



REVIEW OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION

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ARTICLE

VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY THROUGH THE TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL

Percepções de Estudantes Universitários
Vietnamitas sobre Inteligência Artificial Generativa
no Ensino Superior: Um Estudo Qualitativo à
Luz do Modelo de Aceitação de Tecnologia

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ABSTRACT | Background: Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has diffused rapidly across higher education worldwide, yet empirical evidence from Southeast Asian and Global South contexts remains limited. Vietnamese higher education, characterised by rapid expansion, strong digital-transformation agendas, and examination-oriented assessment cultures, provides a distinctive setting in which to examine student perceptions of GenAI. **Objective:** This study examines Vietnamese university students' perceptions and adoption of GenAI in higher education through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), with particular attention to phenomena that extend beyond classical TAM constructs. **Methods:** An exploratory qualitative design was employed. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted in Vietnamese with 30 university students from diverse academic disciplines (business, engineering, social sciences, design, media, and fine arts). Data were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke (2006), yielding five principal themes and sixteen content codes. **Results:** GenAI has become a near-ubiquitous learning tool among participants, primarily used for information retrieval, document summarisation, presentation preparation, and completion of academic tasks. High perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use facilitated widespread adoption (90% reported daily or weekly use). Substantial concerns were identified regarding over-reliance, technological dependency, inaccuracies in AI-generated content, diminished independent thinking, and challenges to authentic assessment. A distinct pattern of instructor-side AI overuse - lecturers generating teaching materials without sufficient verification - was also documented. Students in creative disciplines expressed particularly strong scepticism towards the uncritical promotion of AI and concerns about its potential impact on future professional prospects. **Conclusion:** Although TAM explains the rapid acceptance of GenAI, it does not fully account for concurrent epistemic distrust, AI fatigue, dependency concerns, and educational-quality anxieties. The findings contribute empirical evidence from a Global South context and demonstrate that GenAI adoption in Vietnamese higher education is



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characterised by a tension between high pragmatic acceptance and pronounced critical reservations. An extended TAM framework incorporating epistemic, pedagogical, and professional dimensions is proposed.

Keywords | Generative Artificial Intelligence; Higher Education; Technology Acceptance Model; Student Perceptions; Vietnam; Qualitative Research; Academic Integrity; AI overuse; Extended TAM

RESUMO | Contexto: A inteligência artificial generativa (IAGen) difundiu-se rapidamente no ensino superior em todo o mundo, embora ainda sejam limitadas as evidências empíricas provenientes do Sudeste Asiático e de contextos do Sul Global. O ensino superior vietnamita, marcado por rápida expansão, fortes políticas de transformação digital e uma cultura avaliativa fortemente orientada a exames, constitui um contexto singular para a análise das percepções dos estudantes sobre a IAGen. **Objetivo:** Este estudo analisa as percepções e a adoção da inteligência artificial generativa por estudantes universitários vietnamitas com base no Modelo de Aceitação de Tecnologia (TAM), com atenção especial a fenômenos que ultrapassam os construtos clássicos do modelo. **Métodos:** Adotou-se um delineamento qualitativo exploratório. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas em profundidade, em língua vietnamita, com 30 estudantes universitários de diferentes áreas do conhecimento, incluindo negócios, engenharia, ciências sociais, design, mídia e belas-artes. Os dados foram analisados tematicamente com base em Braun e Clarke (2006), resultando em cinco temas principais e dezesseis códigos de conteúdo. **Resultados:** A IAGen tornou-se uma ferramenta de aprendizagem quase onipresente entre os participantes, sendo utilizada principalmente para busca de informações, síntese de documentos, preparação de apresentações e realização de atividades acadêmicas. A elevada utilidade percebida e a facilidade de uso favoreceram sua ampla adoção, sendo que 90% dos participantes relataram uso diário ou semanal. Entretanto, foram identificadas preocupações significativas relacionadas à dependência excessiva, à dependência tecnológica, às imprecisões em conteúdos gerados por IA, à redução do pensamento independente e aos desafios impostos à avaliação autêntica. Também foi observado um padrão específico de uso excessivo de IA por parte de docentes, especialmente na produção de materiais didáticos sem verificação suficiente. Estudantes de áreas criativas demonstraram maior ceticismo em relação à promoção acrítica da IA e expressaram preocupações quanto aos possíveis impactos sobre suas perspectivas profissionais futuras. **Conclusão:** Embora o TAM explique adequadamente a rápida aceitação da IAGen, o modelo não contempla integralmente fenômenos simultâneos como desconfiança epistêmica, fadiga em relação à IA, preocupações com dependência e inquietações sobre a qualidade educacional. Os achados oferecem evidências empíricas oriundas de um contexto do Sul Global e demonstram que a adoção da IAGen no ensino superior vietnamita é caracterizada por uma tensão entre elevada aceitação pragmática e expressivas reservas críticas. Com base nesses resultados, propõe-se uma versão ampliada do TAM, incorporando dimensões epistêmicas, pedagógicas e profissionais.

Palavras-chave | Inteligência Artificial Generativa; Ensino Superior; Modelo de Aceitação de Tecnologia; Percepções dos Estudantes; Vietnã; Pesquisa Qualitativa; Integridade Acadêmica; Uso Excessivo de IA; TAM Ampliado.

