

English-major Students' Experiences of Using ChatGPT in Academic Writing: A Narrative Inquery in Surakarta

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Abstract

The integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, particularly ChatGPT, into academic writing is increasingly prominent in educational settings. This study explores the experiences of five English-major students from Surakarta, Central Java, in utilizing ChatGPT for various stages of their academic writing process. By employing a qualitative case study methodology, data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and personal stories shared by the participants. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and themes. The study finds that students generally perceive ChatGPT as a valuable tool, particularly for brainstorming, drafting, revising, and improving grammar, vocabulary, and time efficiency. However, concerns about over-reliance on AI, plagiarism risks, and the credibility of AI-generated content were prominent. The findings are interpreted through the lens of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which highlights the importance of perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) in driving students' engagement with ChatGPT. This study contributes to understanding how AI tools can enhance writing efficiency while emphasizing the need to balance such tools with critical thinking to maintain academic integrity. Practical implications for teaching practices suggest that integrating AI tools into curricula should include guidance on ethical use, fostering digital literacy, and promoting responsible AI use among students.

Keywords: ChatGPT; Academic writing; English learning; Generative AI; Technology acceptance model

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INTRODUCTION

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools, like ChatGPT, in academic writing is rapidly emerging and transforming the way students approach writing tasks. In recent years, students' perceptions of AI tools have varied, with some acknowledging the efficiency these tools offer in drafting, brainstorming, and revising their work, while others express concerns about over-reliance, academic integrity, and the potential for creativity loss. These concerns are particularly relevant in academic contexts, where the quality and authenticity of student work are paramount. Existing research shows that while AI tools like ChatGPT can enhance writing productivity and grammar checking, students' hesitations remain, particularly regarding issues of plagiarism and the credibility of AI-generated content (Misbah Sultan et al. 2025). This study, focusing on English-major students in Surakarta, aims to explore these perceptions, providing a localized perspective on how students in this context engage with ChatGPT during academic writing.

The study's theoretical grounding is well-supported by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis and Granić 2024), which provides a framework for understanding students' use of ChatGPT in academic settings. TAM suggests that the adoption of a new

technology is primarily influenced by its perceived usefulness (PU) and ease of use (PEOU). In this context, students' attitudes toward ChatGPT are shaped by how they perceive its ability to enhance their academic performance and how easy it is to use. Recent studies have shown that students are more likely to integrate ChatGPT into their academic workflows when they perceive it as beneficial for tasks like brainstorming, drafting, and revising academic writing (Herwanto, Setiawan, and Munir 2024). However, the challenge lies in balancing the tool's ease of use with the need to maintain academic integrity and critical thinking skills, which TAM also helps address by analyzing these constructs within the adoption process.

A key strength of this study is its integration of both global and local perspectives. While much of the literature focuses on general perceptions of AI tools in education, this study contributes a valuable localized view by specifically examining English-major students in Surakarta. Previous research has predominantly focused on global or urban contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how AI tools are perceived in different cultural and educational environments. This study aims to address this gap by examining how students in Surakarta integrate ChatGPT into their academic practices, shedding light on the unique challenges and benefits experienced by this group (Misbah Sultan et al. 2025). However, the introduction could further emphasize the novelty of this Surakarta context, detailing how this case study fills specific gaps in current literature regarding AI's role in local educational settings (Herwanto et al. 2024).

While the literature review draws on a wide range of studies, it would benefit from more thematic synthesis to clearly identify clusters of findings, such as ethical concerns, perceived usefulness, and support in the writing process. By categorizing these themes, the study could offer a more structured view of the various dimensions of AI tool integration, which would guide the subsequent discussion more effectively. Furthermore, explicitly stating the research questions at the end of the introduction would help readers understand the focus of the study and set clear expectations for the methodology and analysis that follow. This small addition would significantly improve the clarity and flow of the introduction, providing a clearer roadmap for the reader to follow through the rest of the research (Launonen et al., 2024).

