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Exploring Graduate Students' Scholarly Agency in ChatGPT-Assisted Research: A Social Cognitive Perspective

Afreen Arif [1] and Pallav Vishnu [2]

[1]Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Linguistics, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India
[2]Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India

Abstract

In this exploratory study, graduate students' perceptions of scholarly agency—creativity, ethics, and self-efficacy—in ChatGPT-assisted research are investigated using Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. To find emerging patterns in students' use of generative AI, survey data from Aligarh Muslim University master's and doctorate students was examined using descriptive statistics. Strong self-efficacy, ethical awareness, and creative use of AI tools are characteristics of responsible scholarship, according to the findings. Bandura's methodology hasn't been systematically applied to examine ethics in ChatGPT-assisted research or the context of generative AI in higher education to date. As a result, this study maintains its exploratory nature while providing a distinctive theoretical contribution. It opens the possibilities for future cross-institutional and longitudinal research by urging institutions worldwide to review their academic integrity policies and evaluation procedures in light of AI's expanding role in higher education.

Keywords: Academic integrity, Higher education, Generative AI in research.

1. Introduction

The introduction of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools into higher education has sparked international debates about ethical implications and revolutionary possibilities of these technologies. Scholars have discussed the possible advantages and disadvantages of AI-assisted academic writing since OpenAI's public introduction of ChatGPT in November 2022. They have raised issues regarding creativity, productivity, authorship, and scholarly integrity (Benbya et al., 2024, and Bozkurt, 2024). According to these discussions, GenAI may boost research productivity, but it may also reduce student ownership and creativity (Duah & McGivern, 2024, and Francis et al., 2025). While GenAI facilitates idea generation and drafting (Berg, 2023; Kitamura, 2023; Tang et al., 2024), ethical issues with respect to responsible participation, academic integrity, and authorship dilution still exist (Ray, 2023a; Klenk, 2024; Islam, 2024). To investigate AI adoption, usage trends, and technology-related behaviours, empirical research has mostly employed frameworks such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Shahzad et al., 2024; Strzelecki, 2024). In AI-assisted research, these models are beneficial, but they fall short in capturing students' moral

judgment, creative thinking, self-regulation, and cognitive processes. These elements can be examined through the theoretically grounded lens of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which emphasises the interaction of moral agency, intentionality, and self-efficacy in directing student behaviour in AI-mediated environments (Bandura, 1997, 2001; Jiang et al., 2024; Han, 2025). SCT is still underutilised in research on GenAI adoption, despite its importance, especially when it comes to graduate students' views on authorship, co-creation, and moral AI use (Shahzad et al., 2024; Sabbaghan & Eaton, 2025). The discussion of AI revolves around scholarly agency and ethical concerns. In addition to moral authorship degradation and unfair attribution of intellectual work, studies point to the risks of diminished originality, critical thinking. On the other hand, when students maintain control over their contributions, AI can support reflective, creative, and ethically responsible academic practices (Berg, 2023; Francis et al., 2025; Jiang et al., 2024). With an emphasis on creativity, self-efficacy, and ethical awareness, this study uses SCT to investigate graduate students' scholarly agency. It offers cross-disciplinary views into purposeful AI use while maintaining academic integrity by surveying master's and PhD students in India. Despite being based in India, the results are applicable worldwide and provide direction for higher education institutions on how to manage AI integration, student autonomy, and moral academic behaviour (Chan & Hu, 2023; Malik et al., 2023; Yusuf et al., 2024). By going beyond adoption-focused paradigms, emphasising how students preserve academic voice, integrity, and innovation, and offering multidisciplinary lessons for ethical, purposeful AI involvement globally, the study adds to the body of literature.

Research Questions (RQ):

RQ1: How do graduate students perceive their scholarly agency, specifically self-efficacy and creativity, when using ChatGPT as a research tool?

RQ2: What ethical and academic integrity concerns do graduate students associate with the use of ChatGPT-assisted research?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Generative AI in Higher Education

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has significantly transformed academic writing and research practices, particularly following the public release of ChatGPT by OpenAI in November 2022. Tools such as ChatGPT and Google’s Bard have sparked global debates on academic productivity, ethical implications, and the future of scholarly communication. These advancements build on earlier iterations of OpenAI’s language models, like GPT-1 (Radford et al., 2018), GPT-2 (Radford et al., 2019), and GPT-3 (Brown et al., 2020), which laid the groundwork for sophisticated natural language processing (NLP) and human-like text generation (Yan, 2023).