1. INTRODUCTION

The public release of ChatGPT in late 2022 marked the beginning of one of the most rapid technological transformations in the history of higher education. Within a remarkably short period, generative artificial intelligence tools - including ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, Microsoft Copilot, and a growing array of specialised applications - have moved from experimental novelty to routine academic practice for millions of students and instructors worldwide. Large-scale international surveys document a clear transition from tentative experimentation to habitual use (Freeman, 2024, 2025; Newell & Dahlenburg, 2024; Sublime & Renna, 2024).

Nevertheless, the rapid diffusion of AI has intensified debates concerning academic integrity, cognitive dependency, assessment validity, and the quality of teaching materials. While Technology



Acceptance Model (TAM) constructs of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have been widely invoked to explain adoption (Davis, 1989; Chan & Hu, 2023; Sallam, 2023), emerging qualitative evidence suggests that acceptance of AI coexists with substantial reservations that classical TAM does not fully theorise.

Empirical studies focusing on students in Southeast Asia, and Vietnam in particular, remain comparatively scarce. Vietnam's higher education system is characterised by rapid expansion, strong governmental emphasis on digital transformation and artificial intelligence as national priorities (Decision No. 127/QĐ-TTg, 2021; Decision No. 1671/QĐ-TTg, 2026), high smartphone penetration among youth, and a cultural emphasis on academic achievement and examination performance (Pham & Bui, 2019; Tran et al., 2014). These contextual features may shape distinctive patterns of AI appropriation that differ from those observed in high-income countries.

The present study therefore examines Vietnamese university students' lived experiences and perceptions of generative AI through a qualitative application of TAM. It seeks to understand not only why AI is so readily accepted, but also how students evaluate its educational consequences, what forms of overuse they observe (including on the instructor side), and how their attitudes compare with findings from the international literature. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

- *RQ1: How do Vietnamese university students perceive the usefulness and ease of use of generative AI in their academic work?*
- *RQ2: What patterns of GenAI use - supportive and substitutive - characterise students' learning practices?*
- *RQ3: How do students evaluate instructor-side AI use and its implications for teaching quality?*
- *RQ4: What concerns beyond classical TAM constructs (e.g., epistemic distrust, dependency, AI fatigue, professional threat) emerge from students' accounts?*

By providing detailed empirical evidence from a Vietnamese higher education context, the study contributes to a more globally inclusive understanding of GenAI adoption and its pedagogical implications. The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 reviews the international literature on GenAI adoption, academic integrity, faculty use, and TAM applications. Section 3 details the methodology. Section 4 presents the thematic findings. Section 5 discusses the results in relation to TAM and proposes an extended conceptual framework. Sections 6 and 7 present limitations and directions for future research, followed by the conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 International Patterns of GenAI Adoption in Higher Education

International evidence documents rapid and widespread student adoption of generative AI. In the United Kingdom, the Higher Education Policy Institute reported that 53% of undergraduate students used generative AI to support assessment preparation in 2024; by 2025 this figure had risen dramatically, with 92% of students reporting some form of AI use and 88% having employed GenAI



for assessments (Freeman, 2024, 2025). A YouGov survey of more than 1,000 UK undergraduates found that 66% had used AI for learning activities, with one-third doing so at least weekly (YouGov, 2024). Parallel patterns appear across other national contexts. Approximately one-third of Australian university students reported regular use of generative AI, and 53% had specifically employed ChatGPT (Newell & Dahlenburg, 2024). Multi-country European surveys likewise indicate that the majority of students have engaged with at least one AI tool during their studies (Sublime & Renna, 2024). In East Asia, studies from China and other jurisdictions similarly document high rates of adoption, accompanied by both enthusiasm and concern (Chan & Hu, 2023).

Students deploy AI for a wide spectrum of purposes that extend well beyond mere content generation. The most frequently cited applications include clarifying difficult concepts, information searching, document summarisation, academic writing support, translation, programming assistance, outline construction, and idea generation. In the UK, 81% of students reported using AI to explain complex material and 69% used it for summarising learning materials (YouGov, 2024). These patterns suggest that AI is increasingly perceived as a cognitive scaffold rather than solely a text-production device.

2.2 Academic Integrity and the Spectrum of AI Use

The rapid diffusion of AI has intensified debates concerning academic integrity. Stojanov et al. (2024), analysing 490 university students, identified approximately 23.1% as "Assignment Delegators" - individuals who regularly rely on ChatGPT to draft assignments and academic writing. UK data similarly indicate that around 20% of students have used AI to generate portions of assignments and 17% have used it to produce nearly complete submissions (YouGov, 2024). Importantly, recent scholarship emphasises that such misuse does not characterise the majority of learners; most students employ AI as a supportive rather than substitutive tool (Freeman, 2024; Machebe et al., 2026). Yet the boundary between legitimate assistance and academic misconduct remains contested and context-dependent (Cotton et al., 2024; Rudolph et al., 2023).

2.3 Faculty Adoption of Generative AI

Instructors, too, are progressively integrating AI into professional practice - for lecture preparation, learning-resource design, question-bank development, research support, and administrative tasks (Chukwuere, 2024). Adoption among faculty, however, typically lags behind that of students, reflecting differences in digital fluency, perceived need, and risk appraisal (Wiley, 2024). Comparative international evidence on the quality of AI-generated teaching materials remains limited, and the possibility of instructor-side overuse has received comparatively little scholarly attention relative to student behaviour. OECD TALIS data indicate that Vietnamese teachers rank among the higher users of AI for lesson preparation globally (approximately 64% reported using AI in teaching-related tasks), yet many still report insufficient training and infrastructure (OECD, 2025, as cited in Vietnamese education press reports).



