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SYNERGIZING ACADEMIC ADVISORS' FUNCTION AND AI TECHNOLOGY IN ACHIEVING STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL GOALS

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Abstract

In higher education institutions, academic advisors play a pivotal role in guiding students to reach their educational goal and career objectives. However, traditional advising faces challenges such as matched schedule, time duration, personalized attention, and a large student population. This study explores the synergistic integration of academic advisors' expertise with artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to enhance student success. As higher education institutions increasingly adopt artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, the role of academic advisors is undergoing a significant change. This qualitative study explores how the synergy between academic advisors' function and AI technology contributes to the achievement of students' educational goals. Grounded in human-centered pedagogy and interpretive inquiry, this writing investigates academic advisors' perceptions, experiences, and practices in integrating AI-assisted tools within advising processes. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, and document analysis involving academic advisors and undergraduate students from diverse academic disciplines. Based on the research finding, it revealed that AI technologies support advising practices by enabling early identification of academic risks, facilitating personalized study planning, and enhancing access to timely academic information. However, participants emphasized that the effectiveness of AI is highly dependent on the advisor's professional judgment, ethical awareness, and relational engagement with students. Advisors viewed AI as a complementary instrument rather than a substitute for human interaction, highlighting the irreplaceable role of empathy, contextual understanding, and motivational dialogue in advising relationships. The result shows that synergizing academic advisors and AI technology can guide students to reach their educational goals and career objectives. This study proposes a hybrid academic advising model in which AI functions as an augmentative technology that strengthens, rather than diminishes, human agency in educational decision-making. By foregrounding lived experiences and meaning-making processes, this research contributes qualitative insights into how human–AI collaboration can be ethically and pedagogically aligned to support holistic student success in contemporary higher education.

Keywords: *Academic Advisors' Function, AI Technology, Students' Educational Goals*

INTRODUCTION

In higher education institutions, academic advising is essential to fostering students' perseverance, success, and professional growth. Advisors help students choose courses, understand career pathways, comprehend degree requirements, and overcome academic obstacles. Yet, despite the fact that it can be essential for improving institutional success and

encouraging student engagement and retention, it rarely receives enough attention in higher education institutions (Zaher, 2024). Although academic advising has a favorable impact on student retention, staff training, poor implementation, and a lack of resources frequently compromise its efficacy (Mvikweni & Mthengi, 2025)

Academic advising and artificial intelligence (AI) are common in higher education because both aim to help students advance academically and achieve their goals. Traditionally, academic advising has depended on relational discourse, professional judgment, and personalized counsel to aid students in managing curricular requirements and career planning. AI systems can detect patterns of academic risk, recommend course sequences, and provide real-time access to institutional data, increasing efficiency and responsiveness. However, AI does not replace the relational and interpretative components of advising. Instead, AI works best as a complimentary tool, allowing advisors to focus more extensively on developmental interactions, motivational support, and contextual understanding of students' lived experiences (Albinali et al., 2024)

This qualitative study explores the ways in which students' educational and career goals are met through the synergistic integration of academic advisers' knowledge with AI technologies. This study investigates a hybrid paradigm where AI serves as an augmentative tool that enhances human integration and educational involvement, rather than replacing human advisors.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design. This study was carried out at a university where researchers were granted authorization to collect data and investigate the role of academic supervisors using AI. This study included a carefully selected sample of academic advisers and undergraduate students from higher education institutions that have adopted AI-assisted academic advising systems. The study involved a total of eight academic advisors. To ensure relevance and depth of experience, participating advisors had to have at least three years of professional advising experience and regularly use AI-supported advising technologies such digital academic planning platforms. Their disciplinary backgrounds ranged from the humanities to the social sciences and business, providing a variety of institutional perspectives. In addition, 15 undergraduate students who had used AI-supported advising services for at least one semester were chosen.

To facilitate methodological triangulation, data were collected using a variety of qualitative methodologies. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews with advisers and students lasted roughly 45-60 minutes each. In these interviews, participants' opinions, experiences, and thoughts about the incorporation of AI tools into academic advising procedures were examined. Second, in order to place participant experiences within larger institutional frameworks, relevant institutional documents such as policy statements and guidelines for AI implementation were examined.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that artificial intelligence (AI) technologies significantly improve academic advising methods, especially through better access to timely academic information, individualized study planning, and early identification of academic concerns. These findings imply that AI serves as an supported system that enhances in advisory settings. This is consistent with current studies on analysis in higher education, where data-driven resources are being utilized more and more to support student achievement and retention such as the study conducted by Katherine Conway et al (2015) stated that academic achievement is highly predicted by learning management system (LMS) engagement data.

Nevertheless, the results also highlight the fact that technological effectiveness by itself does not ensure advice that is effective. The importance of AI depends heavily on the advisor's professional judgment, ethical awareness, and interpersonal interaction, as participants repeatedly underlined. This means that AI cannot shape student performance on its own; rather, human advisors must understand and mediate it.

The study also emphasizes how important empathy, contextual knowledge, and motivated communication are in advising relationships. Although AI systems may automate administrative tasks and create customized academic courses, they are devoid of the relational and affective abilities that define human connection. Providing advice is a relational activity based on trust, encouragement, and a comprehensive grasp of students' goals and difficulties. It is not just a transactional exchange of information. Based on the opinions of the participants, AI should be seen as an additional tool that improves advisers' ability to offer timely and well- informed advice rather than as a replacement for them. This is in line with Nurhaeni (2022) argued that both students and academic advisors acknowledged that the advising session was not yet as successful as they had planned, according to the study's findings. They listed conflicting schedules and low student motivation as some of the reasons the advising session had not yet proven successful. Both students and academic advisers agreed that in order to have better advising sessions in the future, they need to establish deeper ties and increase communication.

Thus, the primary contribution of this study is the synergy between academic advisors and AI technology. The results support a hybrid advising model where human agency is maintained at the center and technological tools function as cognitive and analytical extensions, rather than framing AI as a disruptive replacement for human activities. A strategy such as this encourages a well-balanced integration in which data-driven insights influence educational decision-making processes without taking over. This collaboration between humans and AI demonstrates a move away from automation and toward augmentation, supporting the idea that educational technology innovation should be pedagogically and morally connected (Zaher, 2024). In the end, the

findings show that AI can assist students in reaching their academic and professional goals provided it is properly included into advising procedures.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes by showing that although AI technologies greatly improve academic advising by detecting risks early, creating individualized study plans, and providing better access to academic knowledge, their efficacy is still largely reliant on the human advisor. The results emphasize that AI is most effective when used as a supplement to advisers' professional judgment, ethical awareness, and interpersonal skills. Empathy, contextual interpretation, and motivated discourse were repeatedly underlined by participants as essential components of successful advising practice.

The suggested hybrid academic advising model confirms that optimal student outcomes are achieved through a synergistic blend of AI-driven data and human-centered involvement. Finally, the study provides qualitative evidence that ethically aligned human-AI collaboration can enhance student development by directing learners toward the successful achievement of their educational goals in current higher education settings.

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