

**EXPLORING THE INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN UK HIGHER  
EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING. A QUALITATIVE STUDY BASED ON THE TPACK  
FRAMEWORK AT UWTSD, LONDON**



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### **Declaration**

I, Simranjeet kaur a student of a BA hons Business Management at University of wales trinity saint David, London hereby declare that the research titled “exploring the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in UK higher education teaching and learning. A qualitative study based on the TPACK framework at UWTSD," is an original work conducted by me. The study aims to investigate [Brief Purpose]. With specific reference to the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework, this study aims to investigate how artificial intelligence is incorporated into teaching and learning practices within UK higher education.

This study complies with ethical standards, guaranteeing participant anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary involvement. This study uses a qualitative methodology that includes thematic analysis and semi-structured interviews for data collection.

I affirm that this research adheres to the ethical standards set by University of Wales Trinity Saint David and has not been submitted elsewhere for publication or evaluation.

Signed: Simranjeet Kaur

Date: 14/12/2025

## **Abstract**

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is fundamentally reshaping UK higher education, creating a critical disconnect between widespread student adoption and limited pedagogical integration by academic staff. This qualitative study explores the lived experiences of lecturers and students within Business and Management programmes to understand AI's real-world impact on teaching and learning. Adopting an interpretivist paradigm and using semi-structured interviews, the research identified a core experience of navigating an 'uncharted landscape' marked by institutional uncertainty. Key findings reveal a dichotomy between instrumental AI use for efficiency and rare instances of transformative pedagogy. While AI can empower student learning, its technical unreliability poses profound challenges to academic integrity and necessitates critical engagement. The study concludes that the primary barriers to effective AI integration are not technological but stem from a significant institutional policy and support vacuum, alongside underdeveloped educator competencies as framed by the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model. Recommendations center on developing coherent discipline-specific policies, redesigning assessments, and investing in staff development to foster ethical and pedagogically robust AI adoption.

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Simranjeet Kaur

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## Table of Contents

|                                                                           |                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Declaration .....</b>                                                  | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>ABSTRACT .....</b>                                                     | <b>2</b>                            |
| <b>Acknowledgement .....</b>                                              | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>                                       | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>1.1: Introduction.....</b>                                             | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>1.2: Background of the Study.....</b>                                  | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>1.3: Rationale of the Study .....</b>                                  | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>1.3 Problem Statement .....</b>                                        | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>1.4: Research Aim and Objectives .....</b>                             | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>Chapter 1.5: Research Questions.....</b>                               | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>1.6: Significance of the Research .....</b>                            | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>1.7: Scope of the Study .....</b>                                      | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>1.8: Chapter Summary .....</b>                                         | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>Chapter 2: Literature Review .....</b>                                 | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>2.1: Introduction.....</b>                                             | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>2.2: Conceptualising AI in Higher Education .....</b>                  | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>2.3: Benefits and Opportunities of AI .....</b>                        | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>2.4: Challenges and Ethical Dilemmas .....</b>                         | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>2.4.1: Specific Challenges in the UK Higher Education Context.....</b> | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>2.5: Theoretical Frameworks for AI Integration.....</b>                | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>2.6: Synthesising the Gap.....</b>                                     | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>2.7: Chapter Summary .....</b>                                         | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>Chapter 3: Methodology .....</b>                                       | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.1: Introduction.....</b>                                             | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.2: Research Philosophy .....</b>                                     | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.3: Research Paradigm.....</b>                                        | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.4: Research Approach .....</b>                                       | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.5: Research Method .....</b>                                         | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.6: Research Strategy.....</b>                                        | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.7: Sampling Strategy and Participant Recruitment.....</b>            | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.8 Data Collection and Analysis Methods.....</b>                      | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.8.1 Data Collection.....</b>                                         | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |

|                                                                                           |                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 3.8.2 Data Analysis .....                                                                 | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| <b>3.9 Ethical Consideration .....</b>                                                    | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>3.10 Summary of Chapter .....</b>                                                      | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings .....</b>                                        | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>4.1 Introduction.....</b>                                                              | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| 4.2 Interpretation of Emerging Themes and Chosen Sub-Themes from Research Texts           | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| 4.2.1 Theme 1: Handling an Undefined and Unguided AI Cultural Environment.                | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| 4.2.2Theme 2: Student Use of AI: Between Cognitive Empowerment and Strategic Gaming ..... | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| 4.2.3Theme 3: Critical Engagement and Validation as Necessary Safeguards .....            | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| 4.2.4 Theme 4: AI Hallucinations and the Erosion of Academic Integrity .....              | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| 4.2.5 Theme 5: Professional Anxiety and Ethical Uncertainty among Educators.              | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| 4.2.6 Theme 6: A Vacuum in Institutional Policy and Pedagogical Support .....             | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| 4.2.7 Theme 7: Envisioned Pathways: From Policing to Principles and Infrastructure .....  | Error! Bookmark not defined.        |
| <b>4.3 Chapter Summary.....</b>                                                           | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>Chapter 5: Conclusion .....</b>                                                        | <b>31</b>                           |
| <b>5.1 Introduction.....</b>                                                              | <b>31</b>                           |
| <b>5.2 Revisiting the Research Aim and Objectives .....</b>                               | <b>31</b>                           |
| <b>5.3 Summary and Discussion of Key Findings .....</b>                                   | <b>31</b>                           |
| <b>5.4 Implications of the Research .....</b>                                             | <b>32</b>                           |
| <b>5.5 Limitations of the Study .....</b>                                                 | <b>33</b>                           |
| <b>5.6 Recommendations for Future Research .....</b>                                      | <b>33</b>                           |
| <b>5.7 Conclusion .....</b>                                                               | <b>33</b>                           |
| <b>References .....</b>                                                                   | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| <b>Appenidx-A INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS</b>                                                    |                                     |
| <b>APPENDIX-B INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT</b>                                                    |                                     |

## List of Figures

|                                                               |                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Figure 1 Technology Acceptance Model Source: Davis 1989 ..... | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Figure 2 The SAMR model Source Puentedura, 2010.....          | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| Figure 3 TPACK framework Source Mishra & Koehler, 2006 .....  | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1: Introduction

The ongoing high rate absorption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is progressively changing the scenery of higher education in the UK, moving from having futuristic vision to the present day classroom reality. As Atkinson-Toal and Guo (2024) note, this shift is aligning per broader countrywide initiatives to leverage digital innovation. To lay the groundwork for understanding this phenomenon, the current chapter outlines the study's context, defines the central research problem, and details its specific aims, while also providing a roadmap for the overall dissertation structure.

### 1.2: Background of the Study

A global shift is underway in education, driven by Artificial Intelligence, with generative AI in particular enabling personalised learning pathways and automating administrative functions (Atkinson-Toal & Guo, 2024). This transformation is distinctly evident within the UK higher education sector, where a marked increase in the adoption of AI technologies aims to refine instructional methods and improve student outcomes. Such integration, however, assumes a dual role. AI acts as a powerful asset for educators, supporting adaptive learning and increasing operational efficiency (George, 2023). Conversely, its application raises substantial challenges, compelling UK universities to develop new policies and frameworks to address pressing issues of academic integrity, data privacy, and equitable access (Meletiadiou, 2025). This complex backdrop highlights a critical imperative: to grasp the perspectives of those at the core of the educational process, ensuring that the adoption of AI is not only successful but also pedagogically robust.

### 1.3: Rationale of the Study

This research is motivated by the urgent need to understand the real-world impact of rapidly integrating AI into UK higher education. While technological potential is widely discussed, a significant gap exists in capturing the lived experiences of those directly involved. This study is necessary to move beyond

possibility, providing timely, qualitative evidence from both lecturers and students. Such empirical insights are crucial for developing effective, responsive policies and pedagogical strategies that address the actual challenges and opportunities presented by AI in the academic environment.

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

The central problem confronting UK higher education is a fundamental disconnect in Artificial Intelligence adoption between institutional ambition and classroom reality, manifesting in several critical dimensions. A dramatic adoption gap is evident where 92% of students regularly use generative AI for academic work (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2025) compared to only approximately 25% of lecturers integrating it into teaching practice (Jisc, 2024). This disparity creates an unsustainable learning environment where student usage outpaces educator oversight and pedagogical integration, increase by underdeveloped and inconsistently implemented institutional AI policies across the sector that create regulatory uncertainty for academic staff (Wilson, 2025). Academic staff face significant barriers to adoption including inadequate training, limited technical support, and unclear ethical guidelines for AI implementation (Nikolic et al., 2024), while assessment integrity is increasingly compromised as AI capabilities advance faster than academic integrity frameworks can adapt (Morimoto, 2025). Compounding these issues, the pedagogical impact of widespread, unregulated student AI use remains largely unmeasured and poorly understood across UK institutions, and a critical research gap persists in understanding the combined perspectives of both educators and students on AI's actual impact on teaching effectiveness and learning engagement. This study addresses these interconnected problems by investigating the lived experiences of both lecturers and students from UWTSD, LONDON to develop a comprehensive understanding of AI's real-world impact on UK higher education.

#### **1.5: Research Aim and objectives**

**Aim:** The aim of this study is to explore the practical applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in pedagogy and learning experiences within the framework of UK higher education.

**Objectives:**

- To understand the context of artificial intelligence Artificial Intelligence (AI) on teaching and learning in the UK higher education.

- To identify issues and challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching and learning.
- To assess the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on teaching and learning.
- To recommend the ways of addressing impact of AI to enhance teaching and learning practices in the UK higher education.

## **Chapter 1.6: Research Questions**

- How does AI affect academic performance, individualized learning, and student engagement in UK universities?
- What attitudes and views do students and faculty have regarding the use of artificial intelligence in their educational experience?