2.4 The Technology Acceptance Model and Its Application to GenAI

To explain the swift diffusion of AI in higher education, numerous studies have drawn upon the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) originally proposed by Davis (1989). TAM remains one of the most widely applied theoretical frameworks for understanding technology adoption behaviour. According to the model, behavioural intention and actual system use are primarily determined by two core constructs: perceived usefulness (the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance performance) and perceived ease of use (the degree to which a person believes that using the system would be free of effort). In the GenAI context, perceived usefulness manifests as the belief that AI accelerates task completion, improves the quality of academic work, or enhances teaching and research efficiency. International evidence consistently identifies this construct as the strongest predictor of AI adoption among both students and instructors (Chan & Hu, 2023; Sallam, 2023). Perceived ease of use, facilitated by natural-language interfaces that require minimal technical expertise, substantially lowers entry barriers and further accelerates diffusion.

Despite the explanatory power of TAM, emerging qualitative evidence suggests that acceptance of AI coexists with substantial reservations concerning educational quality, cognitive dependency, and the integrity of assessment. Classical TAM does not explicitly incorporate constructs such as epistemic distrust, AI fatigue, dependency concerns, or appraisal of educational impact. These "beyond-TAM" phenomena form a central focus of the present study.

2.5 GenAI Adoption and Perceptions among Vietnamese University Students

A growing body of empirical research conducted in Vietnam confirms that generative AI has rapidly become embedded in student learning practices, while simultaneously revealing tensions around academic integrity, dependency, and critical literacy. Large-scale surveys consistently report very high prevalence of use. A study published in the State Management Review found that 98.9% of surveyed Vietnamese students had used AI for learning or entertainment purposes, with ChatGPT by far the most frequently used tool (96.9%), followed by Gemini (66.4%) and translation AIs (52.7%) (State Management Review, 2025). Decision Lab (2025) data similarly indicate that approximately 86% of young people aged 18 - 24 in major cities had used AI, with 40% reporting daily use. At Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCM), a survey of 584 students across six member universities showed that students primarily used ChatGPT for information retrieval and document consultation (mean= 3.89 on a Likert scale) and for translation and explanation of terminology, while their ability to verify the accuracy of AI-generated information remained relatively low (mean= 2.85) (Đặng et al., 2024).

Studies applying or extending TAM in the Vietnamese context reinforce the centrality of perceived usefulness and ease of use, while also identifying additional predictors. Maheshwari (2024), in one of the earlier empirical enquiries into ChatGPT adoption in Vietnam (n= 108 students from public and private universities), found that perceived ease of use, usefulness, personalisation, and interactivity significantly shaped attitudes and behavioural intentions, whereas perceived trust



and perceived intelligence did not. Truong (2025), analysing data from 3,550 students at Phenikaa University with an extended TAM that included mobility and convenience, reported strong positive effects of perceived usefulness, mobility, and convenience on intention to use ChatGPT, while perceived ease of use showed a small negative coefficient. An integrated TAM - UTAUT study of 418 undergraduates from public universities found that performance expectancy, social influence, perceived enjoyment, effort expectancy, and facilitating conditions significantly predicted behavioural intention toward GenAI tools (Phan, 2026). Vo and Nguyen (2024), focusing on English-major students in central Vietnam ($n = 369$), reported high perceived ease of use and generally positive attitudes, but more neutral ratings of usefulness, and recommended careful pedagogical monitoring. Nguyen Ngoc Quynh Anh (2025), using SEM on 664 Hanoi students, confirmed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and prior frequency of ChatGPT use significantly predicted behavioural intention, while demographic variables and perceived risk did not.

Beyond adoption intention, Vietnamese studies have begun to examine dependency, academic integrity, and effects on thinking skills. Research at Tây Bắc University documented both the supportive role of ChatGPT in learning and the risk of diminished critical and creative thinking when the tool is overused (Nguyễn Thanh Thủy, 2025). A large survey at Hanoi Open University ($n > 2,500$) linked academic pressure to stronger intention and actual use of AI, which in turn elevated the risk of academic-integrity violations; ethical awareness partially moderated these pathways (ResearchGate, 2025). At Tan Trao University, a survey of 906 students found frequent use for information retrieval, assignment completion, and language practice, yet many students reported difficulty formulating effective prompts and evaluating source reliability, and lacked formal pedagogical guidance (Đoàn Thị Cúc, 2025). Qualitative and mixed observations from industrial and pedagogical universities similarly note that while students value speed and convenience, a substantial minority still treat AI-generated text as ready-to-submit work and struggle to draw clear boundaries between legitimate assistance and academic misconduct (Trần et al., 2025; various institutional reports).

Taken together, the Vietnamese evidence base shows (a) near-ubiquitous pragmatic adoption driven by usefulness and ease of use, (b) relatively weak verification skills and uneven critical literacy, (c) emerging concerns about dependency and integrity that parallel international findings, and (d) a still-limited body of qualitative work that captures lived experience, instructor-side practices, and disciplinary variation - particularly in creative fields. The present study addresses these gaps by providing an in-depth qualitative account grounded in TAM yet open to phenomena that classical TAM does not fully theorise.

