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BOLETIM DE CONJUNTURA

BOCA

Ano VII | Volume 23 | Nº 68 | Boa Vista | 2025

http://www.ioles.com.br/boca

ISSN: 2675-1488

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16934706

BOLETIM DE CONJUNTURA

www.ioles.com.br/boca

HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS STUDENTS CO-CONSTRUCTING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN JAMAICA IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELIGENCE

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Abstract

This study investigated the perceptions of Jamaican higher education (HE) students regarding the development of artificial intelligence (AI) policies, and identified key elements deemed essential for effective regulation. Employing a quantitative approach framed by social constructivism and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), data were gathered from a proportionally stratified sample of 636 students across three institutions. Determined by a priori power analysis, the sample was recruited via a non-probability, off-campus strategy. Data analysis involved descriptive and inferential statistics with strict adherence to ethical protocols. The findings revealed a paradox: while students are overwhelmingly positive about AI's potential, this optimism is critically undermined by their deep frustration with being excluded from policy development. This creates a perspective of dissonance, wherein students see an urgent need for governance but feel alienated by a top-down institutional approach. This research further indicates that students prioritize foundational, principle-based frameworks, such as mandatory faculty training and clear ethical guidelines, over granular, task-specific rules. They advocate a holistic overhaul of assessment methods, viewing various strategies as an interconnected package of reforms essential for maintaining academic integrity. This study provides critical, evidence-based insights for crafting AI policies that are not only effective but also legitimate, underscoring the necessity of a student-centric participatory approach to bridge the current governance gap and foster widespread acceptance within Jamaican HEIs.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence Policy; Higher Education; Jamaica; Student-Centric Governance; Student Perception.

Resumo

Este estudo investigou as percepções de estudantes do ensino superior jamaicano (IES) sobre o desenvolvimento de políticas de inteligência artificial (IA) e identificou elementos-chave considerados essenciais para uma regulamentação eficaz. Utilizando uma abordagem quantitativa, com base no construtivismo social e no Modelo de Aceitação de Tecnologia (TAM), foram coletados dados de uma amostra estratificada proporcional de 636 estudantes de três instituições. Determinada por uma análise de poder a priori, a amostra foi recrutada por meio de uma estratégia não probabilística fora do campus. A análise dos dados envolveu estatística descritiva e inferencial, com estrita adesão aos protocolos éticos. Os resultados revelaram um paradoxo: embora os estudantes sejam majoritariamente positivos em relação ao potencial da IA, esse otimismo é criticamente abalado por sua profunda frustração por serem excluídos do desenvolvimento das políticas. Isso cria uma perspectiva de dissonância, na qual os estudantes veem uma necessidade urgente de governança, mas sentem-se alienados por uma abordagem institucional de cima para baixo. A pesquisa indica ainda que os estudantes priorizam estruturas de base principiológica, como treinamento obrigatório do corpo docente e diretrizes éticas claras, em detrimento de regras granulares e específicas para tarefas. Eles defendem uma reformulação holística dos métodos de avaliação, vendo várias estratégias como um pacote interconectado de reformas essenciais para manter a integridade acadêmica. Este estudo fornece insights críticos e baseados em evidências para a elaboração de políticas de IA que não sejam apenas eficazes, mas também legítimas, ressaltando a necessidade de uma abordagem participativa centrada no estudante para preencher a lacuna de governança atual e promover ampla aceitação nas IES jamaicanas.

Palavras chave: Ensino Superior; Governança Centrada no Estudante; Jamaica; Percepção Estudantil; Política de Inteligência Artificial.

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INTRODUCTION

The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is demonstrably changing student-teacher interactions in higher education (HEIs). AI's transformative capacity of AI necessitates research to address the scarcity of Jamaica-specific studies. This gap hinders informed policy development for AI integration into education. Consequently, this study explored Jamaican HEI students' perceptions of AI policy. It also examines the impact of policies on their academic experience.

Although AI offers the potential for enhanced teaching and learning, it raises questions regarding its appropriate scope. This study explored how Jamaican HEI students perceive AI policy development for academic use. It also investigates the elements, guidelines, and considerations that students deemed necessary to regulate AI in learning and assessment. Understanding these student perspectives is crucial for effective AI policy formulation in the Jamaican HEIs.

To address these aims, this study used Social Constructivism to understand how students perceive AI policies and their links to academic integrity. This framework acknowledges the Jamaican HEI context and how students actively interpret the evolving policies. Additionally, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) examines students' AI policy acceptance, focusing on perceived usefulness and ease of use. This combination provides a strong approach for analyzing student interactions with AI policies.

Methodologically, this study employed a quantitative design using an online survey of the three Jamaican HEIs. Data from students were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. This article presents a theoretical framework, methodology, results, and discussion of its implications.

THE GLOBAL LANDSCAPE OF AI IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Rapid changes in AI are affecting administrative processes, admission policies, classroom environments, and tuition in higher education. Students benefit from intelligent instruction, machine learning, and natural language processing. These instructional strategies help teachers to provide materials that meet students' needs (RUANO-BORBALAN, 2025). The improved accessibility of readily available and high-quality higher education possibilities follows from educational paths within educational institutions (ASIYAI, 2022).

The administrative functions of an AI system go beyond basic educational institutions to perform diverse operational tasks, such as evaluation operations, appointment planning, and organizational resource tracking (AHMAD *et al.,* 2022). School administrators should use automation to save teaching

time, which can be used to improve their curriculum and mentor more students. Through AI-based systems, educational institutions minimize operational complexity and enhance operational performance, and students and staff receive better educational encounters (SRINIVASA *et al*., 2022; SASIKALA; RAVICHANDRAN, 2024).

AI predictive analytics tools are vital for identifying students who face the risk of dropping out of educational programs (REETHIKA; PRIYA, 2024). These tools analyze student records to deliver prompt resource programs that enhance student continuation rates and academic outcomes. University support systems enable institutions to step into emerging issues before success in the learning process, thus expanding educational opportunities for every student (JOHNSON *et al*., 2022; JAMES *et al.*, 2024).

For educational AI systems to be widely used across institutions, significant ethical challenges must first be addressed (AKGUN; GREENHOW, 2022). Key obstacles for successful implementation include privacy risks, the potential for biased algorithms, and a lack of transparency in how these systems work. Therefore, as institutions adopt AI for their operational advantages, they must ensure that its implementation protects the dignity and respect of all students and staff (HUANG, 2023; SAIN *et al*., 2024; KOKINA *et al*., 2025).

The development of HE through AI requires educational institutions worldwide to protect research integrity, while also adopting technological progress (KHATRI; KARKI, 2023). AI technology will revolutionize future educational practices as it is an absolute advancement of modern learning methods (ADIGUZEL *et al*., 2023). Realizing success with this approach requires all institutions to examine ethical issues seriously while maintaining complete transparency in their decision-making and continuing their focus on people-centric teaching (CALLARI *et al.,* 2024). AI's full potential emerges when universities resolve these concerns alongside their commitment to core educational values (KAYYALI, 2024).

