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Psychological Empowerment Mediates Structural Empowerment's Impact on Unethical Behavior: Moderating Effects of AI Identity in ChatGPT Students

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Studies on user interaction with technology have shown that user behavior is influenced by various factors, including personal motivations, social influences, and system characteristics (Mohit et al., 2023). The study of user interaction with AI-enabled systems has been a prominent area of research in the field of Information Systems (IS) for a considerable period. This research domain covers a wide spectrum of applications, including the support of individual productivity through expert systems, the enhancement of web usage through recommender systems, and the provision of personal assistant functionality (Rzepka & Berger, 2018). However, there is a significant gap in the comprehensive exploration of the ethical implications and challenges associated with the use of AI. This study investigates the mediating role of psychological empowerment, as proposed by Spreitzer (1995) and Spreitzer (1996), in the relationship between structural empowerment and unethical behavior among students using ChatGPT. It also examines the moderating effects of AI identity on this relationship. The research includes a sample of students who regularly engage with ChatGPT for educational purposes. Surveys were used to collect data on structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, AI identity, and unethical behavior. The findings support the hypothesis that structural empowerment positively influences unethical behavior among students. Additionally, the results indicate that psychological empowerment partially mediates the relationship between structural empowerment and unethical behavior, aligning with the conceptualizations of Spreitzer (1995) and Spreitzer (1996). Moreover, the study reveals that AI identity moderates the relationship between psychological empowerment and unethical behavior, suggesting that students with a strong identification with AI, are more likely to engage in unethical behavior when they perceive a lack of empowerment. These results emphasize the importance of both structural and psychological empowerment in promoting ethical behavior among students. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for educators and policymakers to consider the potential impact of AI on student behavior, particularly for those who strongly identify with AI.

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