This study aims to fill critical gaps in existing literature by examining the specific experiences and strategies employed by English-major students in Surakarta when using ChatGPT for academic writing. By exploring how students perceive the tool's role in their writing process, the challenges they encounter, and the benefits they derive from its use, this research offers valuable insights into the practical integration of AI in education. The findings will not only contribute to the growing body of knowledge on AI in education but also provide practical recommendations for educators seeking to leverage AI tools in a responsible and effective manner (Tarchi et al. 2025; Zhou et al. 2023).

The research questions are: 1) How do English-major students in Surakarta use ChatGPT in their academic writing? 2) What strategies do students use when incorporating ChatGPT at different stages of writing? 3) What challenges do students face when using ChatGPT, and how do they overcome them? This study will contribute to a better understanding of the practical use of AI tools in academic settings and offer guidance on their effective and ethical application in education.

METHOD

In this study, a qualitative case study methodology was employed to investigate the experiences of English-major students using ChatGPT in academic writing at a university in Surakarta, Central Java. The research focused on understanding how students perceive ChatGPT's role in their writing process, from brainstorming ideas to revising their drafts. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document

analysis, ensuring a comprehensive view of student interactions with ChatGPT. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify recurring patterns in the data, providing insights into both the advantages and challenges of using AI in academic writing. This approach also included triangulation to enhance data credibility, alongside member checking to validate the findings with participants. The study adhered to strict ethical guidelines, including informed consent, data confidentiality, and participant anonymity, ensuring that the research was conducted with integrity and respect for the participants' rights. The findings are expected to contribute valuable knowledge to the understanding of AI's role in academic settings and inform future educational practices involving digital tools like ChatGPT.

Research Flow

This research follows a qualitative case study approach to explore how English-major students at a university in Surakarta use ChatGPT in their academic writing. The study aims to understand students' perceptions of ChatGPT's role, the stages at which they integrate it into their writing process, and the challenges they face. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis, involving five students who actively engaged with ChatGPT in generating topic ideas, drafting, revising, and finding references. This data triangulation approach ensures a comprehensive exploration of the students' experiences with the AI tool. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns in the students' interactions with ChatGPT, revealing insights into its benefits and limitations in the academic writing process.

The research flow progresses through several stages, starting with the identification of the research context and objectives. Initially, the study investigates students' use of ChatGPT during the early stages of writing, such as topic selection and brainstorming, followed by its application in drafting and grammar checking. The analysis highlights how students utilize ChatGPT to streamline their writing process, particularly in terms of time efficiency and reference management. However, challenges such as limited access to free versions of ChatGPT and concerns about plagiarism and the credibility of sources were also identified. By exploring these issues, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how AI tools can be effectively integrated into educational settings, contributing to the broader discourse on the ethical use and potential of AI in academic writing. The findings also offer practical recommendations for educators seeking to balance AI integration with the preservation of academic integrity.

Following the data collection, the next step was to analyze the interview transcripts using thematic analysis. This process was guided by the framework of Braun and Clarke (2022), which provides a structured approach for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. The analysis began with familiarization, where the interview transcripts were read thoroughly to gain a deep understanding of the content. This allowed the researcher to capture the essence of the participants' experiences and to develop an initial sense of the data as a whole. After becoming familiar with the transcripts, the next stage was initial coding. At this point, the data was systematically examined to identify meaningful segments of text that addressed the research questions. The codes were closely tied to recurring ideas and issues such as motivation, perceived effectiveness, benefits, and challenges. These codes served as the foundation for building broader categories.