## **1.7: Significance of the Research**

This research holds substantial value for multiple stakeholders in higher education. For academic discourse, it provides timely, qualitative insights specifically from the UK context, addressing a significant gap in the current literature which often lacks localized, empirical studies on AI's socio-pedagogical impact. For institutional leaders and management, the findings offer evidence-based guidance for developing more effective AI integration strategies, creating targeted professional development programs, and establishing robust ethical frameworks that address real classroom challenges. For teaching practitioners, the study identifies practical barriers and facilitators to AI adoption, helping to shape more supportive implementation environments. Furthermore, by capturing both student and lecturer perspectives, the research promotes a more balanced approach to AI integration that acknowledges the needs and concerns of all educational stakeholders. Ultimately, this study contributes to the development of more responsive, ethical, and pedagogically sound AI implementation models that can enhance rather than compromise educational quality in UK higher education.

## **1.8: Scope of the Study**

This study is deliberately bounded to ensure a focused investigation. It is confined to the UK higher education sector, specifically within Business and Management programmes. The research focuses exclusively on the role of AI in UK higher education teaching and learning experiences, excluding administrative or research applications. The participants are limited to lecturers and students within this

discipline. This defined scope ensures the research is manageable and the findings are contextually deep and meaningful for the specified stakeholder groups.

## **1.9: Chapter Summary**

This introductory chapter has established the foundational context for investigating AI's role in UK higher education. It has outlined the transformative background of AI integration, identified the critical problem of disjointed adoption between students and lecturers, and presented clear research aims, objectives, and questions. The significance for both academic discourse and practical application has been highlighted, alongside an acknowledgment of the study's scope and limitations. To systematically address these research elements, the remainder of this dissertation is organised as follows: Chapter Two will provide a comprehensive literature review, Chapter Three will detail the research methodology, Chapter Four will present and discuss the findings, and Chapter Five will offer the conclusion, including limitations and recommendations for future research and practice.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1: Introduction**

To understand how Artificial Intelligence is influencing higher education in the UK, it is necessary to have a decent understanding of the academic debate. The following sections explore existing research on the use of AI in teaching and learning. The discussion starts by developing meaningful definitions and theoretical structures that can underpin the interpretation of AI integration. From there, the focus shifts to a balanced review, examining both the promising benefits and the significant challenges documented by researchers. These topics have been generalised to give a clear picture and over time a gap on study is realised because it has been generalised to the UK setting. This structured exploration not only bases the research on previous knowledge, but it also aligns the current investigation with an exact spot to add another dimension of meaningfulness to the information.

### **2.2: Conceptualising AI in Higher Education**

The discourse around Artificial Intelligence in education often starts with abstract notions of systems simulating human cognition, but the recent revolution is facilitated by an ability of generative AI to generate original content (Jauhiainen and Toppari, 2025). ChatGPT and Gemini represent the beginning of a reevaluation of the division between analytical and generative features, reshaping the approach to

knowledge production and consumption within the academic world (Wong, 2025). The technological shift can be traced in various practical activities: individualised learning plans based on student performance, computerised administration to aid with marking and feedback, smart chatbots to support study, and automated content generation in instructional resources. This intellectual context is both incorporative and highly stressful in UK higher education. Postgraduate researchers have already proactively adopted generative AI as a brainstorming partner, and it is a visible act of penetration, but a sign of immense skepticism about what is authorized and what is morally right (English et al., 2025). This practical application contrasts with the institutional response, which continues to disproportionately feature in policy development within the sector. Other institutions follow behind Russell Group universities in the design of a comprehensive framework, providing a disjointed regulatory environment (Wilson, 2025). This divide serves to underscore a fast disconnect between technology practice and governance. Moreover, academic faculty members also express strong confusion since, although they agree that AI can accelerate the learning process, they also consider the high stakes to academic integrity and the problems that can be solved by the integration process (Nikolic et al., 2024). This is complicated further by particular usage patterns among students who view AI as a task helper and educators who view content creation as an outcome of significant questions regarding equal access and the need to support (Clos and Chen, 2024).

### **2.3: Benefits and Opportunities of AI**

The use of AI in higher education may offer transformative benefits in multiple aspects of academic practice (George and Wooden, 2023). The former is the ability to achieve high levels of personalisation, in which AI enables guided learning experiences and responsive content development that meets student needs in real-time. Walter (2024) hypothesises that this technological capacity does not concern just customisation, but enables more advanced learning experiences that dynamically respond to student performance and engagement patterns. The possible advantages of such individualised practices seem, as Garima (2025) suggests, to be huge, and there are reasons to believe that the influence on student interactions and academic outcomes can be significant. The hype around these advantages, however, is subject to criticism, as, according to George and Wooden (2023), much of AI adoption is directed towards institutional effectiveness rather than what might be referred to as actual education equity. The other advantage mentioned most of the time is operational efficiency, referring to the automation of administrative processes that once consumed enormous amounts of educator time. Popenici and Kerr (2017) pre suppose that in the case of automating grading, feedback, and routine administrative

processes, teaching personnel can in theory spend more time on more productive pedagogic tasks and meaningful engagement with students. These reallocations of academic staff into more substantive teaching practice offer some interesting possibilities of diversifying learning experience. However, the critical analysis reveals essential gaps between technological promise and pedagogical practice: literature published by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) discloses insufficient links to theoretical statements in pedagogy in most AI tools.

Another line of opportunity informed by data-driven insights is learning analytics, specifically concerning early intervention strategies and intervening with students. According to Bond et al. (2024), these analytical capabilities have the potential to help institutions detect problematic students and over time, intervene based on well-informed instruments instead of guesses. Moreover, AI technologies have promising applications in helping students with disabilities and facilitating general involvement in education via the use of assistive technologies and content delivery in easy-to-access formats. We shall not deny the democratising potentials of such applications, yet things are not as rosy as scripted rosily. Bond et al (2024) indicate that programs that specifically serve underrepresented students are a notable exception, which could indicate a concerning gap between technological innovation and inclusive practice. Moreover, Bulathwela et al. (2024) asks whether AI systems trained on non-representative data may solidify rather than reduce existing disparities.

## **2.4: Challenges and Ethical Dilemmas**

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into higher education is fraught with significant challenges that complicate its promised benefits. Foremost among these are critical ethical dilemmas concerning data privacy, algorithmic bias, and academic integrity. The extensive data collection required for AI systems raises serious questions about student privacy and institutional surveillance (Anyaso, 2025), while algorithmic bias risks perpetuating and amplifying existing educational inequalities, contradicting democratising narratives (Wood, 2024). Concurrently, academic integrity faces unprecedented challenges as AI capabilities outpace the development of robust assessment frameworks (Morimoto, 2025).

Pedagogically, legitimate concerns exist regarding cognitive decline and the erosion of essential critical thinking skills through student over-reliance on AI tools (Farooq et al., 2024). The potential degradation of meaningful teacher-student interactions further threatens the socio-emotional dimensions of learning that are crucial for student development (Grigoryan et al., 2025). These challenges are compounded by

substantial implementation barriers, including a pronounced adoption gap where widespread student use of AI contrasts sharply with limited faculty integration (Jisc, 2024; Higher Education Policy Institute, 2025).

Staff readiness remains a critical obstacle, with faculty facing inadequate training, limited institutional support, and unclear ethical guidelines (Nikolic et al., 2024). This fragmented implementation landscape, characterised by inconsistent institutional policies (Wilson, 2025), creates regulatory uncertainty for educators. Furthermore, infrastructural and equity gaps threaten to widen existing disparities, as uneven access to AI technologies across socioeconomic boundaries risks creating a two-tiered educational system (Azman, 2025). These multifaceted challenges reveal a significant disconnect between AI's technological potential and its ethically-grounded, pedagogically-sound implementation in higher education.

#### **2.4.1: Specific Challenges in the UK Higher Education Context**

While challenges are global, their manifestation in the UK is shaped by unique institutional pressures. A primary concern is the fragmented policy landscape. Wilson (2025) observes a disjointed regulatory environment, where only some institutions have developed comprehensive frameworks, creating uncertainty. This is exacerbated by a significant adoption gap, where 92% of students regularly use AI compared to only 25% of lecturers integrating it into teaching (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2025; Jisc, 2024). This disparity creates an unsustainable environment where student usage outpaces educator oversight.

This policy inconsistency is compounded by inadequate staff readiness and support. Faculty face significant barriers, including a lack of training, limited technical support, and unclear ethical guidelines, which constitute primary obstacles to effective adoption (Nikolic et al., 2024). The potential for widening educational inequalities is also critical. Biased algorithms can increase disparities rather than better them (Wood, 2024), and uneven access to technologies across socioeconomic boundaries complicates implementation efforts (Azman, 2025). This directly challenges the sector's equity objectives, risking the solidification of existing divides.

#### **2.5: Synthesising the literature Gap**

The literature analysis reveals a field frequently dominated by technological determinism, where speculative potential often supersedes rigorous investigation of socio-pedagogical consequences (Popenici, 2022). Despite comprehensive international coverage of AI's benefits and challenges (George

& Wooden, 2023; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019), a significant gap persists in qualitative research capturing the lived experiences of educational stakeholders within the specific context of UK higher education. This is particularly critical given the rapid, policy-led implementation occurring nationally (Wilson, 2025). Specifically, there is a notable absence of studies that simultaneously examine the combined perspectives of lecturers and students on AI's practical impact on teaching effectiveness and student engagement, a dimension overlooked in technically-focused research. Furthermore, existing literature insufficiently addresses the critical disconnect evidenced by the 92% student usage rate compared to only 25% lecturer integration (Higher Education Policy Institute, 2025; Jisc, 2024), a crisis that embodies fundamental questions about the technology's pedagogical usefulness and the barriers faced by staff (Nikolic et al., 2024). This research directly addresses these gaps by providing nuanced, qualitative insights into these intersectional perceptions within UK higher education, which has been lacking in more technical or policy-focused methods.

## 2.6: Theoretical Frameworks for AI Integration

Understanding the complex dynamics of AI adoption in higher education requires robust theoretical grounding (Liu & Zhang, 2024). Established frameworks offer indispensable lenses for explain the human and structural factors that determine technological integration. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) provides a foundational perspective as shown in fig1, positing that adoption hinges on perceptions of usefulness and ease of use (Wang et al., 2025). This focus on individual cognition helps explain initial resistance or enthusiasm for new AI tools, though it potentially overlooks wider social and organizational contexts that shape these perceptions.