Educational institutions have transformed student feedback practices through the implementation of AI-supported systems (HU, 2022). These systems monitor student performance through real-time assessments, which helps them modify instructional materials based on individual student needs (ALNAJDI, 2022). Students can advance independently through personalized approaches while providing sufficient assistance in grasping concepts (KASWAN *et al*., 2024). AI tutoring systems deliver enhanced learning experiences by accommodating students with different learning profiles and capability levels (RIZVI, 2023).

AI tools for automated grading constitute a powerful educational application as they drive pedagogical advancement. Using automated grading platforms, they both speed up grading processes and simultaneously deliver error-pattern analyses of student work submissions. Teachers enhance their instructional strategies and focus on weak student spots through instructor-provided information about

persistent errors. The data-driven process permits teaching professionals to make more efficient pedagogical choices, leading to better student achievement (BALLA, 2024).

Academic dashboards that combine learning management system data with discussion forum activities and assessment results allow teachers to see student engagement and understanding. Dashboards also allow teachers to track student development and trends, enabling quick intervention. Together with participation and quality monitoring of performance measures, they help teachers customize student support. These technologies generate questions regarding numerical assessment tool abuse and privacy (PAULSEN; LINDSAY, 2024).

Although institutions should consider issues that could dehumanize learning, artificial intelligence holds great promise in education. Artificial intelligence operational improvements and insights reduce student-instructor personal bonds, fostering critical thinking and motivation. Rather than substituting artificial intelligence technologies for human teaching methods, educational institutions should welcome them to enhance instructional interactions. Appropriate use of AI methods should help improve the quality of education (AYALA-PAZMIÑO, 2023).

Academics worldwide now agree that higher education institutions need detailed guidelines to manage the use of artificial intelligence in their ethical and operational aspects. Implementation of AI teaching methods requires policymakers to construct frameworks that support innovative practices and protect academic principles.

The frameworks must handle critical issues regarding data privacy and algorithmic bias while ensuring equitable access, transparency, and accountability mechanisms. Institutions that lack proper policies to control emerging technologies are exposed to academic integrity degradation and increased inequality (RASUL *et al*., 2024).

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence in Jamaican higher education provide both possibilities and restricted means of application. Many colleges of higher learning train staff members and students with digital skills to employ technology to upgrade their facilities. The two key challenges are the lack of resources and unequal access to new technologies. Rural areas struggle to implement artificial intelligence because of limited bandwidth and antiquated technologies. The digital revolution is gaining acceptance only within the accepted educational concepts and methodologies (LEWIS, 2023).

Higher education in Jamaica develops under cultural norms that emphasize direct interactions between people and personal guidance, yet AI technology operates predominantly through data-based systems. A local AI policy development strategy exists for Jamaican higher educational institutions to match cultural expectations while integrating global innovation trends.

Implementing AI-based policies requires establishing an inclusive process that allows all stakeholders, including students, educators, administrators, and policymakers, to participate in AI adoption and regulatory procedures. The implementation of AI tools depends on three key factors: technological preparedness, cultural willingness, and compliance with ethical guidelines.

This study uses Social Constructivism and Technology Acceptance Models as theoretical frameworks, because they help explain AI policy adoption and perception, specifically in this educational context. VYGOTSKY (1978) outlined Social Constructivism by pointing out that students construct knowledge through social interactions in learning environments. Social Constructivism is appropriate for the Jamaican education system, because interactive teaching methods form an integral part of its educational practices.

An essential complement to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) created by DAVIS (1989) examines how users perceive and employ new technologies. The TAM demonstrates that users decide to adopt technology based on usefulness perception and usability, which are key elements for Jamaican universities that support diverse digital literacy levels. The integration of TAM provides this study with essential information to grasp the psychological and behavioral reasons that drive students to adopt AI tools.

Multiple frameworks have analyzed AI policy implementation in Jamaican HE while providing complete examination capabilities. The combination of Social Constructivism and TAM helps researchers to understand educator-specific technology usage patterns and user acceptance evaluation methods effectively. By integrating both research approaches, this study created essential knowledge that helps translate global AI trends into educational settings that best align with local realities.

Artificial intelligence tools, such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, have changed conversations about academic integrity. These instruments help authors credit, improve their work, and brainstorm. Plagiarism policies no longer function as intended, because instructors cannot distinguish student work from AI-generated outputs. Recent developments have forced companies to rethink AI ethics, limitations, and teaching applications. Conflicting instructions unintentionally leads students to breach academic policies and create assessment problems (EKE, 2023).

Appropriate teaching of academic honesty within an AI-assisted educational sector demands innovative teaching methods and open educational policies. Educational practitioners are designing AI-based assessments to evaluate essential thinking abilities and application skills in combination with reflective abilities, instead of basic answer responses.

Educational assignments that require oral defenses, project-based work, and continuous writing under feedback systems minimize the chances of misuse. These methods combine student education with

responsibility-building tools to support creative development. Professional integration of AI tools into education enables students to ethically master proper technology utilization (RASUL *et al*., 2024).

AI detection software has become widely used by educational institutions worldwide to check the originality of student assignments. The support tools faculty use remains subject to ongoing debate about their effectiveness and fairness standards. Detection systems using software generate many incorrect results when tracking student work, especially when the authors need programming assistance or speak a foreign language.

Excessive dependence on such systems leads organizations to shift from trust-based operations to stricter surveillance methods. Additionally, MOORHOUSE *et al*. (2023) noted that AI integrity policies must prioritize human-centered approaches through educational measures and dialogue because they must replace punitive measures.

The foundation of academic integrity in HE throughout Jamaica is closely connected with personal responsibility and scholarly dedication. Educational institutions must adequately train students and faculty members regarding ethical AI tool applications, rather than enabling value violations.

The institute must establish a firm policy based on cultural insights to define acceptable usage boundaries that protect established academic indications of achievement. Jamaican HEIs can create AI integrity practices for ethical use, which focus on inclusivity and local relevance. These policies become stronger by incorporating student participation, thus strengthening academic trust and respect (STONE, 2022).

Students' interpretations of AI academic rules must be studied to ensure their successful implementation. Students' motivations, awareness levels, and ethical reasoning influence their behavior. Interviewing students with survey data reveals their perspectives, which stem from the development of clear policies with enforcement capacity. Throughout policy development, students gain the ability to manage their educational journeys independently. Working together with students aligns perfectly with Social Constructivist principles and supports the development of academic integrity through technological evolution (RASUL *et al*., 2024).

The implementation of AI throughout HE creates additional ethical concerns regarding data justice, privacy problems, and unfair treatment. Collecting extensive student data, including login habits and university discussion forum actions, creates concerns about monitoring practices and user permission enforcement. Students face problems regarding their data privacy since they lack understanding about how their information gets handled, who receives access, and what types of decisions are built upon

AI policy frameworks require transparency as an essential element for data utilization. When data transparency is absent, institutions and their student bases often develop mistrust, especially within communities that experience marginalization (BALALLE; PANNILAGE, 2025).

The most outstanding algorithmic bias issues arise from testing systems and prediction models. If the training data include historical patterns, AI systems either accelerate or sustain discrimination. AI assessments can yield biased results, leading to unequal resource allocation and increased risks. Institutions must schedule AI system reviews to identify biases and protect students' possibilities. Different voices in AI development and oversight provide proportionality and help lower the risks (HANNA *et al.*, 2024).

