

Students' perceptions of education fraud. An evidence-based study to explore their role in combating it

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Abstract

What is the role of students in combating education fraud? To what extent do they feel protected by the academic community? Do they see themselves as playing an active role in preventing education fraud? What impact do new technologies and artificial intelligence have? Education fraud is a global phenomenon that affects all levels of education, with increased efforts at different levels to counter it. Among the actors involved in the fight against education fraud, students can play a significant role.

This article analyses the main findings of a study conducted by the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED) in cooperation with the Academic Equivalence Mobility Information Centre (CIMEA), in light of existing literature on students' perception of fraud in education and the role of new technologies. The aim is to support the identification of strategies for strengthening the culture of academic integrity within the wider academic community.

Keywords: education fraud; students; ETINED; ethics; Artificial Intelligence; academic integrity.

1. Identifying strategies to combat educational fraud based on students' perceptions of the phenomenon

The phenomenon of academic fraud is not recent whatsoever. Historical evidence suggests that issues such as certificate sales and academic misconduct were already prevalent at the dawn of the first universities in the Middle Ages (15th century). Since then, a variety of fraudulent activities have been perpetrated, including plagiarism, forgery of academic documents, contract cheating, and phenomena with explicit intent to defraud, such as *essay mills*, *visa mills*, – respectively providers of contract cheating services and false visa selling, *diploma mills* – non recognised institutions issuing academic qualifications, and *accreditation mills* – institutions providing unreliable accreditation certificates¹.

Studies carried out on the occurrence of academic misconduct in higher education have demonstrated that the proportion of students engaging in plagiarism and other “questionable activities”, including copying from other students and cheating in examinations, has increased significantly from 27% in 1966² to 54% in 1996³. A systematic review conducted by Newton confirmed that, in samples collected between 2014 and 2018, the percentage of students admitting to paying someone else to undertake their work was 15.7%, potentially representing approximately 31 million students worldwide⁴.

Considering the role that the academic community as a whole can play in combating education fraud and promoting academic integrity, a significant number of studies have been conducted focusing on the perceptions of students and lecturers regarding the issue. The findings of these studies have the potential to inform the creation of policies that adopt a systemic and participatory approach to combating education fraud, involving the entire academic community. In 2014, Beasley analysed 298 responses from students who were formally reported for cheating, focusing on their suggestions about what might have prevented their dishonest behaviour. Among the main reasons mentioned by students, there was ignorance about what constitutes cheating⁵. Other reasons for engaging in unethical actions include intense academic pressure, the inability to achieve desired results through legitimate means, and a lack of time⁶. Furthermore, students may employ neutralisation techniques to rationalise their actions, usually by deflecting blame onto external factors, particularly their professors, criticising them for unrealistic expectations, failing to monitor exams, not clarifying rules sufficiently, not caring, or not

¹ CIMEA, *Guide on diploma mills and other dubious institutions*, 2018. <https://www.cimea.it/Upload/Documenti/Guidelines-on-Diploma-Mills.pdf>. Council of Europe, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 on countering education fraud*, Strasbourg 2022. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/-/countering-education-fraud>. [last accessed 23 September 2025].

² Eaton, S., E., Crossman, K., Behjat, L., et al., *An Institutional Self-Study of Text-Matching Software in a Canadian Graduate-Level Engineering Program*, “Journal of Academic Ethics”, Vol. 18, no. 3 2020, pp. 263–282. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-020-09367-0>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Newton, Philip M., *How Common Is Commercial Contract Cheating in Higher Education and Is It Increasing? A Systematic Review*, “Frontiers in Education”, Vol. 3, 2018. <https://cronfa.swan.ac.uk/Record/cronfa43662>. [last accessed 23 September 2025].

