

**Academic Integrity in the Use of
AI-Assisted Academic Writing:
University Students' Perspectives
and Practices**

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Abstract

This research explores the views and practices of students regarding academic integrity in the use of AI-based academic writing tools. With the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence in education, particularly in language teaching, students face various opportunities and challenges in their writing process. This study employs the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as a framework to investigate the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control of students regarding the ethical use of AI tools. Data were collected through an open-ended questionnaire and interviews with 4 students at Swadaya Gunung Jati University, with an emphasis on their experiences and understanding of AI in academic writing. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the responses, allowing for the identification of recurring themes and trends in the students' perspectives. The research results reveal a nuanced understanding of academic integrity, with students acknowledging the benefits of AI—such as improved language accuracy, idea generation, and time efficiency—while also expressing concerns about potential ethical issues, including unintentional plagiarism, overreliance on AI-generated content, and the blurring line between assistance and misconduct. Many students perceived AI as a helpful tool, but emphasized the importance of using it critically and responsibly.

Key words

Academic Writing, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Integrity, Theory of Planned Behaviour

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a significant force in recent years, changing the education paradigm, especially in the field of language instruction. A more responsive and adaptive learning environment is being ushered in by the rapid expansion of AI in education, which also aims to optimize language learning and instruction to meet the unique needs of each student and teacher (Malik et al., 2023). The rapid development of AI has led to increasingly advanced applications, from automated assessment tools to personalized learning systems, which are revolutionizing traditional educational paradigms.

Along with the fast growth of AI in education, the incorporation of technology is becoming increasingly important in the context of academic writing (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024). Many AI technologies help academic writing and research, and each is adapted to specific purposes. Several studies have demonstrated that AI writing tools can significantly enhance the effectiveness and quality of writing assignments, both in terms of content and organization (Marzuki et al., 2023). Students can benefit from an interactive and customized learning experience by using AI technologies like ChatGPT. Grammarly and OpenAI's ChatGPT are essential for improving writing quality because they incorporate AI-driven grammatical checks, plagiarism detection, and text-generating features—all of which are crucial for producing lucid and original academic material (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024).

English academic writing is a complex and multifaceted endeavour that requires coordinating several cognitive abilities and knowledge to effectively manage writing processes, including goal planning, problem-solving, and strategically allocating memory resources (Allen & McNamara, 2017). The writing process is distinct for each student, influenced by their characteristics such as linguistic and literacy backgrounds, prior knowledge, and emotional states (e.g., attitudes towards academic writing and task engagement) (Gupta et al., 2022).

Writing well can help students succeed academically because university admissions and scholarships are often based on the quality of writing (Giridharan, 2012). Students, however, often struggle to produce high-quality, impactful scientific publications. Issues include inadequate vocabulary, bad syntax, and a lack of understanding when it comes to organizing ideas. To improve their writing, they require guidance and constructive criticism. Students are not given sufficient opportunities to practice writing and apply feedback to enhance their writing experience, as teachers often lack the time to provide individualized instruction and formative feedback (Gupta et al., 2022). Additional tools, such as assistance with more targeted grammar and vocabulary, can help students overcome this obstacle (Alemu & Gebremariam, 2025).

Although artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to accelerate academic advancement and expand educational opportunities, it also poses a threat to education's

essential ideals of integrity and authenticity. Using digital writing tools could result in textual plagiarism, which is against the rules of academic integrity. Despite increased interest in AI's role in academia, there is a notable lack of empirical studies examining students' perspectives on how AI use may influence or compromise academic integrity (Sterne, 2023). To create suitable institutional rules and instructional strategies that strike a balance between innovation and moral, academic conduct, it is imperative to comprehend the perspectives of students.

To better understand how university students perceive AI-assisted writing about academic integrity, this study will utilise the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen (1991) as a framework. By using this method, the study examines how students' perceptions of their power over the ethical use of AI writing tools, the social limitations they may encounter, and their attitudes toward these tools influence their behavioural intentions. So, the research questions proposed in this study are: 1) to what extent do university students use AI-assisted academic writing; and 2) what are the university students' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control towards academic integrity in the use of AI-assisted academic writing.

Gaining a better understanding of these social and psychological aspects will enable researchers to better comprehend why students utilise AI in the classroom and how they make decisions. This theoretical approach enables a methodical examination of the challenges of academic integrity in the digital era as technological innovations continue to blur the lines between assistance and academic misconduct.

Literature Review

Academic writing is one of the most challenging and intricate forms of writing, necessitating students to engage in critical thinking and demonstrate exceptional writing abilities (Kurniati & Fithriani, 2022). Students are required to study academic writing in higher education settings. This involves particular writing procedures, formats, and traits that will help them succeed academically. Along with problems such as spelling, word order, and text structure, students continue to identify difficulties with grammar and vocabulary as their primary areas of concern (Polakova & Ivenz, 2024).