Accessibility to AI technology is essential for Jamaican student populations, because not all students have comparable exposure to digital tools. The interaction of students with AI-enhanced education depends on three main factors: the differences between urban and rural areas as well as financial and technological limitations.

AI policymakers must implement accommodations to protect students whose ability to access technology is inadequate. Equitable design implementation includes offline backup systems, training workshops, and hardware or data plan distribution. Government authorities should collaborate with NGOs and policymakers to create a progressive digital transformation that includes everyone involved (AFZAL *et al.,* 2023).

A system of ethical governance must establish precise institutional accountability measures. Universities must create distinct oversight boards and ethics committees for system examination and new implementation directions. These governance bodies include students, faculty, IT experts, and legal advisors. These groups act actively to predict potential risks before they occur, alongside their responsibility to handle existing issues. Governance culture leads to transparent AI policies that build public accountability and maintain responsible use of AI (XUE; PANG, 2022).

All institutions must understand that ethical principles must be adapted to new technological advancements. Universities will maintain their position ahead of rapid change through consistent policy updates, ethical reviews, and open discussion spaces. Ethical governance maintains innovation speed as a counterpart to maintaining institutional values and human rights principles in harmony. By establishing this fundamental principle, Jamaica universities can use AI through transformative practices. According to AKHTAR *et al*. (2024), this structure supports the ethical demands that govern a region's cultural norms.

Although scholars have thoroughly documented AI changes in HEIs, research on undergraduate views on AI system management is lacking. Most current studies focus on technical performance or

originate from Western contexts, ignoring the Caribbean's Non-Western socio-cultural structure and infrastructural barriers.

This study combines Social Constructivism and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to identify how Jamaican students build a shared understanding of AI policies and the factors influencing their adoption intentions. The research findings will guide the development of an anthropologically appropriate measurement tool and provide practical guidance for those who lead AI implementation in education.

The review analyzed how AI affects global teaching practices while demonstrating the necessity of clear policies. It also shows what impedes fundamental changes in Jamaican HEIs, especially considering resource limitations and strong face-to-face mentoring traditions.

The combination of Social Constructivism theory and the Technology Acceptance Model serves as a strong framework for understanding student opinions towards AI governance systems while connecting international approaches with Jamaican institutional contexts. This research will provide essential evidence for Jamaican higher-education managers to establish AI policies based on empirical data that blend innovative objectives with academic ethical standards while maintaining traditional educational principles.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative design across three Jamaican universities and colleges to understand undergraduate students' perceptions of AI policies in education. This quantitative design allows for a generalizable and comprehensive analysis of these perceptions, yielding rich data suitable for in-depth analysis and robust findings (ÖZDAMLI et al. 2022, SUBRAMANIAM; ISMAIL 2023; ALQARNI *et al.,* 2024). This approach aligns with recent research on technology adoption in HEIs, in which studies have quantitatively explored the factors influencing the acceptance of new technologies, including AI-related tools (TABRON; THOMAS, 2023; CROMPTON; BURKE, 2024).

Primary data were gathered from an approximate population of 21,000 students across three institutions. The target sample size of 636 (N = 636) students was determined a priori through a power analysis to ensure adequate statistical power (0.95) to detect medium-sized effects at a significance level of 0.05 for the planned inferential analyses. To enhance representativeness, the sample was proportionally stratified to reflect the population distribution across the following institutions: University/College X (n = 403), University/College Y (n = 148), and University/College Z (n = 85).

An online survey was used for data collection because of its cost-effectiveness, ease of distribution, and capacity to reach a large sample size (LI et al., 2022; WATI et al., 2023; ENRÍQUEZ *et al.,* 2024). The survey instrument was comprised of six parts: Part A (demographics), Part B (AI familiarity), Part C (perceptions of AI policies), Part D (perceived impact), Part E (views on AI regulation), and Part F (acceptance of AI). To ensure reliability, the instrument was pilot tested with 50 students, with subsequent adjustments made to achieve Cronbach's alpha of 0.944. Data collection spanned three months (March–May 2025).

Due to prohibitive administrative delays in securing formal institutional access, a non-probability off-campus recruitment strategy was implemented. Recruitment involved two methods: first, the distribution of flyers with survey QR codes in high-traffic, student-frequented commercial areas adjacent to campuses. Second, this effort was supplemented by a snowball sampling technique, where initial student contacts were used to refer to other eligible participants. The potential for selection bias inherent in this necessary approach is acknowledged and addressed in the limitations section of this study.

The collected data were initially entered into Microsoft Excel before being analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (SINGH *et al.,* 2022; CHOW; SHARMIN, 2025). Specifically, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare perceptions of AI policies across the three institutions. Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used to examine the relationships between these perceptions and students' academic experience as well as the influence of perceived usefulness and ease of use on AI policy acceptance. ANOVA was also used to compare perceptions of the necessary AI regulation elements, and correlation analysis explored the link between AI policy perceptions and views on academic integrity. All statistical analyses were performed using Jeffrey's Amazing Statistical Program (JASP) (YANG *et al.,* 2022; KANGIWA *et al.,* 2024).

Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all the participants before they completed the online survey. This procedure adhered to the Data Protection Act of 2020 in Jamaica, ensuring the protection of participants' rights and privacy.

RESULTS

A survey instrument was administered to ascertain the sociodemographic and academic profiles of the study participants (N = 636). The sample was predominantly female (77.8%). The age distribution of the participants was as follows: 14% were aged 18-20, 33% were 21-24, 17.8% were 25-28, and 35.2% were 29 years or older.

Participants were enrolled across three HEIs: University/College X (n = 403, 63.3%), University/College Y (n = 148, 23.3%), and University/College Z (n = 85, 13.4%). In terms of academic progression, 15.3% were first-year students, 13.1% were second-year students, 25.5% were third-year students, and 30.8% were fourth-year students. A notable proportion (15.3%) consisted of students in non-traditional programs extending beyond the typical four-year undergraduate timeline.

Most respondents (78.5%) were pursuing programs in Applied Sciences and Professions (e.g., Engineering, Business, Information Technology). Smaller cohorts are represented by Social Sciences (for example, Law, Sociology; 10.2%), Interdisciplinary Studies (for example, Environmental Economics, Cognitive Science, 5.5%), humanities (for example, Language, History; 3.1%), Natural Sciences (for example, Chemistry: 1.7%), and Formal Sciences (for example, Mathematics, Computer Science, 1.0%).

This section presents the findings pertaining to Objective 1 through descriptive analysis, which focuses on how Jamaican HEI students perceive AI use and policy development for academic purposes. The analysis encompasses an analysis of students' perspectives on AI benefits and ease of use, as well as their perspective on AI policy in HEI.

Table 1 - Student Perceptions of the Academic Benefits of AI Tools

Perceptions of the Academic Benefits of AI Tools	Mean	SD	Agreement Level
Overall, I anticipate that AI tools can positively impact my academic performance.	4.02	0.89	High
Utilizing AI tools can make my academic workload more manageable.	4.00	0.87	High
I believe AI tools can be valuable for understanding complex academic concepts.	3.96	0.83	High
Using AI tools can help me complete my academic tasks more efficiently.	3.93	0.9	Moderate
Using AI tools can contribute to a higher quality of academic work.	3.93	0.87	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.97**		

Source: Self-elaboration

Note: N = 636. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). The "Agreement Level is categorized as "High" for items with a mean score greater than or equal to the overall mean (3.97) and "Moderate" Moderate for items with a mean score below the overall mean.

