



Assessment on the Availability of Policies and Guidelines for Managing AI-Assisted Plagiarism among Students in Higher Learning Institutions in Arusha, Tanzania

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Abstract: The study assessed on the availability of policies and guidelines for managing AI-assisted plagiarism among students in Higher Education Institutions in Arusha Region. This study was guided by the Institutional Theory. The study adopted mix-method approach and convergent parallel design. The study involved 65 academic and administrative leaders from three Higher Education Institutions. The respondents were selected using purposive and total population sampling techniques. Data were collected through interview guide, questionnaire and document review. Data were analyzed thematically and statistically through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Also, the validity of the research instrument was ensured through expert review and on the aspect of reliability, the obtained Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.8. The findings revealed that formal AI-specific policies and guidelines were limited across higher education institutions. However, higher education institutions have not remained passive. Existing institutional AI practices, including plagiarism detection tools, awareness creation, training, and assessment redesign, support the management of AI-assisted plagiarism and promote academic integrity. The study concludes that AI-assisted plagiarism is currently managed mainly through institutional practices rather than formal AI policy frameworks. Therefore, institutions should develop comprehensive AI policies and guidelines that complement existing practices to ensure ethical AI use and strengthen academic integrity.

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1. Introduction

Higher education institutions in developed countries have made notable progress in establishing institutional mechanisms for governing the use of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) and safeguarding academic integrity. These developments have involved the formulation of AI-related policies and guidelines, promotion of responsible AI use, enhancement of AI literacy among stakeholders, and reconsideration of assessment practices in response to emerging AI-related challenges. In Sweden, evidence indicates that higher education institutions have developed institutional approaches for regulating and implementing GenAI use, with emphasis on academic integrity, responsible use, and guidance for staff and students (Erhardt et al., 2025).

Similarly, universities in the United States have increasingly developed institutional responses to GenAI through policy frameworks addressing issues such as ethical use, transparency and governance of AI applications in academic contexts (Dabis & Csáki, 2024). In Australia, national higher education guidance has encouraged institutions to redesign assessment practices, strengthen academic integrity measures, and build institutional capacity to respond to generative AI challenges (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency [TEQSA], 2023). Despite these advances, studies indicate that institutional responses remain uneven, with ongoing challenges related to policy implementation, ethical considerations, and alignment between rapidly evolving AI technologies and existing academic integrity.

In developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, higher education institutions have also begun developing institutional responses to the growing influence of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), although progress remains uneven across countries. In South Africa, some universities have also begun developing AI-specific academic integrity policies and digital governance frameworks to guide the responsible use of AI in higher education (Kell et al., 2024). Beyond these relatively advanced contexts, institutional responses across Sub-Saharan Africa remain at an emerging stage. Universities in countries such as Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria have started exploring institutional approaches to guide AI adoption, improve AI literacy and strengthen academic integrity. For instance, Cudjoe and Adebayo (2025) reported emerging AI governance initiatives in universities in Ghana and Nigeria, while Guadu et al. (2025) highlighted institutional efforts to promote responsible AI use through awareness creation and stakeholder guidance. Similarly, studies from East African higher education contexts indicate increasing recognition of the need for institutional frameworks to manage AI-related academic challenges (Owidi et al., 2025). Despite these emerging initiatives, many higher education institutions across Sub-Saharan Africa continue to experience challenges related to the development and implementation of AI-specific policies, limited digital infrastructure, inadequate AI literacy, and weak institutional capacity for managing AI-assisted academic misconduct.

In Tanzania, the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in higher education has increased, creating new opportunities for teaching, learning and academic support while also raising concerns regarding academic integrity and institutional governance (Sarakikya & Kitula, 2024). In response to these emerging developments, Tanzania has introduced national frameworks such as the National Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence in Education (2025), the National Digital Education Strategy (2024/25–2029/30) and the National ICT Policy (2023), which emphasize ethical, responsible and transparent use of digital technologies in education (MoEST, 2025). These frameworks provide guidance for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to develop appropriate policies, guidelines and institutional mechanisms that promote academic integrity and regulate students' use of AI tools

Despite these national initiatives, the increasing use of AI tools among students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has contributed to the growing challenge of AI-assisted plagiarism (Sarakikya & Kitula 2024). Although existing studies mainly focus on the general use of AI tools and concerns about academic dishonesty (Luhwera, 2025; Stuart, 2024; Matto & Ponera, 2025; Sarakikya & Kitula, 2024), limited empirical evidence exists on how HEIs in Arusha currently manage AI-assisted plagiarism. Therefore, this study examines AI strategies for managing students' AI-assisted plagiarism in higher education institutions in Arusha City, Tanzania.

