AI, Plagiarism, and Ethics: How Multimedia Journalism Programs in Lebanon are Adapting

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an omnipresent force in our daily lives, particularly as its latest developments are programmed to emulate the intricacies of a human mind, act with human-like intelligence, and possess cognitive capacities. Several international organisations and policymakers regularly develop and update policies to highlight the opportunities and threats of AI for humanity, particularly in the field of education. As a result, educators and academic researchers are increasingly interested in how AI can be integrated into learning environments while maintaining ethical standards. This study investigates AI in the context of multimedia journalism programs in Lebanese universities. Thus, two broad research questions are tackled: How are universities that offer such programs dealing with AI in the classrooms? And what are the attitudes of students towards the use of AI in their projects and assignments? The authors use two qualitative research methods: in-depth interviews with chairpersons of relevant departments and focus groups with multimedia journalism students, to reflect on plagiarism in the AI era while highlighting the ethical dimensions of AI use in the classroom. This study provides recommendations and insight for future academic integration of AI tools in journalism education.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, multimedia journalism, plagiarism, ethics, policymakers.*

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become omnipresent in daily life, with developments programmed to act as a human mind. There is constant use of computers, smartphones, online search engines such as Google, Siri, and intelligent home appliances, yet public awareness remains limited (UNESC, 2025). International organisations and policymakers, such as UNESCO, are updating policies regularly that highlight the opportunities and threats of AI on humanity, mainly in education (Al-Zahrani, 2024), as well as other fields like medical diagnosis, robotics control, telecommunications, the music industry, and media (Jabbar & Khan, 2016).

AI has also entered and influenced the journalism industry (Alzoubi et al., 2025), especially with its multimedia abilities. Media organisations now produce content that incorporates text, videos, podcasts, data visualisations, and social media (Parekh, 2025). Students are also using generative AI tools to draft articles, brainstorm leads, and auto-caption video stories (Veenstra et al., 2024). Tools include AI Chatbots, image generators, text-to-music, animation tools, and audio/video editors (Baptista et al., 2025).

To mimic the intelligence and actions of humans, the use of AI in journalism, especially in the field of academia, has raised concerns, including inaccurate information and ethical concerns (Alzubi, 2024). One of these major concerns at a university level is plagiarism, which constitutes a problem in higher education. The Internet tempts students to cheat by providing endless opportunities to copy or steal. AI applications have increased the possibility of plagiarism, with systems and bots able to follow prompts, compose responses, and produce text. This phenomenon of AI-facilitated plagiarism is now being called AIgiarism (Waqas et al., 2025). Tools like Turnitin and Grammarly are also failing to detect AI-generated content (Khalil & Er, 2023). With such ethical concerns, students must become digitally literate. Students should be equipped with auditing AI output, recognising bias, and generating responsible prompts (Ndungu, 2024). Thus, instead of just teaching students what fact-checking is, universities need to instruct them to read and think like a fact-checker.

This study combines the two worlds of education and multimedia journalism by tackling the issue of AI, plagiarism and ethics at the university level. The investigation of these variables will take place within the multimedia journalism programs offered at higher education institutions in Lebanon. In numbers, 49 universities and colleges in Lebanon are accredited with the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2019, cited in Bou Zeid & El-Khoury, 2020). This includes 19 faculties/units/departments of media (Bou Zeid & El-Khoury, 2020).

To accomplish the research objectives, two Lebanese universities were chosen as case studies: Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) and Al-Maaref University (MU). Both universities offer modern journalism curricula, including programs in Journalism and Electronic Media and Journalism and Digital Media, respectively. Through examining the opinions of both the top administration and students on the subject, this paper aims to explore the methods that universities are using to deal with AI, and to examine the attitudes of students towards the use of AI tools in their projects and assignments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The latest developments in AI can be programmed to act as a human mind (Moreno-Guerro, et al., 2020) and designed to serve humans and society (Herrera-Poyatos et al., 2025). Responsibility, transparency, security, fairness, and accountability are considered core principles for AI ethics (Corrêa et al., 2023). Policy makers across the world are updating guidelines to raise awareness on the opportunities and threats of AI in fields such as education, medicine, and media (Jabbar & Khan, 2016).

