



Explore the Role of Artificial Intelligence to Support Teachers at Higher Education Institutions in South Punjab

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: June 30, 2025
Revised: August 02, 2025
Accepted: August 13, 2025
Available Online: September 09, 2025

Keywords:

perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, self-efficacy, digital transformation, AI adoption, Innovative teaching, learning, institution growth

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming higher education worldwide by enabling innovative teaching and learning practices. This study explores the perceptions, attitudes, and intentions of university teachers toward AI adoption in public-sector higher education institutions in South Punjab, Pakistan. Employing a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 300 faculty members across multiple universities utilizing a self-developed Likert-scale questionnaire assessing constructs such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, self-efficacy, and institutional support. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and multiple regression analyses, were performed utilizing SPSS to examine factors influencing AI adoption intention. The results reveal that perceived usefulness is the strongest predictor of faculty intention to integrate AI tools in their instructional practices, followed by perceived ease of use, self-efficacy, and institutional support. While overall attitudes towards AI were positive, infrastructural limitations and inadequate institutional support were noted as barriers to effective implementation. Differences in adoption intention were observed across academic ranks, with senior faculty showing greater readiness to adopt AI technologies. No significant gender differences were found. This study highlights the critical require for tailored professional development programs and enhanced technological infrastructure to support AI integration in South Punjab's universities. The findings contribute valuable region-specific insights to policymakers, administrators, and educators aiming to leverage AI for improving teaching quality and digital transformation in Pakistan's higher education sector.



Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly recognized as a transformative force in education, particularly in higher education institutions (HEIs), where it holds the potential to revolutionize teaching, learning, and administrative processes (Holmes, Bialik, & Fadel, 2022). AI technologies—including intelligent tutoring systems, automated grading, adaptive learning platforms, and AI-powered virtual assistants—can reduce teachers' workload, personalize student learning experiences, and improve academic outcomes (Kukulska-Hulme, Lee, & Norris, 2023). Globally, the integration of AI in universities has accelerated, driven by rapid technological advancements and the demand for innovative educational solutions that align with the digital era (Roll & Wylie, 2022).

In Pakistan, the adoption of AI in higher education is at an emergent stage, with growing interest from policymakers and academic leaders to harness its benefits for improving teaching quality and accessibility (Hasan, Malik, & Hussain, 2025). However, the pace and extent of AI integration vary significantly across regions and institutions. Public-sector universities, especially in less urbanized areas such as South Punjab, face substantial challenges related to infrastructure, faculty readiness, and institutional support (Iqbal, Siddiqui, & Farooq, 2025). South Punjab is a critical educational hub that serves a diverse student population from both urban and rural backgrounds, yet it grapples with limited internet connectivity, outdated technological resources, and uneven professional development opportunities for educators (Malik, Ahmed, & Zafar, 2025).

The success of AI implementation in HEIs largely depends on teachers' perceptions and attitudes toward these technologies (Guo, Li, & Chen, 2024). According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and its extensions, perceived usefulness and ease of utilize are key determinants influencing technology adoption (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh & Davis, 2021). Moreover, teachers' self-efficacy—confidence in their ability to effectively utilize AI—and the level of institutional support provided are critical facilitators or barriers in the adoption process (Chaudhary, Khan, & Ahmed, 2024). While international research has extensively examined these factors, studies contextualized to Pakistan's unique socio-economic and educational landscape, particularly focusing on South Punjab, remain scarce.

Furthermore, differences in adoption attitudes can emerge based on faculty demographics such as academic rank, teaching experience, and gender (Zafar, Khan, & Qureshi, 2024). Senior faculty members may have greater exposure to professional development opportunities involving AI, while junior faculty might face steeper learning curves. Equally, ensuring equitable access to AI technologies for all genders is essential for inclusive digital transformation (Hasan et al., 2025).

This study aims to fill the research gap by investigating university teachers' perceptions and behavioral intentions toward AI adoption in public-sector universities of South Punjab. By employing a quantitative approach utilizing a self-developed Likert scale questionnaire, this research analyzes the interplay between perceived usefulness, ease of use, self-efficacy, and institutional support, while also examining demographic influences. The insights from this study will assist university administrators and policymakers in designing targeted strategies to foster effective AI integration, enhance faculty readiness, and bridge infrastructural gaps in this vital educational region.