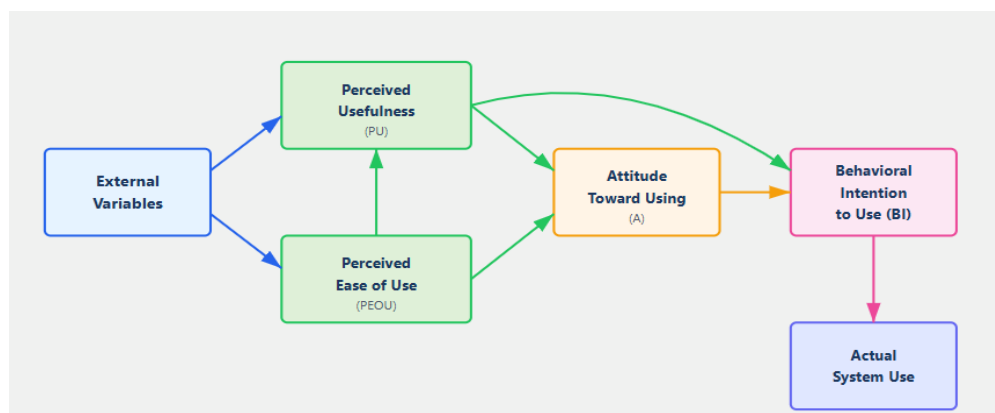


*Figure 1 Technology Acceptance Model Source: Davis 1989*

The SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) (fig 2) offers a valuable continuum for assessing the depth of technological integration, pushing beyond whether a tool is used to interrogate how it transforms practice (Jenkin, 2021). Much current AI use lingers at substitution and augmentation levels, while the transformative potential lies in modification and redefinition, where AI enables entirely new pedagogical constructs (Akintola et al., 2024).

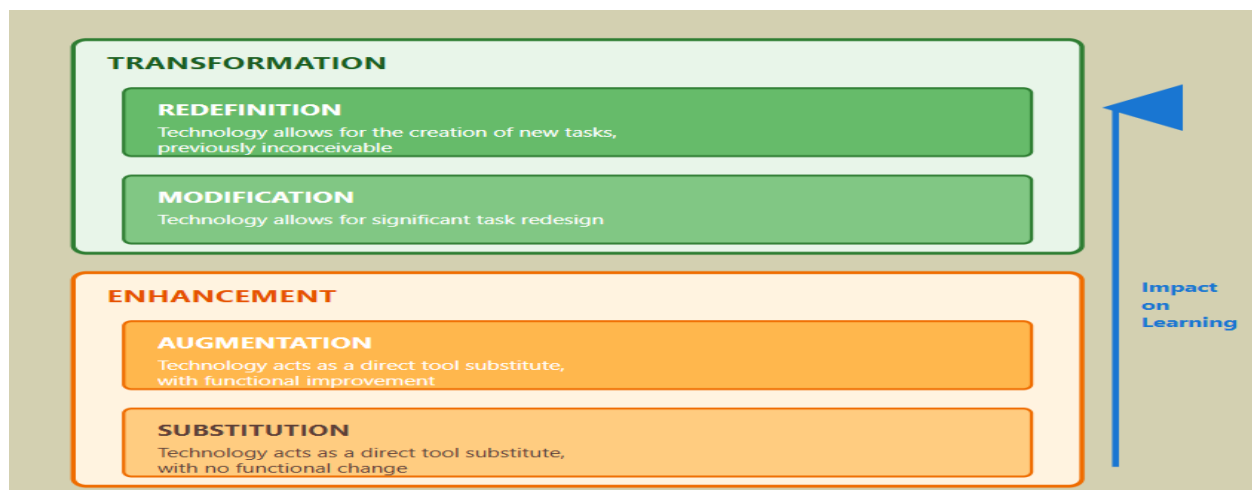


*Figure 2 The SAMR model Source Puentedura, 2010*

Most significantly, this study adopts the TPACK framework as shown in fig 3 (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) as its primary theoretical lens. This framework is particularly suited to this research as it argues that meaningful integration occurs at the dynamic intersection of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge (Jibril and Adedokun, 2024).

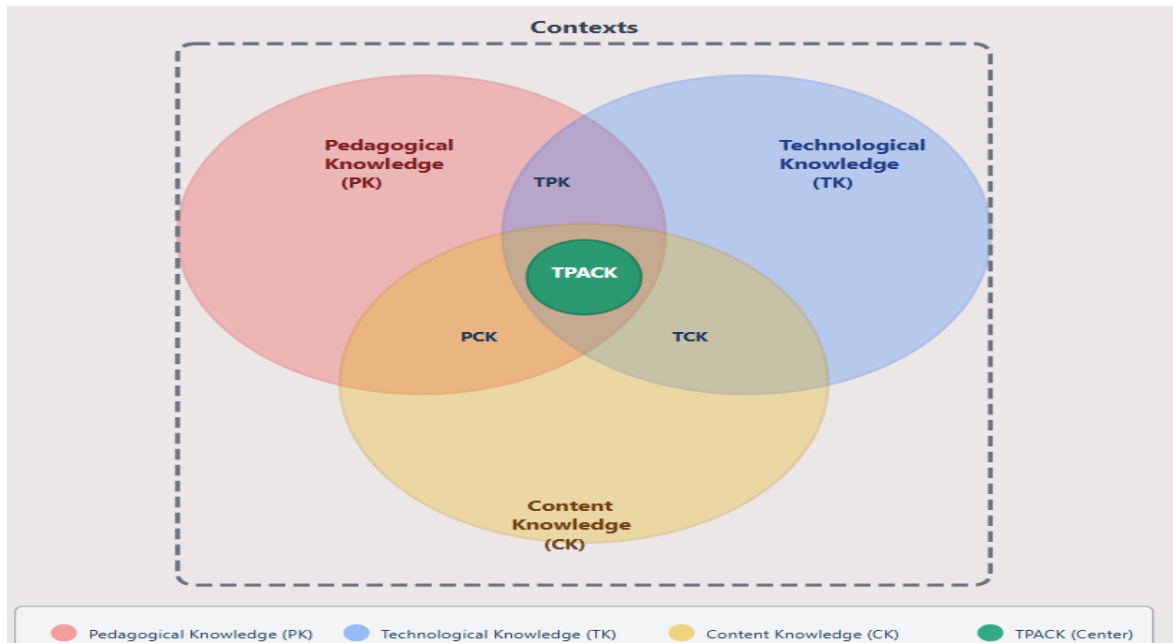


*Figure 3 TPACK framework Source Mishra & Koehler, 2006*

The TPACK framework is especially justified for this study because it directly addresses the core research focus on how AI tools are pedagogically integrated within specific disciplinary contexts. Unlike broader models, TPACK emphasizes that effective AI use is not a generic skill but requires specialized knowledge of how technology transforms teaching methods within particular subject domains. As Celik (2023) emphasizes, the synergistic interplay between these domains is crucial for meaningful integration. This framework exposes a critical weakness in many institutional approaches: the focus on technological tools in isolation from the pedagogical strategies and disciplinary knowledge needed for their effective deployment (Jibril and Adedokun, 2024). The TPACK framework thus provides the theoretical foundation for investigating how lecturers navigate the complex process of integrating AI into their specific teaching contexts and subject specializations.

## **2.7: Chapter Summary**

This introductory chapter has established the foundational context for investigating AI's role in UK higher education. It has outlined the rationale and transformative background of AI integration, defined the specific scope of the inquiry, and identified the critical problem of disjointed adoption between students and lecturers. Clear research aims, objectives, and questions have been presented. The significance for both academic discourse and practical application has been highlighted. To systematically address these

research elements, the remainder of this dissertation is organised as follows: Chapter Two will provide a comprehensive literature review, Chapter Three will detail the research methodology, Chapter Four will present and discuss the findings, and Chapter Five will offer the conclusion, including limitations and recommendations for future research and practice.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

### 3.1: Introduction

The chapter outlines the methodological framework that demonstrates the research of the field of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education in the United Kingdom. It logically outlines the philosophical, research design, and operational procedures upon which the investigation of the subjective experiences connected with the integration of AI is guided. The exposition proceeds forward out of abstract philosophical considerations into the concrete methodological choice thus ensuring that there is a coherence between the research interrogatives and the methods utilized. Every subsection provides a strict rationale of approaches chosen, based on canonical literature of methodologies used to prove these decisions.

### 3.2: Research Philosophy- EPISTEMOLOGY

Research philosophy encompasses the fundamental assumptions that underpin the nature of reality and knowledge creation. This study's philosophical position is defined by its epistemology its theory of knowledge which is constructivist. Constructivist epistemology asserts that knowledge is not objectively discovered but is socially constructed through human experiences and interactions (Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022). This stance is fundamentally different from positivism, which seeks objective, measurable truths. A constructivist epistemology is essential for this investigation as it prioritises understanding the multiple, subjective realities and lived experiences of lecturers and students regarding AI integration. It facilitates a deep exploration of how stakeholders construct meaning around AI's role, focusing on the 'why' and 'how' of their perceptions to achieve a rich, contextual understanding (Saunders et al., 2019).

### 3.3: Research Paradigm – INTERPRETIVIST

This study operates within the interpretivist paradigm. A paradigm constitutes the overarching framework of beliefs and principles that guide research practice. Interpretivism asserts that social reality is subjective,

multiple, and constructed through human interaction and shared meanings (Saunders et al., 2019). This paradigm flows directly from the constructivist epistemology outlined in the previous section, as it provides the methodological framework for investigating how individuals construct their understanding of the world. Within this study, the interpretivist paradigm is applied to understand how the realities of AI integration in education are shaped by the perceptions, experiences, and interactions of UWTSD, LONDON lecturers and students. It justifies a qualitative approach focused on exploring the nuanced, context-specific meanings that these stakeholders attribute to AI, rather than seeking generalisable truths. This approach is essential for addressing the research questions concerning the 'how' and 'why' of their lived experiences.