2.6 The Vietnamese Higher Education Context

Vietnamese higher education is marked by rapid expansion in enrolment, relatively large class sizes (commonly 100 - 200 students in many institutions; Nguyen et al., 2023), and assessment regimes that remain heavily weighted toward written products, midterm assignments, and high-stakes final examinations (Tran et al., 2014; Pham & Bui, 2019). Formative feedback opportunities are often limited by teaching loads and class sizes, reducing the visibility of individual learning



processes. At the same time, national policy has strongly promoted digital transformation and artificial intelligence. The National Strategy on Research, Development, and Application of Artificial Intelligence to 2030 (Decision No. 127/QĐ-TTg, 2021) and subsequent instruments, including Decision No. 1671/QĐ-TTg (2026) approving the National AI Strategy to 2030, position AI as a strategic national priority. Recent Ministry of Education and Training regulations further mandate digital and AI-related competencies as learning outcomes for university graduates (Circular No. 54/2026/TT-BGDĐT). These contextual features - examination orientation, large classes, evolving institutional AI policies, and intensive promotional discourse - may shape distinctive patterns of both student and instructor AI appropriation and help explain why high pragmatic acceptance can coexist with pronounced critical reservations.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted an exploratory qualitative design to investigate Vietnamese university students' experiences and perceptions of generative artificial intelligence in higher education. A qualitative approach was selected because the phenomenon under examination - how AI is perceived, appropriated, and evaluated in authentic academic settings - remains emergent, context-dependent, and insufficiently theorised in non-Western settings. Thematic analysis provided a flexible yet rigorous method for identifying patterned meanings across participants' accounts while remaining open to phenomena that fall outside the original scope of TAM.

3.2 Participants and Sampling

Participants comprised university students drawn from multiple academic disciplines at higher education institutions in Vietnam. A combination of purposive and convenience sampling was employed to ensure diversity across fields of study (including business, engineering, social sciences, design, media, and fine arts) and year levels. The planned sample size ranged from 20 to 30 students, or until thematic saturation was achieved. Data collection continued until no substantially new codes or themes emerged, consistent with established qualitative standards (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The final analytical sample comprised 30 students. This sample size is consistent with the percentage figures reported in the results tables and enabled comparison between technical, social-science, and creative fields.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through individual semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted in Vietnamese. An interview guide was developed on the basis of the core constructs of TAM (perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use) while remaining deliberately open to emergent topics. Key domains included: frequency and tools of AI use; purposes of use in learning and academic work;



perceptions of usefulness and ease of use; perceived benefits, limitations, and risks; observations of AI use by instructors; views on academic integrity, assessment validity, and the broader educational consequences of AI. Interviews lasted between 40 and 70 minutes, were audio-recorded with participants' informed consent, and were subsequently transcribed verbatim. Pseudonyms were assigned to protect confidentiality.

3.4 Data Analysis

Transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis following the iterative procedures of familiarisation, open coding, axial coding, theme development, and refinement (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes were constantly compared with the theoretical constructs of TAM while remaining attentive to phenomena that fell outside the model's original scope - particularly risk perception, trust, dependency concerns, and educational impact. The analysis yielded five principal themes and sixteen content codes that capture the complexity of participants' experiences. Coding reliability was enhanced through iterative review and discussion of emerging themes. Representative quotations were selected to illustrate each theme and were translated into English with careful attention to semantic fidelity.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary. Participants retained the right to decline any question or withdraw at any time without consequence. Personal identifiers were removed from transcripts, and all data were used solely for research purposes. The study adhered to institutional ethical guidelines for research involving human participants.

4. RESULTS

Thematic analysis generated five overarching themes and sixteen associated content codes (Table 1). These themes collectively illuminate both the enthusiastic adoption of generative AI among Vietnamese university students and the concurrent anxieties surrounding its educational consequences. Figure 1 provides a thematic map of the five themes, their constituent codes, and the central paradox of pragmatic acceptance coexisting with epistemic distrust.

