



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Section: *Digital Humanities*

The relationship between artificial intelligence and students' academic achievement in the UAE

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This study aimed to analyze the impact of using social media networks and AI-enhanced AI channels on students' academic performance in UAE, focusing on the role of perceived ease of use and demographic variables as influential factors in this relationship. The study employed a structural model linking social media use, perceived ease of use, AI channels, and academic performance, while also examining the mediating role of demographic variables. The results showed strong and statistically significant positive relationships among all study variables. Intensive use of social media networks enhanced students' perception of the ease of use of digital platforms, which positively impacted their interaction with AI channels. The results also confirmed that perceived ease of use is a pivotal factor in increasing reliance on AI channels, especially given these platforms' use of AI algorithms for content recommendation and personalization. Furthermore, the study revealed a direct positive impact of AI use on students' academic performance, in addition to an indirect impact through demographic variables, indicating that the effectiveness of AI in supporting learning varies according to students' individual and social characteristics. Thus, the study contributes to enriching the literature related to the use of artificial intelligence in education, and emphasizes the importance of smart digital platforms as effective educational tools.

KEYWORDS: Artificial intelligence, perceived ease of use, academic performance, smart algorithms, recommendation systems, UAE

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1. Introduction

Institutions in the UAE have become adept at providing digital services and meeting citizens' expectations even before they realize they need them. Experts and researchers have proven that artificial intelligence (AI) is the key to achieving this, by adopting Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies more effectively to enhance their competitiveness and strengthen the work system within institutions, including educational ones (Abdullah et al. 2020; Mohammad et al. 2020; Vogel et al. 2006). Through AI, educational institutions have been able to identify and interpret trends and patterns in the lives of their users. Understanding these patterns and trends allows educational institutions to capture meaningful digital signals from students and teachers, indicating significant events that have occurred or are likely to occur.

This has opened up vast possibilities for delivering the educational process in many fields, making services not only interactive but also future-oriented for students. In recent years, the integration of AI into educational environments has gained significant momentum, transforming traditional teaching methods and learning environments. AI technologies, ranging from smart teaching systems to personalized learning platforms, are increasingly being adopted to enhance educational outcomes (Dwivedi et al. 2019; Wang, Zheng, and Wandelt n.d.). The relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and academic performance is multifaceted. On the one hand, AI has the potential to significantly enhance educational outcomes by providing personalized learning experiences that cater to diverse student needs. Research indicates that students who interact with AI-powered learning tools tend to demonstrate improved academic performance compared to their peers who do not use such tools (Tayseer et al. 2014).

Furthermore, intelligent teaching systems that adapt to students' learning paces and styles lead to higher retention rates and improved test scores, particularly at the secondary level. Additionally, AI can facilitate formative assessments and enable continuous feedback, helping students identify areas for improvement and adjust their learning strategies accordingly. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between AI and the academic achievement of twelfth-grade students, a crucial stage in a student's educational journey (Davies and Al 2022). Academic achievement is often influenced by numerous factors, including socioeconomic status, motivation, teaching quality, and access to resources (Salama 2020). However, the emergence of artificial intelligence introduces new dynamics into this equation. By analyzing how AI tools and applications are used in classrooms at Fujairah Primary School, this research seeks to explore whether these technologies positively impact student learning outcomes and overall academic performance (Serkal 2020).

2. Scientific importance

The importance of this study stems from its focus on a crucial topic: artificial intelligence (AI), which aligns with the vision and future directions of the United Arab Emirates. Smart education and AI are central to education in the UAE, and smart education is poised to become the future of education in the coming years (Al-Rahmi, Othman, and Yusuf 2015; Kwok and Assistant 2018). Therefore, this study holds significant scientific importance in reaching conclusions that can benefit the smart education sector in the country. It examines the impact of AI on secondary school students' academic achievement and its role in equipping them with the skills to use these technologies. This study can be presented as a scientific proposal that contributes to the future development of the smart education system in the UAE by integrating AI, particularly in secondary education.

