to provide nuanced reflections on the significance of each milestone and impact of these milestones on my trajectory of thinking by constantly asking the questions what are the underlying assumptions and preconceptions? What influence did the personal background have on Interpretation? And consideration of alternative perspectives.

2. Origins and Development of the Research topic

At the start of my doctoral studies all I knew was I wanted to focus my research interest on HE. However, I did not know which area in HE I wanted to focus on. The first decision to pin down a specific area occurred when I was asked what my topic was during the second week of my studies. Little was I prepared for this. In this section I will explain the shifts and twists I have encountered in my focus of research during the journey so far.

See appendix 1 for a temporal map that I have prepared as which captures the evolving nature of my research topic thus far.

2.1. Underlying Assumptions and Preconceptions

My research journey has shifted as I've sought a deeper understanding of the complexities in HE. It all began with a focus on student retention. At first, my research followed a positivist approach, drawing on Tinto's (2012) model of student departure, which focused on quantifiable factors like institutional support and student involvement to explain retention. However, as I engaged with social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986), I became aware of the limitations of this perspective. Social capital theory emphasises students' lived experiences within their socio-cultural contexts, showing that success is not only influenced by institutional support but also by the socio-economic resources students bring with them (Bourdieu, 1986; Kreuter and Lezin, 2002). This realisation required a shift towards an interpretivist approach, which values understanding how power and inequality shape educational outcomes. This shift offered a more nuanced view of the barriers that certain student groups face in accessing education (Thomas, 2012).

Incorporating social capital theory meant moving beyond simply analysing institutional efficiency to exploring how structural inequalities hinder student success. This shift in perspective also shaped my views on student satisfaction. Initially, I approached satisfaction through a consumerist model of higher education, where satisfaction was equated with success (Molesworth et al., 2011; Teeroovengadum et al., 2023). This model focused on measurable outcomes and treated students as customers, with satisfaction metrics reflecting institutional effectiveness.

However, critiques of this model (Nixon et al., 2018; Gupta et al., 2023) led me to question whether satisfaction alone, was an adequate measure of educational success. Influenced by Barnett's (2007) argument that true educational quality encompasses intellectual growth and social responsibility; I began to reframe my research focus. I transitioned from studying student retention to investigating student satisfaction, particularly among mature students, recognising the importance of deeper factors like intellectual development and inclusivity over simplistic satisfaction metrics. This broader, interpretivist approach allowed me to explore how both social capital and educational experiences shape student outcomes in a more meaningful way.

The final shift from student satisfaction to staff readiness for AI in education (AIEd) emerged from a growing recognition that educational outcomes are not solely dependent on student experiences but are also shaped by how educators interact with and implement new technologies. Initially, I focused on student satisfaction as a metric for success, particularly among mature students, valuing inclusivity and intellectual development over simplified consumerist measures (Molesworth et al., 2011; Teeroovengadum et al., 2023). However, my exposure to critical perspectives on digital literacy and AI's role in education (Selwyn, 2011; Stolpe & Hallström, 2024) highlighted the pivotal role of staff in shaping these experiences.

Recognising the ethical, social, and pedagogical complexities involved in integrating AI shifted my focus towards staff readiness. I realised that without staff being adequately prepared and critically engaged with AIEd, even the best intentions for improving student satisfaction would fall short. Successful integration of AIEd requires not only technological access, as I initially assumed (Warschauer, 2004; Cooney et al., 2023), but also staff's critical understanding of its implications for teaching and learning (Williamson, 2017). By addressing staff readiness, my research aligns with a broader commitment to responsible innovation, ensuring that AIEd is implemented in a way that benefits both educators and students.

2.2. Influence of Personal Background on Interpretation

My role as xxxxxx influenced my research trajectory. My direct experience with students naturally led me to prioritise practical issues like retention and satisfaction, reflecting the challenges faced by both students and educators. This practitioner-oriented perspective,

while valuable, introduced biases, particularly a tendency to focus on immediate, tangible outcomes over abstract, long-term educational goals (Dwivedi et al., 2024).