Specifically, the study assesses the availability of AI-related policies and guidelines for managing AI-Assisted Plagiarism among students in Higher Education Institutions in Arusha Region.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted institutional theory which was advanced by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and further developed by subsequent institutional scholars. The theory explains how organizations adopt formal structures and practices to gain legitimacy. The theory explains how institutions establish rules, policies, norms, and organizational practices to maintain legitimacy and acceptable standards within society (Scott, 2014). It is based on the premise that organizations conform to institutional expectations in order to gain recognition, credibility and legitimacy. In this study, the theory emphasizes institutional rules, legitimacy, conformity and organizational practices as key elements that guide institutional efforts to manage AI-assisted plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions. This theory is relevant to the current study because it helps explain how Higher Education Institutions establish AI-related policies, academic regulations, and institutional practices to manage students' AI-assisted plagiarism. It also provides a framework for understanding how institutional rules, governance structures and formal guidelines promote the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence and strengthen academic integrity in Higher Education Institutions.

2.2 Availability of Policies and Guidelines

Marcel and Kang (2024), analyzed existing AI guidelines and policies developed and implemented by Canadian universities and examined how these aligned with academic integrity policies in higher education, particularly in academic writing contexts. The study employed a qualitative document analysis approach in which sixteen Canadian universities were selected and their AI-related policies and guidelines were critically analyzed. The findings revealed both opportunities and challenges associated with integrating AI into academic writing while maintaining academic integrity. The study further showed that although universities had started developing AI guidelines, there were still many gaps, inconsistencies and difficulties in aligning AI policies with academic integrity rules. In addition, the study stressed the need for clearer guidance from institutions to help students, lecturers and other stakeholders understand the ethical use of AI in academic writing. While the study's lie in its systematic policy analysis and its focus on a rapidly evolving area of academic integrity, the study exclude administrators perspectives, limit the scope and the lack of empirical evaluation of policy effectiveness in practice. This study covered the gap by assess whether Arusha universities possess similarly

clear, explicit and up-to-date AI-related plagiarism practices capable of adequately guiding students and faculty within a rapidly changing technological landscape.

Liu et al. (2025), examine the adequacy and evolving nature of AI-related regulations and institutional policies in Chinese. The study uses a qualitative approach, the authors analyses national and institutional policy documents alongside data from 33 faculty interviews to investigate how China's state-led governance model shapes university-level responses to the rise of generative AI. Their data collection methods policy document analysis and semi-structured interviews reveal that universities are actively institutionalizing AI within teaching, research and administrative systems while simultaneously developing guidelines to address ethical, managerial, and academic integrity concerns. The study analyzes policy general, but this study specifically analyzed institutional policies and guidelines related to management of students Plagiarism by using mixed method approach.

Tarisayi (2023), critically examines the adequacy of university plagiarism policies in addressing the rising challenge of AI-generated academic work. Using a qualitative, document-analysis approach framed by the Social Construction of Technology and legal perspectives on plagiarism, the study employed a confirmatory sampling strategy and analyzed ten South African university plagiarism policies until data saturation. The findings reveal significant inadequacies, with existing policies still largely oriented towards traditional text-based plagiarism and failing to explicitly address AI-generated content, thereby underscoring the need for modernized, inclusive definitions of plagiarism. The strengths of this study lie in its theoretical rigor and focus on policy content; however, it is limited by its exclusive reliance on policy documents without incorporating institutional practices, enforcement mechanisms, or stakeholder experiences. These gaps reinforce the need for the current research to examine not only whether HEIs in Arusha possess adequate AI-related plagiarism policies, but also whether these policies are sufficiently updated, comprehensive and responsive to the technological realities posed by AI tools.