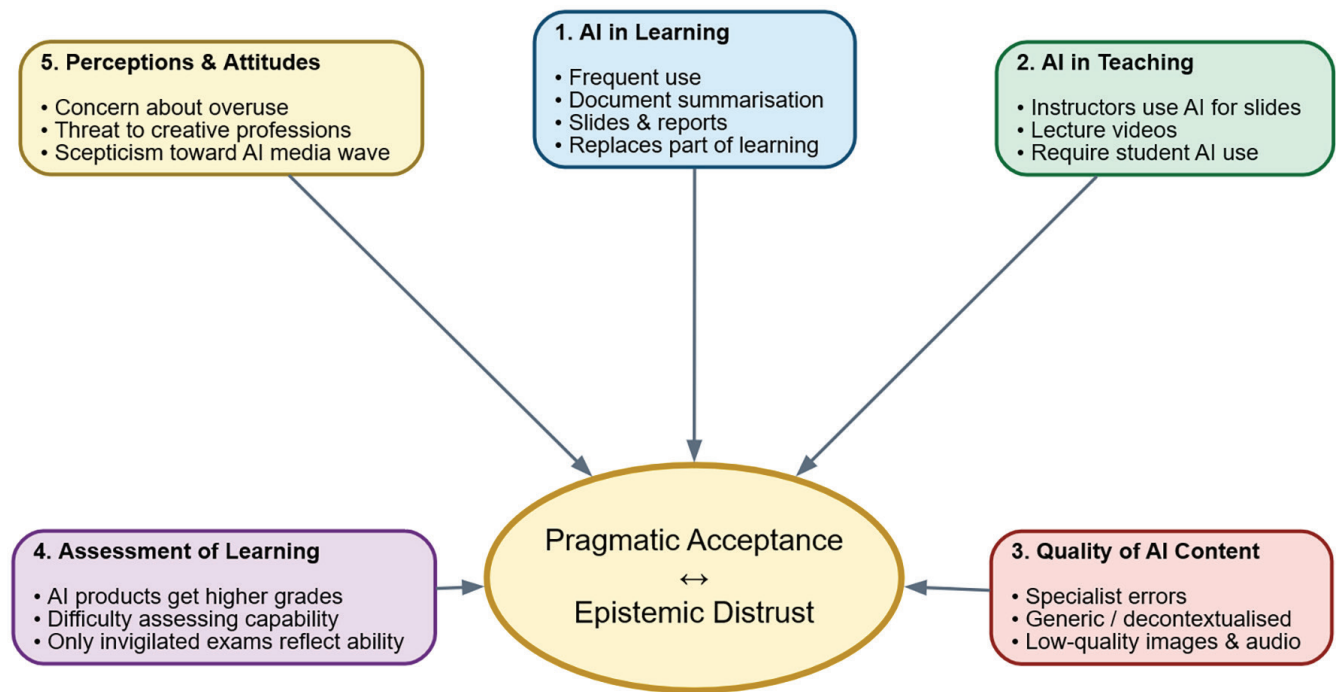


Figure 1. Thematic map of student perceptions of GenAI in Vietnamese higher education

Table 1. Results of Interview Data Coding (N= 30)

Theme	Content Code	Mentions
AI in learning	AI is used frequently	28
	AI supports document summarisation	25
	AI supports slides and reports	22
	AI replaces part of the learning process	19
AI in teaching	Instructors use AI for slides	18
	Instructors use AI to create lecture videos	11
	Instructors require students to use AI	15
Quality of AI content	AI content contains specialist errors	21
	AI produces generic, decontextualised content	24
	AI-generated images and audio of low quality	13
Assessment of learning	AI products receive higher grades than self-produced work	17
	Difficulty in assessing genuine student capability	20
	Only invigilated examinations reflect true ability	14
Perceptions and attitudes	Concern about AI overuse in education	23
	Concern that AI threatens creative professions	16
	Scepticism toward the AI media wave	19

Note. Mentions refer to the number of interview excerpts coded under each content code across the 30 participants.



4.1 AI as a Ubiquitous Learning Tool

Generative AI has become a near-default instrument in Vietnamese students' academic routines. The great majority of participants reported frequent - often daily or weekly - use for summarising readings, preparing presentations, constructing outlines, and completing course assignments. One student observed: "Almost the entire class uses AI. From reading materials and making slides to preparing presentations - AI is involved in everything." This testimony illustrates that AI has moved beyond experimental status into everyday learning practice within Vietnamese higher education.

Participants described AI as particularly valuable for overcoming language barriers when engaging with English-language academic literature, a common challenge in Vietnamese universities where many key readings remain in English. AI-assisted translation and summarisation were frequently cited as enabling faster comprehension of complex material. In addition, students in technical disciplines valued AI for code generation and debugging, while those in business and social sciences emphasised its utility for structuring essays and generating initial ideas.

Table 2. Key Findings Concerning AI Use in Learning (N= 30)

Finding	% of participants
AI used daily or weekly	90.0
AI used for document summarisation	83.3
AI used for slides or assignments	73.3
AI reduces necessary study time	76.7
AI replaces part of cognitive activity	63.3
Only invigilated examinations compel genuine study	46.7

4.2 From Support to Substitution

At the same time, interview data reveal a progressive shift from supportive to substitutive use. Many students acknowledged that current academic products are largely AI-generated, with the learner's role reduced to editing, formatting, and presentation. Several participants characterised the classroom as an environment increasingly defined by competition over AI-exploitation skills rather than by intellectual engagement. One student remarked that "the one who knows how to prompt better gets the higher grade," encapsulating a perception that technical proficiency with AI tools is beginning to displace traditional academic effort as the primary determinant of success.

Approximately 63% of participants (19 of 30) explicitly recognised that AI was replacing part of the cognitive work previously performed by students themselves - reading primary sources, synthesising arguments, and constructing original analyses. This substitution was often framed not as deliberate misconduct but as a pragmatic response to heavy workloads, tight deadlines, and the perceived inefficiency of traditional study methods.



4.3 Instructor-Side AI Use and Quality Concerns

A particularly salient and relatively under-discussed theme concerns the use of AI by instructors. Students frequently reported that lecturers employ AI to generate slides, learning materials, and lecture videos without adequate verification. The most commonly noted defects include inaccurate specialist terminology, unverifiable information, distorted images, and font or formatting errors. One student remarked: "There are lectures in which I spotted AI mistranslating technical terms, yet the materials were still used in class."

Moreover, some participants perceived instructor-mandated AI use as formalistic rather than pedagogically purposeful. Certain lecturers required students to generate images or content with AI even when specialised software would have produced superior results. This pattern of instructor-side overuse has received comparatively little attention in the international literature, which has predominantly focused on student behaviour. The Vietnamese data suggest that the problem of uncritical AI adoption is not confined to learners.