For instance, my initial emphasis on student satisfaction was driven by institutional pressures to achieve positive evaluations, a common concern in UK HE (Cuthbert, 2010). This focus on satisfaction metrics was critically reassessed as I realised these metrics might be unduly influenced by such pressures, rather than reflecting genuine educational quality. This led to a shift towards prioritising students' critical thinking and personal growth, aligning with Barnett's (2007) views.

Similarly, my enthusiasm for AIEd was initially shaped by my experiences with integrating technology into the classroom. My teaching experience made me aware of potential resistance among staff to new technologies, particularly those perceived as disruptive (Selwyn, 2019; Păvăloaia, and Necula, 2023). This underscored the importance of understanding not just the technological aspects of AIEd but also the human factors influencing its adoption, such as the need for adequate training and support (Luckin et al., 2016; Shwede, et al., 2024).

2.3. Consideration of Alternative Perspectives

Engaging with alternative perspectives has been crucial in broadening my understanding. Early in my research, I encountered critiques of retention strategies that argued for a more holistic approach, considering the socio-economic context of students (Thomas, 2012). This challenged my initial focus on institutional strategies and prompted me to consider the role of social and cultural capital in student success (Bourdieu, 1986).

As I explored the role of technology in education, critical perspectives on digital literacy (Tinmaz, et al., 2023) and the ethical implications of AI, including concerns about data privacy and algorithmic bias (Williamson, 2017; Li, 2024), pushed me to move beyond a purely technical focus. These perspectives highlighted the importance of considering the broader societal impacts of AI, including the risk of exacerbating inequalities (Selwyn, 2019).

Moreover, the critical literature on the commodification of education (Nixon et al., 2018) influenced my reassessment of the student satisfaction paradigm, leading to a deeper exploration of genuine educational quality. Engaging with these diverse viewpoints has been

instrumental in shifting my research focus towards a more comprehensive understanding that integrates ethical, social, and pedagogical considerations.

3. Rationale for Research objectives, Questions, and Scope

Having previously looked at my choice of a research topic and the underlying reasons for the choice, this section of the report will delve deeper into examining the rationale behind the objectives and research questions of my proposed study. Appendix 2 provides an outline of the topic with summarised information. The objectives I intend to achieve in my study are;

1. Investigate the factors which affects the readiness of institutions for AI integration.
2. Evaluate the knowledge, attitudes, and willingness of the key stakeholders to adopt AI technologies in their teaching practices.
3. Identify the main challenges and facilitators that impact the successful adoption of AI.
4. Provide recommendations for institutions to enhance their readiness and effectively integrate AI into their educational practices.

Explained below are the underlying principles that has shaped the formulation of these objectives.

3.1. Underlying Assumptions and Preconceptions

The rationale behind my research objectives is rooted in the pressing need to understand how AI can be effectively integrated into HE. As AI continues to reshape various sectors, including education, I recognised that the readiness of institutions like UWTSD Birmingham to adopt AI is crucial. Initially, my assumptions were guided by the belief that technological infrastructure would be the primary factor influencing AI integration, reflecting a simplistic view of technological determinism (Warschauer, 2004; Crompton, and Burke, 2023). However, deeper engagement with literature, particularly Selwyn's (2019) and of Crompton, and Burke, (2023) critique of educational technology, revealed that AI adoption involves more than just technical readiness; it requires a holistic approach that considers institutional culture, stakeholder attitudes, and ethical implications.

This realisation led to the formulation of my first objective: to investigate the factors affecting institutional readiness for AI integration. The aim was to move beyond a narrow focus on

infrastructure and explore the broader organisational and cultural factors that influence AI adoption. I wanted to understand not just the 'what' of AI readiness but the 'why'—why certain institutions are better prepared than others and what underlying factors contribute to this readiness.