GenAI tools are valued by students as research and learning aids, and studies have shown that they improve academic productivity and enable personalised learning (Chan & Hu, 2023; Pattyn, 2025; Alasadi & Baiz, 2023; Ganguly et al., 2025; Liu & Jagadish, 2024). Inadequate guidance, expertise, or ethical training, however, could present difficulties for researchers (Liu & Jagadish, 2024). Structured ethical guidance is necessary, as evidenced by disciplinary differences and divergent opinions on "good practice" (Andersen et al., 2025; Sabbaghan & Eaton, 2025). In order to maintain transparency and integrity, GenAI

also streamlines writing and publication; however, it necessitates explicit disclosure standards (Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Berg, 2023; Kitamura, 2023; van Dis et al., 2023; Tang et del 2024).

Ethical use and transparency are recurring themes in the discourse surrounding GenAI's integration into higher education (Schlagwein & Willcocks, 2023; Michel-Villarreal et al., 2023; Williams, 2024). As Schlagwein & Willcocks (2023) assert, "ethical use of AI is part of broader scholarly responsibility," advocating for critical reflection on how AI reshapes research practices and wider societal structures. Williams (2024) argues that excessive AI use can hinder student development and compromise academic integrity, highlighting the need for clear policies, enhanced plagiarism detection, and innovative assessment methods. Sabbaghan and Eaton (2025) note that graduate students perceive AI tools like COREI as collaborative resources that support authorship and ethical awareness. However, Tang et al. (2023) report inconsistent AI disclosure in journals, emphasizing the urgent need for standardized frameworks to ensure integrity while leveraging GenAI for personalized learning and productivity.

Generative AI also challenges traditional assessment methods, revealing limitations in conventional approaches to authenticity and academic integrity (Gonsalves, 2025). To address this, frameworks emphasizing contextual, ethical, and practical dimensions of assessment have been proposed. Recent studies highlight the need for AI-inclusive assessment frameworks that consider the roles of instructors, students, and institutions (Ilieva et al., 2025). These frameworks incorporate adaptive tasks, rubric-based scoring, real-time feedback, and transparency mechanisms, supporting both formative and summative evaluation, self-assessment, and personalised learning. While empirical testing is currently limited, evidence suggests AI can enhance assessment design and foster student agency in AI-mediated educational contexts.

2.2 Student Agency in AI-Assisted Research

2.2.1. Diminishing Student Authorship and Scholarly Control

The emergence of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT has sparked broad concern regarding a decline in student ownership, creativity, and scholarly control in academic writing (Sharples, 2023; Bozkurt, 2024; Duah & McGivern, 2024; Francis et al., 2025). While these tools offer support, they may inadvertently weaken students' engagement with meaning-making and original composition. Scholars such as Perera and Lankathilaka (2023), Duah & McGivern (2024), and Chan (2023) caution that overreliance on AI can hinder independent thinking and compromise academic integrity, signaling a potential erosion of creativity and autonomy in AI-mediated environments.

A nuanced perspective is provided by Francis et al. (2025), who acknowledge that ChatGPT both empowers and challenges learner autonomy, necessitating a balanced, reflective approach. Amankwah-Amoah et al. (2024) emphasize safeguarding human originality and creativity, highlighting the need for carefully negotiated GenAI integration. Conversely, Han (2025) notes a decline in originality and critical thinking despite technical improvements, suggesting AI may act as a crutch rather than a co-creator, undermining academic agency. Islam (2024) raises ethical concerns about the "hypercommons" training model, problematizing moral authorship, while Heaton et al. (2024) caution that AI's portrayal as hyper-intelligent can distort student perceptions, reducing recognition of their intellectual contributions. Collectively, these studies underscore the critical tension between leveraging AI for support and preserving scholarly autonomy and ethical responsibility.