It is important to remember that the positive role of AI in sustainable development depends on the availability of clear secondary education plans in the UAE, local and

international conditions to ensure credibility and quality, continuous training for personnel in new technologies, and regular maintenance plans for the technological infrastructure to keep pace with the ongoing smart technology development across different educational stages. This study can also serve as a foundation for future research on AI in academic achievement, providing insights and data that can lead to more comprehensive investigations. The long-term effects of artificial intelligence on student learning and increasing their level of academic achievement.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence can be defined on two levels. In its broadest sense, it encompasses all processes, from genius and innovation to control of movement and senses (de Almeida, Moreira, and Rodrigues 2019; Dwivedi et al. 2019; Harrer et al. 2019). In the field of computer science, it can be defined as the human ability to conceptualize things, analyze their properties, and draw conclusions. It thus represents the human capacity to develop a mental model of a specific domain, identify its elements, deduce the relationships between them, and then generate appropriate responses to events and situations within that domain. Furthermore, it is the science that explores how to make computers perform tasks better than humans. It aims to design intelligent systems that exhibit the same characteristics we recognize as intelligence in human behavior and investigates problem-solving using algorithmic code processing (Dikshit et al. 2023; Haenlein and Kaplan 2019).

The idea behind the term "artificial intelligence" originated with John McCarthy, who began researching this topic in 1955 and theorized that every aspect of learning and other areas of intelligence could be accurately described so that they could be imitated by a machine. Even the terms "artificial intelligence" and "intelligent human behavior" are not clearly defined. Artificial intelligence describes the machine processes that would require intelligence if performed by humans. The term "artificial intelligence" (AI) thus means "the investigation of intelligent problem-solving behavior and the creation of intelligent computer systems." There are two types of AI (Dilek, Çakır, and Aydın 2015):

- Weak AI: The computer is merely a tool for investigating cognitive processes—the computer simulates intelligence.
- Strong AI: The processes in the computer are intellectual and self-learning. Computers can "understand" through appropriate programs/software and are able to improve their own behavior based on their past behavior and experience. This includes automatic integration with other devices, resulting in a significant incremental effect.

Initially, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies were the domain of university researchers, but today, technology companies are increasingly using them to monitor their users' online behavior and predict their next steps. Similarly, cybersecurity companies are employing AI to combat the ever-increasing number of hacking incidents and counter hackers with strategies that mimic their own tactics (Al-Aklabi, 2018). Just as Google searches and indexes websites for specific information and tracks users' search and browsing preferences, cybersecurity companies use AI to detect malicious websites and analyze malware behavior to predict future damage (Gitaru 2017; Nolen and Putten 2007).

Tomer Weingarten, CEO of the security firm SentinelOne, stated that the company scans approximately 200,000 samples of malicious code daily, which translates to protecting 11 million events per microsecond—one millionth of a second—requiring the operation of 10,000 computers (Ganesan, 2016). With the increasing prevalence of computing, traditional defense

methods are no longer sufficient to counter threats and manage the risks of artificial intelligence (Ibrahim Al-Munif, 1995). For example, a firewall, which separates a company's computer network from external systems, was once an effective protection mechanism, but it has now lost some of its effectiveness. It has become difficult to define the beginning and end of a system due to the increasing interconnection of more and more things, such as generative intelligence (Abbas Zaher, 2020). The roots of generative AI lie in machine learning and deep learning architectures, particularly competitive generative networks introduced in 2014, and in transformer-based models like the GPT series (Alamir et al. 2019; Basu 2020; Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin 2010).

Competitive generative networks enabled the generation of realistic images and artificial media, while transformer-based language models advanced natural language processing to unprecedented levels, enabling systems to produce coherent and contextually appropriate text. Today, multimedia models integrate the generation of text, images, and audio, pushing the boundaries of AI creativity and human-computer interaction (Fryges, Gottschalk, and Lemminger 2023; Zhalimar Dumpit and Joy Fernandez 2017).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to the learning outcomes and results of students' educational experiences. It encompasses various aspects, including grades, test scores, assignments, degrees, and other academic qualifications. Strong academic achievement is often associated with a range of benefits, such as increased employability, improved career prospects, and enhanced earning potential. Furthermore, the term "academic achievement" implies a positive impact on an individual's personal and social development, as it fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills in students, and improves their academic performance through goal setting, seeking support, and developing effective learning strategies (Gamji and Salman 2019).