This concern around the ethical and societal implications of AI has prompted international organisations to emphasise a values-based approach. UNESCO's Gabriela Ramos states, "in no other field is the ethical compass more relevant than in artificial intelligence... It has transformed countless fields, including education" (UNESCO, 2023). AI brings major benefits, but without "ethical guardrails," it risks reproducing biases and discrimination, fueling "divisions and threatening fundamental human rights and freedoms" (UNESCO, 2023).

b. Plagiarism

As AI reshapes industries and challenges ethical norms, one concern is its impact on academic integrity. In higher education, plagiarism is problematic. It can occur by stealing material, submitting someone else's paper, copying sections, supplying documentation but omitting quotation marks, or paraphrasing without proper documentation. Educational institutions are now dealing with the implications of AI content, raising questions around plagiarism related to intent, ownership, and authenticity. These advancements in AI have resulted in the emergence of AIgiarism - plagiarising using AI (Hern, 2022).

Artificial intelligence (AI) Chatbots like ChatGPT can increase violations of academic integrity and boost plagiarism. Plagiarism represents a substantial problem in scientific research. It incorporates taking others' works and ideas without proper citation. Unfortunately, it is difficult to distinguish students' own writings from those generated by generative tools like ChatGPT because plagiarism detection software could not detect the texts generated by AI Chatbots up till now (Khalaf, 2024). The modern advancements in artificial intelligence resulted in the emergence of a novel construct, namely, AIgiarism. AIgiarism is a blend of two words, artificial intelligence and plagiarism. In simple terms, ChatGPT is regarded as a promising technology helping students and novice researchers understand theories, build their capacities, and produce innovative ideas (Zhang et al., 2023). In a recent study on college students, Khalaf (2024) found that attitudes towards plagiarism were a significant predictor of attitudes towards AIgiarism. Surprisingly, 57% of participants (N=131) had positive attitudes towards AIgiarism. Relatedly, editors and reviewers of scientific journals face challenges in how they would recognise whether the submissions are human-made or AI-generated texts.

Consequently, numerous investigators highlighted the need for advanced software to detect the originality of students' work and faculty staff articles (Zhang et al., 2023). Notwithstanding, ChatGPT should not be banned but rather acknowledged its risks, challenges, and limitations, and not abuse or abandon it and in meantime, maintain academic integrity (Zhang et al., 2023). With this in mind, further research is required to explore factors leading to and correlates of AIgiarism in higher education institutions. AI bots can write detailed and unique texts, making plagiarism harder to detect. Debates have emerged over whether AI-generated text is plagiarism (Jacob, 2022). One side argues it is not, due to a lack of intent and no direct copying from human-created content since AI content is based on algorithms and is highly specific to prompts (Jacob, 2022). Others argue that AI works with algorithms built on human content. So, if someone presents AI content as their own without disclosing the tool, it raises concerns about authenticity and integrity (Jacob, 2022).

c. Multimedia Journalism

Beyond academic integrity, AI is transforming how information is produced and consumed especially in multimedia journalism. Multimedia journalism combines media forms such as text, photos, videos, audio, data visualisations into one product. Media formats and integration have evolved in recent years, with technologies like social media, blogs, vlogs, live video, podcasts, wearable tech, and more (Drew, 2023). AI is the newest form, revolutionising media and enhancing creativity and productivity (Nasrallah, 2022), including tools for image generation, design, music, and video editing.

In Lebanon, the status of digital media and AI is limited, despite the country's media saturation. In 2018, there were over 4.5 million Internet users, about 75.9% of the population (Trombetta, 2018). Bashir et al. (2022) report that "85.4% of users agreed they rely on social media for information" (p. 20). Most citizens access news platforms, cable channels, Internet sites, and text services (Trombetta, 2018). However, one company, Ogero, owns the entire telecom infrastructure, making it subject to state control (Hodali, 2019). Lebanon still lacks infrastructure for broadband, with low international bandwidth (Trombetta, 2018). Also, the media scene is highly politicised and sectarian, making it a struggle for media companies to adapt to new technologies (Hodali, 2019). New models are often met with scepticism, as the media is not fully independent (Hodali, 2019). Although the local multimedia scene is limited, academia offers curricula with an emphasis on the concept.