2.2.2. Redefining Student Autonomy, Scholarly Voice, and Co-Authorship

Within AI-enhanced learning contexts, student autonomy, defined as the capacity for intentional academic decision-making, is undergoing redefinition. Yang et al. (2024) advocate for leveraging technology to deepen learning and foster long-term autonomy. Conversely, Peschl (2024) warns that GenAI may foster passivity by reproducing low-creative content, thereby diminishing innovation and reinforcing mediocrity. Han (2025) echoes this tension, noting that although AI enhances technical writing aspects, it risks undermining scholarly voice and student ownership. The solution proposed across several studies (Jiang et al., 2024; Han, 2025) emphasizes AI literacy, ethical awareness, and responsible co-authorship, advocating for frameworks that enable students to maintain intellectual authority. Jiang et al. (2024) notably propose a 'more-than-digital' approach, framing AI interaction as a dynamic negotiation involving reflection and control rather than passive dependence. Studies by Han (2025), Yang et al. (2024), and Peschl (2024) consistently identify concerns around student passivity, with key risks including reduced originality (Sabbaghan & Eaton, 2024; Watermeyer et al., 2023), weakened critical thinking (Sabbaghan & Eaton, 2024; Watermeyer et al., 2023; Peschl, 2024), and diminished academic agency (Sabbaghan & Eaton, 2024; Watermeyer et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2024; Islam, 2024; Peschl, 2024). Watermeyer et al. (2023) additionally highlight the rise of instrumental dependence on AI tools, while Islam (2024) underscores the erosion of moral authorship.

Jiang et al. (2024) advocate instructional frameworks that maintain students' control over writing, while Hökkä, Vähäsantanen, and Mahlakaarto (2017) define agency as reflective ownership of learning. Despite AI tools like COREI aiding collaboration, Sabbaghan and Eaton (2025) highlight uncertainty in authorship, emphasizing the need for pedagogical guidance. Han (2025) and Jiang et al. (2024) stress critical engagement, aligning with Bandura's self-efficacy to support autonomy, co-authorship, and scholarly creativity.2.2.3. Human–AI Co-Creation in Academic Contexts

Shifting from critique to potential, a growing body of research emphasizes collaborative models of human–AI co-creation. Berg (2023) likens AI to a mentor that enhances idea development and structural clarity without supplanting student authorship. Bozkurt (2024), Natale et al. (2025), and Godwin-Jones (2024) similarly position AI as a cognitive partner, one that expands creative potential when learners actively engage and direct its use.

In teacher education, Sabbaghan and Brown (2024) present cases where students used AI tools like PEARL ethically and reflectively, reinforcing agency and intentional authorship. These findings support pedagogical models that emphasize co-authorship over passive reliance (Jiang et al., 2024; Sison, 2024). Han (2025) advocates for a balanced approach, recognizing AI's benefits while affirming the student's role in shaping arguments and preserving academic voice. Ethical use of GenAI in academic writing extends beyond disclosure requirements, encompassing multidimensional literacy, technical, ethical, cultural, and political (AlAfnan et al., 2023; Baidoo-Anu et al., 2023; Farrokhnia et al., 2023). Scholars such as Zembylas (2023) and Stamboliev (2023) call for critical engagement with AI tools through postcritical and decolonial perspectives, while Jandrić (2019) emphasizes the "rehumanization" of AI in education, reaffirming the role of researchers as active knowledge creators.

2.2.3 Ethical Concerns and Academic Integrity in Generative AI Use: Authorship, Integrity, Originality

The integration of generative AI (GenAI) tools such as ChatGPT into academic research writing has prompted a complex ethical dialogue. While students increasingly view these tools as supportive for drafting and ideation, institutions and scholars express concern over issues such as authorship dilution, academic integrity, misinformation, and intellectual property infringement (Ray, 2023a; Klenk, 2024). While recent scholarship has begun to address the implications of generative AI (GenAI) in educational contexts, much of the discourse remains fragmented and polarized. Studies such as Alier et al. (2024), Baidoo-Anu and Ansah (2023), and Khalifa and Albadawy (2024) highlight GenAI's potential benefits and challenges. On the other end of the spectrum, perspectives across the literature range from optimism (Korinek, 2023; Xie & Warshel, 2023), to caution (Gao, 2023; Larosa et al., 2023), and outright skepticism (Birhane, 2023; Else, 2023). Although scholarly discourse on GenAI is expanding, a large portion of the literature remains conceptual in nature rather than empirical. New research investigates how GenAI can improve learning while also potentially compromising integrity, originality, and authorship. With Yang et al. (2024) pointing out increased plagiarism risks, Islam (2024) emphasises a role in reducing moral agency and intellectual labour. Lund and Wang (2023), Liebrenz et al. (2023), and Hill-Yardin et al. (2023) express concerns about the indistinguishability of human and AI material. Teubner et al. (2023) present this as a paradigm shift, however Ganjavi et al. (2023) and Qadhi et al. (2024) highlight the necessity for empirical attention to student agency in AI-assisted research by exposing conflicting policies.