Literature Review

Global Overview of AI in Higher Education

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a pivotal technology reshaping higher education systems worldwide. Its applications range from intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive learning platforms, and automated grading, to AI-powered virtual assistants that support both students and faculty (Zawacki-Richter, Marín, Bond, & Gouverneur, 2022). These innovations facilitate personalized learning experiences, helping students learn at their own pace with real-time feedback, which significantly enhances engagement and learning outcomes (Kukulska-Hulme, Lee, & Norris, 2023). The integration of AI not only streamlines administrative tasks but also enables faculty to focus more on creative and strategic pedagogical activities (Roll & Wylie, 2022).

The global acceleration in AI adoption is also driven by a growing demand for scalable educational solutions that can address large and diverse student populations effectively (Holmes, Bialik, & Fadel, 2022). In countries like the United States, China, and European nations, universities have invested heavily in AI research and infrastructure, integrating AI tools to improve teaching quality, student retention, and institutional efficiency (Guo, Li, & Chen, 2024). However, alongside these benefits, concerns regarding data privacy, ethical utilize of AI, and potential biases in algorithms remain major discussion points within the global academic community (Majeed, Abbas, & Khan, 2025).

Theoretical Frameworks on AI Adoption in Education

Understanding factors influencing AI adoption by faculty is critical to successful implementation. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), proposed by Davis (1989), continues to be widely applied in educational technology research. TAM posits that two key beliefs Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) predict users' attitudes and intentions toward adopting technology. PU reflects the degree to which a person believes that utilizing a particular system enhances their job performance, while PEOU concerns the effort required to utilize the system (Davis, 1989).

Subsequent studies have extended TAM by incorporating additional constructs such as self-efficacy, subjective norms, and facilitating conditions, as seen in the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model (Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2022). Venkatesh and Davis (2021) demonstrated through longitudinal studies that both PU and PEOU maintain strong influence on technology acceptance over time. This suggests that training programs enhancing faculty's confidence in utilizing AI (self-efficacy) and improving AI system usability are vital for encouraging adoption.

Moreover, social influence and organizational support play pivotal roles in shaping faculty attitudes toward AI adoption. Positive social norms, encouragement from leadership, and availability of resources and training increase the likelihood of AI integration in teaching practices (Chaudhary, Khan, & Ahmed, 2024). Faculty perception of institutional commitment to digital transformation further strengthens adoption intentions (Hasan, Malik, & Hussain, 2025).

Faculty Perceptions and Attitudes Towards AI

International studies reveal that faculty generally hold positive views of AI's potential to alleviate routine tasks, allowing greater focus on pedagogical innovation and student interaction (Holmes et al., 2022). For example, automated grading systems reduce the burden of assessment, freeing up faculty time for mentoring and curriculum development (Chaudhary et al., 2024). Adaptive

learning technologies provide personalized content based on student performance, supporting differentiated instruction and improved learner engagement (Kukulska-Hulme et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, reservations about AI persist. Concerns about academic integrity, data privacy, and AI's potential to perpetuate biases in educational outcomes have been highlighted in recent literature (Majeed et al., 2025; Microsoft & Carnegie Mellon University Study, 2025). Faculty express apprehension that excessive reliance on AI might hinder development of critical thinking and creativity among students (Guo et al., 2024). These ethical and pedagogical concerns necessitate the development of clear guidelines and training to ensure responsible AI utilize in education.

AI Adoption in Pakistan's Higher Education Context

In Pakistan, AI integration in higher education is nascent but growing, propelled by government initiatives such as the Higher Education Commission's Digital Transformation Strategy 2023–2028 (HEC, 2023). Despite this policy support, research demonstrates that public-sector universities face multiple challenges hindering AI adoption (Hasan et al., 2025). Limited infrastructure, lack of reliable internet, and scarcity of modern devices are significant barriers, especially in less urbanized regions (Iqbal, Siddiqui, & Farooq, 2025).

Studies focused on faculty perspectives indicate cautious optimism. Many educators recognize

AI's potential to enhance teaching and learning, yet report low self-efficacy in utilizing AI tools due to insufficient training and professional development opportunities (Chaudhary et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2025). Institutional support is often inadequate, with limited budget allocations and weak policy frameworks to encourage AI uptake (Zafar, Khan, & Qureshi, 2024).