Table 3. Participants' Perceptions of AI's Impact (N= 30)

Perception	% mentioning
AI saves time	86.7
AI increases learning productivity	73.3
AI generates substantial inaccurate information	70.0
AI diminishes independent thinking	66.7
AI is overused in education	76.7
AI is over-promoted by media and institutions	63.3

4.4 Assessment Under Pressure

Assessment practices are also undergoing strain. Several students reported that products generated rapidly by AI sometimes received higher marks than work into which they had invested substantial personal effort. One participant stated: "Once I spent many days on an assignment only to receive a lower grade than a paper produced by AI in a few minutes." Consequently, many students advocated greater reliance on invigilated examinations, oral assessments, and process-oriented evaluation. Nearly half of participants (46.7%; 14 of 30) explicitly stated that only invigilated examinations still compelled genuine study.

This finding points to a growing legitimacy crisis for product-based assessment in Vietnamese higher education. When AI can produce polished essays, slides, and reports with minimal human input, the discriminatory power of traditional assignment formats diminishes. Students' accounts suggest that the incentive structure of assessment is being distorted: effort and originality are no longer reliably rewarded, while sophisticated prompting and light editing of AI output are increasingly effective.



4.5 Scepticism, AI Fatigue, and Disciplinary Variation

Finally, a distinct strand of scepticism – particularly pronounced among students in creative fields such as graphic design, media, and fine arts – emerged. These participants viewed AI simultaneously as a useful tool and as a potential threat to the future value of traditional creative skills and employment prospects. They also expressed fatigue with what they perceived as exaggerated promotional discourse surrounding AI in both media and institutional settings. One design student observed that “everyone is talking about AI as if it will solve everything, but in our field it is already replacing the work we are training for.”

Approximately 63% of participants (19 of 30) characterised the public and institutional discourse around AI as over-promotional. This “AI fatigue” coexists with continued pragmatic use: students continue to employ AI because it is useful and easy, yet they do not fully trust its outputs or endorse the broader educational narrative that accompanies its promotion. The data thus reveal a striking paradox: high ratings on the two core TAM constructs coexist with deep reservations about AI's broader educational consequences.

Table 4. Mapping of Findings onto the Technology Acceptance Model

TAM Component	Manifestation in Interview Data
Perceived Usefulness	AI saves time, reduces workload, supports learning and teaching, helps overcome language barriers
Perceived Ease of Use	AI is accessible, easy to operate, requires minimal technical skill, natural-language interaction
Usage Behaviour	AI is used frequently (daily/weekly) in both learning and teaching contexts
Outcomes beyond TAM	Concerns about dependency, diminished thinking, knowledge distortion, assessment inadequacies, instructor-side overuse, AI fatigue

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Rapid Adoption and the Explanatory Power of TAM

The findings confirm that generative AI has become a pervasive instrument in contemporary Vietnamese higher education practice. Consistent with international surveys conducted in the United Kingdom (Freeman, 2024, 2025), Australia (Newell & Dahlenburg, 2024), and Europe (Sublime & Renna, 2024), Vietnamese participants reported routine use of AI for information retrieval, summarisation, presentation preparation, and task completion. The reported frequency – 90% using AI daily or weekly – places Vietnamese students at the high end of international adoption ranges, comparable to the most recent UK figures (Freeman, 2025).

From the standpoint of the Technology Acceptance Model, both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use emerge with striking clarity. Participants valued AI's capacity to save time, reduce cognitive load, facilitate complex information processing, and – distinctively in the Vietnamese context – help overcome English-language barriers when engaging with international academic literature. These findings corroborate prior TAM-based studies identifying usefulness as the dominant predictor of AI adoption intention (Chan & Hu, 2023; Sallam, 2023). Natural-language



interaction further lowers the barrier to entry, reinforcing ease-of-use perceptions. In this respect, the Vietnamese data align closely with the international literature: the classic TAM constructs retain strong explanatory power for the rapid diffusion of GenAI.

However, the intensity of concurrent reservations distinguishes the present findings from much of the earlier, more optimistic literature. While studies such as those by Kasneci et al. (2023) and Tlili et al. (2023) have emphasised the transformative potential of large language models, Vietnamese students in this sample expressed pronounced concern about overuse, dependency, and the erosion of independent thought. AI is adopted not because users regard it as invariably accurate, but because it delivers immediate pragmatic advantages. This pragmatic acceptance coexists with epistemic distrust – a configuration that classical TAM does not fully theorise.

5.2 Substitution of Cognitive Labour

A particularly consequential finding is the progressive substitution of AI for core learning activities. Approximately 63% of participants explicitly recognised this substitutive dynamic. These observations resonate strongly with warnings issued by Cotton et al. (2024) and Rudolph et al. (2023) concerning the potential degradation of critical-thinking capacities when generative tools are used primarily as answer generators rather than as learning aids. What appears distinctive in the Vietnamese data is the explicit framing of AI proficiency as a competitive academic skill: “the one who knows how to prompt better gets the higher grade.” This perception suggests that the incentive structure of assessment is being reconfigured, a dynamic that may be amplified by cultural emphasis on examination performance and by relatively high student-to-staff ratios (Nguyen et al., 2023).

5.3 Instructor-Side AI Overuse: An Under-Examined Phenomenon

Equally noteworthy – and relatively novel in the international literature – is evidence of AI overuse on the instructional side. Students frequently reported that lecturers generate teaching materials with AI without sufficient verification, thereby circulating specialist inaccuracies, generic content, and low-quality media. This “instructor-side overuse” has received comparatively little scholarly attention; most integrity discussions focus on student behaviour (Cotton et al., 2024; Freeman, 2024, 2025). The Vietnamese data indicate that the problem of uncritical AI adoption is not confined to learners. When instructors themselves deploy AI uncritically, they model a form of technological practice that students may interpret as legitimising similar shortcuts. In the Vietnamese context, where many instructors face heavy teaching loads and limited access to professional development in digital pedagogy, the temptation to rely on AI for material preparation may be particularly strong.