Nakitare and Otiike (2022), examine the availability and adequacy of anti-plagiarism policies and practices across Kenyan universities. Using a mixed-methods approach and a cross-sectional design, the authors collected data through surveys administered to university librarians and interviews with graduate school directors or deans, complemented by pretesting to ensure instrument reliability. Their findings reveal that although most universities acknowledge the threat plagiarism poses to academic quality, there is a lack of unified, comprehensive, and consistently implemented anti-plagiarism policies, with substantial variation between well-funded universities which tend to have clearer

policies, software, and capacity and poorly funded institutions with limited mechanisms. The study includes its methodological triangulation and its national scope, offering a detailed picture of policy inconsistencies, however, it falls short by not addressing AI-generated plagiarism specifically and by focusing only on administrative perspectives without evaluating policy adequacy in light of emerging technologies. These limitations highlight the need for the current study to assess whether Higher Education Institutions possess clear, updated and technologically responsive policies capable of addressing plagiarism facilitated by AI tools.

Maliganya and Mboshaa (2025), investigated how higher learning institutions navigate emerging AI-related challenges in assessment. Employing a qualitative approach and exploratory design, the authors conducted documentary reviews of national policy frameworks and carried out semi-structured interviews with twelve purposively selected facilitators from Tanzanian higher learning institutions. Their findings revealed that although facilitators acknowledge the efficiency and objectivity of AI, they face significant challenges including AI-enabled plagiarism, unauthorized student use of AI tools and the absence of clear institutional guidelines addressing AI in assessment processes. However, the study primarily focused on general assessment practices and did not specifically examine the availability of AI-related policies and guidelines for managing AI-assisted student plagiarism in higher learning institutions. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by assessing the availability and effectiveness of AI strategies policies and guidelines for managing student plagiarism in universities in Arusha Region.

Msigwa et al. (2025), critically assessed the adequacy of plagiarism policies in both public and private higher learning institutions in Arusha. Grounded in Deterrence Theory and employing a convergent mixed-methods approach with a correlational research design, the authors collected data from 147 respondents drawn from instructors, students and IT experts using questionnaires and structured interviews, selected through purposive, stratified and simple random sampling strategies. Reliability of quantitative tools was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha coefficients ($QS = 0.759$; $QCI = 0.738$), while credibility of qualitative findings was ensured through detailed reporting. Their analysis revealed that although plagiarism policies exist across institutions, they are not effective in mitigating AI-assisted breaches of originality and no statistically significant differences were found between public and private institutions regarding the effectiveness of plagiarism detection software. The study mainly focuses on plagiarism policies and effectiveness of plagiarism detection software in public and private HEIs. It did not specifically assess the availability of broader institutional AI strategies for managing students' AI-assisted plagiarism. The current study filled the gap by specifically assessing availability of policies and

guidelines used in managing students AI-assisted plagiarism in HEIs in Arusha.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This design was appropriate because the study sought to assess the availability of institutional mechanisms for managing AI-assisted plagiarism by combining numerical evidence with participants' experiences and perspectives. The integration of the two datasets enabled the researcher to identify areas of convergence, divergence, and complementarity between quantitative patterns and qualitative explanations.

3.2 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in selected Higher Education Institutions in the Arusha Region, Tanzania. The study involved three Higher Education Institutions, which were anonymised as Higher Education Institution A, Higher Education Institution B and Higher Education Institution C. Arusha Region was selected because of the increasing use of AI tools in academic activities, which has raised concerns regarding the management of AI-assisted plagiarism (Sarakikya & Kitula, 2024). Additionally, the region hosts several Higher Education Institutions operating within diverse academic and administrative contexts, making it an appropriate setting for examining institutional practices for managing AI-assisted plagiarism.

3.3 Population

The target population comprised 65 higher education administrators from three selected Higher Education Institutions in the Arusha Region. The population included three Deputy Vice-Chancellors for Academic Affairs, thirteen Faculty Deans, three Quality Assurance Officers, three ICT Officers, and forty-three Heads of Departments. These participants were selected because of their administrative responsibilities and involvement in academic governance, quality assurance and technology-related initiatives relevant to managing AI-assisted plagiarism in higher education.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Procedures

The study employed simple random sampling to select institutions, purposive sampling and total population sampling techniques to obtain sample. Details regarding the application of each sampling technique are presented in the following subsections:

3.4.1. Simple random

Simple random sampling technique was employed to select three among eight Higher Education Institutions among in Arusha Region. The selection was considered appropriate to ensure feasible data collection within the available time and resources, while obtaining sufficient information from academic and administrative leaders (Kumar, 2023).

3.4.2. Purposive Sampling

Expert purposive sampling was employed to select key informants who possessed specialized knowledge and direct administrative responsibilities related to academic integrity management (Patton, 2015). The selected key informant included three Deputy Vice-Chancellors for Academic Affairs, thirteen faculty Deans, three Quality Assurance Officers and three ICT Officers making a total of 22 respondents. However, only 16 respondents were available and participated in the study.