⁵ Beasley, E. M., *Students Reported for Cheating Explain What They Think Would Have Stopped Them*, “Ethics & Behavior”, Vol. 24, no. 3 2014, pp. 229-252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508422.2013.845533>. Ka Yuk Chan, C., *Students' perceptions of 'AI-giarism': Investigating changes in understandings of academic misconduct*, “Education and Information Technologies”, Vol. 30, 2025, pp. 8087–8108; <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-13151-7>. Natal'ya Ivanovna logolevich, Elena Ivanovna Lobodenko, *Academic dishonesty among technical students: Scale of the problem and solutions*, “Pedagogy. Theory & Practice”, Vol. 5, 2020, pp. 99-106. <https://doi.org/10.30853/pedagogy.2020.1.18>.

⁶ Beasley, E. M., *Students Reported for Cheating Explain What... cit.* Ramos, R., Gonçalves, J., Gonçalves, S. P., *The unbearable lightness of academic fraud: portuguese Higher Education students perceptions*, “Education Science”, Vol. 10, no. 12, 2020. <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/10/12/351>. [last accessed 23 September 2025].

providing adequate support⁷. Subsequent studies have reiterated the concept of neutralisation, reporting that students may mitigate the consequences of their dishonesty by minimising the harm caused or by blaming systemic pressures, such as excessive workloads and intense competition⁸. In literature, another cognitive mechanism of self-justification that enables individuals to commit dishonest acts while still perceiving themselves as honest or non-criminal is rationalisation. One common form of rationalisation is blaming the system. In this particular case, students argue that examinations do not adequately measure performance and that institutions should adopt alternative assessment criteria⁹. A related mechanism is the displacement of responsibility, which shifts accountability to the instructor¹⁰. Another interesting perspective is provided by studies comparing perceptions of students and lecturers. In contrast to the perceptions of lecturers, students have a significantly lower opinion of the effectiveness of fraud prevention strategies in terms of detection and monitoring¹¹. However, both groups agree that a combined approach involving education, consistent policy enforcement, and supportive academic environments is necessary to prevent fraud¹², while rejecting the obligation to report peers for unfair behaviour¹³.

2. The work of the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED)

Education fraud has been the subject of study from various perspectives, given its impact at the international, national, institutional, and individual levels. Firstly, it is essential to note that episodes of fraud have the potential to compromise the quality of the education system and the mutual trust that exists among nations¹⁴. Secondly, the aforementioned factors have been demonstrated to have a detrimental effect on an institution's shared values, academic quality, and standards¹⁵. Thirdly, there is a concern about the erosion of the knowledge and skills acquired by students¹⁶. Furthermore, the concept that an individual can attain a degree without exerting significant effort devalues the genuine achievements of those who pursue rigorous education. Against this background, the work of ETINED, the Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education, has extensively addressed the topic with specific reference to legislation as well as the roles that different actors in higher education can play in combating fraud and promoting academic integrity.

⁷ Beasley, E., *Students Reported for Cheating Explain What...* cit.

⁸ Ramos, R., Gonçalves, Gonçalves, *The unbearable lightness of academic...* cit.

⁹ Malgwi, C. A., Rakovski, C. C., *Combating Academic Fraud: Are Students Reticent about Uncovering the Covert?*, "Journal of Academic Ethics", Vol. 7, September 2009, pp. 207-221. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-009-9081-4>.

¹⁰ Debrah Burke, Kenneth Sanney, *Applying the Fraud Triangle to Higher Education: Ethical Implications*, "Journal of Legal Studies Education", Vol. 35, no. 1, 2018, pp. 5-43. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jlse.12068>.

¹¹ Hartanto, R., Sukarmanto, E., Sri Kuntorini, R., *Perceptions of Fraud Prevention Strategies in Higher Education: A Comparative Study of Students, Lecturers, and Educational Staff*, "Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting" Vol. 25, no. 7, pp. 539-549, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.9734/ajeba/2025/v25i71906>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Yakovchuk, N., *Staff and student perspectives on the potential of honour codes in the UK*, "International Journal for Educational Integrity", Vol. 7, no. 2, 2011, pp. 37-52. <https://ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/IJE/article/view/762>. [last accessed 23 September 2025]. Ramos, R., Gonçalves, J., Gonçalves, S. P., *The unbearable lightness of academic...* cit.