5.4 Assessment Crisis and the Erosion of Product-Based Evaluation

Assessment practices face acute pressure. When AI can produce polished essays, slides, and reports with minimal human input, product-based evaluation loses discriminatory power. Students' reports that AI-generated work sometimes outscores carefully crafted human work corroborate Bearman and Ajjawi's (2023) argument that GenAI undermines traditional product-oriented assessment. Nearly half of participants explicitly stated that only invigilated examinations still compelled genuine study – a finding that aligns with international discussions about the need to redesign assessment regimes in the age of generative AI (Rudolph et al., 2023). In a higher education system that has historically placed heavy emphasis on high-stakes examinations and written assignments (Tran et al., 2014; Pham & Bui, 2019), the sudden availability of high-quality generative tools creates a structural mismatch between traditional assessment instruments and the new technological environment.

5.5 Disciplinary Variation and Threats to Creative Professions

Students in creative disciplines articulated a distinctive form of ambivalence. Whereas students in technical or business fields often framed AI as a productivity enhancer, those in design, media, and fine arts perceived it as both instrument and occupational threat. This disciplinary variation echoes broader international analyses of AI's impact on creative industries. What may be particularly acute in the Vietnamese context is the combination of rapid AI diffusion with a higher education system that is still consolidating specialised creative programmes. This finding suggests that disciplinary location is an important moderator of AI perceptions – a nuance that purely quantitative TAM studies, which often treat student populations as homogeneous, may overlook.

5.6 AI Fatigue and the Limits of Promotional Discourse

Perhaps the most culturally resonant observation is the emergence of what may be termed "AI fatigue." Approximately 63% of participants felt that media, institutions, and promotional discourse overstate AI's capabilities relative to its actual educational value. In the Vietnamese context, AI fatigue may be amplified by the intensity of official digital-transformation and AI strategy discourse (Decision No. 127/QĐ-TTg, 2021; Decision No. 1671/QĐ-TTg, 2026; Circular No. 54/2026/TT-BGDĐT). When students encounter inaccurate outputs, generic content, and assessment inequities in daily practice, the dissonance with promotional narratives can generate cynicism. Similar dynamics have been observed in other rapidly digitalising education systems, but the Vietnamese data provide particularly clear qualitative evidence of this tension.

5.7 Extending TAM for the GenAI Era: A Proposed Conceptual Framework

These findings collectively suggest the need to extend TAM when applied to generative AI in education. The classic constructs of usefulness and ease of use explain rapid diffusion, yet they

leave unaccounted the concurrent phenomena of risk perception, trust calibration, dependency concerns, educational impact appraisal, instructor-side dynamics, and AI fatigue. Figure 2 presents a proposed Extended TAM for GenAI in Education that integrates classical TAM constructs with the additional dimensions identified in this study.

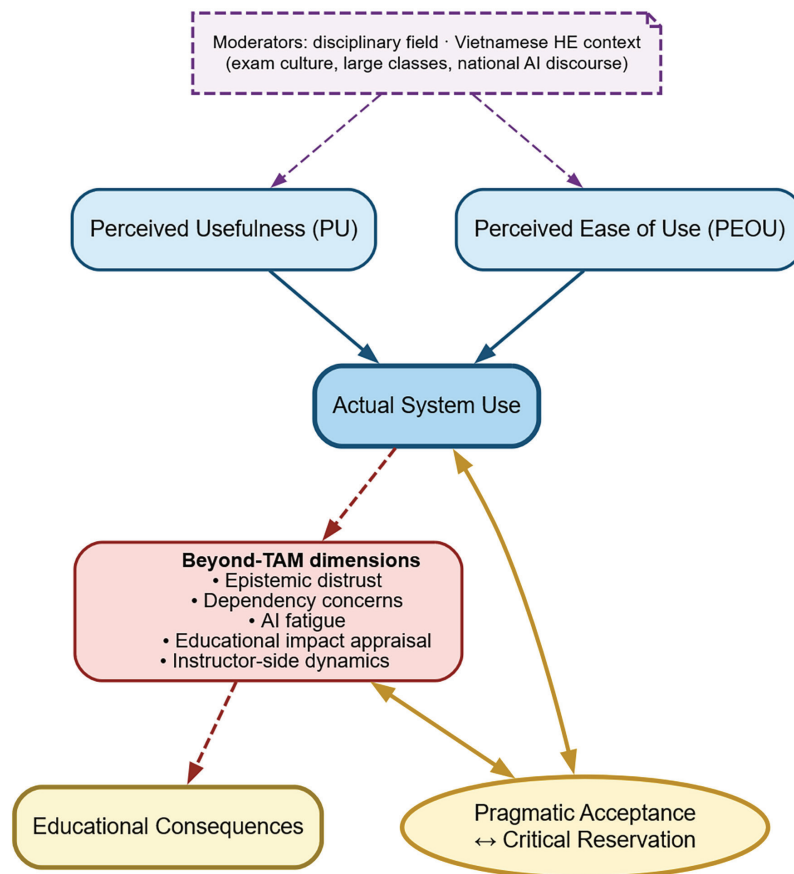


Figure 2. Extended TAM for GenAI in Education

This framework transforms the paper's theoretical contribution from a set of Discussion observations into a reusable, testable model. Future quantitative and mixed-methods research can operationalise the additional constructs (e.g., multi-item scales for epistemic distrust, AI fatigue, dependency, educational impact appraisal, and perceived instructor-side overuse) and test their relationships with classical TAM variables and with learning outcomes.