3.4.3. Total Population Sampling

Total population sampling was used to include all Heads of Departments because their population was manageable and each member was considered to have relevant information regarding departmental-level availability of institutional policies and practices related to academic integrity. Although 43 Heads of Departments were targeted, 36 successfully completed the questionnaire. Overall, the study targeted 65 participants, while data were obtained from 52 participants due to accessibility challenges during the data collection period.

3.5 Sample Size

Sample size is a research term used for defining the number of individuals included in a research study to represent a population in other word a sample is a condensed, controllable representation of a larger group (Ahmed, 2024). The study uses purposive sampling to select participants who meet specific inclusion criteria. The sample size was 65 participants (3 DVCAA, 13 Deans, 3 Quality Assurers Officers, 3 ICT Officers and 43 Heads of Department) from three Higher Education Institutions who were considered to be most relevant to this study.

3.6 Data Collection Tools

This study used three main data collection tools namely, Document review, close ended questionnaire and interview guides. The use of multiple tools enables data triangulation, which enhanced the validity and reliability of findings.

3.6.1 Document Review

The study employed document review to verify the availability of AI-related policies, guidelines and related practices for managing AI-assisted plagiarism in Higher

Education Institutions. The reviewed documents included the Artificial Intelligence Policy, ICT Policy, Academic Regulations and students' Code of Conduct. The document review was employed because it provided verifiable evidence that complemented information obtained from participants and strengthened triangulation (Bowen, 2009).

3.6.2 Questionnaire

This study used a closed-ended questionnaire consisted of items with fixed response options on a four-point Likert scale. A closed-ended questionnaire was administered to Heads of Departments to obtain data on availability of institutional AI related policies and guidelines for the management of AI-assisted plagiarism in Higher Education institutions in Arusha. Questionnaires were distributed physically and electronically (Kobo Toolbox) depending on accessibility and institutional preference. In this study questionnaires were used because it enabled data collection from a relatively large group of respondent within a short time and statistical analysis of patterns related to the study objectives (Cohen et al., 2018). The quantitative findings complement qualitative evidence obtain through interview and document review.

3.6.3 Interview guide

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with institutional administrators including Deputy Vice-Chancellors for Academic Affairs, faculty Deans, Quality Assurance Officers and ICT Officers. Interviews were conducted through face-to-face and online communication depending on participants' availability and preferences. The study employed semi-structured interview to gain deeper insight on the availability of AI-related policies in managing AI-assisted plagiarism among students in Higher Education Institutions in Arusha (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Tools

In this study the reliability of the quantitative questionnaire was established through a pilot study using closed-ended Likert scale items. The pilot data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the questionnaire achieved a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80. This value exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the instrument had acceptable internal consistency and was therefore suitable for the main data collection (Surucu & Maslakci, 2020).

Also, the study ensured validity of the research instruments through expert review, whereby research experts in methodology and the study area assessed the relevance, clarity and adequacy of the questionnaire and interview guide before data collection. For the qualitative component, trustworthiness was enhanced through methodological triangulation by comparing findings

from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document review as well as maintaining detailed interview records to ensure the credibility and dependability of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Together, these procedures strengthened the overall quality of the quantitative and qualitative data used in the study.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Following ethical approval, process began with review of documents including AI-related policies and guidelines, ICT frameworks, academic regulations and students' codes of conduct, while structured questionnaires were administered to Heads of Departments. The questionnaires were distributed both physically and electronically through KoboToolbox, depending on institutional preference and accessibility also respondents were given sufficient time to complete them. At the same time, semi-structured interviews were conducted with institutional administrators, including Deputy Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs (DVCAAs), Deans, Quality Assurance Officers and ICT Officers, either face-to-face or by telephone at times convenient to the participants. Before data collection, all participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

In this study quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis where by descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages and means, were used to summarize respondents' views regarding the availability AI policies and guidelines (Field, 2018). The quantitative findings were presented using tables to enhance clarity and facilitate interpretation.

Qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews and document review were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview data were transcribed, read repeatedly to gain familiarity with the content, coded and grouped into categories based on similar meanings. these categories were then subsequently developed into themes and subthemes aligned with the study objectives, enabling the researcher to explain participants' experiences and perspectives regarding the availability of AI-policies and guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Finally, the quantitative and qualitative findings were compared and integrated to examine areas of convergence, divergence and complementarity between the two datasets. This integration enabled the researcher to explain how the statistical patterns related to participants' experiences and perspectives, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, consistent with the convergent parallel mixed-methods design (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Clark, 2018).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained an official approval letter from Tumaini University Makumira (TUMA), which facilitated permission to conduct the study in the selected Higher Education Institutions in Arusha. This approval ensured compliance with institutional research requirements before engaging participants. Participation in the study was voluntary. Before data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, and their rights as research participants. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were informed of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

During data collection, the researcher conducted interviews and administered questionnaires

professionally and respectfully to ensure ethical interaction with participants. Participants' identities were protected and no personal identifying information was included in the research report. Access to raw data was restricted to the researcher to maintain confidentiality. Electronic data were stored in password-protected files, while hard-copy materials were kept in secure storage. The collected data were used solely for academic purposes and findings were reported accurately while preserving participants' anonymity and confidentiality.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Information of the Participants

Table 1: Demographic Information of the Participants

Characteristic	Category	Frequency (F)	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	27	75
	Female	9	25
	Total	36	100
Educational level	Professor	1	2.8
	PhD	11	30.6
	Master's Degree	23	63.9
	Bachelor Degree	1	2.8
	Total	36	100
Working experiences	1-10	15	41.7
	11-20 years	11	30.6
	21-30 years	4	11.1
	31-40 years	5	13.9
	Total	35	97.2
	Missing	1	2.8
	Total	36	100

Source: Field data 2026

Table 1 shows that 27 (75.0%) were male and 9 (25.0%) were female. This implies that the majority of respondents who participated in this study were male. The dominance of male respondents may be due to the staffing composition within higher learning institutions, where male academic and administrative staff may outnumber female staff in some departments. It may also reflect unequal gender representation in leadership and decision-making positions within institutions.

On aspect of level of education, Table 1 shows that among 36 respondents, 22 (61.1%) had Master's Degrees, 12 (33.3%) had PhD qualifications, 1 (2.8%) had a Bachelor Degree and 1 (2.8%) was a professor. This implies that most respondents possessed advanced academic qualifications. The high number of respondents with Master's and PhD qualifications suggests that the participants had adequate academic knowledge, professional competence and experience

relevant to issues of AI plagiarism management in higher education institutions. This may be due to the fact that universities and higher learning institutions often employ highly educated personnel in academic and administrative roles.

Table 1 also shows that 2 (5.6%) had working experience of 21–30 years, 15 (41.7%) had 1–10 years, 11 (30.6%) had 11–20 years, and 7 (19.4%) had 31–40 years. One respondent had missing data. This implies that the majority of respondents had substantial working experience in their institutions. The presence of respondents with many years of service suggests that they were likely to provide reliable views regarding institutional policies, administrative strategies and academic integrity matters. This may be due to long-term staff retention and experience accumulation in higher education institutions.

Table 2: Scale of Interpretation

Mean range	Scale ranking	Response mode	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	4	Strong agree	Very high
2.51-3.25	3	Agree	High
1.76-2.50	2	Disagree	Low
1.00-1.75	1	Strong disagree	Very low

Table 2 shows the scale of interpretation whereby the mean range was calculated by subtracting the lowest value from the highest and dividing by the highest $(4-1)/4 = 0.75$; this value was then deducted from the highest score to establish the mean intervals. The following section presents the administrative strategies for managing AI-assisted students' plagiarism.

4.2 Availability of policies and guidelines

The first objective sought to assess the availability of policies and guidelines for managing students' AI-assisted plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to the availability of institutional policies and guidelines. The responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Availability of Institutional AI practices
N=36(leaders in Departments of programs)

Items	N	SD (%)	D F (%)	A F (%)	SA F (%)	Mean
Availability of AI institutional practice	36	-	8(22.2)	21(58.3)	7(19.4)	2.97
AI practices align with integrity standards.	36	-	10(27.8)	22(61.1)	4(11.1)	2.83
AI practices adapt to emerging challenges.	36		12(33.3)	19(52.8)	5(13.9)	2.81
AI practices distinguish acceptable AI use.	36	2(5.6)	18(50.0)	15(41.7)	1(2.8)	2.42
Availability of AI policies and guidelines.	36	3(8.3)	23(63.9)	10(27.8)	-	2.19
Overall Mean	36					2.6