3.2 Lecturer performance

The performance of lecturers is critical in any university (Riadi et al., 2025). The performance of lecturers determines whether the productivity and achievement of the lecturer satisfy the university he/she works for. Similarly, when it comes to tertiary institutions, one factor to evaluate is the performance of the professors (Atikah & Qomariah, 2020). A competition of work, implementation of new ideas in the work, help the organization to achieve its goals, can all be viewed as indicators of job performance. Employee performance according to Azhad et al. (2015) is the outcome of individual's work that is in line with organizational goals. Employee performance could be poor if the motivation factors are absent (Govender et al., 2018).

Lecturer performance is always an interesting topic to study (Thalhah et al., 2022). The term performance refers to the execution of obligations, namely the fulfillment of basic tasks based on responsibilities and authorities as defined in work standards (Dunggio, 2021). In practice, however, doing these fundamental tasks necessitates the use of numerous attributes, e.g., attitudes, knowledge, skills, and work conduct. As lecturer performance is a crucial factor utilized to determine organization achievement, especially in today's severe competition in all industries (Rizal et al., 2024). Thus, organizations must be able to meet their employees' demands, both physically and socially, in order for them to have high job satisfaction, which will improve their performance (Layla et al., 2020). The success of educational institutions can be measured in terms of the lecturer performance. According to Trisnaningsih (2011), lecturer performance is the ability of a lecturer to carry out the educational tasks for the students. The measurement of lecturer performance as claimed by Wijatno (2009) includes conducting the

education process appropriately, contributing to research and scientific publications, and helping the academic community to improve and grow. The way individuals perform their duties, whether directly or indirectly, can have an impact on the success or failure of any organization because it ultimately reflects organizational performance (Kuruppu et al., 2021). In this regard, lecturers are the most essential human resources who contribute to the achievement of the goals of their university. Because lecturers have direct contact with students, achievement is significantly influenced by the performance of the lecturers (Atikah & Qomariah, 2020). Lecturer performance is what lecturers do to attain responsible and high-quality performance (Suryaman & Hamdan, 2016). The goal of becoming a professional lecturer is to establish a learning process based on professional principles so that people have equitable access to quality education (Mukhtar et al., 2019). Academic institutions require quality lecturers to boost academic quality. To that end, boosting lecturer performance will contribute to education quality (Sutawan et al., 2023). In addition, the satisfaction lecturers are important. If lecturers are satisfied with their work, they will afford their professional expertise to complete help student acquire knowledge without complications (Zain et al., 2017). This is consistent with Robbins' (2016) observation that firms with more satisfied employees are usually more efficient than organizations with less satisfied employees. According to the findings of Chandra and Priyono (2016) and Setyorini et al. (2018), the satisfaction of employees has a considerable effect on their performance and career.

3.3 Academic achievement of students in the UAE

The academic achievement of students in the United Arab Emirates is a national educational priority, given its direct link to the quality of human capital and the country's ability to achieve its ambitious development goals. The UAE has given significant attention to the education sector, reflected in curriculum development, improvements to the school environment, and the adoption of the latest educational technologies, all of which contribute to raising the academic achievement of students at all levels (Ahmad, Abu Bakar, and Ahmad 2019; Amin et al. 2019). In recent years, the UAE education system has witnessed qualitative transformations, most notably the shift from traditional teaching methods to competency-based education, which focuses on developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation skills. The Ministry of Education is working to update the curriculum in accordance with international standards, while respecting the national identity and cultural values of Emirati society. This approach has contributed to improved student performance in national and international assessments such as TIMSS and PISA (Ahmad et al. 2019).

Teachers also play a pivotal role in raising the level of academic achievement. The country has invested in teacher training and professional development, and in providing them with modern teaching tools. Educational studies indicate that the quality of teaching, effective assessment methods, and continuous academic support are among the most important factors influencing student achievement (Al-Dhaafri and Alosani 2020; Cherian et al. 2021). Furthermore, flexible educational policies have helped accommodate individual differences among students through academic support programs and inclusive education. The role of the family in enhancing academic achievement cannot be overlooked. Cooperation between the school and parents is essential for monitoring student progress and motivating them to learn. The stable socio-economic environment in the UAE also provides students with favorable conditions to focus on their studies and achieve better results. In light of the digital transformation, smart learning and distance education initiatives have expanded learning opportunities, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, as students acquired self-learning skills

and the ability to use technology for research and learning. However, challenges remain regarding the disparity in student achievement levels and the need to enhance academic motivation among certain groups (Ahmad, S. Z., Ahmad, N., & Bakar 2018; Almarzooqi 2019; AlQubaisi and Emran 2022; Awada, Johar, and Ismail 2020; Das 2019; Mawed and Al-Hajj 2017).

4. Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive-analytical approach, as it is the most suitable method for studying students' academic achievement in the United Arab Emirates and analyzing the factors associated with it as they exist in reality, without interfering with or influencing the study variables. This approach is widely used in educational research because it allows for a precise understanding of educational phenomena, the diagnosis of achievement levels, and the observation of differences among students according to various demographic and educational variables.

The descriptive-analytical approach in this study aims to describe the level of academic achievement among students at different educational stages and analyze the impact of a range of influencing factors, such as the school environment, teacher competence, the role of the family, and the use of modern educational technologies (Elareshi et al. 2022; Mohammed Habes et al. 2022; Habes, Elareshi, and Ziani 2021). This approach also allows for the interpretation of relationships between educational variables and their connection to the social and educational context in the UAE. The questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool due to its suitability to the nature of the study and its ability to reach a large number of respondents in a short time. The questionnaire comprised a set of items measuring dimensions of academic achievement and the factors influencing it. It was designed based on relevant educational literature and previous studies (Habes et al. 2018, 2019, 2023; Mohammad Habes, Ali, and Tahat 2022).

The instrument's validity was confirmed by a panel of expert reviewers in the field of education, and its reliability was established using appropriate statistical methods. The study population consisted of school students in the United Arab Emirates, while the sample was selected randomly to ensure representativeness of the population and the generalizability of the results. The sample was chosen to reflect the diversity of its characteristics in terms of grade level and school type, thus mirroring the educational landscape in the UAE. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data, employing descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations, in addition to other appropriate statistical tests to identify differences and statistical significance between variables.

5. Analysis Of Measurement Model:

5.1 Convergent Validity

In order to analyze the measurement model, we first conducted a convergent validity analysis, as suggested by (Alghizzawi et al., 2019). First, we can see the values of Factor Loading range from .772 to .891, and Average Variance Extracted range from .820 to .886, indicating that all the values are higher than the threshold value of 0.5. Besides, the Cronbach Alpha values range from .883 to .915, and Composite Reliability values range from .770 to .810, indicating that all the mentioned values are greater than the threshold value of 0.7. Thus, we found that the convergent validity is fully established (See Table 1).

Table 1: Convergent Validity Analysis

Variables	Items	Factor Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Use of AI	USN1	.832	.883	.770	.820
	USN2	.777			
	USN2	.851			
Perceived Usefulness	PES1	.850	.915	.810	.886
	PES2	.828			
	PES3	.885			
AI Channels	YTC1	.836	.906	.800	.828
	YTC2	.772			
	YTC3	.876			
Academic Performance	APE1	.891	.916	.794	.832
	APE2	.823			
	APE3	.782			

5.2. Discriminant Validity

Moreover, we also conducted the discriminant validity analysis of the measurement model as suggested by (Henseler et al., 2015). First, we conducted a Fornell-Larker Criterion analysis (see Table 2) and found that all the squares of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are greater than the correlation values mentioned in the table. Besides, we also found that the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio value of our measurement model remained at .063, which is less than the designated threshold value of 0.85 as suggested by (Habes et al., 2021). Thus, we found that the discriminant validity of our measurement model is successfully established.

Table 2: Fornell-Larker Criterion

	USN	PES	YTC	APE
USN	.672			
PES	.614**	.784		
YTC	.657**	.710**	.685	
APE	.567**	.562**	.662**	.692

Table 3: HTMT Ratio Scale

	USN	PES	YTC	APE
USN				
PES	-.444			
YTC	-.204	-.388		
APE	-.176	-.076	-.398	

5.3 Demographics Of Participants

We conducted a descriptive analysis of the participant's personal data. We found that the majority of respondents (51.2%) were females, and 48.8% were males (M: 510, SD: 501). The calculation of age revealed that most of the respondents (47.0%) were 22 to 24 years old, 23.4% were 18 to 21 years old, 19.3% were 25 to 27 years old, and 10.0% were 25 to 27 years old (M: 1.93, SD: 1.238). Finally, according to the qualification level of the respondents, 42.4% were undergraduate level students, 33.1% were graduate level students, 17.0% were post-graduate level students, and only 7.55 of participants were Doctorate level students (M: 2.42, SD: 1.322).