3.2. Influence of Personal Background on Interpretation

As I have mentioned before, reflecting on my own experience as xxxxx , I recognise the tension between technological innovation and personal or institutional reluctance to change. By evaluating these attitudes, my research probes deeper into the sociocultural dimensions of AI implementation, which are often overlooked in the rush to introduce new tools (Williamson, 2017, Rudolph, 2024). This aligns with the concern that AI, like other forms of educational technology, is not neutral but socially constructed, and how it is received depends on the beliefs and values of those involved in its implementation (Bearman, et al., 2023; Rudolph, 2024). By focusing on stakeholders' willingness and knowledge (Luckin, et al., 2017), I can reveal insights into the barriers and opportunities AI presents within the real-world context of teaching practices.

My teaching experience highlighted that even the most advanced technology could fail to achieve its potential if educators are not adequately prepared or are resistant to its use. This personal insight drove me to include research questions focused on the attitudes and perceptions of faculty towards AI. I wanted to explore the underlying reasons behind their willingness or reluctance to engage with AI, recognising that these human factors are often the most significant barriers to successful technology adoption (Selwyn, 2011).

Additionally, my focus on the challenges and facilitators of AI adoption was informed by my practical concerns. I saw an opportunity to contribute to the institution by identifying best practices and providing actionable recommendations that could enhance AI integration. This objective reflects my commitment to not only understanding the barriers but also to actively seeking solutions that could improve the readiness of educational institutions for AI.

3.3. Consideration of Alternative Perspectives

In developing my research objectives and questions, I considered various perspectives that challenged my initial assumptions and deepened my understanding of AI integration. Engaging with critical literature on the socio-political implications of AI (Williamson, 2017) led me to question the neutrality of AI technologies and to consider their broader impacts on

education. This awareness shaped my decision to include research questions that probe not only the practical aspects of AI adoption but also the ethical and cultural dimensions.

Philosophically, I found myself grappling with the tension between technological determinism and a more critical realist perspective. Initially, I may have been drawn to the idea that AI, once integrated, would naturally lead to educational improvements. However, as I progressed, I realised that such a view was overly simplistic. Through reflexive practice, I acknowledged that technology is shaped by social, cultural, and political forces, and that institutional readiness for AI requires more than just technical tools—it requires changes in attitudes, policies, and practices.

Ultimately, my research objectives and questions were designed to address the multifaceted challenges of AI integration in HE. By combining practical concerns with theoretical insights and a critical engagement with diverse perspectives, I aimed to develop a research agenda that could contribute meaningfully to both academic knowledge and institutional practice.

4. Choosing Data Collection and Analysis Techniques

In this section, I critically reflect on the data collection and analysis techniques used in my doctoral research, focusing on institutional readiness for AI integration in education. The chosen methods were shaped by both emic and etic approaches (see appendix 3), allowing me to capture in-depth perspectives from stakeholders while also identifying broader trends. Through qualitative interviews and focus groups, I gathered rich, context-specific insights into staff attitudes toward AI, while surveys provided quantitative data on institutional factors influencing readiness. I will discuss the rationale behind these methods, their alignment with my research objectives, and how they contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

4.1. Underlying Assumptions and Preconceptions

Initially, I assumed that quantitative methods, particularly surveys, would provide the most reliable data for assessing AI readiness in HE. This assumption was influenced by a positivist research philosophy (As mentioned in section 2.1), which emphasises objectivity and generalisability (Creswell, 2014). I believed that large-scale data collection would offer clear insights into the attitudes and preparedness of educators and institutions. However, this view was challenged by authors like Denzin and Lincoln (2018), who argue that quantitative methods often fail to capture the complexities and nuanced experiences of participants. This critique resonated with my research objectives which required an understanding of not just the observable factors but also the underlying attitudes, motivations, and concerns of stakeholders involved in AI adoption. This resulted in a significant stage of my journey was when I conducted a pilot study to test the feasibility of qualitative research tools of the study (See appendix 4).