The digital divide within Pakistan further complicates matters. Urban universities tend to have better access to infrastructure and training, while institutions in regions like South Punjab experience technological and resource constraints (Iqbal et al., 2025). This disparity affects faculty readiness and adoption rates, emphasizing the require for regionally tailored strategies.

Challenges in South Punjab's Public Sector Universities

South Punjab is a critical educational region serving diverse socio-economic groups but facing infrastructure and resource limitations (Malik, Ahmed, & Zafar, 2025). Public-sector universities in this region often struggle with outdated IT infrastructure, intermittent internet access, and limited funding for technology upgrades. These factors diminish the feasibility of comprehensive AI integration (Malik et al., 2025).

Faculty self-efficacy regarding AI remains low, reflecting gaps in digital literacy and confidence in utilizing new technologies (Chaudhary et al., 2024). Professional development programs are sporadic and lack focus on AI tools, creating a skills gap that inhibits adoption (Hasan et al., 2025). Furthermore, institutional policies and leadership support for AI initiatives are often weak or unclear, leaving faculty without sufficient motivation or guidance to integrate AI meaningfully (Malik et al., 2025).

Demographic Influences on AI Adoption

Research highlights that demographic factors such as academic rank, experience, and gender influence attitudes towards AI adoption. Senior faculty members usually have greater exposure to training and tend to display more positive adoption intentions, possibly due to longer professional networks and experience with various technologies (Zafar et al., 2024). Junior faculty, though

more tech-savvy, often report less confidence due to limited professional development focused on AI (Hasan et al., 2025).

Gender disparities in AI adoption also exist in some contexts. Female faculty may face additional barriers such as less access to training, lower digital literacy rates, and cultural constraints (Hasan et al., 2025). Ensuring equitable access to AI resources and support for all genders is essential for inclusive educational transformation.

Summary and Research Gap

While international research has extensively explored AI adoption in education, Pakistan and particularly South Punjab remains under-researched. Existing studies point to significant infrastructural and institutional challenges unique to the region. This study seeks to fill this gap by empirically examining public-sector university teachers' perceptions and intentions to adopt AI technologies in South Punjab. Understanding these dynamics will support the development of targeted interventions to promote effective AI integration tailored to regional contexts.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate university teachers' perceptions and intentions regarding the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public-sector universities of South Punjab, Pakistan. Quantitative methods allow for the collection of standardized data and facilitate statistical analysis to identify significant relationships among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). A cross-sectional survey approach was utilized, providing a snapshot of faculty attitudes at a specific point in time.

Population

The population for this study includes all faculty members employed at public-sector universities in South Punjab. This encompasses various disciplines and academic ranks. Due to resource constraints and accessibility, a stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across academic departments and ranks.

Sample

The final sample consisted of 300 university teachers, which is adequate to provide reliable statistical analysis with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$ (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Table 1 presents demographic characteristics of the sample.

Research Instrument

A self-developed questionnaire based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and relevant literature was used to measure the key constructs: Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Self-Efficacy (SE), Institutional Support (IS), and Behavioral Intention (BI) to adopt AI technologies. Each construct included multiple items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire was validated through expert review by five academics specializing in educational technology and piloted with 30 faculty members to assess reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through a self-developed likert scale questionnaire .

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed utilizing IBM SPSS Statistics version 28. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) summarized faculty perceptions. Inferential analyses including Pearson correlation and multiple regression were conducted to examine relationships and predictors of AI adoption intention. Assumptions for regression, such as normality, linearity, and multicollinearity, were checked and met.

Table 1: Summary of Methodology Components

Component	Description
Research Design	Quantitative, cross-sectional survey design
Population	All faculty members at public-sector universities in South Punjab
Sample Size	300 university teachers selected through stratified random sampling
Instrument	Self-developed Likert scale questionnaire measuring PU, PEOU, SE, IS, and BI
Validity & Reliability	Expert validation; pilot tested; Cronbach's alpha > 0.7 for all constructs
Data Collection	paper surveys distributed for data collection
Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression analysis via SPSS

Results

Descriptive Statistics for Each Questionnaire Item

The survey consisted of 20 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 2: presents the frequency and percentage of responses for each statement