Table 1 presents the students' perceptions of the benefits of AI tools in their academic experience. The findings suggest that students have a generally positive perception of the academic benefits of AI tools, as evidenced by the overall mean of 3.97. Students expressed the highest agreement that AI could positively impact their overall performance (*M = 4.02*) and make their workload more manageable (*M = 4.00*).

While still seen as favorable, there is slightly less consent on AI's direct role in improving the efficiency or quality of academic tasks (*M = 3.93*). The consistently low standard deviation ($SD \leq 0.90$) across all items underscores the strong consensus on these favorable views among the student population.

These findings align with the literature that highlights the benefits of AI tutoring, automated grading, and instructional customization (RIZVI, 2023; KAWAN *et al., 2024*). It also acknowledges some concerns about AI's direct role in improving efficiency, emphasizing the need for ethical guidance and

equitable implementation (RASUL *et al*., 2024; HANNA *et al.,* 2024). The statistical evidence from the findings complements the broader themes of caution, but favors students' acceptance of AI in education.

Table 2 - Perceived Ease of Use of AI Tools

Perceived Ease of Use of AI Tools	Mean	SD	Agreement Level
I believe that interacting with AI tools will not require significant technical expertise.	4.05	0.88	High
I expect that learning to use most AI tools will be straightforward for me.	4.05	0.85	High
I anticipate that AI tools will have user-friendly interfaces.	4.05	0.80	High
I expect AI tools will be easy to get to do what I need them to do.	4.02	0.92	Moderate
Overall, I expect AI tools to be easy to integrate into my academic workflow.	4.02	0.88	Moderate
Overall Mean	**4.04**		

Source: Self-elaboration

Note: N = 636. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). The "Agreement Level is categorized as "High" for items with a mean score greater than or equal to the overall mean (4.04) and "Moderate" for items with a mean score below the overall mean.

Table 2 presents students' perceived ease of use of AI tools in their academic experience. The findings revealed that students had a high and uniform perception of the ease of use of AI tools (*Overall Mean = 4.04*). The highest agreement (*M = 40.5*) centered on the belief that AI tools have user-friendly interfaces, are straightforward to learn, and do not require significant technical expertise.

A subtle but meaningful distinction was observed for more practical applications, with slightly lower but still robust agreement for integrating AI into academic workflows and obtaining tools to perform specific tasks (*M = 402*). The tight clustering of the means, along with the low standard deviations ($SD \leq 0.92$), signified a powerful and widespread consensus among the students that AI tools are highly accessible and intuitive.

The literature highlights the ease of use of AI through TAM, which suggests that students embrace AI tools based on their usability and ease of use (DAVIS, 1989). The widespread agreement on AI's user-friendly design supports the discussion of personalized learning and real-time learning that enhances student experience (ALNAJDI, 2022; KAWAN *et al*., 2024).

However, the findings contrast subtly with the technological preparedness challenges in Jamaica, where accessibility issues (especially in rural areas) could limit AI adoption (LEWIS 2023). Thus, infrastructural limitations may prevent adoption across all educational settings.

Table 3 - Student Perspectives on AI Policy Development and Governance in HE

Student Perspectives on AI Policy	Mean	SD	Agreement Level
Clear AI policies are necessary in HEIs.	3.90	1.05	High
HEIs should have specific policies for the use of AI in learning.	3.74	1.09	High
I should have a significant role in the development of AI policies.	3.74	1.05	High
HEIs should have specific policies for the use of AI in assessment.	3.72	1.11	High
The development of AI policies is primarily the responsibility of the HEI administration.	3.43	1.00	Moderate
Current AI policies (if any) in my HEI are easy to understand.	3.31	0.95	Moderate
Current AI policies (if any) in my HEI are clearly communicated to students.	3.27	1.13	Moderate
I was adequately consulted in the development of AI policies (if any) in my HEI.	2.69	1.10	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.48**		

Source: Self-elaboration

Note: N = 636. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). The "Agreement Level is categorized as "High" for items with a mean score greater than or equal to the overall mean (3.48) and "Moderate" for items with a mean score below the overall mean.

Table 3 presents students' perspectives on AI policy development and governance in HE. The findings reveal a critical disconnect between their expectations and current institutional experience, as reflected in the moderate overall mean of 3.48. There is strong consensus on the need for clear AI policies, especially for learning and assessment ($M \geq 3.72$), and students expressed a pronounced desire to play a significant role in this development ($M=3.74$).

This forward thinking contrasts with their assessment of the current reality, where they reported that existing policies (if any) were not communicated ($M = 3.27$) and most notably disagreed that they had been adequately consulted (M = 2.69). The wide range of means and higher standard deviation (*SD up to 1.13*) highlights that AI policy is a complex and contentious area where institutions are currently failing to meet student expectations for inclusion and clarity.

These findings align with the emphasis on the need for clear AI governance and student involvement in the policymaking process. There is a need for inclusive AI policy development that engages all stakeholders (students, educators, and administrators) (RASUL *et al*., 2024).

The literature has recognized a gap between AI institutional policies and student expectations, reflecting concerns such as unclear communication and insufficient consultation. This shared focus on transparency and student engagement underscores the growing demand for an ethical and accountable AI framework for HEIs.

Table 4 - Attitudes Towards the Role of AI Policies in HE

Attitudes Towards the Role of AI Policies in HE	Mean	SD	Agreement Level
AI policies should differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable uses of various AI tools in academic work.	3.65	0.95	High
The absence of clear AI policies will likely lead to confusion and inconsistencies in how AI use is handled in assessments.	3.59	0.98	High
AI policies can contribute to a more equitable learning environment for all students.	3.57	0.99	High
Strict AI policies will unnecessarily limit students' use of helpful AI tools for learning.	3.52	1.13	Moderate
Clear AI policies will help maintain academic integrity.	3.51	0.99	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.57**		

Source: Self-elaboration

Note: N = 636. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). The "Agreement Level is categorized as "High" for items with a mean score greater than or equal to the overall mean (3.57) and "Moderate" for items with a mean score below the overall mean.

Table 4 presents the students' attitudes towards the role of AI policies in HE. The findings are moderately positive, yet complex (*Overall Mean = 3.57*), reflecting a desire for clear guidance balanced with a significant fear of over-restriction. There is strong agreement that policies should differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable AI use ($M = 3.59$).

This demand for clarity was concurrently tempered by the notable concern that strict policies could unnecessarily limit the use of helpful learning tools ($M = 3.52$), an item that showed the most significant variance in students' opinions ($SD = 1.13$). This suggests that students advocate for nuanced, enabling

policies that provide clear guardrails rather than prohibitive restrictions, thereby preserving AI's academic benefits of AI while maintaining integrity.