Consequently, I shifted towards a more pragmatic approach, recognising the value of qualitative methods in exploring the subjective dimensions of AI integration. The works of Merriam and Tisdell (2015) emphasised the importance of qualitative inquiry in understanding the meaning-making processes of individuals, which is crucial when

investigating a complex, multifaceted phenomenon like AI adoption. This shift in perspective led to the decision of exploring the incorporation of semi-structured interviews alongside surveys, allowing for a deeper exploration of stakeholder perspectives.

4.2. Influence of Personal Background on Interpretation

My experiences as a xxx significantly influenced my methodological choices, particularly the integration of qualitative methods (Morris, et al., 1999). Having navigated the challenges of technological integration in the classroom, I was keenly aware of the importance of capturing the lived experiences and attitudes of educators. This personal bias towards understanding educator perspectives was supported by Bazeley's (2013) argument that researchers' backgrounds and experiences inevitably shape their research focus and methodological choices.

For data collection, this emic approach would likely involve qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and focus groups. Engaging directly with stakeholders through open-ended questions will allow me to uncover the personal motivations, concerns, and expectations that shape their attitudes toward AI (Kumar, et al., 2023). For example, through interviews with staff who resist AI, I can understand the cultural and institutional factors that influence their reluctance. This will give me rich, context-specific data, helping to identify barriers such as fear of job displacement or lack of institutional support (Woithe, and Filipec, 2023). The emic approach will also help to explore facilitators, such as positive experiences with technology in the classroom (Morris, et al., 1999).

However, this inclination towards qualitative methods also raised concerns about potential bias, particularly given my dual role as both researcher and practitioner. Creswell and Poth (2017) highlight the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research to address such biases.

4.3. Consideration of Alternative Perspectives

In contrast, the etic approach looks at phenomena from an external, objective standpoint, often applying theories or frameworks to understand the system as a whole (Morris, et al., 1999). This perspective is vital for identifying broader patterns and generalisable factors that impact the successful adoption of AI (Objective 3). The etic approach allows me to step back and evaluate institutional readiness across different contexts, comparing schools or departments with varying levels of AI adoption (Kumar, et al., 2023). By doing so, I can

identify challenges and facilitators that are not just specific to one institution but are widespread across similar environments.

To employ an etic perspective, I would use quantitative data collection methods such as surveys or questionnaires, designed to gather standardised information across a larger sample. For example, I could administer a survey to assess stakeholders' general knowledge of AI, their willingness to adopt it, and the institutional policies that support or hinder this adoption. By using a Likert scale or other quantifiable measures, I can draw broader conclusions about the factors that shape institutional readiness. This will help me compare institutions and highlight general trends, such as the correlation between institutional support and positive attitudes toward AI.

In my research, the combination of both emic and etic approaches will create a comprehensive understanding of institutional readiness for AI. The emic approach provides in-depth, context-sensitive insights into the unique experiences of stakeholders, while the etic approach offers a more detached, generalisable view of institutional factors (Niblo, and Jackson, 2004).

For example, after identifying challenges through the emic approach (such as individual staff resistance), the etic approach can quantify how widespread these challenges are across different institutions or departments. Similarly, while the emic approach will highlight specific facilitators from stakeholders' perspectives, the etic approach will provide data on how these facilitators vary in effectiveness across various contexts.

Ultimately, integrating both approaches will strengthen my research by ensuring that my data collection methods are both detailed and scalable, offering a holistic view of how institutions can enhance their readiness to integrate AI.

5. Researcher's Positionality and Reflexivity

In this section, I reflect on my positionality and its impact on my research into institutional readiness for AI. As xxxxxxxx, my experiences with non-traditional students and lecturer have influenced my perspective, shifting my focus from student satisfaction to organisational readiness. This dual role as researcher and insider has shaped my research design and interpretation of findings. I also consider ethical implications, particularly ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and minimising power dynamics during data collection with colleagues. Appendix 5 provides further details related ethical considerations I have made during my pilot study. Reflexivity has been crucial in addressing these influences and maintaining objectivity throughout my journey.