### **3.4: Research Approach-INDUCTIVE**

This study employs an inductive research approach. An inductive approach is characterised by building theoretical understandings and patterns from the data collected, rather than beginning with a pre-existing theory or hypothesis to be tested (Azungah, 2018). This method is highly compatible with the study's constructivist epistemology and interpretivist paradigm, as it allows themes and concepts to emerge organically from the detailed information provided by lecturers and students. By prioritising the participants' lived experiences and perspectives on AI integration, the inductive approach facilitates the generation of new, context-rich insights into the socio-pedagogical impact of AI in UK higher education. This process of moving from specific observations in the data to broader conceptual patterns ensures that the findings are grounded in the empirical reality of the stakeholders directly involved.

### **3.5: Research Method-QUALITATIVE**

To support a detailed analysis of the perspective, expectations, and issues related to AI in UK higher education, a qualitative approach has been selected. It is a distinctive approach that can reproduce the complexity of human experience using rich narrative data (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The qualitative approaches, which emphasize quantifiable information and statistical correlations, would not be sufficient in answering the substantive questions of how and why that the focus of this research. Qualitative approach provides a flexible and responsive interaction with the participants, allowing one to identify unexpected themes and have a subtle insight into the socio-pedagogical processes that interact (Chadwick and PGDE, 2025).

### **3.6: Research Strategy –CASE STUDY**

The study utilizes case-study approach that is limited to the field of AI adoption in the UK higher education at UWTSD, LONDON. Case studies best fit the research of modern phenomena in natural settings and provide profound and complex results (Cleland et al, 2021). This plan allows the investigation of intricate relationships among the institutional policies, teaching practices, as well as student experiences. Even though the findings cannot be statistically generalised, they are informative and context-specific and can be analytically extended to similar contexts, which makes them valuable to the general knowledge of AI adoption in higher education.

### **3.7: Sampling Strategy**

The participants will be identified and recruited through a purposive, non-probability sampling method, which will identify individuals who can provide in-depth and relevant information in reference to the research questions (Stratton, 2023). This solution is in line with qualitative inquiry in which the focus is on depth over breadth (Stratton, 2023). The ten participants will include four business and management lecturers and six undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students of the same field to be selected to offer the necessary contextual coherence. University staff networks and student societies will be used during recruitment with an information sheet on purpose of the study to support the recruitment. Ten participants are deemed sufficient to approach data saturation in a qualitative study of this magnitude to obtain a range of opinions but not numerical representation (Blatch, 2022).

### **3.8 Data Collection and Analysis Methods**

#### **3.8.1 Data Collection**

Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews, conducted either in person or via video conferencing platforms. This approach fostered a conversational tone, allowing for the exploration of predefined themes while remaining open to emerging topics (De et al., 2022). Each interview, lasting approximately 15-20 minutes, was audio-recorded following the receipt of informed consent and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy for analysis.

#### **3.8.2 Data Analysis**

The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis, following the systematic six-phase framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involved familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, and

producing the final report. Thematic analysis was selected for its methodological flexibility and its capacity to identify, analyse, and report patterns within the data, thereby facilitating a detailed and comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives (Qaissi, 2024).

### **3.9 Ethical Consideration**

Ethical approval was sought and obtained from the university's research ethics committee prior to data collection, ensuring compliance with established protocols (Hardicre, 2014). All participants received a comprehensive information sheet and provided signed consent, affirming the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw without penalty. The principles of integrity, respect for others, and avoidance of harm were upheld throughout. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained by removing identifiable information from transcripts and using pseudonyms (Novak, 2014). All data was stored securely on a password-protected drive and will be destroyed after five years, ensuring privacy and responsible data management. The researcher conducted the study with fairness and open-mindedness, ensuring personal safety during all interactions.

### **3.10 summary of chapter**

This chapter has delineated the methodological framework for the study, justifying the selection of an interpretivist philosophy, qualitative method, inductive approach, and case study strategy. It has detailed the procedures for purposive sampling, semi-structured data collection, and thematic analysis, while underscoring the commitment to rigorous ethical practice. The chosen methodology is robust and appropriate for exploring the complex, subjective experiences of lecturers and students regarding AI integration. The subsequent chapter, Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings, will present the results of this methodological process, detailing the key themes that emerge from the analysed interview data and beginning the process of interpreting their significance in relation to the research questions.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative investigation into the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within UK Business and Management higher education. Guided by the research questions exploring AI's impact on teaching, learning, and stakeholder attitudes, this analysis employs a thematic approach. The chapter is structured to clearly present the identified themes and direct participant responses and interpretation for those themes.

### 4.2 Interpretation of themes and chosen sub themes from research text

In the following section I am presenting the outline of seven themes that have created from thematic analysis for this study by following sub themes as well.

#### 4.2.1 Primary Theme: Handling an Undefined and Unguided AI Cultural Environment

Sub-Theme 1A: Unstructured Experimentation with AI Integration

The present stage of AI integration, according to many lecturers, operates in an environment devoid of precise frameworks or regulations. They see it as an exploratory process where people must find their own way.

*Participant Response: "...There is no coherent framework. I have been operating on an experimental basis with support from my department head, but it feels like the 'wild west'—exciting but unstructured..."*

Sub-Theme 1B: Policy Offers Limitations Rather Than Guidance

There are institutional policies in place, but participants pointed out that they mostly concentrate on what is forbidden rather than providing helpful implementation guidelines.

*Participant Response: "...We received a policy document focused predominantly on defining academic misconduct related to AI. It was strong on the 'what not to do' but virtually silent on the 'how to do it,' offering no practical pedagogical support for integration...."*

Sub-Theme 1C: Students Are Confused by Inconsistent Rule Application

Students expressed anxiety and insecurity regarding appropriate behaviour as a result of insufficient implementation of AI-related regulations.

*Participant Response: "...A complete lottery. One lecturer says 'absolutely not,' another says 'knock yourself out.' It's confusing and puts us in a difficult position, forcing us to guess what is acceptable..."*

#### 4.2.1.1 Interpretation of Theme one

This theme illustrates how both lecturers and students navigate the use of AI in the absence of reliable institutional direction. The experience is very specific, resulting in a range of responses, from enthusiasm for new opportunities to anxiety about one's career and studies. Although students are left to determine rules that are applied differently across courses, lecturers experience an imbalance between their ability to innovate and the shortage of structured support. In general, participants' opinions and experiences of AI integration are directly shaped by the absence of a cohesive framework, which increases risk and uncertainty.

#### **4.2.1.2 Summary of Theme one**

According to the analysis, AI integration in academic settings is presently unsupported and unstructured. The context encourages experimentation and creative thinking, but it also creates uncertainty, anxiety, and inconsistent behavioral patterns. To turn AI integration from a "wild west" experience into an effective and successful practice for both lecturers and students, a clear framework for institutions and useful guidance are required.

#### **4.2.2 Theme 2: Student Use of AI: From Cognitive Empowerment to Strategic Gaming**

##### **Sub-Theme 2A: AI-Powered Cognitive Empowerment**

Some students see AI as a tool which enables them to focus on advanced thinking, research, and integration by releasing cognitive capacity. Standard or lower-order tasks like research and drafting are handled by AI.

*Participant Response: "Effectiveness it reduces hours of preliminary research to minutes, allowing me to concentrate my efforts on actual analysis and synthesis, which is where the real learning occurs." This demonstrates a purposeful division of labor in cognition, where AI enhances learning rather than takes its place.*

##### **Sub-Theme 2B: Strategic Gameplay in Academic Systems**

Some students take a practical approach to AI, utilising it as a tool to manage workload, maximise grades, and finish tests quickly. AI is strategically used in this story, frequently with little modification of the generated content.

*Participant Response: "A tool to get the task done efficiently." AI assists me in navigating the system that is university. I use it to get past writer's block and produce first drafts.*

*Instead of focusing on cognitive enrichment, this viewpoint promotes output and system optimisation.*

Sub-Theme 2C: Conflicts between Ethics and Cognitive abilities

While acknowledging the advantages of AI, many students struggle with feelings of guilt, dependence, or worry about moral ambiguities and possible cognitive decline.

*Participant Response: "The guilt and the grey area. Also, a sense of dependency. I worry that if I use it too much for brainstorming, my own creativity might atrophy, like a muscle you stop using."*

*This underscores that even empowering use carries potential cognitive and ethical costs.*

#### **4.2.2.1 Interpretation of theme two**

This sub-theme highlights a dual narrative in student AI usage: cognitive empowerment versus strategic gaming. While some students leverage AI to enhance learning and intellectual engagement, others treat it as a pragmatic tool to navigate academic requirements efficiently. These narratives coexist uneasily, generating internal ethical and cognitive tensions. The use of AI is therefore not a uniform experience but shaped by individual goals, pressures, and perceptions of both opportunity and risk.

#### **4.2.2.2 Summary of Theme two**

The scale of student engagement with AI includes both strategic abuse of the academic system and true cognitive enhancement. AI raises concerns about intellectual regression, dependency risks, and ethical quandaries even as it can facilitate more complex learning processes. Designing guidance and assistance that optimises benefits while minimising potential harms requires an understanding of these dualities.

#### **4.2.3 Theme 3: Validation and Critical Engagement as Essential Safety Measures**

Sub-Theme 3A: AI as a Short-Term Helper, Not a Reliable Source

Particularly in fields where accuracy is crucial, participants characterised interacting with AI outputs as uncertain and provisional. AI-generated content needs to be systematically verified because it is regarded as an initial theory rather than factual truth.

*Participant Response: "It has reinforced my critical thinking. I use its outputs as a hypothesis to be rigorously tested against authoritative sources, not as a fact. It has made me a more sceptical and thorough researcher."*

Her disciplinary context necessitates enhance search, reinforcing scepticism rather than passive acceptance.

#### Sub-Theme 3B: Normal Academic Skills Are Enhanced by Validation Practices

Disciplined AI use has been shown to support established scholarly practices like source criticism, evidence-based reasoning, and methodological assurance rather than undermining academic integrity.