d. Journalism Education in Lebanon

Eleven universities have programs tailored for journalism in Lebanon. Universities have started upgrading programs toward contemporary journalism. New degrees have emerged in the media section, with terms in degree names like multimedia, digital media, electronic media, broadcast journalism, and communication. For example, Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) offers Journalism and Electronic Media, Al Maaref University (MU) has Journalism and Digital Media, the Lebanese American University (LAU) offers Multimedia Journalism, and the University of Sciences and Arts in Lebanon (USAL) has Digital Media. All programs offer at least one multimedia journalism course, with names like electronic newsgathering, digital journalism, web journalism, digital storytelling, and multimedia production. This shows that all universities recognise the need to equip students with multimedia skills.

e. Media Ethics in Journalism Education

As journalism education in Lebanon evolves, attention is being directed towards ethical responsibilities. Media ethics ensures values like trust, respect, responsibility, fairness, and truth are implemented in work (Olayinka & Odunayo, 2024). The understanding of constructing a set of moral guidelines in the industry has been positively received in academia. Ethics courses are essential in curricula, merging philosophical theories with ethical media practice (Feng, 2024). Some theorists argue that ethics education needs to be more practical. This means integrating real-world practice and experiential pedagogy to help students engage with authentic ethical dilemmas (Abbas & Khan, 2023; Severijnen & de Haan, 2024).

In Lebanon, ethics education is imperative. The media landscape is owned or financed by political powers, with 78% of outlets being politically affiliated (Trombetta, 2018). Journalism programs in universities offer media ethics courses, but students believe journalists act unethically, accepting bribes, payments, or using deception (Bou Zeid & El-Khoury, 2020). The political system is often cited as the cause. This shows a deficit in academia and industry, with calls for ethics education to help remedy corruption and uphold journalistic standards (Bou Zeid & El-Khoury, 2020).

f. Digital Literacy in Journalism Education

Digital literacy is the ability to access, manage, evaluate, and create information appropriately using digital technologies (UNESCO, 2025). Today, data-rich media literacy abilities are needed (Hassan et al., 2022). There are urgent calls for AI literacy, and students must learn to verify AI

outputs, create effective prompts, and fact-check content (O'Dea & O'Dea, 2023). AI literacy also increases awareness of cyber cheating and plagiarism. With AI literacy, students understand the challenges and benefits of using AI tools. Trust (2023) warns that banning AI Chatbots can worsen the digital divide and create a discriminatory and inaccessible learning experience. Instead, academia should equip students to learn with AI. This literacy helps students think, learn, brainstorm, and write better while critically examining the production, design, and use of these tools (Trust, 2023).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With artificial intelligence as prime focus in today's digital world, raising several queries regarding its ethical considerations and its involvement in media education, two research questions were presented to understand the context of AI in multimedia journalism programs in Lebanese universities:

RQ 1: How are universities with multimedia journalism courses dealing with AI in the classroom?
RQ 2: What are the attitudes of multimedia journalism students towards the use of AI tools in their projects and assignments?

To answer these research questions, two universities in Lebanon will be used as cases, including Al Maaref University and Notre Dame University-Louaize.

a. Al Maaref University (MU)

Al Maaref University (MU) is a private university in operation since 2015. Among its six faculties is the Faculty of Mass Communication and Fine Arts, which offers three majors: Journalism and Digital Media, Advertising and Public Relations, and Radio and Television. MU is a significant case due to its young age, offering one of the latest curricula tackling journalism and new media. The Journalism and Digital Media program includes courses such as multimedia journalism, digital storytelling, and web design, all discussing modern technological trends.

All faculties at MU hold students to high standards of integrity in line with the university Code of Conduct. This includes zero tolerance for plagiarism, cheating, and collusion. Cheating is defined as having others do the work or stealing, altering, or destroying another student's work. Plagiarism is using another's ideas or words without giving credit. Collusion is paying someone to do work. If such dishonesty is detected, students receive an 'F' and must drop the course. MU promotes values including fairness, respect, trust, responsibility, and honesty.

b. Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU)

Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) is a private, Lebanese non-profit Catholic institution, accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). NDU follows the American liberal arts model and is dedicated to freedom of thought and expression. The Department of Media Studies offers graduate and undergraduate programs in Communication Arts, with two emphases: Journalism and Electronic Media, or Radio and Television, as well as a Bachelor's in Advertising and Marketing. NDU is continuously updating its journalism program, recently renaming it "Journalism and Electronic Media" to match technological progress and

market needs. Facilities such as a newsroom and projection rooms give students real-world media experience.

Regarding the rules and regulations, NDU expects students to refrain from academic dishonesty, including plagiarism that defined as presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Paraphrasing, summarising, and direct quotations are also considered plagiarism if not properly cited.

METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method was used to understand the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of universities and their students to answer the research questions. This consisted of in-depth interviews with deans and chairpersons of journalism programs at MU and NDU to discuss how they are dealing with AI in classrooms. In addition, focus groups took place with multimedia journalism students at both universities to understand their approaches toward AI.

Qualitative strategy is useful to gain a rich understanding of the Internet and new media users (Faulkner & Atkinson, 2024). An in-depth interview is a research technique that provides insight into an individual's perspective, experiences, feelings, and meanings, and it is a common form of qualitative data collection in social sciences (Belobrovkina, 2025). This format can provide more detailed information than methods such as surveys (Kon et al., 2025). In-depth interviews also result in more relaxed and comfortable atmospheres for interviewees (Kon et al., 2025). For such reasons, in-depth interviews add value to this study and help produce thorough responses on how universities are managing AI in journalism classrooms.

In the focus group discussions, open-ended questions help participants to fully express ideas and opinions, giving rich and dynamic data through group interaction (Mwilongo, 2025). Participants interact with each other with the help of a moderator to share experiences.

PROCEDURE

a. In-depth Interviews

Researchers conducted two in-depth interviews. This included an interview with Dr. Hatem Zein, Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Mass Communication and Fine Arts and Chairperson of the Journalism and Digital Media Department at Al Maaref University. Another interview was conducted with Dr. Maria Bou Zeid, the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, former chairperson of the Media Studies department, and current chair of the AI Ad-Hoc Committee at Notre Dame University-Louaize. The professors were asked a total of six questions in an effort to better understand their new coping mechanisms and belief systems towards AI technology in education. This included questions to determine regulations in place to adapt to AI, new forms of assessments, what they consider plagiarism, AI detection techniques, and how students are using this new technology in their multimedia work. To yield appropriate and logical results, responses were analysed using a thematic approach. Two themes were found to connect the answers received from the chairpersons. This includes university's perception of AI usage in the classroom. Here, results include the extent to which students are allowed to use AI tools in their multimedia work, how they use them, and when this is considered plagiarism. The second theme grouped ways in which universities are adapting to AI in the classroom. This includes new policies, assessment alternatives, and detection tools.

b. Focus Groups
Researchers contacted current journalism students at MU and NDU and organised two separate focus groups. The focus group at MU took place on its Beirut campus and consisted of nine students, all majoring in the Journalism and Digital Media program. This included seven females and two males. The focus group at NDU took place on its Zouk Mosbeh campus and consisted of 10 students, all majoring in the Journalism and Electronic Media program. This included eight females and two males. Both focus groups lasted for 75 minutes, where the researchers hosted the sessions and organised open discussions. This included asking 10 questions to determine students awareness and outlooks on AI. Students discussed current AI tools they put to use to complete their work, reasons for using AI, plagiarism risks of AI usage, trusting AI, and ethical considerations connected with AI. To analyse the results, three themes were extracted based on the links in the responses. The first theme deals with how students are using AI in the classroom, the second theme includes student awareness of risks associated with AI, and the third theme discusses student attitudes and feelings towards AI tools.

RESULTS
In applying qualitative methods, both in-depth interviews and focus groups present coherent findings.

1. *In-Depth Interviews*
    a. *University Perception of AI Usage in the Classroom*
        i) Al Maaref University

The chairperson at MU says the university accepts the use of AI tools in multimedia work as long as it is for the sole purpose of enhancing student digital perception and digital literacy. Students are prohibited from using AI to purely produce their assignments without any individual effort to showcase their skills and knowledge. According to the chairperson, artificial intelligence can be useful to help students develop their ideas, improve their awareness, and adapt to modern technology. MU says there seem to be two types of students: those who are oblivious to artificial intelligence and those who have a deep understanding of the method. A common trend the chairperson observes is the domino effect of the use of AI. Students interact with each other to increase their familiarity with AI and encourage each other about its possible uses. According to the chairperson, most students seem to use AI with the desire to upsurge their intelligence and quality of delivery. The most common AI tool students appear to use include language model Chatbots such as ChatGPT, which helps them produce text-based content. Other common tools used, according to the chairperson, are those that generate photos and videos. Applications such as ChatGPT can be considered dangerous and extremely negative in situations where students are using the bot to produce text word-for-word. The university views the application as one that can generate content that is unreal and with no verification or proper references. MU will consider this plagiarism, bearing in mind that the student is not the owner of the given work. When using AI to enhance multimedia, such as to edit a photo or video, without drastically changing its meaning, MU views this as acceptable.