5.1. Underlying Assumptions and Preconceptions

As a xxxxxxxx , my personal and cultural background has inevitably shaped my research approach. My understanding of xxxxx cultures, shared by many students enrolled in provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by these students. However, this cultural alignment also presents the risk of bias, as I may unintentionally favour perspectives that resonate with my own experiences. I highly value principles such as fairness, morality, and self-discipline, which have informed my commitment to addressing broader social concerns, including access to HE. This alignment with the xxxx — "Transforming education, Transforming lives"—motivates my research, but it also requires careful reflection to ensure that my personal values do not unduly influence the research findings.

5.2. Influence of Personal Background on Interpretation

My extensive experience in xxxx , particularly in xxxx , has shaped my understanding of the complexities involved in increasing access to education as suggested by many authors

(Greenbank, 2003; Hinostroza-Paredes, 2023; Jamieson, et al., 2023). Over 12 years in xxxxx, I have developed a deep commitment to supporting underrepresented groups in HE. This background equips me with significant knowledge of the topic, but it also presents challenges related to objectivity. My professional role as xxxxx , places me in close contact with the research subjects. This proximity offers valuable insights but also requires careful management to avoid potential biases stemming from my existing relationships and preconceptions about the institution and its students (Jamieson, et al., 2023). The challenge lies in ensuring that my interpretations remain balanced and that I do not overemphasise the experiences and perspectives I am most familiar with.

5.3. Consideration of Alternative Perspectives

Acknowledging my positionality, I am committed to integrating alternative perspectives into my research to enhance its validity and reliability. Being an xxxx, I am aware that my role could influence the research process. To mitigate this, I will adopt strategies to ensure impartiality, such as triangulating data from multiple sources and seeking input from external colleagues or experts who are less connected to the context as suggested by Hinostroza-Paredes, (2023). This approach also aligns with Cohen, Manion, and Morrison's (2018) emphasis on the importance of acknowledging and managing researcher bias. Additionally, I will ensure that all research participants, regardless of my prior relationship with them, are provided with equal guidance, access to information, and opportunities to contribute to the study. This commitment to fairness is crucial in maintaining the integrity of the research and ensuring that the findings are not skewed by my positionality or the dynamics of my professional relationships.

6. Future Impact and Practical Applications of the Research

6.1. Strengths and Potential Contributions

My research on AI integration readiness at xxxxx is driven by my belief that AI's role in xxxx goes beyond enhancing efficiency; it aims to fundamentally transform the learning experience. This belief comes from reflecting on the dual nature of technology as both a tool and a potential disruptor (Bates, et al., 2020; George, and Wooden, 2023) . While AI holds great promise in personalizing education and improving administrative processes (Maghsudi, et al., 2021) it also raises important questions about equity, privacy, and the very purpose of education (Vincent-Lancrin, and Van der Vlies, 2020; Holms, et al., 2022). My decision to explore these broader implications is influenced by scholars like Selwyn (2019), who argue that responsible AI integration requires a critical examination of its impact on the social and ethical fabric of education.

In shaping my research objectives, I was particularly mindful of the need to move beyond technical considerations. My objective to identify both challenges and facilitators of AI adoption is rooted in the understanding that technology alone cannot drive meaningful change. This perspective is informed by Williamson's (2017) argument that the success of educational technologies depends on the readiness of institutions to engage with them critically. By focusing on the attitudes and perceptions of key stakeholders, my research acknowledges that human factors—such as trust in technology, professional development, and organizational culture—are just as crucial as the technology itself.

Moreover, my research aims to provide practical recommendations that are not only technically sound but also ethically grounded. This dual focus emerged from reflecting on the limitations of existing AI integration strategies, which often prioritize scalability over the quality of learning outcomes. My research is positioned to contribute to the ongoing discourse on AI in education by offering insights that balance innovation with ethical responsibility. My decision to frame the recommendations in this manner responds to the complex realities of educational practice, where the rush to adopt new technologies can sometimes overlook the long-term implications for xxxxxx .