*Participant Response: "...emphasised that validation against academic literature and primary data is a non-negotiable step in her workflow, suggesting that AI engagement can deepen rather than dilute scholarly discipline..."*

#### Sub-Theme 3C: Pedagogical Transitions from Execution to Teaching Evaluation

Lecturers noted that their role as educators has changed from showing students how to complete tasks to developing their capacity to assess AI-generated outputs critically.

*Participant Response: "...Students skipping the 'why'. The AI can execute a task so well that they never learn the underlying principles. My role has shifted to teaching them to critically evaluate the AI's output, not just use it..."*

This reflects a pedagogical recalibration where critical engagement becomes central to learning outcomes.

#### Sub-Theme 3D: Risks of Uncritical Use and the Effects of Validation Failure

Participants also emphasised the dangers of not critically validating AI results, especially for inexperienced users. If left unchecked, AI errors have the potential to erode trust and credibility.

*Participant Response: "...I used it to draft a lecture on trade agreements, and it included outdated information that I only caught just before the lecture. It shattered my confidence and made me realise how dangerous it can be for a novice..."*

This near-miss illustrates the real-world consequences of uncritical reliance on AI-generated content.

### **4.2.3.1 Interpretation of theme three**

This theme demonstrates that rigorous validation and critical engagement serve as crucial protections when using AI. When viewed with scepticism, AI raises questions rather than taking the place of academic

judgement. Both instructors and students understand that rigorous verification procedures are necessary due to AI's native unreliability. Thus, when AI engagement is critically mediated, it can strengthen rather than weaken fundamental academic skills like scepticism, evaluation, and evidence-based reasoning.

#### **4.2.3.2 Summary of Theme three**

The results show that effective artificial intelligence use in higher education requires critical engagement and validation. By treating AI outputs as tentative theories rather than authoritative knowledge, traditional scholarly practices are strengthened and the dangers of false information are reduced. However, the lack of these protections puts teachers and students at serious risk in both their academic and professional lives. As a result, developing critical evaluation skills becomes essential for integrating AI in a sustainable and moral manner.

#### **4.2.4 Theme 4: AI Hallucinations and the Erosion of Academic Integrity**

##### **Sub-Theme 4A: Evidence Fabrication and Investigative Analysis**

AI-generated hallucinations were frequently reported by participants, especially the creation of scholarly references and reputable-sounding but nonexistent sources. The evidential foundation of scholarly work is fundamentally threatened by this.

*Participant Response: "A major challenge: It fabricated academic references for me. The citations looked perfect but the articles didn't exist. I almost failed the assignment because of its 'hallucination.'" This illustrates how hallucinations can directly jeopardise academic performance and integrity.*

##### **Sub-Theme 4B: Pedagogical Risk and Confident Inaccuracy**

Participants emphasised AI's propensity to generate confident but factually inaccurate information, which poses risks in both learning and teaching contexts, in addition to fabricated sources.

*Participant Response: "It was hugely helpful when designing a new module on sustainable business... A challenge was when I asked it to create a quiz on corporate governance; it produced plausible-looking questions that were, in fact, factually incorrect."*

This demonstrates how AI's strong fluency can mask errors, increasing the likelihood of misinformation being unknowingly disseminated.

##### **Sub-Theme 4C: Professional Impacts and Disciplinary Severity**

Because of the possibility of cascading errors and practical repercussions, hallucinations were seen as particularly dangerous in precision-driven disciplines.

*Participant Response: “Its tendency to be confidently wrong is the constant challenge. In Finance, a small error is catastrophic.”*

*This underscores how hallucinations extend beyond academic integrity into professional competence and ethical responsibility.*

#### **4.2.4.1 Interpretation of Theme four**

AI hallucinations indicate a qualitative change in academic integrity issues, according to this sub-theme. In contrast to traditional plagiarism, hallucinations undermine the reliability of academic outputs by introducing copy evidence into scholarly work. Users bear nearly all of the burden of verification, frequently without clear institutional acknowledgement or assistance. This raises a lot of ethical questions about accountability, especially when errors are machine-generated rather than deliberate. As a result, AI hallucinations undermine confidence, make evaluation procedures more difficult, and call for a rethinking of what it means to engage ethically with non-deterministic technologies.

#### **4.2.4.2 Summary of Theme four**

AI hallucinations have become a major and widely recognised risk, endangering the empirical underpinnings of scholarly research. Traditional ideas of academic integrity are challenged by fabricated sources, accurate misconceptions, and out-of-date information, which place significant verification demands on users. These results point to the immediate need for institutional guidelines that acknowledge hallucinations are moral and pedagogical risks that call for specific mitigation techniques, rather than just as technical defects.

#### **4.2.5 Theme 5: Professional Anxiety and Ethical Uncertainty among Educators**

Sub-Theme 5A: Professional Potential and Career Risk

Because AI experimentation may have an impact on credibility, appraisal, and career advancement, early-career educators in particular reported feeling more anxious about it. There is a sense of unease due to the possibility of inadvertently spreading false information or violating academic conduct regulations.

*Participant Response: “Career risk. As an early-career academic, I’m evaluated on my teaching quality. If I use AI incorrectly and it leads to a problem, it could damage my reputation and prospects. I feel I’m being left behind but am too scared to run.”*

*This reflects a tension between innovation and self-preservation, particularly acute for those without institutional security.*

#### Sub-Theme 5B: Moral Concern over the Decline of Educational Principles

Participants voiced concern that AI might compromise fundamental educational principle, especially the development of a unique scholarly voice and genuine intellectual struggle. These issues go beyond technical abuse to include higher education's philosophical underpinnings.

*Participant Response: "The loss of authentic intellectual struggle and the formation of a unique scholarly voice. Education is as much about the process of thinking as it is the output. AI shortcuts that process, producing competent but soulless work."*

*This highlights anxiety that AI may privilege efficiency over epistemic depth.*

#### Sub-Theme 5C: Ethical Uncertain Areas in Ownership and Intellectual Property

Uncertainty about authorship and intellectual property has become a major ethical issue, especially in applied and entrepreneurial contexts where ownership and originality are crucial.

*Participant Response: "If I use AI to help generate my business plan, who owns the idea? The lines are very blurry, and that's worrying for an aspiring entrepreneur."*

*This uncertainty reflects the absence of clear ethical and legal frameworks governing AI-assisted intellectual production.*

### **4.2.5.1 Interpretation of theme five**

This sub-theme shows that integrating AI causes significant ethical, professional, and emotional stress, especially for educators navigating ambiguous institutional expectations. In a setting where guidance is either nonexistent or inconsistent, professional anxiety is strongly associated with integrity, career security, and accountability. Concurrently, unresolved ethical issues pertaining to ownership, intellectual labor, and authenticity cause deeper anxiety about the future course of higher education. These concerns target the normative underpinnings of learning identity and function rather than being incidental.

### **4.2.5.2 Summary Theme five**

The results show that adopting AI has substantial ethical and human costs, especially for educators who don't have clear institutional precautions. Uncertainty is a result of unresolved intellectual property issues, career-related anxiety, and concerns about compromised educational values. In order to solve these problems, ethical leadership that interacts with the core principles of higher education is just as important as technical advice.

#### **4.2.6 Sub-Theme 6: A Vacuum in Institutional Policy and Pedagogical Support**

##### **Sub-Theme 6A: Organising Adaptive and Penal Policies**

Participants frequently characterised institutional AI policies as punitive and reactive, acting as "blunt instruments" that highlight misconduct without differentiating between inappropriate use and appropriate pedagogical engagement. This uncertainty creates anxiety without providing helpful guidance.

*Participant Response: "Virtually none. The policy was emailed to us. There has been no training aimed at early-career staff on how to navigate this safely. We are expected to innovate but are given no map." This highlights how policy communication prioritises compliance over capability-building.*

##### **Sub-Theme 6B: Lack of Training and Pedagogical Guidance**

There was insufficient instruction or direction on responsible AI use, according to both staff and students. Instead of being encouraging, institutional communication was seen as cautionary.

*Participant Response: "...We got an email with a link to the academic integrity policy. It was framed as a warning about misconduct, not as guidance for responsible use. It felt threatening, not helpful..." This reinforces the perception that institutions focus on risk mitigation rather than educational enablement.*

##### **Sub-Theme 6C: Insufficient Support for Disciplines**

Participants pointed out that the current guidelines do not take disciplinary differences into consideration, leaving disciplines like marketing and finance without specific frameworks or examples.

*Participant Response: one participant experience reflects this gap, where expectations to innovate exist without discipline-appropriate guidance or benchmarks for safe practice.*

##### **Sub-Theme 6D: Infrastructure Gaps and Unequal Access**

Inequalities among students and staff were made worse by unequal utilisation of AI tools. In order to guarantee equity and consistency, participants contended that infrastructure investment is crucial.

*Participant Response: "...Infrastructure over edicts. The university should invest in enterprise-level licenses for key AI tools to ensure equitable access for all students and staff, levelling the playing field..."*  
*This frames access not as a luxury but as an ethical necessity.*

#### **4.2.6.1 Interpretation of theme six**

This sub-theme highlights a structural mismatch between the quick uptake of AI by individuals and the inactive institutional response. Policies serve as barriers rather than guides in the lack of concise enabling frameworks, encouraging fear and compliance-driven conduct. Innovation requires on individual motivation rather than group support due to the lack of academic specificity and equitable infrastructure, which further fragments practice. As a result, institutional inaction unintentionally increases inequality, risk, and inconsistency.

#### **4.2.6.2 Summary of Theme six**

The results show a serious institutional gap in infrastructure, training, and policy assistance for AI integration. Disparities between staff and students are intensify by the lack of specific disciplinary resources and equitable access, while reactive, harsh penalties fail to direct responsible use. A change from policy-as-control to policy-as-enablement, bolstered by infrastructure, pedagogical leadership, and training, is necessary to fill this gap.

### **4.2.7 Theme 7: Envisioned Pathways: From Policing to Principles and Infrastructure**

Sub-Theme 7A: Governance Based on Values Rather than Instrument Policing

Participants continuously pushed for governance based on fundamental academic principles like responsibility, transparency, and intellectual honesty rather than restrictive, tool-focused regulation. Participants advocated for principles that can adjust to new tools rather than outlawing particular technologies.