¹⁴ Lantero, L., Finocchietti, C., Petrucci, E., et al., *Knowledge and awareness of fraud in education: A student perspective*, CIMEA, 2020.

https://www.cimea.it/Upload/Documenti/FraudS_Student Awareness on fraud in education singole.pdf. [last accessed 23 September 2025].

¹⁵ Newton, P. M., *How Common Is Commercial Contract Cheating in Higher Education and Is It Increasing? A Systematic Review*, "Frontiers in Education", Vol. 3, 2018, p. 67. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2018.00067>.

¹⁶ Brimble, M., Ptevenson-Clarke, P., *Perceptions of the prevalence and seriousness of academic dishonesty in Australian universities*, "The Australian Educational Resercher", Vol. 32, no.3, 2005, pp. 19-44. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03216825>.

ETINED was officially launched in 2015, with its roots in the Final Declaration of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education on Governance and Quality Education, which took place in Helsinki in 2013¹⁷. The platform aims to foster the exchange of best practices and relevant information, contribute to developing solutions to the challenges posed by corruption, and nurture an environment where all stakeholders support ethical principles¹⁸. In 2022, following four years of work by ETINED, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 on countering education fraud, along with its explanatory memorandum, on 13 July 2022¹⁹. The Recommendation is based on four main dimensions identified to combat education fraud and promote ethics and integrity in education: (i) prevention, (ii) prosecution, (iii) international cooperation, and (iv) monitoring. Furthermore, the text proposes six main recommendations:

- U protect pupils, students, researchers, and staff at all levels of education from organisations and individuals engaged in selling (and advertising) fraudulent services.
- U Provide support for the implementation of preventive and protective measures, as well as for a culture of equality of opportunity at all levels and in all sectors of education and training, and in the transition between these sectors.
- U Monitor technological developments that could support new forms of fraud.
- U Facilitate international cooperation in the field.
- U Support the wide dissemination of the Recommendation²⁰.

As reflected in the six recommendations, students are particularly connected to the spheres of prevention and protection. This aligns with a previous study presented during the ETINED 3rd Plenary Session, held in Prague on 28 November 2019²¹, which clearly identifies students and potential applicants to higher education institutions as the primary actors in combating the phenomenon of education fraud.

Another point that emerges in the Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 and is recalled in point 2 of its appendix is the «Use of digital solutions»²². Within the discourse surrounding education fraud, new technologies are frequently viewed as representing two sides of the same coin. On one hand, technological innovation can be seen as part of the problem of education fraud, as it offers easy and

¹⁷ Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education: "Governance and Quality Education", *Final Declaration on the Conference Theme*, Helsinki, Finland, 26-27 April 2013. <https://rm.coe.int/med24-final-declaration-confmin-april13-en/1680909525>. [last accessed 20 September 2025].

¹⁸ ETINED, Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education, *7th Session of the Prague Forum*, ETINED, Council of Europe Platform on Ethics Transparency and Integrity in Education, Vol. 1, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg 2016. <https://rm.coe.int/volume-1-7th-session-of-the-prague-forum/168074427a>. [last accessed 20 September 2025].

¹⁹ Draper, M., *Legal responses to education fraud*, in Draper M., Farrington, D., Finocchietti, C., et al., (eds), *Means to counter education fraud - Legislation, practices and instruments*, ETINED-Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education, Vol. 7, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg 2023, pp. 11-23. <https://rm.coe.int/prems-023823-gbr-2512-etined-vol-7-16x24-web-4-/1680addf63>. [last accessed 15 September 2025].

²⁰ Council of Europe, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18*... cit.

²¹ ETINED-Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education website, *3rd ETINED Plenary Session (2019)*. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/ethics-transparency-integrity-in-education/3rd-etined-plenary-session-2019->. [last accessed 23 September 2025].

²² Ibid.

inexpensive ways to forge documents. Moreover, the global online market facilitates the operations of diploma mills and essay mills. On the other hand, new technologies constitute a powerful part of the solution in preventing and combating education fraud. The use of digital tools to enable the secure exchange of digital student data and verify the authenticity of qualifications could support the fight against education fraud²³.