6.2. Limitations and Risks

Despite the strengths of my research, I am keenly aware of the limitations and risks inherent in the process, particularly those related to positionality and bias. As xxx, I occupy a dual role that could subtly influence the research. This dual role presents a potential conflict, as my professional responsibilities may shape my interpretation of the data. This concern is not merely theoretical but grounded in Berger's (2015) caution about the impact of a researcher's positionality on the objectivity of their findings. Reflecting on this, I recognize the importance of maintaining a critical distance, using reflexivity to continually assess how my background and experiences might influence the research process.

Another significant risk is the potential for social desirability bias among participants, who may be inclined to provide responses they believe are expected or favourable. This risk is particularly pertinent given my existing relationships with many of the study's participants. The challenge here is to create an environment where participants feel safe to express genuine opinions, without fear of judgment or repercussions. Flick's (2022) emphasis on the importance of transparency in research design has influenced my approach to this issue. By ensuring that data collection methods are anonymized and stressing the confidentiality of responses, I aim to mitigate this bias as much as possible.

Ethical considerations also play a crucial role in my research, particularly given the sensitive nature of AI integration in education. The dynamic nature of ethical standards, as highlighted by Artal and Rubinfeld (2017), necessitates a flexible approach that can adapt to emerging challenges. I am committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct, not only to protect the participants but also to ensure that my research contributes positively to the broader educational community. This commitment reflects my deeper understanding that ethical considerations are not just a procedural requirement but a fundamental aspect of responsible research.

7. Summary and Conclusion

Reflecting on my research journey has illuminated the complexities and opportunities involved in integrating AI into institutional practices. Initially, my understanding of the research problem was somewhat superficial, focused primarily on the practical aspects of AI adoption. However, as I progressed through various stages of the research, the context deepened, revealing the intricate relationship between institutional readiness, stakeholder perceptions, and the broader socio-cultural and ethical implications of AI in xxxx .

My early assumptions, which centred on the technical challenges of AI integration, gradually evolved as I engaged with critical perspectives and the underlying values driving educational change. This shift was reflected in the refinement of my research objectives and questions, which now consider not just the practicalities of AI implementation but also the need for ethical responsibility and inclusivity. The preliminary literature review and identification of research gaps laid the foundation for this more nuanced approach, but I recognise that further refinement is needed as the research progresses.

The insights gained from reflecting on my positionality as a researcher—particularly the insider advantages and potential biases—have been crucial in shaping my approach. Acknowledging my background as xxxx with extensive experience in xxxxxx has heightened my awareness of the ethical dimensions of the research and the need for reflexivity throughout the process. This recognition has informed my preference for qualitative research methods, which allow for a deeper exploration of the lived experiences of stakeholders.

As I continue this research journey, I am committed to refining my approach through systematic literature reviews, critical reflection, and ongoing engagement with diverse perspectives. The ultimate aim is to contribute meaningfully to the discourse on AI in education, offering practical recommendations that enhance institutional readiness and support the responsible integration of AI technologies. This reflective essay serves not only

as a testament to the growth achieved thus far but also as a roadmap for the continued exploration of my research.

8. References

Appendix 1 – Temporal map of my journey

Milestone	Key event	Reflection	Influence on the current research	Trajectory of thinking
Day 1 – Start of the DBA programme	Meeting fellow students			
Week 2	Choosing a research topic			
Weeks 2 - 6	Learning about Ologies for the first time			
End of term 1	Submission of the first assessment task			
Term 2	Literature review			
Term 3	Quantitative methods			
Term 4	Visions for the future			
Term 5	The pilot study			

Appendix 2 – Research outline

Student ID	Title	Outline	Research objectives	Research questions	Methodology	Significance	References
			1.	1.			

Using ‘Emic’ Perspective on Faculty and Institutional Readiness for AI Integration

The emic perspective focuses on understanding phenomena from within the context and cultural framework of the subjects being studied. In the context of examining xxxx, an emic approach would delve deeply into the unique perspectives, experiences, and cultural nuances of the faculty members and the institution itself. According to Morris, Leung, Ames, and Lickel (1999), the emic approach is essential for capturing the intrinsic meanings and views that are specific to a particular cultural context (p. 782).