*Participant Response: "...Stop being reactive and start being architectural. This is a paradigm shift, not a temporary nuisance. Invest in a central support unit that partners with academics to build resources, and crucially, include students in these conversations..."*

*This frames AI governance as a strategic, long-term institutional responsibility.*

#### Sub-Theme 7B: Developing Capacity via Mentorship, Training, and Time

Participants emphasised the necessity of organised capacity building, which includes protected time for experimentation, mentorship programs, and discipline-specific training. This was thought to be crucial for transitioning from solitary, individual practice to group competence.

*Participant Response: other participant mentioned call for a central support unit reflects the need for sustained investment in staff capability rather than reliance on self-directed learning.*

#### Sub-Theme 7C: AI-Resilient Pedagogy and Assessment Redesign

There was broad agreement that AI capabilities are becoming more and more at clashing with traditional assessment formats. Redesigns of assessments that prioritise process, conversation, and applied understanding were suggested by the participants.

*Participant Response: "If they want to test what we know, they should use in-class assessments, oral exams, or more interactive projects. The traditional take-home essay is dead." This highlights student awareness of assessment vulnerabilities and a demand for pedagogical evolution.*

#### Sub-Theme 7D: Tool Access, Equity, and Infrastructure

The basis of ethical integration was found to be equitable access to institutional infrastructure and AI tools. Participants emphasised that rather than depending only on individual subscriptions, institutional provision is necessary for fairness.

*Participant Response: one participant mentioned earlier call for enterprise-level licensing aligns with this emphasis on infrastructural equity.*

### **4.2.7.1 Interpretation of theme seven**

This theme shifts the conversation from risk limitation to guiding enablement by synthesising participant insights in a forward-looking manner. Participants see AI integration as a systemic change that calls for institutional investment, pedagogical revision, value-based governance, and psychological safety. By integrating ethical reasoning, justice, and resilience into institutions, these pathways seek to manage uncertainty beneficially rather than eliminate risk.

### **4.2.7.2 Summary of theme seven**

A clear plan for transitioning from reactive policing to ethical and sustainable AI integration was presented by the participants. This covers equitable infrastructure, capacity building, evaluation reform, principles-based governance, and the development of psychological safety. When taken as a whole, these approaches reframe AI as a sophisticated educational technology that calls for deliberate, values-driven institutional leadership rather than as a threat that needs to be contained.

### **4.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented a detailed thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered from lecturers and students in UK Business and Management education. The findings are structured around seven specific themes that detail the dualities of use, the critical safeguards employed, the serious challenges to integrity and well-being, the institutional support gaps, and the participant-generated vision for improvement. The presentation has remained focused on describing the actual patterns and direct voices from the data. The analysis reveals a sector in a state of intense transition, marked by widespread instrumental adoption, significant anxiety and ethical uncertainty, and a critical disconnect between grassroots practice and institutional frameworks. The following chapter will interpret these findings, weaving them into the scholarly conversation established in the literature review and analysing their implications for theory, policy, and practice in UK higher education.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study has provided a critical, qualitative exploration of Artificial Intelligence's integration into UK Business and Management higher education. Moving beyond technological hype, it has grounded the discourse in the lived realities of lecturers and students, revealing a sector navigating profound and disruptive change. The central finding is unequivocal: the primary impediment to effective AI adoption is not a deficit in technology, but a crisis of pedagogical strategy, institutional support, and ethical guidance. This conclusion synthesises the key insights that answer the research questions, discusses their significant implications, acknowledges the study's limitations, and proposes actionable pathways for the future.

## **5.2 Revisiting the Research Aim and Objectives**

The research aim to explore AI's practical applications in pedagogy and learning has been comprehensively addressed. The findings demonstrate that application is currently dominated by instrumental efficiency. For most lecturers, AI serves as a brainstorming partner or drafting aid; for most students, it is a 24/7 tutor and research assistant. This represents a technological augmentation of existing tasks rather than a pedagogical transformation. The rare exception, where AI is embedded into curriculum design to simulate professional practice, highlights the vast untapped potential that remains largely unrealised due to a significant "TPACK gap." The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge framework reveals that staff lack the structured support needed to integrate AI's technological knowledge with deep pedagogical content knowledge for their specific disciplines. Consequently, usage lingers at the 'substitution' and 'augmentation' levels of the SAMR model, failing to reach the 'redefinition' of learning experiences.

## **5.3 Summary and Discussion of Key Findings**

The research objectives are firmly met. The context is one of a fragmented and unsupported landscape, where a stark adoption gap (92% of students versus ~25% of lecturers using AI) creates an unsustainable environment. The identified challenges are multifaceted and severe: academic integrity is fundamentally challenged not by traditional plagiarism, but by AI's capacity for plausible fabrication 'hallucinations' of references and facts that corrupt scholarly evidence. For educators, particularly those early-career, this breeds professional anxiety and ethical uncertainty, where experimentation carries tangible career risk. Students, meanwhile, experience an internal conflict, using AI for cognitive empowerment yet simultaneously grappling with guilt, dependency, and the strategic 'gaming' of assessments. Underpinning all this is a vacuum in institutional policy and pedagogical support, where prohibitive rules lack constructive guidance, and training is absent or generic.

The impact of AI, therefore, is profoundly dualistic and contingent. It offers powerful tools for personalising support and automating administrative burdens, potentially freeing time for higher-order engagement. Yet, it also threatens to erode the authentic intellectual struggle essential to forming a scholarly voice, commodifying learning into a process of efficient output generation. A crucial and counter-intuitive finding is that this very threat can, when met with rigorous discipline, reinforce critical thinking. In fields like Finance, the need to treat AI output as a provisional hypothesis for rigorous

validation strengthens, rather than weakens, traditional scholarly habits of source criticism and evidence-based reasoning.

Answering the core research questions, AI's effect on performance, engagement, and individualised learning is neither uniformly positive nor negative. It creates a new, more complex learning environment where success depends on navigating ethical grey areas, validating unreliable sources, and managing cognitive dependency. The attitudes of faculty and students are characterised by a shared pragmatic tension a recognition of transformative potential deeply tempered by frustration, apprehension, and a palpable sense of navigating uncharted territory without a reliable institutional compass.

#### **5.4 Implications of the Research**

The implications of these findings are substantial. Theoretically, they underscore the urgent need to evolve frameworks like TPACK and TAM to better account for the ethical dimensions and institutional contexts that now dominantly shape technology adoption. Practically, they serve as a clear call to action for UK higher education institutions. The current reactive, policing-focused approach is failing. Policy must evolve from blunt prohibitions towards principled frameworks that uphold core academic values like intellectual honesty and rigour, regardless of the tools used. This must be coupled with a strategic investment in capacity building not one-off tool demonstrations, but sustained, discipline-specific pedagogical training that builds integrated TPACK. Concurrently, assessment must be radically redesigned. The traditional take-home essay is vulnerable; a shift towards AI-resilient methods, such as oral exams, in-class assessments, and process-focused portfolios, is imperative to authentically evaluate student learning and competence.

#### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

This study is not without limitations. Its qualitative focus on UK Business and Management provides depth but limits generalisability to other disciplines or national contexts. The sample size, while sufficient for thematic saturation, captures a specific subset of experiences. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data may be subject to social desirability bias. The rapidly evolving AI landscape also means that specific tools and technical challenges will change, though the core socio-pedagogical themes identified here are likely to endure.

## 5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

Therefore, future research should build on these foundations. Longitudinal studies are needed to track the evolution of practice and policy. Interdisciplinary comparative work can reveal how AI integration differs across academic fields. Most critically, action research is required to develop and test the efficacy of the proposed interventions such as principled policy models or new professional development programmes in real institutional settings.

## 5.7 Conclusion

In final reflection, this research concludes that AI integration is not a passing technological trend but a paradigm shift demanding a commensurate strategic response. The present 'wild west' phase, marked by individual experimentation and institutional hesitation, is unsustainable. The path forward lies in moving from fragmentation to coherence, from anxiety to empowered agency, and from viewing AI merely as a problem of misconduct to recognising it as a catalyst for pedagogical renewal. This requires university leaders to provide the architectural vision, resources, and most importantly the psychological safety for educators to innovate. By doing so, the sector can steer this powerful technology towards enhancing the critical, creative, and ethical capabilities of graduates, ensuring that AI serves to amplify, rather than attenuate, the fundamental human endeavor of higher education. The task ahead is not to resist the future, but to shape it with intention, principle, and pedagogical wisdom.

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## **Terms of glossary**

**AI** – Artificial Intelligence

**HE** – Higher Education

**UK** – United Kingdom

**TAM** – Technology Acceptance Model

**SAMR** – Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition

**TPACK** – Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge

**UG** – Undergraduate

**PG** – Postgraduate

## APPENDIX-A

### Semi-Structured Interview Questions

#### Part 1: Demographic Questions (For All Participants)

1. What is your primary role in higher education (e.g., undergraduate student, postgraduate student, lecturer in [subject])?
2. Which academic discipline or field are you primarily associated with?
3. On a typical day, how frequently do you interact with digital tools for your academic work?