ii) Notre Dame University-Louaize

According to the dean at NDU, the extent to which students are allowed to use AI while preparing or writing their projects or assignments depends on the nature of the requested deliverable from them. Practically speaking, the university will not set limits to AI usage but will test the skills and knowledge that should be learned and/or used from a deliverable. For example, if students have to produce an end product or write a story, they are requested to present and defend it, in order for the instructor to check what they learned throughout the process. They will also be asked about their project or their story in an exam, so the instructor can assess who among the students has had a positive experience with AI, and who just used it to avoid putting in the effort.

The Dean says many students are still using AI in an "amateurish way" since they still do not have enough experience in that regard. For this reason, the university has yet to reach a point where Journalism and Electronic Media students are using AI to edit, create websites, or add voice-overs on their reports. The majority seem to be still restricting the use of AI to ChatGPT 3.5. The university considers, without any doubt, that a written piece of work is plagiarised if it does not include any human touch or does not provide any benefit to the way the information was presented.

b. Adapting to AI in the Classroom
i) Al Maaref University

Since AI tools have entered classrooms, MU says it is working to adapt to the new technology. The chairperson makes it clear that plagiarism is a crime in all cases. However, the university admits there are no protocols or laws where cheating under the framework of AI have been assigned or clarified. The journalism chairperson says there is general consent on campus that when AI generates work and personal labor has not been implemented, it will be considered academic misconduct.

MU says using AI platforms entirely or even partially to produce content, including text, photos, audio, or videos, is considered plagiarism. Taking content from AI is considered the same as taking content from an individual. The chairperson also says such actions may also result in the killing of student creativity, limiting their opportunity to achieve proper learning outcomes. On the other hand, MU says using AI tools to enhance one's understanding of a topic or to offer ideas related to production is tolerable and even beneficial.

MU says alternatives are being implemented to assess students, to avoid any unethical use, and to dodge unfair grading of students improperly using AI. This includes the recent increase in class activities and discussions, so students are required to showcase their understanding in the classroom. The chairperson says asking students to work, solve, or submit a certain case study related to the issue at hand live in class accurately showcases real student ability. Moreover, the chairperson says students are increasingly being asked to send videos of themselves explaining a theory or case. This encourages personal effort to produce content that is solely based on their own knowledge and understanding. It also helps increase their communication skills, production skills, and media literacy.

In terms of AI detection, MU admits this is based on the instructor who must stress on the idea of academic misconduct regularly in class. The chairperson says instructors do have access to basic plagiarism detection tools, such as the ones on Google Classroom but confesses they can be imperfect and inaccurate. The chairperson says it is important that both instructors

and students alike have high levels of digital literacy skills. This means instructors should put in effort to enhance their comprehension of AI platforms and their impact on student work. MU says there is no general policy regarding the detection of AI. Although important, the chairperson considers that implementing a general policy today is unrealistic because of the ongoing innovation in the field. Adapting to AI seems to be on a semester basis, with constant references towards its change from time to time.

ii) Notre Dame University-Louaize

According to the dean at NDU, one cannot talk about regulations when dealing with the issue of AI; but one can discuss policies that should be adopted. NDU believes plagiarism or academic integrity policies should be changed and adapted to the current technological progress. The position of NDU is to fully embrace technology, especially generative AI technologies. Instructors and students are encouraged to make full use of this new world within a certain balance between the traditional perception of academic integrity and the opportunities that AI is offering.

For NDU, a paper or an assignment breaches the plagiarism policies when students fully use data and ideas generated by AI without being critical or analytical, and without adding any human touch. This is applicable in Journalism and Electronic Media courses, in addition to other courses where writing and/or producing specific deliverables are the main components.

It is true that no reliable tools yet exist to detect the usage of AI in students' assignments and projects, but NDU is now working on getting the updated edition of Blackboard which will help instructors to detect AI-generated content. NDU also believes that experienced instructors can and should compare the writing styles of the students in their exams and in their assignments.