As xxxx, xxxxx would engage directly with colleagues, leaders and teammates through interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic observations. These methods allow for a rich, detailed understanding of their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours regarding AI integration.

For example, xxxx might explore how subordinates and colleagues and leaders view the benefits and challenges of AI in their teaching practices. Xxxx would investigate the local academic culture, including existing technological competencies, the support provided by the institution, and the specific needs and concerns of the faculty. Additionally, xxxx might examine the institutional policies, resources, and training programs available to support AI integration, considering how these are perceived and utilized by employees (Morris et al., 1999, p. 785).

In conclusion, an emic perspective provides a comprehensive, insider view of faculty and institutional readiness for AI integration, emphasizing the importance of cultural context and subjective experiences. This approach complements etic perspectives by offering a depth of understanding that is essential for developing effective, context-sensitive interventions and policies (Morris et al., 1999, p. 787).

Using 'Etic' Perspective on Readiness for AI Integration

The etic perspective, in contrast to the emic perspective, focuses on understanding phenomena from an external, comparative viewpoint, applying universal concepts and theories across different cultures. Morris, Leung, Ames, and Lickel (1999) highlight the etic approach as a means to identify generalizable patterns and principles that transcend specific cultural contexts (p. 782).

When investigating readiness for AI integration at xxx from an etic perspective, xx would employ standardised measures and comparative analyses to assess readiness across different institutions. This approach involves using surveys, questionnaires, and quantitative metrics to gather data that can be compared across diverse academic settings. The aim is to identify common factors, trends, and patterns that influence readiness for AI integration on a broader scale (Morris et al., 1999, p. 788).

An etic study might reveal, for example, that campuses with robust technological infrastructure and comprehensive faculty development programs exhibit higher levels of readiness for AI integration, regardless of their specific cultural contexts. These findings can inform the development of best practices and guidelines that can be applied universally to enhance readiness for AI integration in company xxxxxxx (Morris et al., 1999, p. 790).

Moreover, in the etic perspective, test hypotheses and theories about AI integration readiness are studied across various cultural contexts. By identifying generalizable principles, this approach contributes to the development of a broader theoretical framework for understanding and promoting AI integration (Morris et al., 1999, p. 791).

In summary....

Appendix 4 – Outline of the pilot study

Framework/table for the pilot study checklist for doctoral students

Category	Tasks	Your Answer (column to expand) Yes No How Where When ETC
Research Question and Objectives for module pilot study		
Study Design		
Sample Size		
Data Collection Methods		
Ethical Considerations		
Recruitment and Consent		

Data Management		
Pilot Testing		
Data Analysis		
Reporting and Dissemination		
Logistics and Resources		
Feedback and Refinement		.
		.
Other		

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Appendices.

Appendix 1 – Interview Questions

Research Questions	Key Area	Interview Questions	Rationale	Literature sources
RQ1 -				Crompton, and Burke, 2023; Titko et. al. 2023
				Holmes, et. al. 2019; Sutherland, et. al. 2023
				Bostrom, 2014; Luckin et. al. 2016; Wrinkler 2018; Bond et. al. 2024
				Chen, et. al. 2018; Selwyn, 2019; Holmes, et. al. 2019;
				Chen, et. al. 2018; Selwyn, 2019; Holmes, et. al. 2019;
				Chen, et. al. 2018; Selwyn, 2019; Holmes, et. al. 2019;
				Xing, et. al. 2016; Holmes, et. al. 2019; Walter, 2024; Bond, et al. 2024
				Zheng, et. al. 2018; Titko, 2023; Bond, et. al. 2024
				Xing, et. al. 2016; Titko, 2023; Crompton, and Burke, 2023

RQ2:				

Appendix 2 – Cover letter for participants

Dear,

Sincerely,

References

[Appendix 5 – Ethics approval form](#)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

Appendix 6 – Ethical consideration using Seedhouse’s grid