The findings align with the discourses on AI policy development in HEI, particularly in the importance of clear yet flexible governance frameworks (RASUL *et al*., 2024). The literature and findings highlight the need for policies to define acceptable AI usage while avoiding the excessive restrictions that hinder learning. AKHTAR *et al*. (2024) noted concerns about over-regulation, cautioning that stringent rules could limit AI's educational potential.

This section presents the findings of Objective 2, which explores the specific elements, guidelines, and considerations that students believe are necessary to regulate the use of AI in learning and assessment. The analysis encompasses students' perceptions of institutional strategies for managing AI in academia, strategies for adapting student assessment in the age of AI, and students' overall perceived impact of AI on their academic experience.

Table 5 - Perceptions of Institutional Strategies for Managing AI in Academia

Perceptions of HE Strategies for Managing AI in Academia	Mean	SD	Agreement Level
The provision of training for lecturers/professors on how to address AI in teaching and assessment strategies.	3.95	1.04	High
The provision of educational resources for students on the ethical and responsible use of AI in academia.	3.94	1.01	High
The implementation of mechanisms for detecting the inappropriate use of AI in submitted assignments.	3.93	1.06	High
Clear definitions of what constitutes academic misconduct when using AI tools.	3.89	0.99	High
Clear guidelines on the acceptable use of AI for drafting parts of assignments.	3.82	1.05	Moderate
Clear guidelines on the acceptable use of AI for generating initial ideas for assignments.	3.80	1.08	Moderate
Clear guidelines on the acceptable use of AI for research purposes.	3.75	1.00	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.87**		

Source: Self-elaboration

Note: N = 636. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Not at all Important to 5=Extremely Important). The "Agreement Level is categorized as "High" for items with a mean score greater than or equal to the overall mean (3.87) and "Moderate" for items with a mean score below the overall mean.

Table 5 presents students' perceptions of institutional strategies to manage AI in academia. The findings show that students perceived a range of institutional strategies for managing AI as highly important (*Overall Mean = 3.87*), signifying a strong desire for proactive governance. The findings revealed a clear hierarchy of perceived importance, with the highest priority placed on fundamental educational frameworks, such as providing training for lecturers to address AI (*M = 3.95*) and offering resources to students on its ethical use (*M = 3.94*).

In comparison, specific guidelines for applying AI to discreet tasks, such as drafting assignments (*M = 3.82*) or research purposes (*M = 3.75*), while still considered important, were rated marginally less critical. This suggests that students believe that the most crucial first step for Jamaican institutions is to build a robust and educated ecosystem by equipping faculty and students with core knowledge and clear ethical definitions, which they see as more vital than granular task-specific rules.

These findings align with the literature's emphasis on institutional preparations for AI adoption, particularly the need for comprehensive faculty training and ethical education (RASUL *et al*., 2024).

Proactive governance is essential for effective AI integration. This is further supported by AKHTAR *et al*. (2024), who called for the creation of a knowledgeable academic ecosystem focusing solely on task-specific AI applications.

The findings also raise concerns about data privacy and algorithmic bias, which, though not explicitly mentioned in the findings, remain essential components of institutional AI governance (HANNA *et. al*., 2024).

Table 6 - Strategies for Adapting Student Assessment in the Age of AI

Strategies for Adapting Assessment	Mean	SD	Agreement Level
Ensuring that assessments continue to effectively evaluate students' core knowledge and skills.	3.96	1.03	High
The increased use of alternative assessment methods that are less susceptible to AI misuse.	3.92	0.97	Moderate
Considering the potential disparities in students' access to different AI tools when formulating policies.	3.91	1.05	Moderate
Clearly communicating whether the use of specific AI tools is permitted or prohibited for each assessment task.	3.91	1.04	Moderate
Providing clear guidelines on how to properly cite and reference AI-generated content if its use is permitted.	3.91	1.03	Moderate
Adapting the design of assessment tasks to better account for the capabilities of AI tools.	3.9	0.97	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.93**		

Source: Self-elaboration

Note: N = 636. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Not at all Important to 5=Extremely Important). The "Agreement Level is categorized as "High" for items with a mean score greater than or equal to the overall mean (3.93) and "Moderate" for items with a mean score below the overall mean.

Table 6 presents the strategies that students perceive as important for assessments in the age of AI. The findings show that students assigned a uniformly high and consistent level of importance to a comprehensive suite of strategies for adapting academic assessments in the age of AI (*Overall Mean = 3.93*). This narrow range means (*from 3.90 to 3.96*) indicates that students do not perceive a hierarchy among these strategies but rather endorse them as an interconnected and equally vital package of reforms.

While the fundamental principle of ensuring that assessments effectively evaluate students' core knowledge remains paramount (*M = 3.96*), ensuring equity (*M = 3.91*), and providing clear communication and criterion rules (*M = 3.91*) are considered equally critical. These uniform patterns of response suggest that students advocate for a holistic, multi-pronged institutional overhaul of assessment, viewing a combination of approaches as essential to maintaining academic integrity and relevance.

These findings align with the emphasis on AI-driven assessment reforms, particularly on the need for holistic and equitable evaluation strategies (RASUL *et al*. 2024). This recognizes that adapting a multifaceted assessment approach, ensuring core knowledge evaluation, remains rigorous while addressing concerns of fairness and transparency.

The findings also align with AYALA-PAZMIÑO (2023), who placed emphasis on student-centered assessments, such as project-based learning and continuous feedback, to minimize misuse while fostering academic integrity. Ultimately, the findings and literature advocate for institutional assessment transformations that uphold academic relevance while maintaining trust and fairness.

Table 7 - Perceived Impact of AI on Student Academic Experience

Perceived Impact of AI	Mean	SD	Agreement Level
The workload of assignments.	3.52	1.25	High
The level of academic integrity in my courses.	3.52	1.12	High
My ability to learn effectively.	3.50	1.14	High
My motivation to learn.	3.49	1.20	High
Interaction with my lecturers/professors.	3.48	1.00	High
My academic writing skills.	3.47	1.21	Moderate
The fairness of assessments.	3.46	1.15	Moderate
My critical thinking skills.	3.43	1.15	Moderate
Overall Mean	**3.48**		

Source: Self-elaboration
Note: N = 636. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Significant Negative Impact to 5=Significant Positive Impact). The "Agreement Level is categorized as "High" for items with a mean score greater than or equal to the overall mean (3.48) and "Moderate" for items with a mean score below the overall mean.

Table 7 presents students' impact on their academic experience. The results show that the overall academic experience of Jamaican HEI students had a notably ambivalent and marginally positive (*Overall Mean = 3.48*) response. This finding suggests a significant disconnect between the theoretical benefits of AI and its current and practical effects. This finding was reinforced by the high standard deviation across all aspects ($SD \geq 1.00$). This indicates a considerable lack of consensus and a polarized student experience rather than a universally shared one.

While students perceived a slightly positive impact on factors such as managing assignment workload ($M = 3.43$), they reported the least positive effect on the development of fundamental academic competencies, including academic writing ($M = 3.47$), and most notably, critical thinking skills ($M = 3.43$). This complex and contested view suggests that, for these students, the integration of AI has not yet translated into a clear, transformative enhancement of their core intellect and academic development.