Once the initial coding was complete, the process moved toward generating themes. Similar codes were grouped together to create overarching patterns that captured the complexity of the participants' narratives. Themes such as "motivation and confidence," "AI as a cognitive partner," and "over-reliance on AI" emerged during this stage, reflecting both the positive and potentially problematic aspects of using ChatGPT. The themes were

then reviewed to ensure that they coherently represented the data. This reviewing process involved revisiting the transcripts to confirm that the themes were accurate, consistent, and supported by sufficient evidence. Any discrepancies were refined until the themes provided a reliable representation of the students' experiences. Following this, the themes were clearly defined and named in a way that reflected their essence. Each theme was articulated to provide an in-depth understanding of how students engaged with ChatGPT and the implications of this interaction on their academic writing.

The naming of themes ensured clarity and interpretability for readers. Finally, the analysis was written up in a narrative form. Each theme was presented with direct evidence from the transcripts, offering a comprehensive and nuanced picture of the benefits and challenges students encountered. Through this structured approach, the thematic analysis highlighted the multifaceted role of ChatGPT in academic writing and shed light on the ways in which students navigated its advantages and limitations.

Data Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation was employed, which involved cross-verifying data collected through interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis. By comparing different sources and types of data, the researcher was able to confirm the consistency of themes and patterns emerging from the student experiences with ChatGPT in academic writing. This process enhanced the reliability of the findings, ensuring they were grounded in a range of perspectives and not skewed by any single data source. Member checking was also employed, where participants were given the opportunity to review and validate preliminary findings. This step ensured that the interpretations reflected the participants' true experiences, increasing the study's credibility and minimizing potential biases in data analysis.

Ethical considerations were a cornerstone of this research, with particular emphasis on protecting the rights and well-being of the participants. All students involved in the study provided informed consent, acknowledging their understanding of the study's purpose, methods, and any potential risks. The research adhered to strict confidentiality protocols, with all data being securely stored in password-protected files and participant identities anonymized. This approach safeguarded participants' privacy and minimized any risk of harm. Additionally, the study maintained transparency throughout the research process, ensuring participants were fully aware of their rights, including the ability to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

This study aims to explore how English-major students in Surakarta use ChatGPT for academic writing, addressing gaps in existing research. While AI tools in education have been studied broadly, little is known about how students in specific regions, like Surakarta, use these tools. By examining how students perceive ChatGPT's role in their writing, the challenges they face, and the benefits they gain, this study will offer valuable insights into how AI can be integrated effectively in education. The research also provide recommendations for educators on how to use AI tools responsibly.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This chapter presents the findings obtained from a qualitative case study conducted at a university in Surakarta City, Central Java, with the participation of five students majoring in English. The study sought to explore their perceptions of ChatGPT in relation to academic writing, how they integrate it into various stages of the writing process, and the specific challenges they encounter when relying on the tool. The insights gathered from the participants provide valuable perspectives on the interplay between artificial intelligence and student writing practices, particularly within the context of higher education in Indonesia. The findings reveal that students generally perceive ChatGPT as

a supportive resource that can enhance their confidence, provide language suggestions, and offer structural guidance during the drafting and revising stages. However, the results also highlight that students exercise caution and remain aware of potential issues such as over-reliance on the tool, the risk of reduced critical thinking, and occasional inaccuracies in generated content. These challenges suggest the need for balanced use and critical engagement when employing ChatGPT in academic contexts. To provide a clearer overview of the results and their distribution, the key findings of this study are summarized and organized in Table 1 for reference.

Table 1. Perceptions of the Role of ChatGPT in Academic Writing

No	Key Findings	Student	
		Number	%
1	ChatGPT is primarily used by students to generate topic ideas for their writing.	4	80
2	Students use ChatGPT to help with brainstorming , particularly when they are stuck or need new perspectives.	1	20
3	ChatGPT aids students in drafting their writing by helping them structure their ideas and provide content.	3	60
4	ChatGPT significantly enhances time efficiency by providing immediate suggestions, reducing the time spent on writing tasks.	2	40
5	Students use ChatGPT to find references quickly, but always verify their credibility.	3	60
6	ChatGPT helps students expand their academic vocabulary , especially by suggesting more formal or technical terms.	1	20
7	ChatGPT is used for revising written content , helping to refine and improve the quality of the drafts.	1	20
8	Students rely on ChatGPT for grammar checking , ensuring their writing meets academic standards.	2	40