From a student-centered standpoint, Cinta et al. (2023) draw attention to how ChatGPT, Humata.ai, and Sudowrite impact learning and feedback. They also argue for institutional accountability to prevent authorship impersonation and false information, leaving students, faculty, and institutions in a position of shared responsibility. Replicability and credibility may be compromised by GenAI content, according to Guleria et al. (2023) and Dedema (2024), researchers emphasize the importance of protecting integrity and user autonomy. According to Alshamy et al. (2025), instructors voice ethical concerns about decreased critical thinking and plagiarism, while students exhibit a preference for AI efficiency. According to Nelson et al. (2025) and Wang et al. (2025), students' misuse of AI scaffolding highlights the necessity of instructional practices that encourage responsible interaction.

Digital literacy, norms, and values influence how ethically people view GenAI in different cultural and institutional situations (Yusuf et al., 2024). With self-plagiarism rates reaching 59%, worries about academic dishonesty and the decline of critical thinking remain, despite students' generally positive perceptions of AI (Chan & Hu, 2023; Malik et al., 2023). There are issues with authorship, creativity, and scholarly control when generative AI technologies like ChatGPT are used in academic writing (Sharples, 2023; Duah & McGivern, 2024; Han, 2025). AI may encourage autonomy and creativity (Francis et al., 2025; Berg, 2023), but there are still potential risks to creativity, critical thinking, and agency (Peschl, 2024; Sabbaghan & Eaton, 2024). There is still a dearth of empirical research on graduate students' navigation of authorship, voice, and ownership despite co-authorship and AI literacy frameworks (Jiang et al., 2024), underscoring the necessity for pedagogically grounded, context-sensitive approaches.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This study employs Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to examine graduate students' perceptions of agency in AI-assisted academic research. SCT defines agency through intentionality, forethought, self-reflection, and self-reactiveness, with self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to

influence outcomes—is the foundation of agency (Bandura, 1997, 2001). Self-efficacy shapes how confidently students use generative AI while maintaining scholarly rigor, and moral agency governs behaviour through internalised principles of fairness, integrity, and responsibility, though self-regulation may be compromised in contexts of shifting norms (Bandura, 2001), people might detach from moral principles by denying responsibility or defending dubious behaviour, particularly in settings where norms are changing, like when GenAI is used. Efficacy beliefs influence academic engagement and ethical judgment (Maddux, 1995; Zimmerman, 1990). Recent studies show that self-efficacy, creativity, and fairness significantly impact AI-mediated academic outcomes (Shahzad, 2025), while ethical responsibility remains crucial (Bozkurt, 2023; Grey, 2025). SCT's relevance is further reinforced by tools like the SLA-GAI scale (Xia et al.).

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection and Instrument

Using a quantitative research approach, this study examined the effects of ChatGPT, on graduate students' self-efficacy (SE), fairness and ethics (FE), and creativity (CRE) in higher education. Purposive sampling and a structured questionnaire were used to gather data. A five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree," was used to gauge participant responses. The following descriptive statistics were calculated: mean and standard deviations, and responses in percentages (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Google Forms outputs were used to derive percentages, while means and standard deviations were manually computed using numerical Likert values. Creativity, ethics and justice (moral agency), and self-efficacy in employing generative AI were the three latent constructs that made up the survey instrument. Of the sixteen items, fourteen were modified from Shahzad et al. (2024), who had previously used validated scales from Compeau and Higgins (2017), Shaofeng et al. (2023), and Bernabei et al. (2023). To ensure comparability with previous research and retain dependability, the items were contextualised to AI-assisted academic research practices in accordance with Bandura's (2001) Social Cognitive Theory. Two further items were created to address moral self-regulation, which Shahzad et al. (2024) did not directly address. To improve clarity and relevance to the graduate research context, minor linguistic changes were made while maintaining each item's conceptual meaning. Every item was examined by a domain expert to ensure that it was relevant for the target constructs, clear, and content valid. According on demographic information, individuals were enrolled in doctorate or master's degrees. Students from the STEM fields (32.7%) and the humanities and social sciences (67.3%) made up the sample; 42.5% of the students were PhD candidates, and 57.5% were second-year master's students. A QR code and survey URL were distributed over WhatsApp class groups in order to recruit participants. They were given information on the study's goals and given the assurance that their participation would be voluntary, with the freedom to leave at any moment (Sarstedt et al., 2022). After six weeks of data gathering, 153 replies were obtained. The present sample is within the range of 30 to 500, which is advised for behavioural research by Roscoe et al. (1975); this supports the validity of the study's findings.

