Exploring Senior High Student's Use of Artificial Intelligence in Their Studies and Learning: A Qualitative Descriptive Analysis

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Abstract

Student's over reliance on Artificial Intelligence in their academics is the problem. In my study, I aimed to explore how senior high students use artificial intelligence in learning. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative approach, I purposely selected thirteen senior high participants, and through my analysis, it revealed key themes. I found that students accepted or rejected the use of AI when this happens, upholding accuracy and reliability, dependency and critical thinking, and based on situational use. The usefulness of AI can be as a learning aid, improved learning experience, and managing time. In terms of ease of use, I observed simple usage, challenging aspects, and user-friendly features with AI. Without intuitive design and guidance, students may lose trust in these tools. Regression analysis may be undertaken to examine the degree of influence of students' perceptions on the usefulness and ease of use of artificial intelligence as predictive variables and the acceptance or rejection usage of artificial intelligence as the criterion variable. Exploratory Factor Analysis may be done to formulate questionnaires tailored to each of the themes.

Key words: Senior High Students, Use of Artificial Intelligence, Studies and Learning, Qualitative Descriptive Analysis

1. Introduction

The exploration of artificial intelligence in education highlights its advantages in speed and convenience but also reveals risks of overreliance that can weaken critical thinking and creativity. Studies from China, Pakistan, and the Philippines show concerns about academic laziness, poor decision-making, and ethical issues, especially as many students use AI tools like ChatGPT for schoolwork. With limited adoption due to infrastructure challenges, there is a clear need for guidelines and education to promote responsible and balanced use of artificial intelligence in learning.

Theoretical Lens

In my study, I applied the Technology Acceptance Model to explore how students choose to use artificial intelligence tools. I found that students are more likely to adopt these tools if they find them easy to use

and believe they enhance academic performance by improving efficiency, offering personalized support, and increasing access to information (Wang et al., 2021).

Methods

The study used a qualitative descriptive approach to authentically capture the experiences of thirteen purposively selected 18-year-old Grade 12 students at Makilala National High School–Senior High. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gain comprehensive insights. Ethical protocols were strictly followed, including approvals from relevant authorities, informed consent, and fostering a trusted and safe research environment.

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic approach, systematically coding interview transcripts to identify key themes reflecting students' experiences. This method ensured a structured and credible interpretation while maintaining credibility, dependability and confirmability through transcript-audio comparisons. All audio recordings were securely stored in a google drive folder (https://ggle.in/MLFE) with strict adherence to ethical guidelines to protect participant confidentiality in line with national and institutional standards.

Results and Discussion

Through an in-depth exploration of participant experiences, this study examined how students navigate the evolving presence of artificial intelligence in education. The analysis revealed that students' acceptance or rejection of artificial intelligence is largely influenced by its perceived usefulness and ease of use in their academic activities. The research introduced a modified paradigm that identified sub-themes reflecting how these perceptions shape students' engagement with artificial intelligence. These findings underscore the influence of students' technological acceptance and the practical challenges they face in integrating artificial intelligence into their learning processes.

Acceptance or Rejection and Usage of AI
Students experienced both acceptance and rejection of AI, depending on factors such as its accuracy and reliability, their level of dependency on it, its impact on critical thinking, and how appropriate its use was in different situations.

Perceptions on the Usefulness of AI
Students' perceived AI as useful for aiding learning, improved learning experience and managing time.

Perceptions on the Ease of Use with AI
Students' revealed the ease of using AI comes from its simple usage, challenging aspects and user-friendly features.

