AI Assistance and Academic Integrity in Scholarly Writing

This combined review evaluates two papers that explore the evolving relationship between artificial intelligence and academic writing:

1. **Khalifa & Albadawy (2024)** on how AI supports academic writing workflows. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666990024000120
2. **Mondal, Mondal & Jana (2025)** on the dilemma created by AI text generators, AI detectors, and AI "humanizers." Available at: https://ijcdw.org/the-artificial-intelligence-dilemma-in-academic-writing-balancing-efficiency-and-integrity/

Both papers address the theme of balancing assistance and integrity, but each adopts a distinct research method and emphasis, making them highly suitable for comparative critical review.

1. Purpose, Problem, and Research Questions

Paper 1: Khalifa & Albadawy (2024)
The first article seeks to map how AI tools contribute to academic writing and research productivity. Its core purpose is to identify the stages of the research and writing workflow where AI offers tangible support, particularly for drafting, editing, and literature synthesis. The authors respond to a practical problem faced by researchers and postgraduate students: managing extensive reading and writing workloads while maintaining clarity, accuracy, and ethical standards. The research question is broad but clear, focusing on which aspects of academic writing benefit most from AI assistance. The paper aligns closely with my own experience in academic work, especially the need for support in structuring text, editing, and synthesising literature. Its purpose also contributes meaningfully to current discussions about the legitimate and practical uses of AI in higher education.

Paper 2: Mondal, Mondal & Jana (2025)

The second article explores the growing dilemma created by the interaction of AI text generators, AI detectors, and paraphrasing/humanizing tools. The authors aim to address the confusion among academics regarding acceptable AI use, particularly as detection tools frequently generate false positives. The guiding question asks how researchers can use AI responsibly while avoiding the risks associated with detection inaccuracies and overreliance.
This reflects real challenges I have seen across universities, where inconsistent policies and emerging detection technologies create anxiety for students and staff. The article

therefore contributes to the broader conversation about integrity, fairness, and standardisation in AI governance.

2. Appropriateness of the Research Methodology

Paper 1: Systematic Review

The authors adopt a systematic review, which is appropriate for their aim of mapping existing knowledge across multiple domains of academic writing. The methodology allows them to gather evidence from various disciplines and summarise recurring themes. However, the review remains descriptive rather than evaluative. The lack of critical appraisal of included studies limits its strength, as not all sources carry equal methodological weight. A more rigorous evaluation framework would have enhanced reliability.

Paper 2: Perspective Review

The second paper uses a perspective or commentary-based review. This is suitable for raising awareness, summarising ongoing debates, and interpreting emerging trends in AI usage. Because the goal is not to generate new empirical findings but to reflect on a rapidly changing landscape, this method is appropriate.
Still, the perspective format introduces natural limitations: the authors rely on selected examples and their interpretations. Their conclusions, while coherent, are shaped by selective evidence rather than systematic synthesis. Greater transparency about how sources were chosen would improve credibility.

3. Appropriateness of Data Collection and Analysis

Paper 1

The authors use multiple academic databases and clearly defined inclusion/exclusion criteria. Their thematic grouping into six domains is sensible and corresponds well to stages of academic work. However, the analysis lacks the depth expected from a systematic review. Without a formal quality assessment or reviewer triangulation, the themes risk reflecting the authors' assumptions rather than the internal structure of the evidence. Some included papers are conceptual rather than empirical, yet all are treated uniformly.

Paper 2

The authors synthesize surveys, empirical observations, and commentary pieces to illustrate the challenges associated with AI-detection cycles. This mixed evidence is acceptable for a perspective piece. Their examples, including documented cases of

false positives and the ease with which paraphrasers bypass detectors, effectively support their argument.
However, the use of anecdotal evidence and the absence of methodological transparency limit the generalisability of their claims. The article presents a compelling narrative, but it is not grounded in systematic evidence gathering.

4. Support for Claims and Conclusions

Paper 1

The authors' claims, that AI improves drafting efficiency, supports literature synthesis, and introduces new ethical considerations, are supported by cited studies. They acknowledge risks such as hallucinations, fabricated citations, and overreliance. However, some conclusions are overly confident given the underlying evidence base. Many referenced studies are opinion-based rather than empirical. The assertion that AI "substantially revolutionises" academic writing would benefit from more careful distinction between early findings, speculation, and established evidence.

Paper 2

This paper supports its claims with documented examples and relevant literature. It effectively highlights contradictions between generator, detector, and paraphraser tools. The discussion of ethical guidelines from ICMJE and WAME is grounded in established sources.
Where the article is less balanced is in its predictions, such as the claim that AI-detectors will soon become obsolete. This is stated without acknowledging that some institutions may instead increase their reliance on such tools. A more cautious framing would strengthen the argument.

5. How Each Paper Could Be Enhanced

Paper 1: Key Enhancements

Two improvements would significantly strengthen the contribution:

1. Engage more deeply with contradictory findings.
The review acknowledges concerns about accuracy and misinformation but does not meaningfully compare competing positions. Some studies celebrate efficiency gains, while others warn of academic dependency and risk. Clarifying where the literature diverges would move the paper beyond description into critical synthesis.

2. Define explicit boundaries between AI assistance and essential human judgment.

The paper advocates for “balance,” but leaves this concept vague. It should specify tasks where human expertise is irreplaceable, such as evaluating methodological soundness, interpreting empirical results, and verifying citations. This would give the review more practical value and improve its alignment with integrity principles.

Paper 2: Key Enhancements

Two similar but distinct improvements would enhance this perspective piece:

1. Explore conflicting viewpoints more comprehensively.
While the authors acknowledge disagreements among researchers regarding AI use, they do not examine why these disagreements exist or how they impact policy development. A deeper engagement with alternative or opposing viewpoints would add analytical depth.

2. Provide clearer guidance on the limits of AI tools.
The article effectively critiques detectors and humanizers, but offers limited specificity about where AI should not be used. Identifying non-negotiable tasks requiring human oversight would help practitioners apply guidelines in real academic contexts. This would also reinforce integrity by clarifying the boundaries of acceptable assistance.

References

Khalifa, M. & Albadawy, M., 2024. *Using artificial intelligence in academic writing and research: An essential productivity tool.* Computer Methods and Programs in Biomedicine Update, 5, p. 100145. Available at: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666990024000120

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