These findings align with the discussion on AI's evolving role in HEI, particularly the gap between the theoretical advantages and its practical impact (KHATRI; KARKI, 2023). It recognizes that AI facilitates task management and automation, yet its contribution to core intellectual skills such as critical thinking and academic writing remains uncertain (AYALA-PAZMIÑO, 2023).

While literature acknowledges AI's potential of AI to enhance learning, it also warns about the risk of dehumanization. This is reinforced by the finding that AI has not yet fully transformed fundamental academic competencies (CALLARI *et. al.,* 2024). Ultimately, the literature highlights AI's benefits and limitations of AI, demonstrating that its effectiveness depends on institutional strategies and ethical integration.

This section presents an inferential analysis relating to objective 1, focusing on comparing the overall "perception of AI policies" across the three universities/colleges, examining the relationship between these policy perceptions and students' academic experience, and investigating how perceived usefulness and ease of use influence students' acceptance of AI policies.

Table 8 – ANOVA Summary of Perception of AI Policies and Governance by HEI

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
HEI	5.025	2	2.513	4.129	0.017
Residuals	385.214	633	0.609		

Source: Self-Elaboration

Table 8 presents an ANOVA that revealed a statistically significant difference in students' perspectives on AI policy across the three surveyed institutions, *F (2, 633) = 4.129, p = 00017.* This indicates that the institutional context is a meaningful factor in shaping students' views.

Table 9 – Games-Howell post-hoc comparison

Comparison	Mean Difference	SE	t	df	p_{tukey}
University/College X - University/College Y	0.057	0.088	0.646	190.155	0.795
University/College X - University/College Z	-0.237	0.113	-2.102	98.082	0.095
University/College Y - University/College Z	-0.293	0.136	-2.159	175.218	0.081

Source: Self-Elaboration.

However, a follow-up Games-Howell post-hoc analysis, selected for its robustness in observing unequal variances, showed that no specific pairwise comparison between institutions reached the conventional threshold for statistical significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). The comparison involved university/college Z, which held the most positive views ($M = 3.75$), but did not reach significance when compared to university/college Y ($p = 0.81$) and university/college X ($p = 0.095$). This common statistical scenario suggests that while genuine variation exists across the institutional landscape, it is the result of the cumulative pattern of differences rather than a large, statistically separable gap between any two specific universities/colleges.

The interpretation of the ANOVA and Games-Howell test aligns with the emphasis on institutional variability in AI policy adoption, reinforcing the idea that context shapes students' perceptions (RASUL *et. al.,* 2024). It therefore means that differences across HEI, considering Jamaican-specific challenges such as resource disparities and cultural expectations, influence these perceptions (LEWIS, 2023). Although there is no statistical significance in pairwise differences between institutions, the literature suggests that technology preparedness and AI governance vary widely, thereby influencing the adoption rate (XUE; PANG, 2022). Together, they underscore the complexity of institutional AI policy integration and student perceptions.

Table 10 – Descriptive Statistics and Pearson's Correlation Matrix for Key Study Variables

Variable		Table 3: Student Perspectives on AI Policy	Table 7: Perceived Impact of AI
1. Table 3 Student Perspectives on AI Policy	Pearson's r	—	
	p-value	—	
2. Table 7: Perceived Impact of AI	Pearson's r	0.286	—
	p-value	< .001	—

Source: Self-Elaboration

Table 10 presents a Pearson's correlation conducted to examine the relationship between students' perspectives on AI policy (as measured by the scale in Table 3) and the perceived impact of AI on their academic experience (as measured by the scale in Table 7). The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between the two variables ($r(634) = 0.286$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that students who hold more positive and constructive views towards the development of AI policy and governance tend to report a more positive impact of AI on their overall academic experience.

This magnitude of the correlation suggests a small-to-moderate relationship, implying that while a favorable attitude towards AI policy is linked to a positive experience with AI, other factors also play a substantial role in shaping students' overall perception of AI's impact.

Building upon the established significant correlation, simple linear regression was performed to quantify the predictive power of this relationship. The overall model was highly significant ($F(1,634) = 56.277$, $p < 0.001$), and it added a crucial layer of depth by revealing that students' perceived impact of AI accounted for 8.2% of the total variation in their perspectives on AI policy ($R^2 = 0.082$).

Furthermore, the analysis moves beyond the association to a specific predictive model, where for every one-unit increase on the "*Perceived Impact*" scale, there is a corresponding predicted increase of 0.244 units on the "*Policy Perspective*" scale ($B = 0.244$). Therefore, this regression transforms the previously observed link into a relationship, providing a precise and quantifiable measure of how a more positive student's experience with AI predicts constructive engagement with the complexities of its governance.

The findings align with the emphasis on the relationship between AI policy perception and academic experience, reinforcing that institutional governance shapes student engagement (RASUL *et al.,* 2024). There is a need for well-defined AI policies to foster positive student outcomes and address the necessity of continuous institutional adoption (XUE; PANG, 2022; HANNA et al., 2024). Ultimately, the impact of AI on HEI is contingent on the interplay between regulatory frameworks and student engagement.

Table 11 – Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Students' Perspectives on AI Policy

Variable	B	SE	β	p-value
(Intercept)	2.700	0.187	-	< .001
Perceived Benefits of AI	0.084	0.044	0.086	0.058
Perceived Ease of Use of AI	0.125	0.048	0.118	0.009

Source: Self-Elaboration

Note: $R^2 = 0.032$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.029$; $F(2,633) = 10.346$, $p < 0.001$

Table 11 shows the results of a multiple linear regression analysis on whether key constructs from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), namely, Perceived Benefits and Perceived Ease of Use, could

predict students' perspectives on AI policy. The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F(2,633) = 10.346, p < 0.001$); however, it explained only 3.2% of the variation in policy perspectives ($R^2 = 0.032$), including a weak practical relationship.

An examination of the individual predictors revealed a more nuanced story: Perceived Ease of Use was a significantly positive predictor of favorable policy perspectives ($\beta = 0.118, p = 0.009$), suggesting that students who found AI tools more intuitive were more likely to support their governance.

Conversely, central to the findings, Perceived Benefits (usefulness) did not emerge as a statistically significant predictor when controlling for ease of use ($\beta = 0.086, p = 0.058$). This suggests that students' acceptance of AI policy is more significantly linked to the technology's usability and accessibility than to the academic benefits it provides and that factors beyond this traditional TAM framework are overwhelmingly responsible for sharing these critical policy attitudes.

These findings align with the discourse on TAM as a framework for AI adoption, confirming usability as a key driver of student acceptance (DAVIS, 1989; ALNAJDI, 2022; KASWAN *et al.,* 2024). However, it diverges by finding that perceived usefulness does not predict AI policy attitudes, contradicting the literature's emphasis on AI's practical advantages of AI in influencing engagement (RIZVI, 2023). This highlights the evolving complexity of AI governance, suggesting that institutional and cultural factors may supersede traditional technology acceptance metrics in shaping students' perspectives.

This section presents an inferential analysis relating to Objective 2, focusing on comparing students' perceptions of the specific elements necessary for AI regulations across the three universities/colleges and exploring the link between the overall AI policy perceptions and students' views on key considerations for regulation and academic integrity.