The findings show that although students appreciate the speed and efficiency of artificial intelligence, many rely on it heavily without critically assessing its content, which weakens their confidence and essential skills like critical thinking and creativity. Contributing factors include time pressure and

academic demands. The study highlights the need for strategies that encourage balanced use of artificial intelligence to support learning while preserving students' independent thinking and meaningful engagement.
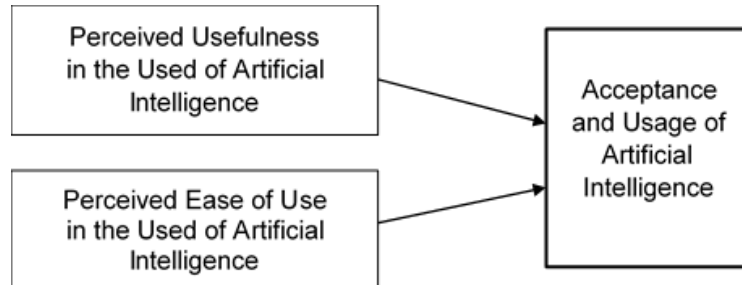

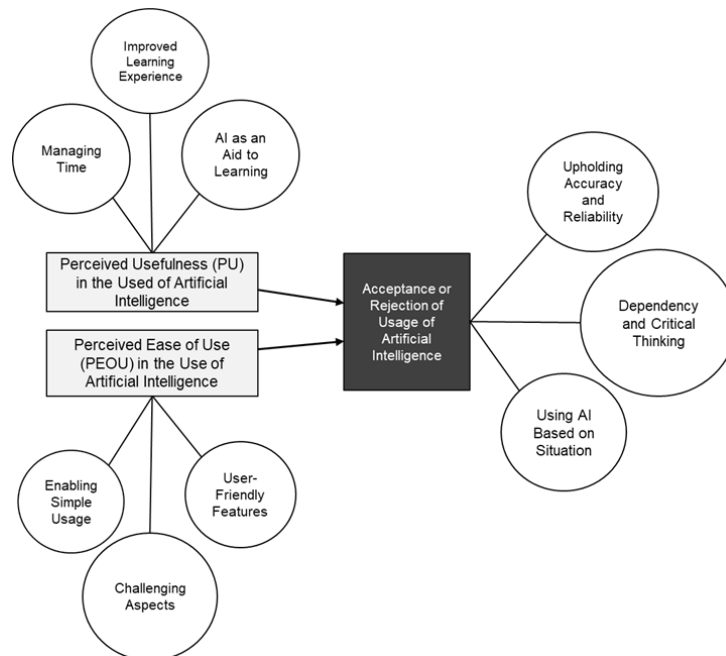**Figure 1: Theoretical Paradigm of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**

Figure 2: Themes and Sub-Themes of Exploration of Senior High Students' Use of Artificial Intelligence in Their Studies and Learning

2. Conclusions

The overreliance of students on artificial intelligence in their studies presented both opportunities and challenges. While these technologies offer valuable support in managing academic workloads and improving access to information, excessive dependence may hinder the development of critical skills such as analysis, creativity, and independent problem-solving. As artificial intelligence becomes more integrated into education, it is essential to promote its responsible and thoughtful use—encouraging students to view it as a tool for enhancement rather than a substitute for their own cognitive effort. A balanced approach is necessary to ensure that technology supports, rather than weakens, the overall learning process.

3. Recommendations

The study recommends that educational institutions and educators prioritize Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use as key factors influencing students' acceptance of artificial intelligence in academic settings. To support student engagement and trust, artificial intelligence technologies should be designed to be user-friendly and aligned with learning needs. Schools are encouraged not only to integrate these tools into instruction but also to provide structured guidance on their responsible and ethical use. By equipping students with the skills to critically evaluate and adapt artificial intelligence resources, institutions can promote a more thoughtful and sustainable use of technology that complements rather than replaces essential academic skills.

4. Acknowledgment

5. Author's Biography

The author is currently a graduate student at Holy Cross of Davao College, pursuing a Master of Arts in Education major in Teaching Social Studies. She has a strong interest in the social sciences, particularly in integrating artificial intelligence in student's academic pursuits, as she has experience using information technology in her classes over eight years of teaching. Her academic work reflects a deep commitment to promoting inclusive and sustainable practices that supports twenty-first century learners inclined with the trend without abusing it.

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