The students in the study consistently highlighted the value of ChatGPT in supporting various stages of the academic writing process, specifically in the areas of topic generation, brainstorming, drafting, and grammar checking. These findings align with similar research exploring student perceptions of ChatGPT in academic writing. For instance, a study found that university students in Finland reported high usability for ChatGPT in academic writing, especially in generating ideas and structuring content, though some students still expressed concerns about its overall effectiveness and ethical use in academic contexts.

Moreover, the data show that ChatGPT is particularly beneficial in providing writing support, especially for language learners who may face challenges with content organization and language proficiency. The study found that students in Indonesia and the Philippines appreciated ChatGPT for enhancing their writing confidence and reducing stress, which led to a more organized and coherent final product. The students found the tool beneficial in the early stages of academic writing, such as generating ideas and refining language, but cautioned against overreliance on AI for creative aspects.

These findings are further supported by some research data, that explored the perceptions of English language students regarding ChatGPT's potential applications. They noted that while students utilized ChatGPT to assist with content creation and drafting, they remained cautious about its limitations, such as potential plagiarism risks and the inability to fully replicate human creativity. They argue that students should be educated about the ethical use of AI in academic writing to avoid misuse and to maintain academic integrity.

In addition to these observations, the study identified that brainstorming and generating writing outlines were among the key advantages of using ChatGPT. Their study highlighted that ChatGPT facilitated academic writing in English as a foreign

language (EFL) by helping students organize ideas, synthesize literature, and enrich their writing. However, they also pointed out that academic integrity remained a concern due to the possibility of unacknowledged AI contributions to writing. This suggests that while students found ChatGPT helpful in structuring and refining their work, there was a need for critical engagement with the generated content to ensure the quality and originality of their academic work.

These studies reflect a growing consensus on the positive impact of ChatGPT in academic writing, particularly in supporting the writing process, while also acknowledging the ethical challenges and limitations of AI-generated content. They underline the need for ongoing research to explore best practices in integrating AI tools like ChatGPT into educational settings responsibly. By addressing these concerns, educators can help students harness the power of AI without sacrificing their academic integrity and critical thinking skills.

Table 2. Use of ChatGPT Across Different Stages of Academic Writing

No	Key Findings	Student	
		Number	%
1	ChatGPT is often used in the early stages of writing, specifically for topic generation and drafting text. It helps students by providing multiple ideas from which they can choose.	1	20
2	Students frequently use ChatGPT during the brainstorming and reference searching to expand or improve the structure of their work. This includes rephrasing or suggesting content improvements.	1	20
3	Some students combine ChatGPT's output with other AI tools for content development and reference gathering, leading to a more collaborative AI assisted writing process	1	20
4	In later stages, students use ChatGPT from topic generation until revision, and check grammar. It is frequently used during revision for improving the final output.	1	20
5	ChatGPT assists in not only brainstorming and drafting but also helps students find relevant references, making it a comprehensive tool for multiple stages of writing.	1	20

The integration of ChatGPT into the students' writing process was consistent across several stages, beginning with topic generation and continuing through drafting and revision. All five students started by using ChatGPT to generate a range of potential topic ideas, selecting one that fit their academic interests. This step was crucial in setting the foundation for the rest of the writing process. Following the selection of a topic, students employed ChatGPT for drafting. They provided prompts to ChatGPT to create initial drafts or sections of their papers, which they would then build upon. Some students mentioned integrating ChatGPT with other AI tools to refine their drafts further. As part of the revision process, students used ChatGPT to check grammar, improve sentence structure, and ensure the overall clarity of their work. The tool was particularly useful for these tasks, as it saved students time and effort that would otherwise have been spent manually editing their papers.