In-person examinations and presentations at NDU are important alternatives for instructors to assess students' performance and determine whether the information or skills required and used in the assignment were surely learned. According to the dean, AI is still very new, and people are still in a phase of trials and errors. One should accept the fact that if universities or instructors prohibit AI usage, they will try to find a "safe" way to breach the system; that is why universities should cope and "outsmart" such potential reactions.

2. Focus Groups
a. The Use of AI in the Classroom
i) Al Maaref University

All multimedia journalism students at MU reported they use ChatGPT in the process of completing their projects and assignments. The vast majority of participants also mentioned they use AI tools for multimedia purposes. This includes platforms that edit photos, remove backgrounds, increase image quality, download audiovisuals, denoise audio, or enhance designs and logos. Furthermore, students cited tools that help them transcribe interviews, edit voice-overs, summarise content, fix grammar, and generate photos based on prompts. One student mentioned using a tool titled Undetectable AI, which is designed to detect AI-written text and humanise the content, and another cited using a paraphrasing tool.

As for reasons students use AI, all participants in the focus group mentioned speed and ease as their top factors. Students voiced their opinions that AI tools save them time when completing their assignments and, in turn, make their studying process simpler. One participant said the use of AI has become "a lifestyle where we want everything fast. It has also become a psychological thing where I feel I need to use AI just for curiosity, even if I have researched somewhere else." All students mentioned that AI platforms can be helpful research tools to generate facts or ideas for their projects. Some students mentioned that AI helps them put their ideas into a clear scope. One student mentioned a reason they use AI is for entertainment, especially when interacting with Chatbots.

ii) Notre Dame University-Louaize

All students at NDU admitted to using ChatGPT to assist with tasks such as getting ideas for their stories or essays, composing emails, and writing essays. One of the students said he uses Google Bard, an artificial intelligence chatbot that can respond to users' questions on any subject with an almost human-like "understanding," to draft an article outline, prepare a PowerPoint presentation, summarise a text, and translate documents.

All students agreed that AI generates data quickly, so it saves time and effort and provides the main bullet points for a given assignment. One student said, "Why not use AI when I can have 'somebody' doing my assignment on my behalf? It is so relieving". Another student stated that even if she already has preliminary ideas for her story, she would check ChatGPT because she feels "safer" doing it and "more confident and comfortable" about the thoughts she would like to include in her report. "AI is out there, so I feel that I have to check it out, even if I don't need it," she added.

b. Risks in Using AI
i) Al Maaref University

Students at MU are well aware of the different risks associated with AI. All participants agree that using AI to generate their work from scratch is considered plagiarism. This usage includes copying and pasting text or even producing videos or photos that are not individually owned or created by the student. Students say even taking detail with no additional content or personal effort is frowned upon. Inserting prompts asking AI to write their papers or solve an assignment is an unethical act, according to the students. Students also classify pure AI-generated photos as plagiarism. All participants say the only safe way to use AI tools is for brainstorming or enriching student-led audiovisuals.

Moreover, students seem aware that the unethical use of AI can generate different moral and credibility risks. All students have a full understanding of the university regulation that they will receive a grade of F if they are caught plagiarising. Students also expressed that depending on AI can result in copyright issues, skewed information, and stealing. A student said a huge risk with using AI is the idea that "the truth will become unknown since there is no real source and no transparency when using AI." Another student said, "We will all become the same and there will be no uniqueness in our work anymore."

All participants agree that content from AI is inaccurate, and the truth is easily altered and at times misrepresented. Students believe AI Chatbots are politicised and agenda based. The majority of participants also seem to have privacy concerns with the use of AI. They believe AI

tools closely monitor and record their behaviours, creating impressions on users and the societies they come from.

In turn, all students believe there are ethical concerns when using AI. All students mentioned the need to rely on their own content and add their personal touch to any content they create. Citations and references are also necessary. The majority also stated that transparency is an important factor. This means confessing to users, audience members, and instructors when AI has been used to generate content. Students also said asking for permission to insert people's photos or audio in AI tools is extremely important, being well aware that AI tools may save and reuse such content later. One student mentioned an important ethical obligation is for students not to lose their intentions and purpose, specifically saying, "in journalism, it is our job to show the truth. We just do not rely on and love AI so much to the point where we will forget our objective".