Table 12 – Descriptive Statistics and One-Way ANOVA for Perceptions of AI Management Strategies by HEI

Institution	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
University/College X	403	3.97	0.91
University/College Y	148	4.07	1.02
University/College Z	85	3.81	0.96
Total	**636**		
ANOVA Result		F-statistic	p-value
F (2, 633)		1.997	0.137

Source: Self-Elaboration

An ANOVA was conducted to determine whether students' perceptions of the importance of institutional strategies for managing AI differed across the three universities. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in these perceptions among institutions (F (2, 633) = 1.997, p =.137). While the descriptive statistics show minor variations in the mean scores, with University Y (*M* =

4.07) reporting slightly higher importance and University Z (*M = 3.81*) reporting slightly lower importance, the ANOVA confirms that these differences are not statistically significant and are likely due to random sampling variability. The small effect size ($\eta^2_b = 0.006$) reinforces this conclusion.

This finding points to a strong consensus among students across different Jamaican HEIs, suggesting that they share a consistent and unified perspective on the strategies they deem important for managing AI in academia.

The interpretation of the tests aligns with the emphasis on institutional AI strategies, reinforcing a consensus on AI governance across Jamaican HEIs including the need for proactive faculty training and ethical education (RASUL *et al*., 2024; AKHTAR *et. al*., 2024). However, while the statement found no significant differences in student perceptions across universities and colleges, it is worth noting that technological disparities may create practical accessibility challenges, particularly between urban and rural institutions (LEWIS, 2023). Together, these underscore the need for governance models that balance uniform strategies with localized institutional realities.

Table 13 Comparison of Strategies for Adapting Assessments Across HEIs

Institution	N	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
University/College Y	148	4.12	0.76
University/College X	403	3.86	0.88
University/College Z	85	3.82	1.07

Source: Self-Elaboration

ANOVA also confirmed a statistically significant difference among the three institutions regarding the perceived importance of strategies for adapting student assessment, *F (2,633) = 5.146, p=.006*. A follow-up Games-Howell post-hoc test, which accounts for the observed inequality of variances, pinpoints the specific source of this difference.

Students at University Y (*M = 4.12*) perceived these strategies as significantly more important than their peers at University X (*M = 3.86*), with a mean difference of 0.26 (*p = 0.002*). No other pairwise comparisons were statistically significant at the conventional $\alpha=0.05$ level, although the difference between University Y and University Z (*M = 3.82*) approached significance (*p = 0.073*). This demonstrates that the overall institutional variation is primarily driven by the distinctively higher value that students at University Y place on evolving assessment practices in the AI era.

The test findings align with the critical discussion on institutional variation in AI-driven assessment strategies, confirming that students' perspectives on AI policy differ across universities and colleges (RASUL *et al.,* 2024). While the statement identifies University/College Y's specific emphasis on assessment, the literature attributes this variation to broader cultural and infrastructural disparities as well as differing institutional readiness concerning privacy and bias (LWEIS, 2023; HANNA *et al.,* 2024).

Together, these findings underscore the need for context-sensitive AI assessment policies that reflect institutional diversity and evolving educational challenges.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated HEI students' perspectives on the development of AI policy for academic use and the specific elements, guidelines, and considerations that students believe are necessary to regulate the use of AI in their learning and assessment. The findings revealed general agreement on the need for AI regulations in academia.

The study reveals that Jamaican HEI students hold a generally positive view of AI, believing that it can enhance their academic performance and is easy to use. Despite this optimism, a significant new finding is the profound disconnect between students' expectations and reality. There is a strong consensus on the urgent need for clear AI policies for learning and assessment; however, students feel completely excluded from the current policy development process, reporting a stark lack of consultation and communication from their institutions.

Regarding specific regulations, students prioritize fundamental strategies such as providing training for lecturers and establishing clear ethical guidelines on AI use. What is newly discovered is that students see these educational frameworks as more critical than the granular task-specific rules for their assignments. Furthermore, they advocate for a holistic overhaul of assessment methods to ensure academic integrity and fairness, viewing various adaptive strategies not as a menu of options, but as an interconnected and equally vital package of reforms.

Inferential analysis revealed that students' support for AI governance is significantly predicted by how easily they find the tools to use, rather than by the academic benefits they perceive. These findings challenge traditional technology, and suggest that usability is a critical factor in policy acceptance. While a unified call for better AI management strategies exists across institutions, the study also found statistically significant differences in how students, particularly those at University/College Y, prioritized the need to adapt academic assessments for the AI era.

When considering the integration of AI technologies, policies, and regulations into Jamaican HEIs, businesses, and society, it is crucial to prioritize culturally relevant and contextually appropriate solutions. Recommendations for AI policy frameworks should be tailored to the unique cultural context of Jamaica and the Caribbean by considering factors, such as local and regional values, norms, and technological infrastructure. This approach ensures that AI policies align with the specific needs and priorities of the population for which they will be applied, promoting acceptance and adoption, and ultimately, the

successful integration of these AI policies. The following recommendations will be geared towards university and college administrators and academic leaders, national policymakers (Ministry of Education, etc.), and the wider academic and research community.

Establishing a student-centric AI Policy Task Force is a critical step in addressing the recognized desire for a significant student role and improving communication in academic AI governance (KRITANDANI *et al.,* 2024; MOORE; LOOKADOO, 2024). To make this actionable in Jamaica, the composition of the task force must reflect the nation's higher education landscape, mandating representation from UWI, UTech, UCC, NCU, and various teachers and community colleges. Achieving substantial 30-40% student membership requires formal partnership with influential Student Guilds and Unions to ensure the authentic voices of part-time, evening, and rural students.

For any proposed policy to be actionable, the task force must anchor its recommendations in Jamaica's infrastructural reality. The digital divide must be directly confronted by prioritizing scalable AI tools that function on low-specification hardware and withstand inconsistent Internet connectivity and power outages. A practical strategy involves advocating for a phased pilot-based rollout, allowing different institutions to adapt policies to their specific resource levels before a national mandate is considered. This approach ensures that equity is a functional component of the final policy, rather than a mere aspiration.

Finally, to ensure legal compliance and build a genuine buy-in, the task force must integrate legal and communication specialists from its inception. A legal expert is crucial to navigate the Jamaica Data Protection Act, 2020, ensuring that all data-handling protocols are compliant from day one. Furthermore, a dual communication strategy is essential: formal policy language for official channels paired with accessible, culturally resonant messaging, including Jamaican Patois on student-led platforms. This approach builds the necessary trust and widespread buy-in for successful implementation.

To cultivate AI-resilient pedagogy, Jamaican HEIs must implement continuous professional development for all faculty members coordinated through established centers for teaching and learning. These workshops must pivot from mere tool proficiency to the strategic design of AI-resistant assessments, such as project-based vivas and complex localized case studies. This focus is essential for fostering higher-order critical thinking skills perceived to be negatively affected by AI adoption, ensuring that academic rigor is maintained and enhanced (KIM *et al*., 2025; MCCOY *et al*., 2025; OXENDINE *et al*., 2022).