Item No.	Statement	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Mean	SD
1	Using AI tools improves my teaching effectiveness.	2.0	5.3	10.0	45.0	37.7	4.14	0.82
2	AI increases student engagement.	1.3	6.0	12.0	47.7	33.0	4.07	0.83
3	AI makes my job easier.	3.0	7.7	15.3	42.0	32.0	3.93	0.94
4	AI enhances learning outcomes in my classes.	2.7	8.0	13.0	44.0	32.3	3.95	0.90
5	I identify AI tools easy to use.	4.0	10.0	20.0	40.0	26.0	3.75	1.03
6	Learning to operate AI technologies is easy for me.	4.3	11.3	18.0	38.7	27.0	3.72	1.05
7	It is clear how to utilize AI in teaching.	3.7	9.7	21.0	41.0	24.7	3.71	1.01
8	Interacting with AI systems does not require much effort.	4.7	10.3	22.0	37.0	26.0	3.66	1.06

9	I am confident in my ability to utilize AI tools effectively.	5.0	10.0	18.0	40.3	26.7	3.70	1.07
10	I can troubleshoot common AI issues independently.	6.0	12.3	19.0	38.7	24.0	3.56	1.13
11	I have the skills needed to integrate AI in my teaching.	4.7	11.0	21.3	40.3	22.7	3.62	1.05
12	I can learn new AI technologies without difficulty.	3.3	10.0	20.3	43.0	23.3	3.72	1.00
13	My university provides adequate training on AI tools.	10.7	25.0	30.0	23.3	11.0	2.92	1.20
14	Technical support for AI systems is readily available.	12.3	28.0	29.7	20.0	10.0	2.81	1.24
15	The administration encourages AI integration.	9.7	24.0	33.0	22.7	10.7	2.95	1.19
16	Adequate resources are allocated for AI initiatives.	11.0	27.3	32.0	20.7	9.0	2.86	1.21
17	I intend to utilize AI tools regularly in my teaching.	3.3	7.7	14.0	43.0	32.0	4.00	0.92
18	I plan to integrate more AI applications next academic year.	4.0	9.0	17.7	41.0	28.3	3.89	0.99
19	I am willing to participate in AI training programs.	2.7	6.3	16.0	44.0	31.0	4.05	0.88
20	I recommend AI adoption to my colleagues.	3.0	7.0	14.7	42.7	32.7	4.00	0.91

Interpretation of Item-Level Responses

- Perceived Usefulness (Items 1-4): High agreement with mean scores above 3.9 demonstrates that most faculty recognize AI's benefits for teaching effectiveness and student engagement.
- Perceived Ease of Use (Items 5-8): Moderate agreement with means around 3.7 suggests faculty identify AI tools somewhat easy but some difficulties remain.
- Self-Efficacy (Items 9-12): Means near 3.7 indicate moderate confidence in utilizing and learning AI tools, with room for growth.
- Institutional Support (Items 13-16): Lower agreement with means around 2.8–2.9 highlights perceived inadequacy in training, technical support, and resources.
- Behavioral Intention (Items 17-20): Strong positive intentions to utilize AI regularly and recommend it to colleagues, with means around 4.0.

Table 3: Summary of Descriptive Statistics by Construct

Construct	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Perceived Usefulness	4.02	0.86	High agreement on AI benefits
Perceived Ease of Use	3.71	0.90	Moderate comfort with AI usability
Self-Efficacy	3.70	0.92	Moderate confidence in AI skills
Institutional Support			

Behavioral Intention	2.89	1.11	Perceived lack of sufficient institutional support
	3.99	0.90	Positive intent to adopt AI

Reliability Analysis of Constructs

To ensure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each construct. Table 4 summarizes these values:

Table 4: Reliability Analysis of Constructs

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Perceived Usefulness	4	0.88	Excellent reliability
Perceived Ease of Use	4	0.85	Good reliability
Self-Efficacy	4	0.83	Good reliability
Institutional Support	4	0.79	Acceptable reliability
Behavioral Intention	4	0.87	Excellent reliability

All constructs demonstrate strong reliability, confirming that the questionnaire items consistently measure their respective constructs.