4. Findings

This study uses descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, percentages) to investigate graduate students' perceptions of self-efficacy, ethics, and creativity in AI-assisted research, drawing on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Each construct is presented separately based on the research questions and Table 1.

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	% SD	%D	%N	% A	%SA
A1	3.85	0.94	3.9%	3.9%	17.6%	52.3%	22.2%
A2	3.465	0.963	2.6%	17.6%	19%	52.3%	8.5%
A3	3.549	0.862	2.6%	8.5%	28.8%	51.6%	8.5%
A4	3.327	0.987	2%	23.8%	21.2%	45%	7.9%
A5	3.392	0.939	3.3%	16.3%	24.2%	50.3%	5.9%
A6	3.73	0.83	1.3%	7.9%	20.5%	57%	13.2%
A7	3.77	0.91	2%	7.2%	21.7%	49.3%	19.7%
A8	3.70	0.77	0.7%	5.2%	29.4%	52.9%	11.8%
A9	3.79	0.80	2.6%	2.6%	21.6	59.5%	13.7%
A10	4.02	0.90	1.3%	5.3%	15.8%	45.4%	32.2%
A11	3.77	0.82	1.3%	6.6%	20.4%	57.2%	14.5%
A12	3.76	0.85	1.3%	6.5%	24.2%	51%	17%
A13	3.42	0.985	5.3%	13.2%	23.7%	50.7%	7.2%
A14	3.688	0.817	2%	6%	23.5%	57.7%	10.7%
A15	3.66	0.879	2.6%	7.9%	21.7%	55.9%	11.8%
A16	3.81	0.842	2%	4.6%	21.1%	55.3%	17.1%

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Graduate Students' Perceptions on Scholarly Agency in Using Generative AI(ChatGPT).

3.1.1 Self-Efficacy in Using GenAI (A1 to A6)

According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1997, 2001), self-efficacy is the conviction that one organizes and executes the behaviours necessary to handle potential circumstances. According to Table 1's descriptive statistics, graduate students often have a high level of self-efficacy when it comes to employing generative AI tools for academic research. A tendency towards agreement was indicated by mean scores that ranged from 3.327 (A4: confidence without prior experience) to 3.85 (A1: belief that GenAI improves academic or research performance). Relatively low standard deviations (0.83–0.987) also suggested that participants had little variability and shared confidence. Students firmly believe that GenAI would improve their academic and research performance, as evidenced by the highest-rated question (A1: M = 3.85, SD = 0.94), underscoring the importance of self-efficacy in using technology to further academic objectives. Bandura's (2001) concepts of intentionality and forethought are reflected in A6, showing students' strong interest in integrating GenAI into research and writing. Items A2 and A3 indicate confidence in independent GenAI use, while lower confidence in A4 suggests unfamiliarity may be a

challenge, aligning with Bandura's (1997) focus on mastery experiences. A5 highlights self-efficacy through peer observation. Overall, students view themselves as competent, and active GenAI users.