The recent introduction of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and their widespread availability have opened the doors to new opportunities and, simultaneously, new challenges for academic integrity, particularly regarding plagiarism²⁴. Although AI is perceived as beneficial for improving understanding, creativity, and productivity²⁵, many students express concerns about its costs²⁶. Some of these costs are personal, including the risk of increased laziness²⁷, reduced motivation, and diminished individual cognitive capacities. Others relate to ethical considerations, such as the erosion of independent thinking²⁸, threats to academic integrity²⁹, the devaluation of education, and concerns about privacy and data security³⁰.

The rise of AI forces higher education institutions to reconsider how they define and address misconduct. It is not just a matter of updating policies but also of understanding how students themselves see the boundary between legitimate help and fraud. That blurred line is now at the heart of the debate, and the literature on students' perceptions of academic fraud in relation to AI is an emerging field. At the centre of this debate lies the concept of *AI-giarism*, a neologism that combines AI and plagiarism, capturing the ethical dilemmas introduced by generative AI tools such as ChatGPT³¹. Eaton proposes the concept of post-plagiarism, arguing that historical definitions of plagiarism, which often focus on the literal cutting and pasting of text without attribution, may soon be obsolete or will be transcended rather than rewritten due to AI³².

²³ Johansson, E., Finocchietti, C., *The digital alternative*, in Draper, M., Farrington, D., Finocchietti, C., et al., (eds), *Means to counter education fraud - Legislation, practices and instruments*, ETINED- ouncil of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education, Vol. 7, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2023, pp. 67-79. <https://rm.coe.int/prems-023823-gbr-2512-etined-vol-7-16x24-web-4-/1680addf63>. [last accessed 15 September 2025].

²⁴ Ka Yuk Chan, C., Zhou, W., *Deconstructing Student Perceptions of Generative AI (GenAI) through an Expectancy Value Theory (EVT)-based Instrument*, (Version 1), "arXiv preprint arXiv:2305.01186", 2023. <https://doi.org/10.48550/ARXIV.2305.01186>. Deinny José Puche Villalobos, *La inteligencia artificial y el fraude académico en el contexto universitario*, "Revista Digital de Investigación y Postgrado", Vol. 6, no. 11 2025, pp. 73-93. <https://doi.org/10.59654/kg944e15>.

²⁵ Grájeda, A., Burgos, J., Córdova, P., et al., *Assessing student-perceived impact of using artificial intelligence tools: Construction of a synthetic index of application in higher education*, "Cogent Education", Vol. 11, no. 1, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2287917>.

²⁶ Ka Yuk Chan, C., *Students' perceptions of 'AI-giarism': Investigating changes...* cit.

²⁷ Ahmad, S. F., Han, H., Alam, M. M., et al., *Impact of artificial intelligence on human loss in decision making, laziness and safety in education*, "Humanities and Social Sciences Communications", Vol. 10, no. 1, 2023, p. 311. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01787-8>.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ka Yuk Chan, C., *Students' perceptions of 'AI-giarism': Investigating changes...* cit.

³⁰ Ahmad, S. F., Han, H., Alam, M. M., et al., *Impact of artificial intelligence on human...* cit. Ka Yuk Chan, C., *Students' perceptions of 'AI-giarism': Investigating changes...* cit.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Eaton, S. E., Curtis, G. J., Stoesz, B. M., et al. (eds.), *Contract Cheating in Higher Education*, Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12680-2>.

3. Main findings from the study on students' perceptions and awareness of education fraud

The ETINED platform, in collaboration with CIMEA, the Italian National Information Centre responsible for the recognition of qualifications, conducted a study titled *Student Perceptions and Awareness of Education Fraud*³³. The study builds on previous research developed under the Erasmus+ project FraudS+ (False Records, Altered Diplomas, and Diploma Mills Qualifications Collection), which resulted in the publication *Knowledge and Awareness of Fraud in Education: A Student Perspective*³⁴. To follow up on this publication, a new survey was developed in line with Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)18 and targeted at higher education students from the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, as represented at the Steering Committee for Education (CDEDU) of the Council of Europe. The active engagement of the CDEDU representatives, who supported the dissemination of the survey, enabled the collection of 5.333 responses across 40 countries. The survey results were published in Volume 10 of the ETINED publications, which presents students' perceptions of educational fraud, focusing on six key dimensions: knowledge, experience, community – including protection and prevention – and technology. The last part of the study is dedicated to new technologies, which represented a "study within the study" since the questionnaire included a substantial section related to this topic.