Source: Field data 2026

4.2.1 Availability of Institutional AI Practice

Table 3 indicates that institutional AI practices are available, with a mean score of 2.97, which falls under the Agree (High) category. This implies that the majority of respondents agreed that institutions have established practices for managing the use of AI tools. This might be happening due to awareness on the technological changes among the lectures where they receive updated knowledge on how artificial intelligence can be integrated in teaching and learning. The interview findings further supported the quantitative results. One respondent stated *"There are guidelines and practical directions being considered for integration into teaching and learning activities"* (AO1, interview 15 April 2026). Similarly, another respondent explained that *"Some guidance is provided at an individual level, particularly in research-related activities also detection tools are used to detect if students plagiarize"* (DA1, Interview, 30 March 2026). In the same vein, the ICT Officer noted

that *"Staff members provide practical guidance to students on acknowledging AI assistance, avoiding direct copy-paste practices and using AI responsibly but also try to redesign assessment to minimize AI dependency"* (TO1, interview, 30 March 2026). The interview findings indicate that although formal AI policies may still be limited, institutions have already developed and are utilizing institutional practices to guide the responsible and ethical use of AI tools in teaching, learning and research activities.

4.2.2 Alignment of AI Practices with Academic Integrity Standards

Table 3 shows a mean score of 2.81 on the aspect of alignment of AI practices with academic integrity standards, which falls under the Agree (High) category. This indicates that institutional practices are generally consistent with and supportive of academic integrity standards. The interview findings further supported this

result. One respondent emphasized the importance of maintaining students' originality in academic work, stating, "Students should remain the original authors of their work and AI should only play a supportive role" (AN7, Interview, 23 April 2026). Respondent further highlighted the importance of guiding students to use AI responsibly. The respondent noted, "*Students are guided to acknowledge AI assistance and avoid direct copy-paste practices*" (TO2, Interview, 23 April 2026). This perspective was echoed by another respondent who emphasized the ethical dimensions of AI use in academic work. The respondent explained that "*Ethical AI use, plagiarism checking and disclosure of AI assistance are already emphasized*" (AN4, Interview, 23 April 2026). The interview responses indicate that institutions promote honesty, originality and the responsible use of AI tools through existing institutional practices aimed at supporting academic integrity standards.

4.2.3 Adaptation of AI Practices to Emerging AI challenges

Also, the aspect of AI practices being relevant to current technologies, a mean of 2.81 as shown in Table 3 falls under Agree (High). This suggests that respondents agreed that institutional practices are aligned with current AI technological developments. This may be influenced by the presence of ICT expertise that monitors emerging AI tools and supports the adaptation of institutional responses. During the interview, one respondent stated that

Since technology changes quickly, the institution continuously improves guidelines through both short-term and long-term revisions. To keep up with technological advancement, institutions must adopt technology and continuously update staff capacity through long-term and short-term training, workshops and continuous professional development. These activities are currently ongoing at the institution (AN9, 30 April, 2026).

These responses indicate that while formal policies may lag behind, institutional practices are evolving at different rates across institutions to keep pace with AI

4.2.4. Acceptable and Unacceptable Use of AI Tools.

The mean score of 2.42 in Table 3 indicates that respondents disagreed that institutional AI practices clearly distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable use of AI tools. The findings reveal that lecturers might encounter difficulty in making decisions on what is accepted and what is not accepted when using AI in academic works. The interview findings further supported the quantitative results. One respondent explained that "*Since there is no official AI policy yet, there is no clear institutional position on how much AI use is acceptable. Instead, lecturers are given the freedom to decide what they consider acceptable in their*

classes (AO1, Interview, 15 April, 2026). Similarly, another respondent noted that;

Discussions have already been conducted to determine what AI use is acceptable and what is unacceptable. A guideline is being prepared to clearly explain proper and improper uses of AI. For now, the situation is still unclear, although both lecturers and students already use AI tools (AO2, interview, 12 April, 2026).

In the same vein, one respondent emphasized the importance of ethical AI use by stating that:

Technology cannot be avoided. Instead, institutions and individuals must adapt and learn how to use AI ethically. Some uses of AI, such as grammar correction, are considered acceptable as long as students acknowledge the assistance. Ethical AI use means students must remain the main creators of their work. AI should only support the learning process rather than replace students' thinking abilities. The future guideline is expected to clearly explain what is acceptable and unacceptable (AN2, Interview, 23 April 2026).