5.8 AI Overuse in the Vietnamese Higher Education Context

The pattern of AI overuse documented in this study must be understood against the specific institutional and cultural backdrop of Vietnamese higher education. Several contextual factors appear to facilitate substitutive rather than supportive use. First, assessment regimes remain heavily weighted toward written products and final examinations (Tran et al., 2014; Pham & Bui, 2019),



creating strong incentives to maximise output quality with minimal time investment. Second, large class sizes and limited opportunities for formative feedback reduce the visibility of individual learning processes (Nguyen et al., 2023). Third, the relative novelty of GenAI means that clear institutional policies on acceptable use are still evolving; in the absence of explicit guidelines, students and instructors develop informal norms that may tolerate or even reward extensive AI reliance. At the same time, Vietnamese students are not passive victims of technological determinism. Their accounts reveal a sophisticated, if conflicted, awareness of the trade-offs involved, suggesting that educational interventions aimed at fostering critical AI literacy may find fertile ground.

6. LIMITATIONS

Several limitations must be acknowledged. As a qualitative study with a modest sample of 30 participants, the findings reflect the experiences of the particular students interviewed and cannot claim statistical generalisability to all Vietnamese university students. Interview data may be subject to recall bias and selection effects. Reliance on self-report means that actual AI-use behaviours were not directly observed or logged; social desirability bias may have led some participants to under- or over-state the extent of substitutive use when discussing practices with a researcher. The study did not incorporate institutional policy documents or observational data on classroom practice as complementary sources. The single-country design limits cross-cultural transferability, although the Vietnamese case is theoretically informative for other Global South and rapidly digitalising higher education systems. Finally, the cross-sectional design captures attitudes at one point in time and cannot trace trajectories of AI use or attitude change over the course of a degree programme.

7. FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research would benefit from several concrete designs. First, mixed-methods studies that combine surveys with logged AI interaction data (e.g., prompt histories, time-on-tool metrics) could triangulate self-report with behavioural evidence and reduce social-desirability bias. Second, comparative qualitative or mixed-methods studies across Southeast Asian countries would clarify which patterns of dual (student and instructor) overuse are shared regionally and which are shaped by national policy and institutional cultures. Third, longitudinal designs tracking cohorts of students across academic years would illuminate trajectories of dependency, fatigue, and critical literacy. Fourth, instructor-focused qualitative studies are needed to examine faculty motivations for AI use in material preparation, verification practices, and perceptions of pedagogical responsibility. Fifth, quantitative validation of the proposed Extended TAM for GenAI in Education - developing and testing multi-item scales for epistemic distrust, AI fatigue, dependency, educational impact appraisal, and instructor-side dynamics - would enable larger-scale hypothesis testing and cross-context comparison. Finally, intervention studies evaluating the effects of critical AI literacy curricula on the balance between supportive and substitutive use would provide actionable evidence for institutional policy.



8. CONCLUSION

This study has examined Vietnamese university students' perceptions of generative artificial intelligence through the lens of the Technology Acceptance Model. The findings demonstrate that GenAI has become a routine component of university learning and teaching in Vietnam. Students employ AI extensively for information seeking, summarisation, presentation design, and task completion. Consistent with TAM, high levels of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use account for this widespread acceptance and frequent use. Distinctively, Vietnamese students also valued AI's capacity to bridge English-language barriers in academic work.

Simultaneously, participants voiced substantial concerns about overuse, technological dependency, content inaccuracy, compromised assessment validity, and the possible erosion of independent thinking. A notable pattern of instructor-side AI overuse was identified, whereby lecturers generate teaching materials with insufficient verification. Acceptance of AI, therefore, does not imply unreserved endorsement of its educational role. Scepticism - especially pronounced among students in creative fields - and a form of AI fatigue coexist with pragmatic utilisation.

The study contributes to the international literature in several ways. First, it provides detailed qualitative evidence from a Vietnamese higher education context, thereby enriching a body of research that has been dominated by Western and East Asian samples. Second, it documents instructor-side AI overuse as a significant and under-examined phenomenon. Third, it highlights the limits of classical TAM in accounting for the ambivalence, risk perception, and educational-impact concerns that accompany rapid GenAI adoption, and proposes an Extended TAM for GenAI in Education that integrates these dimensions. Fourth, it illustrates how contextual features of Vietnamese higher education - assessment regimes, class sizes, evolving institutional policies, and digital-transformation discourse - shape distinctive patterns of AI appropriation.

In sum, the study reveals a structural paradox at the heart of AI adoption in Vietnamese higher education: the very features that render AI highly useful and easy to use simultaneously intensify anxieties about the quality of learning, the integrity of teaching, and the university's capacity to cultivate independent intellect. Navigating this paradox constitutes one of the central challenges facing Vietnamese higher education - and, by extension, higher education systems worldwide - in the age of generative AI.

AI DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

This manuscript was originally written in Vietnamese by the author. An initial English translation was produced with the assistance of generative artificial intelligence tools. The AI-generated translation was subsequently reviewed, revised, and verified by a paid third-party professional translation and editing service. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and scholarly content of the final English version. No AI tool was used to generate research data, analyse interview transcripts, or fabricate findings. All analytical interpretations and theoretical arguments are the author's own.



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