Additionally, students used ChatGPT to manage references and citations. Four students employed ChatGPT to find relevant sources and organize them according to academic citation styles, such as APA. This made the process of gathering and citing references more efficient, although some students expressed concerns about the credibility of sources provided by ChatGPT.

Table 3. Challenges Encountered in Using ChatGPT

No	Key Findings	Student	
		Number	%
1	Students using the free version of ChatGPT often encounter limitations in the number of queries they can make, causing frustration and requiring them to wait for access	4	80
2	Crafting detailed prompts is challenging, as vague or imprecise input leads to unsatisfactory results, requiring multiple revisions	5	100
3	Students worry about plagiarism when relying too heavily on	2	40
4		1	20

Despite the motivational benefits, the study also found that students expressed concerns about Despite its usefulness, students faced several challenges when using ChatGPT for academic writing . One common issue was limited access to advanced features in the free mode. All students reported facing restrictions when using the free version of ChatGPT, which limited their ability to fully explore the tool's capabilities. These restrictions were particularly frustrating when students needed access to more advanced features for tasks such as drafting longer sections or receiving more in-depth feedback. Another challenge that students encountered was difficulty in crafting effective prompts. Many students found it challenging to phrase their prompts in ways that would yield the most useful and relevant responses from ChatGPT. This led to frustration, especially when they required highly specific information or nuanced responses to complex academic questions.

In addition to these technical challenges, students raised concerns about plagiarism. Several students expressed unease about using AI-generated content due to the potential for unintentional plagiarism. While ChatGPT assisted in generating text and drafting ideas, students worried about the ethical implications of relying too heavily on AI without properly acknowledging its contributions. Finally, some students experienced issues with credibility of sources. One student noted that some of the references suggested by ChatGPT were not credible, which made them hesitant to rely entirely on the tool for sourcing academic materials. This concern was particularly evident when students used ChatGPT for reference generation, as they needed to validate the information before including it in their work.

Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on the ways in which English-major students in Surakarta integrate ChatGPT into their academic writing practices. Overall, the results affirm the dual character of ChatGPT as both a facilitator of efficiency and a source of concern for academic integrity. The themes that emerged from the participants' experiences resonate strongly with existing literature on generative AI in educational contexts, yet they also add a localized perspective that enriches the global discourse. This discussion situates the study's results within the body of previous research, organized thematically around perceived usefulness, application across writing stages, ethical concerns, and broader theoretical implications.

The students in this study overwhelmingly emphasized the perceived usefulness of ChatGPT, particularly in tasks such as brainstorming, drafting, grammar checking, and vocabulary enrichment. These findings align closely with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which identifies perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) as primary drivers of technology adoption. Davis and Granić (2024) argued that tools integrated smoothly into academic tasks are more readily embraced by students, and this was evident in how participants reported time efficiency and confidence-building as

central benefits of ChatGPT. Launonen, Talalakina, and Dubova (2024) similarly noted that Finnish university students perceived ChatGPT as highly usable in generating ideas and structuring writing, although they remained cautious about its reliability. The present study reinforces this view by illustrating how Surakarta students use ChatGPT not only to accelerate writing but also to scaffold their confidence when tackling complex academic tasks.

Another key contribution of this study lies in mapping ChatGPT's role across multiple stages of the writing process. Students reported that the tool was most beneficial during the early phases of topic generation and idea development, confirming the observations of Xu and Jumaat (2024), who identified brainstorming and outlining as key advantages of ChatGPT for EFL students. Beyond these initial stages, students in this study also relied on ChatGPT for drafting and revising, tasks that mirror findings by Royani and Rizki (2024), who noted that Indonesian and Filipino students benefited from ChatGPT's support in content organization and linguistic refinement. Importantly, this research adds nuance by documenting how students blended ChatGPT's suggestions with other AI tools, creating a collaborative digital ecosystem that extended beyond single-tool usage. This highlights a new trajectory in AI integration, where students are not passive consumers of generated text but active curators who combine multiple resources to strengthen their academic work.