4.5 Structural Model Testing

To assess the strength of variation caused by exogenous variables, we conducted the R2 analysis as suggested by (Figueiredo Filho et al., 2011). As shown in Table 4, the predictive potential of the AI remained at .657 or 65.7%, the power of Perceived Ease of Use remained at .710 or 71.0%, and finally, the predictive power of Academic Performance is found at .662 or 66.2%. Thus, we

found that all the values indicate a strong predictive power of all the n= 3 latent variables.

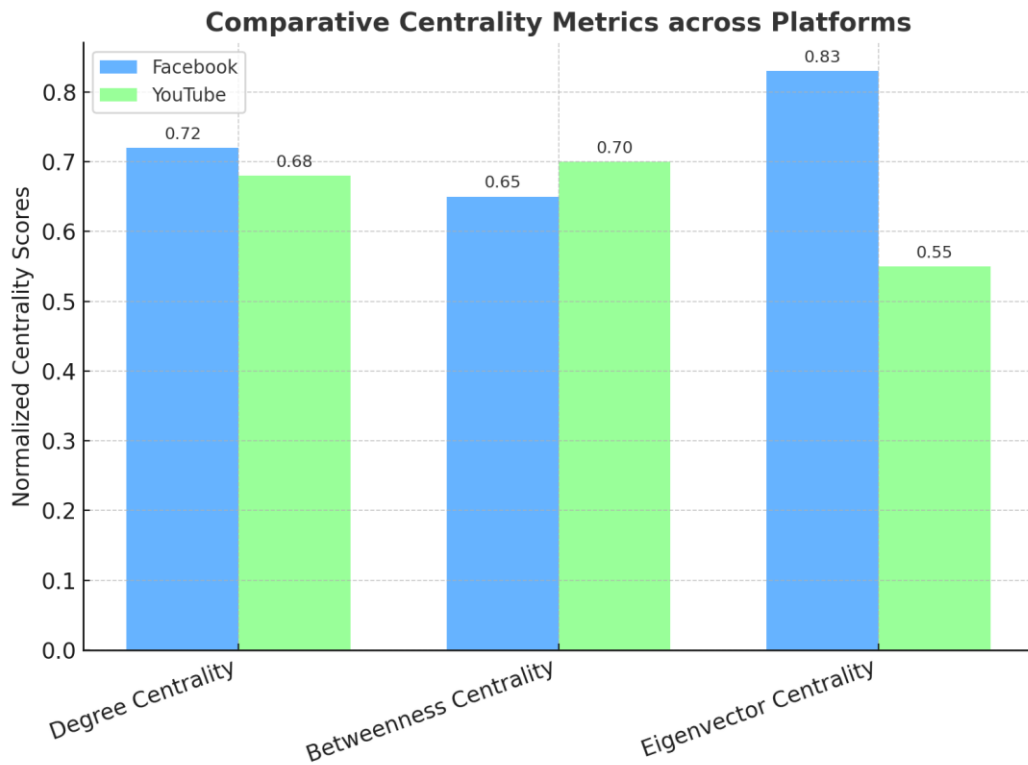
Table 4: R2 Analysis of Latent Variables

S/R	Variables	R ²
1.	AI	.657
2.	Perceived Ease of Use	.710
3.	Academic Performance	.662

Hypothesis Testing in Light of Artificial Intelligence Technologies

This study aimed to analyze the relationships between the variables of the proposed research model from the perspective of the role of artificial intelligence technologies in digital platforms, particularly recommendation algorithms and user behavior analysis. The path analysis results presented in Table (5) indicate that all proposed hypotheses received strong statistical support. The results showed a strong and statistically significant positive relationship between social media use and perceived ease of use, with a path coefficient of (0.770) and a t-value of (11.183) at a significance level of ($p < 0.001$).