Correlation Analysis among Constructs

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to explore relationships between constructs. Table 5 displays the correlation matrix:

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

Construct	PU	PEOU	SE	IS	BI
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	1				
Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)	0.65*	1			
Self-Efficacy (SE)	0.58*	0.55*	1		
Institutional Support (IS)	0.47*	0.50*	0.52*	1	
Behavioral Intention (BI)	0.70*	0.60*	0.63*	0.58*	1

Interpretation

- Behavioral Intention (BI) demonstrates the strongest positive correlation with Perceived Usefulness ($r = 0.70$), indicating faculty who see AI as useful are more likely to intend to adopt it.
- Self-Efficacy and Institutional Support also have moderate positive correlations with BI, suggesting confidence and organizational backing matter.
- All predictor variables are moderately correlated with each other, showing a theoretically coherent model.

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Behavioral Intention

A multiple regression analysis assessed how Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Self Efficacy, and Institutional Support predict Behavioral Intention to adopt AI.

Table 6: Regression Analysis

Predictor	B	SE B	β (Standardized)	t	p
Perceived Usefulness	0.45	0.06	0.42	7.50	<0.001
Perceived Ease of Use	0.28	0.07	0.26	4.00	<0.001
Self-Efficacy	0.22	0.06	0.20	3.67	<0.001
Institutional Support	0.18	0.05	0.16	3.60	<0.001

Model Summary

$R^2 = 0.62$ (62% of variance in Behavioral Intention explained)

$F(4, 295) = 123.4, p < 0.001$

Interpretation

Perceived Usefulness is the strongest predictor of faculty intention to adopt AI, meaning faculty who identify AI beneficial are much more likely to intend its use. Perceived Ease of Use, Self-Efficacy, and Institutional Support also positively and significantly predict intention, underscoring the importance of usability, confidence, and organizational environment.

Summary of Results

- Faculty generally perceive AI positively, recognizing its usefulness for improving teaching and learning outcomes.
- Moderate levels of ease of utilize and self-efficacy indicate some confidence but also room for additional support and training.
- Institutional support is perceived as insufficient, signaling a critical area for improvement.
- Behavioral Intention to adopt AI is positively strong, with clear influences from perceived usefulness and ease of use.
- The regression model confirms these constructs explain a substantial portion of adoption intention variance, guiding where efforts should focus to increase AI integration.

Discussion

This study examined faculty perceptions and intentions to adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public-sector universities of South Punjab. The findings highlight that teachers generally recognize AI's usefulness in enhancing teaching effectiveness and student engagement, which aligns with global research emphasizing perceived usefulness as a key adoption driver (Davis, 1989; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2022).

Faculty reported moderate ease of utilize and self-efficacy, suggesting some confidence in utilizing AI tools but also indicating the require for targeted training to improve skills and comfort with technology (Hasan, Malik, & Hussain, 2025). Institutional support was identified as insufficient, highlighting gaps in training, technical assistance, and resources—consistent with documented challenges in South Punjab's universities (Malik, Ahmed, & Zafar, 2025).

Behavioral intention to utilize AI was positively influenced most strongly by perceived usefulness, followed by ease of use, self-efficacy, and institutional support. This supports the Technology Acceptance Model's applicability in this context (Venkatesh et al., 2022) and underscores the importance of demonstrating AI's benefits alongside improving usability and support.

To promote AI adoption, universities should prioritize comprehensive professional development, invest in infrastructure, strengthen institutional policies, and foster collaborative environments. Addressing these areas can empower faculty and enhance educational outcomes.

Limitations include the cross-sectional design and regional focus, suggesting future research could adopt longitudinal and qualitative approaches to deepen understanding.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance AI adoption in public-sector universities of South Punjab:

1. **Comprehensive Training Programs:** Develop ongoing professional development workshops focused on AI tools, pedagogical integration, and ethical considerations to boost faculty self-efficacy and ease of use.
2. **Infrastructure Improvement:** Invest in reliable internet, updated hardware, and userfriendly AI platforms to reduce technical barriers.
3. **Strengthen Institutional Support:** Establish dedicated technical support teams and clear policies encouraging AI integration, including incentives for faculty innovation.
4. **Promote Awareness and Benefits:** Showcase successful AI implementation case studies to increase perceived usefulness and motivate adoption.
5. **Foster Collaborative Communities:** Create forums or user groups for faculty to share experiences, challenges, and best practices in AI use.

Implementing these recommendations can facilitate sustainable AI integration, ultimately improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes in the region.

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