This paper outlines the main findings presented in Volume 10 of the ETINED publications, situating them within the existing literature on the topic, and aims to contribute to the debate on combating education fraud, as well as to identify potential strategies for promoting ethics and integrity in education.

3.1 Knowledge and experience

The first aspect examined, knowledge, reveals significant limitations in student familiarity with education fraud. Overall, students admitted only a partial understanding of the phenomenon: only 15% said they were "definitely aware" of what constitutes education fraud, while 54% were unsure or not familiar with the concept. Familiarity with specific types of fraud was similarly uneven. Plagiarism was the most widely recognised, with 69% of respondents indicating familiarity. Other forms of misconduct were far less known, with only 12% familiar with visa mills. Indeed, although students are generally aware of the existence of education fraud, only a small minority demonstrates a clear understanding of its various forms, while plagiarism remains the most well-known.

Despite these knowledge gaps, there is a clear consensus on the negative impact of educational fraud on the quality of education, particularly in terms of its impact on the equity and reputation of the education system. Students ranked the transparency of national education systems as one of the main aspects that are negatively affected.

When it comes to students' direct experience with educational fraud, this aspect closely aligns with their familiarity with the phenomenon. Plagiarism remains the most frequently encountered form of fraud, with 32% of respondents reporting direct experience, followed by essay mills, with 16% of students

³³ Petrucci, E., Tardioli, M., Ratto Vaquer, G., *Student perceptions and awareness of education fraud, ETINED-Council of Europe Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education*, Vol. 10, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2025, <https://rm.coe.int/prems-050724-gbr-2512-etined-10-web/4880283e72>. [last accessed 15 September 2025].

³⁴ Lantero, L., Finocchietti, C., Petrucci, E., et al., *Knowledge and awareness of fraud in education...* cit.

reporting having direct experience with this type of fraud. The primary source of information for students who have encountered fraud in education is made up of the students themselves (64%), followed at a considerable distance by advertising and online platforms. Social media is the least mentioned source, with only 34% of respondents mentioning it.

3.2 Community, protection, and prevention

38% of respondents reported not feeling protected by their academic community. Furthermore, a considerable percentage of students stated that they did not report instances of fraud. This was either because they did not consider themselves responsible for reporting it or because they were unsure who to contact. Among those who did report incidents of fraud, the most common point of contact was the course professor, cited by 28% of respondents. 14% reported to the students' ombudsperson or ethics committee, while a small proportion selected «other», specifying academic coordinators, institutional authorities, or even confrontation with the individual involved in the fraudulent activity. 50% of respondents indicated that they were not aware that the activity they witnessed constituted illegal or unethical behaviour, which prevented them from reporting the incident. The survey reveals that many students feel uncertain or unprotected if they report fraudulent activities: only 38% reported that they would be protected, while 42% were unsure, and 20% felt they would not be protected.

When it comes to preventing education fraud, students have clearly expressed the need for more secure and transparent reporting mechanisms. Their suggestions fell into three main themes. The most frequently cited concern was ensuring confidentiality throughout the reporting process. Students also emphasised the importance of transparency regarding both investigation processes and institutional actions and highlighted the need to improve understanding of which authorities handle fraud cases and their effectiveness.

The findings reveal that most students have not received targeted instructions on educational fraud. Over half of the students (54%) reported not having received any training on education fraud, and another 16% were unsure whether academic integrity was included in their curriculum.

When asked how educational fraud could be more effectively prevented, students suggested actions aimed at empowering them with the knowledge and skills needed to avoid committing fraud. These include skill development in critical thinking and academic writing, as well as awareness campaigns. Other suggested actions to improve fraud prevention focus on protecting the legitimacy of academic qualifications and institutions. Students also see themselves and the academic community as active players in combating fraud. Among the leading actors responsible for addressing education fraud, they highlighted universities, teaching staff, students, and student associations. Regarding the role of national governments, students emphasised their importance not only in enforcing legal standards but also in fostering an environment of trust, transparency, and ethical behaviour in education.