Another respondent also explained that "*There is still no proper guideline explaining how much AI use is acceptable. However, students may use AI for support purposes such as grammar correction or document structuring, not as a replacement for their own intelligence and critical thinking*" (AN7, 30 April, 2026). These findings indicate that although formal institutional clarity regarding acceptable and unacceptable AI use is still limited, some practical guidance is already being provided at departmental and course levels to encourage ethical and responsible use of AI tools.

4.2.5 Availability of official AI policies and practices

Table 3 shows that official AI policies and guidelines are not available, with a mean score of 2.50, which falls under the Disagree (Low) category. This suggests that respondents generally disagreed that institutions have formal and documented AI policies to guide the management of AI-assisted plagiarism.

The interview responses were consistent with the quantitative findings. One respondent stated that:

Currently, there is a policy for managing plagiarism in general, but there is no specific policy related to AI-assisted plagiarism. At the moment, the management of AI use depends largely on individual lecturers. What the institution has done is provide a plagiarism detection tool called Turnitin. The good thing is that these tools have started including features that can detect whether content was generated by AI or not. Therefore, there is still no direct policy explaining how lecturers should handle AI tools use or the acceptable level of AI use.

Some institutions have already introduced limits, for example allowing AI use up to 30%, and they have clear guidelines. However, in this institution they still rely on the normal plagiarism policy together with the detection tool to assist lecturers and students (AO1, interview, 15 April 2026).

These findings indicate that although institutions have established practices and rely on plagiarism detection tools to manage AI-assisted plagiarism, formal institutional AI policy frameworks and clear operational guidelines are still lacking.

Documents reviewed to assess the availability of AI policies and guidelines and findings showed that the selected higher education institutions did not have formal policies or guidelines specifically related to AI use and AI-assisted plagiarism management. Existing documents mainly focused on general academic integrity and plagiarism issues. Although there are ongoing initiatives aimed at developing policies to guide responsible use of AI tools (Document review from HEIA, HEIB and HEIC 31st March, 16th April and 15th April 2026). The overall of 2.6 implying that majority of respondents agreed that AI practices are available in high learning institutions for managing AI related issues.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This part presents discussion of findings concerning the study which aimed to investigate administrative strategies for managing students AI-assisted plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions. The discussion is based on one objective which is; to assess the availability of policies and guidelines for managing students AI-assisted plagiarism in Higher Education Institutions. The findings revealed that formal AI-specific policies and guidelines were limited across the participating Higher Education Institutions. However, the institutions had established various institutional AI practices to manage AI-assisted plagiarism and promote academic integrity. This suggests that management AI-assisted plagiarism is currently operationalized primarily through institutional practices rather than formal AI-specific policy frameworks. Consequently, this section discusses both the availability of formal policies and guidelines and the institutional practices.

4.3.1 Availability of Institutional AI Practices

The findings revealed that higher education institutions have established institutional AI practices for managing the use of AI tools and AI-assisted plagiarism. Interview findings showed that institutions use practices such as presentations, plagiarism detection software, regular training, assessment redesigning and awareness creation to support academic integrity. This finding is consistent with Sarakikya and Kitula (2024), who identified strategies such as face-to-face presentations and plagiarism detection software as important measures for combating AI-assisted plagiarism. The finding is also

supported by Institutional Theory which explains that institutions adopt practices and structures to respond to emerging technological and academic challenges (Scott, 2014). However, the findings further indicate that these practices are still fragmented and inconsistently implemented, suggesting the absence of a fully structured institutional AI governance system. Tanzania National Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence in Education (2025), particularly Section 2.1 on Policy Development and Advocacy, emphasize the need for clear and coordinated institutional AI governance practices. Therefore, higher education institutions should improve the coordination, consistency and implementation of AI practices to strengthen the management of AI-assisted plagiarism and maintain academic integrity.

4.3.2 Alignment with Academic Integrity Standards

The current findings revealed that institutional AI practices for managing students' AI-assisted plagiarism in higher education institutions are highly aligned with academic integrity standards, as institutions promote honesty, originality and responsible use of AI tools through existing academic practices and guidelines. This finding is similar to Marcel and Kang (2024), who explained that universities are increasingly developing AI-related guidelines to support academic integrity in academic writing, although some inconsistencies in implementation still exist. The finding is supported by Institutional Theory, which posits that institutions adopt policies and practices that align with accepted academic norms and standards to maintain legitimacy and credibility (Scott, 2014). Therefore, the alignment of institutional AI practices with academic integrity standards reflects higher education institutions' efforts to promote ethical academic behavior and maintain institutional legitimacy. However, institutions should strengthen the implementation and monitoring of AI practices to ensure consistency and improve the effective management of AI-assisted plagiarism among students.