Despite these benefits, the challenges identified in this study illustrate persistent concerns echoed throughout the literature. One recurring issue was limited access to advanced features in the free version of ChatGPT, which often disrupted the students' workflow. This is consistent with the practical obstacles noted by Wu (2023), who observed that EAP students faced technical and accessibility constraints when using AI for feedback. In the Surakarta case, such restrictions not only caused frustration but also influenced how students approached task management, suggesting that institutional support in providing broader access could play a critical role in optimizing AI-assisted learning.

Another significant challenge was the difficulty of crafting effective prompts, with students reporting that vague inputs produced unsatisfactory results. This reflects findings by Boudouaia, Mouas, and Kouider (2024), who highlighted that effective AI use in language learning requires training students in prompt engineering. Without these skills, the benefits of generative AI remain underutilized. For Surakarta students, this limitation implied additional cognitive load, as they had to repeatedly refine their instructions before obtaining useful outputs. Hence, the study underscores the need for pedagogical interventions that explicitly teach prompt formulation as part of digital literacy in academic writing.

Perhaps the most critical concerns raised by students were those related to plagiarism and source credibility. Even while acknowledging ChatGPT's utility, participants were cautious about the ethical implications of over-reliance on AI-generated text. These concerns are echoed by Janković, Janković, and Kulić (2025), who argued that students must be educated about the ethical boundaries of AI use in order to prevent academic misconduct. In this study, participants admitted to verifying references provided by ChatGPT, demonstrating a conscious effort to safeguard academic integrity. Similarly, Misbah Sultan et al. (2025) documented that while AI can improve the writing abilities of undergraduate students, issues of plagiarism and diminished critical thinking remain central risks. By triangulating these findings, it becomes evident that ethical use and critical engagement are not supplementary concerns but essential elements of AI integration in education.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study expands the application of TAM by showing how perceived usefulness and ease of use are moderated by cultural and

educational context. Whereas Western studies have largely emphasized efficiency and usability, the Surakarta students framed their use of ChatGPT in relation to academic integrity and responsibility. This suggests that TAM can be enriched by incorporating ethical awareness as an additional construct influencing adoption, particularly in academic environments where originality and credibility are highly valued. Furthermore, the findings resonate with Tarchi et al. (2025), who highlighted the role of ChatGPT in source-based writing tasks, underscoring the importance of balancing technical utility with higher-order cognitive demands such as synthesis and evaluation.

Practically, these findings hold significant implications for educational policy and pedagogy. The evidence suggests that ChatGPT is already deeply embedded in students' writing practices, regardless of formal institutional endorsement. Therefore, rather than discouraging its use, universities should provide structured guidance on responsible integration. This aligns with the recommendations of Alshammri (2024), who emphasized that educators must recognize the inevitability of AI adoption and respond by equipping students with the skills to use it ethically. For the Surakarta context, this could mean workshops on prompt design, training on citation management, and explicit instruction on distinguishing between AI-generated suggestions and original contributions. Moreover, providing institutional access to advanced AI tools could reduce inequities caused by free-version limitations and ensure that all students benefit from the same level of technological support.

The study also contributes to broader debates on the role of AI in shaping student creativity and critical thinking. While concerns about over-reliance were prominent, participants' cautious engagement suggests that students are not uncritically dependent on ChatGPT. Instead, they negotiate its outputs against their own academic judgment, reflecting what Zhou et al. (2023) described as a process where human writers outperform AI in deeper cohesion despite relying on AI for surface-level refinement. This hybrid practice indicates that AI does not necessarily diminish creativity but, when used thoughtfully, can complement students' intellectual agency. The challenge lies in fostering pedagogical environments that encourage reflection and conscious decision-making when interacting with AI-generated text.