Furthermore, a national framework for inter-institutional collaboration, potentially spearheaded by the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (J-TEC), should be established to accelerate this pedagogical shift. This body systematically curates and disseminates proven international best practices in AI-resilient teaching while actively facilitating their adaptation to the unique resources and cultural contexts of each

local institution. Such a structured effort ensures that successful innovations are rapidly contextualized and shared across the sector, moving beyond isolated departmental success to best national practice.

Jamaican HEIs must develop flexible AI usage policies that avoid blanket prohibitions in favor of a tiered framework outlining the principles for ethical engagement (NG *et al*., 2021; CHAUDHRY *et al.*, 2022; MIKELADZE *et al*., 2024). This model shifts the focus from restriction to responsible use, providing clear and nuanced guidance for students to navigate their academic work. This principled approach fosters a culture of integrity while acknowledging AI as a legitimate tool, thereby preparing students for future professional environments where these skills are essential.

For direct implementation, this framework should be operationalized through clear assessment categories, such as "AI-Free," "AI-Assisted," and "AI-Collaborative". A key actionable step is to mandate that the faculty explicitly label every assignment with one of these designations in the course syllabus and instructions. This simple act removes ambiguity for students, empowers educators to design assessments with clear intent, and provides a transparent roadmap for using AI ethically and effectively to achieve specific learning outcomes.

To ensure student buy-in for AI governance, HEIs must adopt an evidence-based procurement strategy that prioritizes user experience over feature sets (NIU *et al*., 2022; CHETRY, 2024). A key actionable step is to mandate student-led usability testing before institution-wide adoption of a new AI tool. This practical measure not only guarantees smoother user experience but also provides direct validation for the tool's selection, making students active partners in the governance process and increasing the likelihood of its successful, widespread acceptance.

To eliminate the disconnect in student engagement, a national mandate for AI policy consultation should be established through the Jamaica Tertiary Education Commission (J-TEC) and University Council of Jamaica (UCJ). This framework requires all accredited HEIs to demonstrate inclusive and participatory policy development as a condition for accreditation renewal. Mandating documented evidence of robust student consultation ensures that standardized participatory governance becomes the national norm, directly addressing inconsistencies in student involvement (IGBOKWE, 2024; AL-ZAHRANI; ALASMAR, 2024).

To address the critical challenge of resource disparity, a national public-private partnership, potentially facilitated by a government body such as the Ministry of Science, Energy, Telecommunications, and Transport (MSETT), is essential for ensuring equitable AI access across all Jamaican HEIs. This initiative brokers nationwide licensing foundational AI tools, directly tackling the digital divide so that institutional regulations do not inadvertently penalize students with limited technological access (ANAWATI, 2024; GHANEM *et al*., 2025). A practical national policy must then

mandate that any required AI assessment tool be provided through this program, guaranteeing baseline access for every student.

For future-proof pedagogy, the academic and research communities must establish a formal, inter-institutional initiative to create and validate AI-resistant assessment models. This collaborative effort should focus on evaluating core competencies, such as critical thinking and creativity, which AI struggles to replicate, rather than simple knowledge recall (HOLMES *et al*., 2021). For practical dissemination, these validated assessment strategies must be shared through a national/international digital repository, perhaps managed by J-TEC, to ensure that all HEIs can readily adopt them.

The findings of this study should be interpreted with consideration of several methodological limitations. These boundaries clarify the scope of the conclusions and provide a roadmap for future research.

The primary limitation stems from the non-probability sampling strategy that was necessary because of the impracticability of securing formal institutional access. Recruitment via off-campus flyers (convenience sampling) and participant referrals (snowball sampling) indicated that none of the students had an equal chance of inclusion.

A direct consequence of this approach was a significant demographic imbalance in the final sample, which was heavily skewed towards female students (77.9%) and those in Applied Sciences (78.5%). Consequently, the perspectives of male students and those in the humanities were not adequately captured. Although the findings are valid for this cohort, these factors—the non-probability method and resulting demographic skew—necessitate caution when generalizing the results to the entire student population.

Two crucial steps were taken to mitigate these inherent challenges. First, the sample was proportionally stratified by institutions to ensure that its distribution matched the overall university/college population, enhancing representativeness at the institutional level. Second, the large sample size (N=636), determined by a priori power analysis, provides strong statistical power for analyses performed within the sample itself.

Furthermore, the study design imposes its own constraints. The quantitative approach, while effective for identifying broad perceptual trends, lacks qualitative depth to fully explain the complex reasoning and lived experiences behind students' attitudes. Additionally, the cross-sectional design offered only a temporal snapshot of perceptions. Given the rapid evolution of AI, these views are likely to change, potentially affecting the long-term applicability of the findings.

Finally, this study relied on self-reported data on AI's cognitive impact of AI. Such perceptions are valuable, but do not constitute a direct measurement of actual cognitive outcomes, a distinction that this study was not designed to make.

Future research should employ sequential explanatory mixed methods designed to address the limitations of this study. Subsequent quantitative analysis was followed by purposeful sampling for semi-structured interviews, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the rationale behind the key statistical findings.

Further investigation must also intentionally target underrepresented cohorts, including male students and those from the humanities and social sciences, to enable a robust subgroup analysis. Expanding the research scope to include Jamaica's teachers and community colleges would provide a richer, more comparative, national perspective.

To overcome the limitations of a cross-sectional design, a longitudinal cohort study is strongly recommended. Following a single cohort of students annually from matriculation to graduation would yield invaluable data on the evolution of students' attitudes towards AI in response to their own academic maturation and changing technological landscapes.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals a paradox within Jamaican HE: while students are overwhelmingly positive about AI's potential to enhance their academic lives, this optimism is critically undermined by their deep frustration and exclusion from policy development. The findings demonstrate a student perspective marked by dissonance: they see the urgent need for governance but feel alienated by a top-down institutional approach that lacks transparency and engagement.

The research indicates that students prioritize foundational principle-based frameworks over granular task-specific rules. They strongly advocate mandatory faculty training in AI pedagogy and the establishment of clear ethical guidelines. Furthermore, students view the adaptation of academic assessments not as a menu of disparate options, but as an interconnected and equally vital package of reforms, signaling their demand for a comprehensive institutional overhaul to maintain academic integrity.

The key recommendations derived from these findings were clear and accurate. The foremost is the establishment of a truly representative, student-centric AI Policy Task Force, mandated at a national level through bodies such as the J-TEC and UCJ, to bridge the current consultation gap. This must be coupled with continuous professional development for faculties in AI-resilient pedagogy and the adoption of tiered usage policies that provide nuanced guidance rather than prohibitive restrictions.

However, these conclusions must be contextualized by the study's limitations, including its quantitative design, sampling strategy, and cross-sectional nature, which cannot capture the rationale behind perceptions or their evolution over time. Future research must, therefore, employ sequential explanatory mixed methods designed to provide qualitative depth and a longitudinal cohort study to track how student attitudes shift in response to this rapidly changing technological landscape.

Ultimately, this study's contribution transcends its immediate context, offering critical insight into all HE systems, particularly those in the Global South, grappling with technological integration. The findings assert that student-centric governance is not merely a progressive ideal, but a fundamental prerequisite for the legitimate and effective implementation of AI. For institutions to navigate this new era successfully, they must abandon the paradigm of top-down policy mandates and embrace a collaborative future co-authored with the students they serve.

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