4.3.3 Adoption to Emerging AI Challenges

The findings revealed that higher education institutions are adapting AI practices to address emerging AI challenges, as respondents agreed that institutional practices are relevant to current technological developments. This finding is consistent with Liu et al. (2025), who found that universities are actively institutionalizing AI within teaching, research, and administrative systems while continuously adapting institutional responses to generative AI developments, although such adaptation is often accompanied by ethical and governance challenges. The finding is supported by Institutional Theory, which posits that institutions adapt their practices in response to technological and environmental changes to maintain legitimacy and remain relevant (Scott, 2014). This is further supported by the Tanzania National Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence in Education (2025), which encourage

institutions to regularly review and update AI policies and promote continuous innovation in AI practices. Therefore, higher education institutions should continue strengthening ICT expertise, regular training, and policy improvement to effectively respond to rapidly changing AI technologies and challenges.

4.3.4 Acceptable and Unacceptable use of AI tools.

The findings revealed that higher education institutions do not clearly distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable use of AI tools, as respondents disagreed that clear institutional guidance exists on proper AI use. This finding is consistent with Liu et al. (2025), who observed that although universities are actively developing AI governance structures, many institutions still struggle with unclear and evolving definitions of ethical and academic use of AI tools. This finding is supported by Institutional Theory, which posits that organizations establish policies and practices in response to institutional pressures, including regulatory requirements, professional norms, and the practices of other organizations. The lack of clear institutional guidance on acceptable and unacceptable AI use indicates that higher education institutions are still in the process of institutionalizing AI governance. Without well-established AI policies and guidelines, institutions are unable to provide consistent standards for ethical AI use, resulting in uncertainty among academic staff and students regarding the appropriate use of AI tools (Scott, 2014). Therefore, higher education institutions should develop and clearly communicate AI usage policies that define acceptable and unacceptable uses of AI tools to strengthen academic integrity and reduce AI-assisted plagiarism among students.

4.3.5 Availability of Official AI Policies and Guidelines

The findings revealed that official AI policies and guidelines for managing AI-assisted plagiarism are not formally available in higher education institutions. This finding is consistent with Matto and Ponera (2025), who found that despite the increasing opportunities and risks associated with AI in education, many higher education institutions had not yet established formal AI policies. The finding is also supported by Institutional Theory which suggests that institutions may delay adopting formal structures and policies when facing new technological changes and uncertainties (Scott, 2014). Therefore, higher education institutions should develop formal and well-documented AI policies to guide the ethical and effective management of AI-assisted plagiarism among students.

In conclusion, the findings indicate that although higher education institutions are making efforts to manage AI-assisted plagiarism, formal AI policies and clear ethical guidelines are still limited. Tanzania National Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence in Education (2025), particularly Section 2.1 on Policy Development and Advocacy and Section 2.2 on Security, Privacy and Ethics, emphasize the importance of developing and implementing clear institutional AI policies and ethical guidelines to ensure responsible and ethical use of AI in education. Therefore, higher education institutions should strengthen the development, implementation, and monitoring of formal AI policies and practices to improve the effective management of AI-assisted plagiarism and maintain academic integrity.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that formal AI-specific policies and guidelines for managing AI-assisted plagiarism remain limited across the participating Higher Education Institutions. However, the institutions have established various institutional AI practices that promote academic integrity and support the management of AI-assisted plagiarism. This indicates that AI-assisted plagiarism is currently managed mainly through institutional practices rather than formal AI-specific policy frameworks. Therefore, there is a need for higher education institutions to develop and implement comprehensive AI-specific policies and guidelines that strengthen and standardize existing institutional practices to ensure the ethical and responsible use of AI tools in academic activities.

5.2 Recommendations of the Study

1. Higher education institution administrators should develop, implement and regularly review comprehensive AI-specific policies and ethical guidelines that build on existing institutional AI practices to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI tools, strengthen academic integrity and effectively manage AI-assisted plagiarism.
2. Future studies should examine the effectiveness of AI-specific policies and institutional AI practices in reducing AI-assisted plagiarism across higher education institutions. Further research may also explore students' and lecturers' perceptions of AI governance and ethical AI use in teaching, learning and assessment.

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