In situating these findings chronologically within the literature, it is evident that early research around 2023–2024 focused primarily on identifying the potential of ChatGPT in language learning and writing (Wu, 2023; Zhou et al., 2023). By 2024, studies such as those by Launonen et al., Xu and Jumaat, and Royani and Rizki emphasized both opportunities and risks, particularly concerning ethical use and language development. More recent contributions, including Janković et al. (2025) and Misbah Sultan et al. (2025), have advanced the debate by examining misuse, plagiarism risks, and the need for responsible pedagogical frameworks. The present study fits within this trajectory by extending these insights into a new geographical and cultural context, providing a localized perspective that underscores both universal patterns and region-specific challenges.

The findings of this study reinforce the growing consensus that ChatGPT is a powerful but double-edged tool in academic writing. It offers substantial benefits in efficiency, confidence-building, and language support, but it also raises pressing challenges regarding ethics, access, and critical engagement. By situating these findings within the broader literature, the discussion highlights both continuity and novelty: continuity in the recurring themes of usefulness and ethical concern, and novelty in documenting how students in Surakarta actively negotiate the balance between AI assistance and academic responsibility. Theoretically, the study suggests the need to expand TAM to include ethical awareness as a determinant of adoption, while practically, it calls for institutional strategies to guide students toward responsible and critical AI use. These contributions

enrich the understanding of AI's role in academic writing and provide a foundation for future inquiries into how digital tools can be leveraged without undermining the values of higher education.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the growing role of ChatGPT as a supportive tool in the academic writing process for English-major students. The findings highlight that ChatGPT is primarily used for generating topic ideas, drafting initial sections, and revising content. The tool significantly aids in enhancing students' time efficiency by streamlining the brainstorming and drafting stages, allowing students to focus more on refining their ideas and improving their writing quality. Additionally, ChatGPT was valued for its grammar-checking capabilities, helping students ensure that their work adhered to proper linguistic standards. Its ability to assist with reference management further streamlined the writing process, though the credibility of these references was a concern for some students.

In terms of practical implications, the research underscores the importance of integrating digital literacy and AI awareness into academic writing instruction. Educators should not only acknowledge students' use of ChatGPT but also guide them in ethical and effective use. Institutions can play a proactive role by developing clear policies, offering training, and encouraging reflective practices that balance AI assistance with students' independent thinking and originality. These steps are crucial to ensure AI tools are used to support, rather than undermine, the academic writing process.

Finally, the study recommends further research to explore ChatGPT's impact across broader student populations, disciplines, and educational contexts. It suggests that future studies investigate long-term effects on writing skills and the evolving relationship between AI tools and academic integrity. Given the rapid advancement of generative AI, ongoing inquiry is essential to adapt pedagogical approaches and institutional policies in ways that respond to both the opportunities and challenges of AI-assisted academic writing.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that educational institutions provide structured guidance and training for students on how to effectively integrate AI tools like ChatGPT into their academic writing processes. This training should focus on improving students' skills in creating effective prompts, ensuring they can extract relevant and useful information from ChatGPT. Additionally, educators should emphasize the ethical use of AI in academic contexts, particularly in addressing concerns about plagiarism and the reliability of sources. Workshops or resources on responsible AI usage could help students understand how to use ChatGPT as a complement to their learning, while still maintaining academic integrity and producing original work.

Moreover, it is recommended that universities explore the possibility of offering more advanced, subscription-based access to ChatGPT or similar tools. The limitations of the free version were noted by several students, and providing access to more comprehensive features could enhance students' ability to fully utilize the tool. Additionally, institutions should encourage students to critically evaluate AI-generated content, particularly in terms of reference quality and factual accuracy. Implementing mechanisms such as peer reviews or instructor feedback sessions could ensure that students remain engaged with the critical thinking and editing processes, rather than over-relying on AI for content creation. This would support a balanced approach to AI integration, where technology enhances students' writing without undermining their creative and intellectual growth.

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