ii) Notre Dame University-Louaize

At NDU, students believe that plagiarism occurs whenever authors or researchers use others' ideas without giving them credit. One student said, "It is not wrong to use others' ideas and build on them your own story or report, but one should give credit to the authors, and not just copy and paste the content". Students also seem aware that when using AI, one can plagiarise others' work without knowing. One student stated that AI repeatedly provides her with wrong citations or with quotes from authors that do not exist. Students said that AI is not always accurate in providing information or data. One student added, "At least it is not as accurate as human writing is." Participants highlighted the ethical concerns using AI. "I might get low grades if I use AI, which I think is unfair", one student said. Another participant added, "I will be lying to myself if I totally rely on AI to do my assignments and projects. I am majoring in Journalism and Electronic Media because I have good writing skills and because I like writing and the multiple facets of this world. So, what is the point behind the abuse of AI?" All students agreed on the fact that plagiarism is one of the most ethical concerns when using AI.

c. Students' Attitudes Towards AI
i) Al Maaref University

Concerning their attitudes, multimedia journalism students at MU are active users of AI, but they remain skeptical. When asked if AI can help improve their work, all participants mentioned that AI tools may only help in expressing their thoughts or ideas and enhancing their audio-visuals. Others mentioned that AI may help with grammar, spelling, and sentence structure. They did mention that such improvements can be made only in English, as AI's ability to produce content in Arabic is poor. Moreover, all students doubt the usefulness of AI in other forms, with one student stating, "especially when using AI for written work, it does not help improve my work because the human narrative and perspective is being erased." All students agree that they cannot fully rely on AI when completing their projects and assignments, indicating major trust issues. In fact, every participant was quick to state that they have zero trust in the text and information generated using AI. All students say if AI is used for research purposes, it is only for consultation and fact-checking will always follow. The majority of participants mentioned that they trust AI only when editing their visual content.

All students cite the number one advantage to using AI tools is saving time, especially with its ability to reply to prompts quickly. The majority of students also mentioned that AI is beneficial in simplifying complex concepts and generating diverse ideas for class use. Students say that, in turn, this helps them feel more comfortable. As for the disadvantages, the majority of participants mentioned that it has made users more dependent, limiting their ability to exercise their minds, and in turn making them more lazy and idle. One student said AI "can radically narrow our minds", while another student stated, "it can rob us of the significance of having humans exist, which can lead to unemployment and the decrease of humanity." Furthermore, one student mentioned that AI "has caused us to freeze, and the thought of just thinking has become tiring to humans". Here, students elaborated that they feel standard research and deep reading have been put on pause and in turn, they have become bombarded with high quantities of information generated by Chatbots. All students agree that a major disadvantage to AI is the plagiarism risk associated with it as well as the spread of inaccurate information.

ii) Notre Dame University-Louaize

All students believed that using artificial intelligence does not improve the quality of their story or end-product. Instead, AI generates "less quality" results, which are "dry and not human," as one student stated. AI provides straightforward answers to given questions, with "no emotions, no human touch." Participants agreed that AI-generated results cannot always be trusted. Instead, students said they generally use it to double-check some linguistic matters or for consultation purposes.

The use of AI still has its advantages, according to students. The process is fast, the English is good and trustworthy, the range of provided synonyms is rich and diversified, and most importantly, it is easily accessible. On the other hand, students said AI generative technologies have their drawbacks. First, the results are not timely, not always trustworthy, biased and not always credible. "Relying on AI will make us lose our writing skills and will jeopardise our creativity and innovative perceptions about stories, public interests, and local concerns," as said by one of the participants.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence is a hot topic in industries and educational institutions worldwide. It has the potential to enrich journalism and teaching. However, with its rapid advancement, AI may also pose risks and challenges if used improperly. Today, AI has outrun policies and regulations. Academia is now thinking of new methods to deal with AI in the classroom. With journalism being involved in writing and distributing information, the use of AI is a sensitive topic. This study explored how multimedia journalism programs in the country are dealing with AI and how students perceive AI in their projects and assignments. Findings showed that universities and students are still in the beginning stages when using AI tools.

In RQ1, multimedia journalism programs were asked how they are responding to AI tools. This included how students are allowed to use AI, how they are experimenting with such tools, and new policies that have been put in place to respond to such. Both MU and NDU are aware of AI's opportunities and risks, but are still exploring and testing AI systems. Students are still considered amateurs learning about AI, using tools like ChatGPT to understand issues or assist with multimedia work.