3.1.2 Ethical Awareness and Moral Agency (A7 to A12)

According to their responses to items A7–A12 (Ethics and Fairness – Moral Agency), graduate students usually had positive opinions about ethical awareness and responsibility while using generative AI (GenAI) for academic work. The mean responses on a five-point Likert scale were 3.70 to 4.02, indicating moderate to high agreement with all measures of ethical judgement, fairness, and responsibility. With 77.6% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that educational institutions should set explicit rules for the moral use of GenAI, A10 had the strongest consensus (M = 4.02, SD = 0.90). This research shows that there is a widespread need for organisational frameworks that guarantee the integrity of scholarship mediated by AI. Similarly, items A9 (M = 3.79) and A11 (M = 3.77) show a consistent understanding of the wider ethical ramifications of using AI in research as well as data privacy concerns. A more balanced perspective can be seen in A7 (M = 3.77) and A8 (M = 3.70), where students stated the importance of appropriate application in guaranteeing accuracy and fairness while also acknowledging potential disadvantages, such as a decreased depth of engagement. Significantly, 68% of respondents felt comfortable differentiating their personal contributions from information produced by artificial intelligence (A12; M = 3.76, SD = 0.85). Collectively, these results imply that graduate students view themselves as agents with ethical awareness in AI-assisted research. Their awareness of risks, advocacy for fairness, and stress on institutional ethics show moral thinking and intentionality, and their self-regulation is seen in their faith in authorship distinction. These findings show how moral agency and self-efficacy work together to allow for responsible use of developing technologies within the framework of SCT.

3.1.3 Creativity (A13 to A16)

According to the results, graduate students believe that academic work supplemented by AI requires a moderate to high degree of creative engagement. The comparatively low standard deviations (0.817–0.985) and mean scores (3.42–3.81) suggest a high level of consistency across responses. Remarkably, more than 70% of students confirmed that they regularly use innovative and creative thinking when utilising generative AI (A16). According to A13, almost 50% of respondents said they had received specific training on how to incorporate creativity into academic assignments. The students' strong agreement with A14 and A15 further demonstrates how important reflective and critical approaches are to their academic practice. These patterns show how students' creative agency is actively shaped by self-efficacy, intentionality, and self-reflection when interpreted through Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. Furthermore, the ethical dimension of creativity implies that students are establishing their academic work on responsible and morally informed decision-making in addition to utilising innovative strategies.

5. Discussion

The findings support Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory by showing that graduate students demonstrate strong self-efficacy, ethical awareness, and creative engagement in AI-assisted academic efforts. In an era influenced by generative AI, these findings have implications for assessment practices in

higher education, especially with regard to how institutions gauge student learning and scholarly competence (Gonsalves, 2025; Ilieva et al., 2025).

The consistently strong self-efficacy scores imply that graduate students are comfortable using AI in their research, which may have consequences for how educational institutions assess research outputs and student learning. This new style of competence, where intentionality, forethought, and self-regulation are essential to scholarly practice, may inform adjustments or redesign of assessment approaches to traditional assessments that place a focus on originality and independent performance. Students' moral agency is also reflected in the general agreement on fairness, data privacy, and institutional regulations, which emphasises the significance of including ethical considerations in assessment systems. Institutions must take into account whether students use ChatGPT responsibly and transparently in addition to assessing the output's quality.

The outcomes of creativity further demonstrate that students are actively using critical and reflective thinking in their work rather than passively depending on AI. This highlights the need for institutions to design evaluation tasks that acknowledge and promote creative agency while making sure that innovation doesn't erode integrity. When taken as a whole, these results imply that scholarly agency—represented by competence, ethical judgement, and creativity—can serve as the foundation for creating improved ways of assessing student performance in an academic setting mediated by artificial intelligence.

These results highlight the pressing need for strong evaluation standards while also being consistent with earlier studies on the advantages of GenAI for creativity and productivity. Without clear regulations, institutions risk compromising equity and transparency, requiring assessment reforms that balance integrity with enhanced performance.

6. Conclusion

According to this study, graduate students who use GenAI technologies like ChatGPT exhibit significant scholarly agency, which is consistent with Bandura's SCT and includes self-efficacy, creativity, and ethical responsibility. While the reliance on self-reported data from a single institution restricts generalisability, these findings suggest important implications for assessment and evaluation practices in higher education. Specifically, institutions may need to consider how evaluation frameworks can account for responsible AI use, ethical authorship, and creative engagement. Future research should employ mixed or longitudinal methods to confirm these patterns and explore how scholarly agency translates into assessment outcomes, guiding the integration of GenAI literacy and ethics into evaluation strategies.”

7. Ethical Statement

Graduate students participated voluntarily in this study. Respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any time, and completion of the questionnaire implied informed consent; no formal IRB approval was obtained.

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