This result can be explained by the reliance of social media platforms on artificial intelligence technologies to enhance user experience through smart interfaces and automatic content personalization, thus boosting users' perception of ease of use. The results also revealed a statistically significant relationship between social media use and AI channels ($\beta = 0.051$, $t = 7.144$, $p < 0.001$), reflecting the pivotal role of intelligent algorithms in linking social and video platforms. AI systems contribute to automatically directing users to AI content based on their interests and previous interaction patterns. The study also demonstrated a significant positive correlation between perceived ease of use and AI channels ($\beta = 0.070$, $t = 8.395$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the ease of interacting with intelligent systems on the AI platform, such as smart search and automated suggestions, is a motivating factor for consuming educational content. The relationship between AI channels and academic performance was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.084$, $t = 9.920$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that AI-enhanced educational content, such as educational video recommendations and student preference analysis, contributes to improved academic achievement. Regarding mediation analysis, demographic variables showed a significant mediating effect on the relationship between AI channels and academic performance, with indirect effect values of 0.080 and path values of 0.037 at a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the impact of AI on supporting learning varies according to students' demographic characteristics. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis (H5) is strongly supported.



After examining the predictive power of our dependent variables, we further analyzed the relationships between study variables proposed in the structural model. As shown in the Table 4, the relationship between artificial Channels (YTC), Social Networking Usage and Perceived usefulness are strongly significant with significance value at $p > 0.000$ (t-value: 7.144) and $p > 0.000$ (t-value: 8.395), respectively. Besides, the relationship between artificial intelligence and Academic Performance is also significant with the t-value at 9.920 and p-value at $p > 0.000$. Finally, the mediation analysis of the demographical variables also remained strongly significant with the path value at .037 and significance value at $p > 0.000$. Also the indirect effects of demographical variables on the relationship between artificial intelligence and Academic Performance remained strong with the value at .080. indicating that the H5 of the study is strongly supported. Table 5 summarizes the results of path analysis and Fig 2 graphically illustrates the results of path analysis:

Table 5: Path Analysis, t-value, Significance value

Hypotheses	Path	t-value	P-Value	Decision
USN>PES	.770	11.183	.000***	Validated
USN>YTC	.051	7.144	.000***	Validated
PES>YTC	.070	8.395	.000***	Validated
YTC>APE	.084	9.920	.000***	Validated

Hypotheses	Path	Indirect	P-value	Decision
YTC>DEM>APE	.037	.080	.000***	Validated

6. Discussion

The results of this study align with recent literature confirming that AI-powered social media platforms have become an integral part of students' daily lives. Elareshi et al. (2022) indicated that the intensive use of digital platforms is linked to multiple educational and entertainment purposes, a finding supported by this study through highlighting the role of intelligent algorithms in shaping students' media behavior. Ali (2018) argues that the increased reliance on social media reflects students' transition to intelligent digital learning environments, and is not necessarily a negative behavior. The results of the current study demonstrate that artificial intelligence on the AI platform, through its recommendation and personalization systems, helps students manage their time effectively and access educational content relevant to their academic needs.

The findings also clearly support the study by Lee and Lehto (2013), which confirmed that perceived ease of use, supported by intelligent systems, is a crucial factor in the adoption of digital platforms. The findings regarding the relationship between social media use and AI channels support the conclusions of Tahat et al. (2022), where AI algorithms act as mediators in integrating different digital platforms. The positive relationship between artificial intelligence and academic performance confirms what Peter (2015) indicated: that visual educational content, when supported by smart technologies, contributes to improved academic understanding and comprehension. Thus, the study highlights the growing role of artificial intelligence in transforming communication platforms from mere entertainment tools into effective digital learning environments.

7. Conclusion

The study concluded that artificial intelligence (AI) has become a fundamental element in shaping students' use of social media platforms, particularly AI channels, playing a clear role in enhancing the user experience and guiding them towards content that aligns with their educational needs. The results showed that recommendation algorithms and ease of interaction with digital platforms directly contribute to boosting academic achievement, transforming these platforms from purely entertainment tools into intelligent digital learning environments. The study also confirmed that the relationship between AI use and academic performance is not solely influenced by technical factors, but is also intertwined with demographic variables.

This necessitates the adoption of flexible educational policies that consider individual student differences when employing AI in education. In this context, the importance of guiding students towards the conscious and purposeful use of digital platforms and enhancing their skills in utilizing AI-powered educational content becomes evident. The study recommends integrating educational AI channels into formal educational strategies and encouraging educational institutions to leverage AI technologies in designing customized and effective educational content. It also suggests conducting future studies that address the impact of specific types of intelligent algorithms, and the level of trust in them, on learning outcomes in different educational and cultural environments.

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