If students use AI, both universities say it depends on the nature of usage. If deliverables lack human input, are copied and pasted, and are not cited, it is plagiarism, and universities will apply academic integrity policies. Nevertheless, both academic institutions say using AI is acceptable to simply enhance students' ideas or awareness on digital media. This is allowable since AI is the technology that is supposed to help humans facilitate their work. In addition, institutions say they cannot set logical limits to the usage of AI, admitting it is difficult to detect AI use. This is because AI is considered tricky as it mimics human thinking. So, the extent to which students are allowed to use AI depends on intention.

MU and NDU embrace AI use within ethical standards. Universities say banning it is impossible since students will find ways to use it, proving that it has become omnipresent. While there are no official AI policies, boundaries on its usage have been discussed with students. This means complete AI-generated content is considered plagiarism. To control this, both universities rely on learning management systems, but admit they are not always accurate. Instead, instructors are encouraged to enhance their digital literacy and compare writing styles from prior assignments to understand the extent of AI use. Moreover, assessment methods are shifting to in-class discussions and in-person exams and presentations.

In RQ2, students were asked about AI usage, awareness of risks, and overall habits. It was found that students are eager to learn about AI but question its reliability and ethics. All participants used ChatGPT at some point, mainly for consultation like idea generation or clarification. NDU students use it for text while MU students use it for multimedia such as photo editing, transcription, voice-overs, aligning with views that AI boosts productivity. As for reasons why students use such applications, all students say AI is used for speed, ease, and curiosity.

Students at NDU and MU are aware of the plagiarism risks involved in using AI, including direct copying, no citation, or idea stealing, showing a common understanding that plagiarism is considered a form of theft. Students are reluctant to use AI for text prompts, mentioning that such tools can be unreliable, inaccurate, and biased. Students at MU cited privacy concerns. Students also believe transparency and responsibility are important components when using AI. Some students say depending on AI risks their objective and purpose in journalism, leading to untruthful content and unhealthy reliance that hinders responsibilities and commitment the journalism profession. This shows that students are well aware of their purpose to serve the public and the ethical considerations related to it.

Overall, students do not believe AI drastically improves assignment quality but rather can enhance their work. All participants in both universities cited the disadvantages to using AI is that results can be outdated, emotionless, and lack creativity. With that being said, students at both universities believe AI is easily accessible, delivering vast amounts of information in top speed, and improving their grammar. For multimedia use, AI can be more reliable and can help them accurately edit their audiovisuals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into consideration the literature review and findings of this study, a list of recommendations has been assembled for universities and students on how to deal with artificial intelligence tools in the classroom using an ethical framework:

a. Recommendations for Universities
  i.   Embrace AI and profit from the opportunities it provides.
  ii. Increase assessment weights based on in-class work and presentations.
  iii. Regularly review plagiarism policies to keep up with AI.
  iv. Be transparent with students on AI guidelines and policies.
  v.   Create class discussions and workshops to familiarise students with AI and its risks.
  vi. Organise digital literacy workshops for instructors on integrating AI ethically, detecting immoral use, and creating alternative assessments
  vii. Update courses' syllabi and incorporate AI as a separate category.
  viii. Discuss with students how to use and benefit from AI positively.

b. Recommendations for Students
  i.   Embrace AI and profit from the opportunities it provides.
  ii. Use AI tools within university limits and ethical standards
  iii. Get familiar with policies on plagiarism and AI
  iv. Develop digital literacy and critical thinking skills to assess AI-generated products
  v.   Learn how to create useful prompts for high-quality AI content
  vi. Participate in workshops discussing AI
  vii. Ask instructors when in doubt
  viii. Respect copyright and privacy issues when using AI
  ix. Understand the coursework to know whether AI can be used

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In recognition of the limitations of this study, it can be mentioned that the number of case studies and focus groups this paper relied on was limited, mainly because of time constraints. Therefore, although the findings of the study give an initial idea about the subject matter, researchers acknowledge that these cannot be generalized when discussing Lebanese universities and students as a whole. Moreover, there has been limited research about the use of AI in multimedia education, specifically in Lebanon, meaning there was little literature review to rely on. The topic of AI usage is drastically evolving and changing daily, with new technologies and applications emerging. Therefore, such findings do not stop here. As for future research, this study is the first of its kind in Lebanon and can be considered a preliminary report. Since this study focuses on two universities, future research should include more case studies and a wider sample to establish stronger findings and thus generalise the results. Moreover, intensive and ongoing research needs to happen to update discoveries in new AI tools and capabilities.

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