3.3 New technologies and AI

The section on new technologies aims to provide insights into the perceived relationship between technology and fraud, as well as students' familiarity with AI tools. Over half of the respondents believe that technology plays a role in fraudulent activities within the education sector. They do not view new technologies related to education fraud as inherently problematic, acknowledging the importance of

higher education institutions adapting to them. On this note, new technologies are seen equally as both a potential problem and a possible solution in relation to education fraud. Over half of respondents see technology as contributing to fraudulent activities in education, with 37% agreeing and 15% strongly agreeing. Many expressed concern that new technologies could facilitate the falsification of documents and the creation of fake qualifications, viewing them as part of the problem. Conversely, technologies are also seen as tools to prevent and combat educational fraud. They can enable secure digital data exchanges and support online platforms for credential verification. 39% of students expressed confidence in this potential, with an additional 9% showing strong confidence.

Regarding students' familiarity with AI, the study revealed a certain level of uncertainty surrounding all aspects connected to it. The surveyed students are equally divided into two groups: those who are aware of and use existing AI tools, and those who are either unaware of AI tools and their applications or are unsure about them. The vast majority of students who use AI tools do so for learning purposes.

Opinions are divided on whether AI usage constitutes plagiarism, reflecting ongoing debate in academic contexts: 51% of respondents stated that whether AI use counts as plagiarism depends on how it is used, while the remaining students were almost evenly split, with 24% agreeing that AI use should be considered plagiarism and 25% disagreeing. Those who did not consider AI use as plagiarism reported using it primarily for everyday questions (69%) or entertainment purposes (16%). The study highlights students' ambivalent attitudes toward AI and new technologies, underscoring the need for digital literacy and awareness initiatives within academic communities to reduce uncertainty and promote ethical use of AI in education.

4. Considerations on the main findings

Although some students appear to have a general understanding of the phenomenon, only a limited percentage of them expressed a certain level of awareness of fraudulent activities, with plagiarism being the type of education fraud with which respondents are most familiar. Furthermore, there is a clear consensus regarding the negative impact of education fraud on the quality of education, particularly in terms of equity and the reputation of the education system.

Students feel the need for protection of anonymity and privacy, as well as for training and awareness. The study revealed a belief that actions to prevent education fraud should be primarily carried out within the academic community, starting with universities, teaching staff, and students themselves. These efforts can be fully effective when supported by a systemic approach and cooperation.

Lastly, a final reflection concerns student approaches to new technologies. Students' attitude towards new technologies in relation to fraud seems to be ambivalent, reflecting in some way the dual nature of the technological dimension itself, which can be used both to combat the phenomenon and to support it.

5. Conclusions

The jointly conducted study by ETINED and CIMEA contributes new, evidence-based information and a broader geographical coverage to the existing literature. While most preceding works have been conducted at the institutional or national level, the study's broad geographical coverage, spanning 40 countries, represents an innovative research element. A key finding of the study is that students perceive themselves as integral to the academic community and as active participants in combating academic fraud. This aspect, which pertains to the potential contributions of students and the academic community towards preventing educational fraud by fostering a culture of academic transparency and integrity, calls for further research.

A secondary element that necessitates further research is the perceived necessity for students to enhance transparency and protection by the academic community. Whilst this may be regarded as a rationalisation, it would be relevant to ascertain how the level of awareness of education fraud and the protection of privacy could be enhanced to generate a greater sense of protection among students within their academic community.

Another element that stems from the study and requires further research is the role of new technologies and AI in combating education fraud, as well as the blurred boundary between legitimate help and fraud that appears unclear to students. It is interesting to note that students perceive technologies as both contributing to the problem of education fraud and as having the potential to provide a solution to this issue. Nevertheless, the uncertainty expressed in relation to the use of AI tools as potentially connected to cheating, as well as their need for digital literacy, confirms the interest in exploring this topic as emerging in the extant literature.

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