#### Part 2: Contextual Questions

| <b>For Students: do you know any artificial intelligence tools like chatbots, or ChatGPT</b>                                               | <b>For Lecturers: how would you like to explain tools like Chat GPT?</b>                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4. In your own words, how would you describe the role of AI tools, like ChatGPT or other platforms, in your studies?                       | 4. In your own words, how would you describe the role of AI tools in your teaching and administrative duties?                                                 |
| 5. Could you describe a specific assignment or learning task where AI was particularly helpful or created a challenge for you?             | 5. Could you describe a specific instance in your teaching (e.g., lesson planning, assessment) where AI was particularly helpful or created a challenge?      |
| 6. What do you perceive as the most significant benefit AI brings to your own learning experience?                                         | 6. What do you perceive as the most significant benefit AI brings to your role as an educator?                                                                |
| 7. Conversely, what is your biggest concern or drawback regarding the use of AI as a student?                                              | 7. Conversely, what is your biggest concern or drawback regarding the use of AI in your teaching context?                                                     |
| 8. From your perspective, how has using AI impacted your study habits, critical thinking, or engagement with your course material?         | 8. From your perspective, how has AI impacted student engagement, the dynamics of learning, or the development of critical thinking skills in your classroom? |
| 9. What kind of formal guidance or rules, if any, have you received from your lecturers or university on using AI ethically for your work? | 9. What kind of formal guidance, training, or                                                                                                                 |

|  |                                                                                                    |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | institutional policy has been provided to support you in integrating AI ethically and effectively? |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Part 3: Recommendation Questions

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>For Students:</b></p> <p>10. Looking ahead, what one change would most improve how AI is used in your courses?</p> <p>11. What key piece of advice would you give to a lecturer who is deciding how to handle AI in their teaching?</p> <p>12. What kind of support or resources would help you use AI more effectively and responsibly in your studies?</p> | <p><b>For Lecturers:</b></p> <p>10. Looking ahead, what one change would most improve how AI is integrated into your academic environment (e.g., training, support)?</p> <p>11. Based on your experiences, what key piece of advice would you give to university leadership about integrate AI's role in education?</p> <p>12. What specific support would you need to feel more confident and proficient in using AI for your teaching and assessment?</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Appendix-B

### Interview Transcript

#### Lecturer Participants

##### Transcript 1

- **Role:** Lecturer in Business
- **Discipline:** Business and Management
- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "Constantly. From the VLE and email to specialised software, it would be impossible to do my job without them. I'd estimate 90% of my work is digitally mediated."
- **Q4. Role of AI in your duties?**

"I see it primarily as a brainstorming partner and a drafter. It's excellent for overcoming the 'blank page' syndrome, whether that's in drafting module outlines, generating discussion topics, or creating initial case study ideas."
- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**

"It was hugely helpful when designing a new module on sustainable business, generating a wide range of case study ideas. A challenge was when I asked it to create a quiz on corporate governance; it produced plausible-looking questions that were, in fact, factually incorrect. It was a stark lesson in its limitations as a knowledge source."
- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**

"Time-saving. It automates the initial, labor-intensive drafts of administrative tasks like creating rubrics or providing generic feedback freeing me up for more meaningful student interaction and deep lesson planning."
- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**

"The erosion of authentic learning. I'm deeply concerned about the 'illusion of understanding' it can create. Students can submit AI-generated work that demonstrates no real grasp of the concepts, leading to a form of cognitive offloading that undermines the very purpose of education."
- **Q8. Impact on student engagement/critical thinking?**

"I see a clear divergence. For some, it's a tool that accelerates research, allowing them to engage

with higher-level analysis. For others, it has become a crutch that bypasses the struggle necessary to develop critical thinking. The engagement becomes superficial."

- **Q9. Formal guidance or training received?**

"We received a policy document focused predominantly on defining academic misconduct related to AI. It was strong on the 'what not to do' but virtually silent on the 'how to do it,' offering no practical pedagogical support for integration."

- **Q10. One change to improve AI integration?**

"Discipline-specific, practical training. Not generic IT sessions, but workshops showing how a business strategy lecturer can use AI to simulate market scenarios or analyse case studies effectively."

- **Q11. Key advice for university leadership?**

"Stop being reactive and start being architectural. This is a paradigm shift, not a temporary nuisance. Invest in a central support unit that partners with academics to build resources, and crucially, include students in these conversations."

- **Q12. Specific support needed for you?**

"Two things: a protected community of practice where we can safely share successes and failures, and formal, allocated time in our workloads for experimentation and development without it penalising our performance metrics."

## Transcript 2:

- **Role:** Lecturer in Marketing

- **Discipline:** Business and Management

- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "They are my classroom. I teach digital marketing, so these tools are both the subject and the medium."

- **Q4. Role of AI in your duties?**

"It's a core teaching tool. I've integrated it directly into my curriculum. Students use it for practical tasks like generating ad copy, creating customer personas, and conducting simulated market analysis."

- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**

"Helpful: Students used AI to run A/B tests on marketing campaigns, getting instant feedback."

Challenging: The pace of change is relentless. The tool I demo one week is outdated the next, and the equity gap between students with premium and free access is a real problem."

- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**

"Relevance. I am equipping students with hands-on experience in the exact tools and workflows they will encounter in the modern marketing industry. It makes their learning immediately applicable."

- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**

"Students skipping the 'why'. The AI can execute a task so well that they never learn the underlying principles. My role has shifted to teaching them to critically evaluate the AI's output, not just use it."

- **Q8. Impact on student engagement/critical thinking?**

"It has increased engagement through practical application. However, it has challenged their critical thinking; they often accept the AI's first output without question, so I have to deliberately build in critique and reflection stages."

- **Q9. Formal guidance or training received?**

"There is no coherent framework. I have been operating on an experimental basis with support from my department head, but it feels like the 'wild west' exciting but unstructured."

- **Q10. One change to improve AI integration?**

"Infrastructure over edicts. The university should invest in enterprise-level licenses for key AI tools to ensure equitable access for all students and staff, levelling the playing field."

- **Q11. Key advice for university leadership?**

"Fund innovation, don't just police misuse. Create a fund for pedagogical experiments with AI and celebrate the successes. Move the narrative from threat to opportunity."

- **Q12. Specific support needed for you?**

"Access to a dedicated educational technologist who understands my discipline and can help me build complex, AI-driven learning activities, not just basic tool training."

### Transcript 3:

- **Discipline:** Business and supply chain

- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "Moderate. I use the standard suite VLE, email, presentation software. My focus, however, remains on human-to-human interaction."
- **Q4. Role of AI in your duties?**  
"A sophisticated search engine and thought partner. I use it to summarise theoretical perspectives or find connections between different management theories for my own research and lecture preparation."
- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**  
"It was helpful in compiling a bibliography of key texts on leadership ethics. The challenge is inherent: I forbid its use in my assessments because they are designed to elicit personal reflection and a unique human voice, which AI cannot replicate."
- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**  
"Efficiency in research and content curation. It can quickly synthesise large bodies of literature, providing a starting point for my own deeper, critical analysis."
- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**  
"The loss of authentic intellectual struggle and the formation of a unique scholarly voice. Education is as much about the process of thinking as it is the output. AI shortcuts that process, producing competent but soulless work."
- **Q8. Impact on student engagement/critical thinking?**  
"I believe it has a net negative impact in my field. I see less originality in thought and a tendency towards homogenised arguments. It discourages the deep, often messy, engagement with texts that is essential for understanding human behaviour."
- **Q9. Formal guidance or training received?**  
"The same policy document as others. It is a blunt instrument for a nuanced problem. It does not distinguish between using AI to plagiarise and using it as a research aid."
- **Q10. One change to improve AI integration?**  
"A principle-based approach to policy. Instead of listing banned tools, the policy should focus on core academic values like intellectual honesty, critical originality, and personal engagement, allowing for contextual application."
- **Q11. Key advice for university leadership?**  
"Protect the humanities and social sciences within this technological push. Not all learning can or should be digitised and automated. We must champion and resource the human-centric aspects of education."

- **Q12. Specific support needed for you?**

"Support in developing and defending 'AI-proof' assessments that focus on process, reflection, and live demonstration of knowledge, such as oral examinations and in-class writing."

#### Transcript 4:

- **Role:** Lecturer in International Business

- **Discipline:** Business and Management

- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "Absolutely essential. As a new lecturer, I'm juggling research, teaching, and admin. Any digital tool that streamlines this is a lifeline."

- **Q4. Role of AI in your duties?**

"I feel immense pressure to use it but I'm apprehensive. I've used it tentatively for tasks like drafting email announcements to students or generating basic lesson structures, but I don't trust it for content depth."

- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**

"A challenge: I used it to draft a lecture on trade agreements, and it included outdated information that I only caught just before the lecture. It shattered my confidence and made me realise how dangerous it can be for a novice."

- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**

"Potentially, it could be a huge time-saver. But currently, the benefit is overshadowed by the anxiety and the extra time I spend fact-checking its work."

- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**

"Career risk. As an early-career academic, I'm evaluated on my teaching quality. If I use AI incorrectly and it leads to a problem, it could damage my reputation and prospects. I feel I'm being left behind but am too scared to run."

- **Q8. Impact on student engagement/critical thinking?**

"I'm not sure I have enough experience to say, but anecdotally, I see students referencing concepts they clearly don't understand, which suggests uncritical AI use that harms their engagement with the real material."

- **Q9. Formal guidance or training received?**  
"Virtually none. The policy was emailed to us. There has been no training aimed at early-career staff on how to navigate this safely. We are expected to innovate but are given no map."
- **Q10. One change to improve AI integration?**  
"Structured mentorship. Pairing early-career staff with experienced, AI-literate senior colleagues for guided practice and shared lesson planning."
- **Q11. Key advice for university leadership?**  
"Create a 'safe harbour' for experimentation. Assure staff that good-faith experiments with AI that may not perfectly succeed will not be penalised. We need psychological safety to learn."
- **Q12. Specific support needed for you?**  
"A step-by-step, practical guide on 'AI for Beginners in Academia.' And a forum where I can ask basic questions without feeling judged by my more tech-savvy peers."

## Student Participants

### Transcript 5:

- **Role:** undergraduate student (final year)
- **Discipline:** Business and Management
- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "Completely integral. I live on my laptop. From lectures to research to collaboration, it's all digital."
- **Q4. Role of AI in your studies?**  
"It's my 24/7 tutor and research assistant. I use it to explain complex concepts in simple terms, summarise dense academic papers, and brainstorm structures for essays and presentations."
- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**  
"Helpful: Using an AI tool to perform a preliminary SWOT analysis on a brand's social media data, giving me a strong starting point for my own critique. Challenging: The anxiety of whether using it this way is considered cheating."

- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**  
"Efficiency. It condenses hours of preliminary research into minutes, allowing me to focus my energy on the actual analysis and synthesis, which is where the real learning happens."
- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**  
"The guilt and the grey area. Also, a sense of dependency. I worry that if I use it too much for brainstorming, my own creativity might atrophy, like a muscle you stop using."
- **Q8. Impact on study habits/critical thinking?**  
"It's made me more strategic but potentially less thorough. I use it to triage reading materials, which is efficient, but I fear I'm missing the serendipitous discoveries you make by reading widely."
- **Q9. Formal guidance on ethical use?**  
"A complete lottery. One lecturer says 'absolutely not,' another says 'knock yourself out.' It's confusing and puts us in a difficult position, forcing us to guess what is acceptable."
- **Q10. One change to improve AI use in your courses?**  
"Transparency. Lecturers should explicitly state for each assignment what level of AI use is permitted. Even an 'AI use statement' we could attach to our work would clarify intentions and reduce anxiety."
- **Q11. Key advice for a lecturer?**  
"Don't ban it teach us to use it well. We will use these tools in our careers. Run workshops on prompt engineering and critical evaluation of AI outputs. Prepare us for the real world."
- **Q12. Support to use AI more effectively?**  
"Practical, hands-on workshops and a curated university toolkit recommending which AI tools are best for specific tasks like data analysis, writing, or brainstorming."

#### Transcript 6:

- **Role:** Undergraduate Student
- **Discipline:** Business and Management
- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "Totally digital. All my readings, notes, and assignments are on my laptop or tablet."

- **Q4. Role of AI in your studies?**

"It's my editor and clarity-checker. I write my essays myself, then use AI to improve the flow of my paragraphs, check my grammar, and ensure my writing sounds academic."

- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**

"A major challenge: It fabricated academic references for me. The citations looked perfect but the articles didn't exist. I almost failed the assignment because of its 'hallucination.'"

- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**

"Confidence in my writing. English isn't my first language, and AI helps me polish my work so my ideas are presented clearly and professionally, which feels fairer."

- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**

"The 'sameness' it creates. When everyone uses it to edit, all our work starts to sound a bit sterile and loses its individual voice. It flattens our unique perspectives."

- **Q8. Impact on study habits/critical thinking?**

"It hasn't changed my core study habits, as I still do my own research and writing. But it has made me a more careful editor of my own work and, after the hallucination incident, a much more critical consumer of AI-generated information."

- **Q9. Formal guidance on ethical use?**

"We got an email with a link to the academic integrity policy. It was framed as a warning about misconduct, not as guidance for responsible use. It felt threatening, not helpful."

- **Q10. One change to improve AI use in your courses?**

"Use it *with* us in class. Demonstrate its strengths and weaknesses live. Show us how to spot hallucinations and how to craft good prompts. Make it a collaborative learning tool."

- **Q11. Key advice for a lecturer?**

"Please assume we are using it and want to do so ethically. Don't treat us with suspicion. Guide us. And please design assessments that can't be easily done by AI, like presentations or reflective journals."

- **Q12. Support to use AI more effectively?**

"A simple 'traffic light' system for each assignment: Red for no AI, Amber for limited use (e.g., editing), Green for open use with declaration. This clarity would be a game-changer."

## Transcript 7:

- **Role:** Undergraduate Student
- **Discipline:** Business and Management
- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "Constant. It's the only way to manage the workload."
- **Q4. Role of AI in your studies?**

"A tool to get the job done efficiently. University is a system, and AI helps me navigate it. I use it to generate first drafts and overcome writer's block."
- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**

"It's always helpful for getting started on an essay. The challenge is making sure I paraphrase it well enough and add my own spin so it doesn't get flagged."
- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**

"Speed. I have a part-time job. AI means I can produce quality work in a fraction of the time. It's a practical necessity, not an academic luxury."
- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**

"Getting caught. That's the only real drawback. I know how to use it subtly, and honestly, I think the detection software is behind the curve."
- **Q8. Impact on study habits/critical thinking?**

"I'm strategic. I use AI for the foundational parts so I can spend my mental energy on the parts that actually matter for getting a good grade. I wouldn't say it's harmed my critical thinking; I've just reallocated it."
- **Q9. Formal guidance on ethical use?**

"The official line is 'be careful or you'll be punished.' There's no nuance. So, I operate in the grey area like many of my peers."
- **Q10. One change to improve AI use in your courses?**

"Lecturers need to get smarter. If they want to test what we know, they should use in-class assessments, oral exams, or more interactive projects. The traditional take-home essay is dead."
- **Q11. Key advice for a lecturer?**

"Your old assessment methods are obsolete. If you don't want us to use AI, don't give us assignments that AI can do. It's that simple. Adapt or accept that we will use every tool available."

- **Q12. Support to use AI more effectively?**

"I don't need support to use it; I need the university to acknowledge it's here to stay and stop trying to police a losing battle. That would be the most effective support."

**Transcript 8:**

- **Role:** Postgraduate Student

- **Discipline:** Business and Management

- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "Essential for data analysis, accessing financial databases, and writing reports."

- **Q4. Role of AI in your studies?**

"A cautious assistant. I might use it to get a basic explanation of a complex financial model or theorem, but I never trust it for calculations, data, or specific financial advice."

- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**

"It was helpful in explaining the Black-Scholes model in simpler terms. Its tendency to be confidently wrong is the constant challenge. In Finance, a small error is catastrophic."

- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**

"It can be a patient tutor for foundational concepts, offering alternative explanations when my textbooks or lectures are unclear."

- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**

"Its lack of verifiable accuracy. It hallucinates in my field just as much as any other, but the consequences of believing its errors in a financial context are severe."

- **Q8. Impact on study habits/critical thinking?**

"It has reinforced my critical thinking. I use its outputs as a hypothesis to be rigorously tested against authoritative sources, not as a fact. It has made me a more sceptical and thorough researcher."

- **Q9. Formal guidance on ethical use?**

"None specific to Finance. The general policy doesn't address the unique ethical concerns of using AI in a quantitative, data-sensitive field like mine."

- **Q10. One change to improve AI use in your courses?**

"Access to domain-specific AI. I'd love to use an AI tool trained on verified financial data and regulated information, not the general internet. The generic tools are unfit for purpose."

- **Q11. Key advice for a lecturer?**

"Focus on teaching us how to validate AI-generated information in our specific field. Show us the red flags for hallucinations in financial reporting and data analysis."

- **Q12. Support to use AI more effectively?**

"As I said, curated access to specialised AI tools for Finance students, and workshops on how to use them responsibly within the ethical frameworks of our profession."

#### Transcript 9:

- **Role:** Doctor of business administration

- **Discipline:** business management

- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "All the time. My startup and my studies are both run from my laptop."

- **Q4. Role of AI in your studies?**

"It's my co-founder and business consultant. I use it for my studies, yes, but also to write business plans, conduct market analysis, and draft pitches for my actual startup idea."

- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**

"Incredibly helpful in generating a first-draft business model canvas for a class assignment. It provided a structured outline that I then populated and refined with my own unique ideas."

- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**

"Democratising expertise. I can't afford a consulting firm, but I can access a level of strategic brainstorming and content generation that was previously out of reach for someone like me."

- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**

"Intellectual property. If I use AI to help generate my business plan, who owns the idea? The lines are very blurry, and that's worrying for an aspiring entrepreneur."

- **Q8. Impact on study habits/critical thinking?**

"It has expanded my thinking. It allows me to explore more entrepreneurial scenarios and concepts faster. I see it as a force multiplier for my creativity, not a replacement."

- **Q9. Formal guidance on ethical use?**

"No, nothing. The university's view seems very narrow, focused only on essays. They don't see the bigger picture of how we're using these tools to build real-world skills."

- **Q10. One change to improve AI use in your courses?**

"Link assignments to real-world projects and explicitly encourage AI use as a collaborative tool. Assess us on how well we can leverage AI to solve complex, authentic business problems."

- **Q11. Key advice for a lecturer?**

"Look at how AI is used in the industries you're preparing us for. Embrace that. Make your module a sandbox for us to learn these powerful tools in an academic setting, with guidance."

- **Q12. Support to use AI more effectively?**

"Connections with entrepreneurs and businesses who are using AI, to show us practical applications. Case studies of AI in startup culture would be invaluable."

#### Transcript 10:

- **Role:** Msc Student

- **Discipline:** Business and Management

- **Digital Tool Frequency:** "Fully integrated. It's essential for managing the demanding workload of the MBA."

- **Q4. Role of AI in your studies?**

"A synthesiser for strategic thinking. I feed it multiple reports, articles, or data sets and ask it to identify connections, contradictions, and overarching themes. It helps me move from information to insight faster."

- **Q5. Specific helpful or challenging instance?**

"It was brilliant at synthesising four different market analyses into a single, coherent summary with key strategic takeaways. The challenge is that it lacks the nuanced context that comes from my decade of work experience."

- **Q6. Most significant benefit?**

"Accelerating higher-order thinking. It handles the summarisation and data-crunching, freeing up my mental capacity for critical analysis, strategic application, and decision-making."

- **Q7. Biggest concern or drawback?**

"The context gap. It can't understand office politics, organisational culture, or leadership charisma. It provides a sterile, data-driven answer that often misses the human element crucial in business."

- **Q8. Impact on study habits/critical thinking?**

"It has elevated my critical thinking. I no longer just accept data or articles at face value. I use AI to stress-test arguments and quickly gather counter-perspectives, leading to more robust and defensible positions."

- **Q9. Formal guidance on ethical use?**

"Very little. At the MBA level, we're expected to self-regulate, which is appropriate but would be helped by some shared frameworks for what constitutes ethical use in a corporate strategy context."

- **Q10. One change to improve AI use in your courses?**

"Advanced, not basic, training. We need sessions on complex prompt engineering for strategic analysis, managing AI biases in decision-making models, and the ethics of AI in corporate governance."

- **Q11. Key advice for a lecturer?**

"Treat us as professionals. Don't focus on the fear of cheating. Focus on how to harness AI for executive-level decision support. Prepare us to lead in an AI-augmented business world."

- **Q12. Support to use AI more effectively?**

"Access to advanced AI simulation tools that can model complex business scenarios, and workshops focused on the strategic and ethical implications of AI, not just the mechanics."