Due to these challenges, AI has the potential to assist students with their writing and learning in various ways. Students may find that when their writing contains grammatical, punctuation, or spelling errors, they encounter an emotional barrier that prevents them from progressing during the writing process (Kim, Detrick, & Li, 2025). AI technologies, such as ChatGPT, can edit spelling, punctuation, and grammatical problems; moreover, it may summarize the text, paraphrase it, and even build a piece of a paper based on another, such as producing an abstract or an introduction based on the study's conclusions (Giglio & Costa, 2023). Additionally, Grammarly's AI evaluates user material and provides real-time recommendations for enhancing clarity,

engagement, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and delivery (Marzuki et al., 2023). This effectively transforms the writing process into a learning experience.

While these technologies offer significant benefits in terms of efficiency and writing quality, they also raise complex questions about academic integrity. Students' awareness of the risks associated with academic dishonesty when using AI tools varies, raising concerns about ethical responsibility (Du et al., 2025). International students are more likely to engage in academically dishonest behaviour, such as misconduct, but not negligence or violations, according to research findings, which show a strong and significant relationship between the variable students and academic integrity violations (Khalel et al., 2025). Understanding students' perspectives and practices regarding AI-assisted academic writing requires a robust theoretical framework; the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen provides a valuable lens for this analysis, especially when explored through qualitative research.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is a theoretical framework that can be applied to the development of behaviour-changing therapies, as well as the establishment of mediation mechanisms to influence behaviour through these interventions (Amirkhani et al., 2025). According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (2020), behaviour influenced by three core components: Attitudes, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control. The positive or negative values of each expected outcome or experience are directly related to the overall attitude, which is proportionate to the subjective likelihood that the behavior will produce the desired outcome or experience, reflecting students' positive or negative evaluations of using AI tools in writing.

Subjective Norms, Ajzen distinguishes between two kinds of normative beliefs: descriptive and injunctive. Expectations or subjective probabilities about whether certain people or reference groups (friends, family, instructors, etc.) support or oppose the action under consideration are known as injunctive normative views. Descriptive normative views, on the other hand, are beliefs regarding whether important individuals are engaged in the same activity. The general sense of social pressure to conform to such subjective norms or behaviours is influenced by both kinds of beliefs. This includes the impact of visible peer pressure, teachers, and institutional regulations regarding the use of AI.

Perceived Behavioural Control is believed to be based on the idea of accessible control, which refers to the existence of factors that may help or impede the execution of behaviour, such as the required knowledge and skills, as well as the availability or lack of time, money, and other resources. It relates to how students view their capacity to utilize AI tools responsibly and within moral bounds.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach to investigate university students' perspectives and experiences regarding the academic integrity of AI-assisted academic writing tools. Data were collected from an open-ended questionnaire and interview designed to explore students' understanding, attitudes, and experiences with AI. The questionnaire included questions about the frequency and manner of AI tool usage like

ChatGPT and Grammarly, students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using AI in academic writing, as well as their understanding of academic integrity in the context of AI assistance. The participants were selected from Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, specifically among students in the English study program who had completed academic writing courses and had experience with artificial intelligence (AI). Data collection was conducted online via Google Forms and Zoom Meeting; the participants were ensured to have experience with AI-assisted writing through the use of a purposive sampling technique.

The chosen individuals are guaranteed to have experience with AI-assisted writing, as determined through the use of a purposive sampling technique. The sample size is defined by data saturation, which ensures that rich and useful insights are obtained. Participants from a variety of academic disciplines contribute unique perspectives on AI-assisted writing. There are four students participating in the interview. The inclusion criteria for participant selection are as follows:

- 1) Enrollment in a higher education institution.
- 2) Experience with AI-assisted writing tools for academic tasks such as essays, reports, research papers, or thesis writing.
- 3) Willingness to participate in a recorded interview and share personal insights regarding AI-assisted writing.
- 4) Proficiency in academic writing to ensure an informed perspective on how AI impacts writing skills and development.

Using a mixed approach of inductive and deductive thematic analysis. The obtained data is examined using thematic analysis, which follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach. First, interview recordings are transcribed and thoroughly reviewed to familiarize the researchers with the data. Initial coding is then conducted to identify meaningful statements related to AI's benefits, challenges, ethical concerns, and its impact on students' writing development. Similar codes are grouped into broader themes, such as AI's role in enhancing writing skills versus fostering dependency, ethical dilemmas surrounding academic integrity, and variations in AI use across disciplines. The analysis was conducted manually, depending on the researchers' methodical coding and theme building approach.

These themes are then refined, reviewed, and supported with direct quotations from participants to ensure accuracy and credibility. By sharing early themes and chosen quotes with participants, member checking was carried out, enabling them to confirm the accuracy of interpretations and offer revisions as needed. To identify potential biases, challenge presumptions, and refine theme categorizations, peer debriefing sessions were conducted with colleagues who were not involved in the data collection process. The final results are compiled into a structured narrative, providing a comprehensive insight into how students perceive and engage with AI-assisted writing in academic settings.

Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and clarifying that participation is voluntary. This method provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by capturing students' authentic voices. It contributes valuable insights for developing policies and educational interventions related to AI use and academic integrity in higher education.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire and interviews, participants demonstrated varied levels of awareness about academic integrity in the context of AI-assisted writing. Many students acknowledged the benefits of AI tools, including improved language accuracy and assistance with idea generation. However, there was a noticeable difference in how students perceived the ethical boundaries of using AI. Some viewed AI as a mere aid comparable to a dictionary or grammar checker. In contrast, others expressed concerns about the risk of unintentional plagiarism or over-reliance on AI-generated content. In particular, three key conclusions based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) were uncovered by the interviews: (1) students' perceived behavioral control, which demonstrated their confidence and capacity to use AI tools responsibly within academic bounds; (2) the influence of subjective norms, where peer behavior and perceived expectations influenced students' choices; and (3) students' attitudes toward the ethical use of AI, which varied from supportive to cautious.

Students' attitude towards Academic Integrity

The findings reveal a nuanced and in-depth perspective among students regarding AI-assisted academic writing and academic integrity. The majority of students show a high sensitivity to the principles of academic integrity. Most respondents understand the importance of honesty, transparency, and responsibility in using AI-based tools to support their academic writing. They are aware that the unethical use of AI—such as submitting work entirely generated by AI without proper acknowledgement or plagiarism—is a serious violation of academic integrity. Students also tend to distinguish between using AI for minor tasks (e.g., grammar corrections or reference checks), which is considered more acceptable, and using AI to write entire papers, which is viewed as a serious violation. This aligns with the TPB's "attitude" component, which focuses on students' positive evaluations of their ability to utilize AI effectively for their purposes.

"I most often use AI to outline my writing, create introductions, and sometimes to summarize references or make paraphrases. I find AI very helpful in designing ideas. When facing many tasks at the same time, AI becomes a solution to efficiently design the flow of writing." (Ainin)

"In my opinion, using AI is perfectly okay as long as we know its limitations. AI is very helpful for us to develop ideas, but the direction of the writing is still determined by us. In that sense, I believe it is still honest academically." (Lutfiyah)

"In my view, AI can be used as long as it does not replace the primary role of the writer. We still must think and write broadly with our abilities." (Fadlan)

"I believe AI can be used ethically as long as we do not directly copy its results and still contribute intellectually. The use of AI must be accompanied by personal understanding and responsibility. If one only copies AI's results, that could be a form of plagiarism." (Amelia)

Some students are wary, voicing worries about authenticity and understanding the risks of over-reliance. This has proven especially troublesome in academic settings, where the distinction between AI aid and academic dishonesty remains blurred (Gonsalves, 2024). Additionally, there is a good awareness of the need to cite sources and maintain transparency when using AI assistance in writing.

To prevent plagiarism, some participants emphasised the importance of maintaining academic integrity. They also felt accountable for ensuring that, even with AI's assistance, the works generated were the product of their ideas and labour. However, there are also concerns about the potential for over-reliance on AI, which can impair students' capacity for creativity and critical thinking. Therefore, they emphasised the necessity for a balanced approach in integrating AI as a helpful tool in the learning process without compromising the core of autonomous learning. Overall, this interview demonstrates that students are beginning to grasp the principles of academic integrity related to the use of AI, and they are aware of the importance of ethics and accountability in producing academic work that is held to account.

According to research, students frequently utilise AI-powered tools in their academic writing process, viewing this technology as a helpful aid that enhances productivity, accuracy, and the overall quality of their work. Many students utilise AI programs for various purposes, including grammar checking, idea generation, literature review assistance, and reference searches. Students believed that artificial intelligence (AI) could be used as a proofreading tool, alerting them to errors by identifying phrases that contain grammatical errors (Afifah, 2024).

This response demonstrates students' ethical awareness and a positive outlook on the use of AI in academic writing while simultaneously acknowledging the challenges in upholding academic integrity in the digital age. With the proper setup, artificial intelligence can help students study more effectively on their own, resulting in a more enjoyable learning experience for each student (Ghannam et al., 2025).

Students' Perceptions of Social and Institutional Expectations

Many students stated that they believe the adoption of this approach in academic writing is a result of their classmates' extensive usage of AI technologies. These students interpret peer conduct as social approbation, which supports the notion that using programs like Grammarly or ChatGPT is commonplace and acceptable. This illustrates

how subjective standards play a role in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that people are more likely to act in a manner they perceive as acceptable or common among their reference group. In this situation, even in the absence of explicit institutional sanction, publicly observing peers utilise AI technologies might lessen the perceived stigma and inspire others to follow suit.

However, there is often some hesitancy or concern about how instructors or educational institutions may feel regarding the employment of AI technologies as a result of this normalisation. Some students claim that while employing AI, some teachers doubt the veracity of their writing. Students are encouraged to use AI more carefully as a result. Although students recognise that AI can enhance their writing, they also acknowledge that excessive use of AI may have adverse effects.

“When many friends use AI to complete tasks faster and with seemingly good results, I feel compelled to follow so as not to be left behind. However, I still try to remember that each student has a different learning style, and I choose to use AI selectively, not as a substitute for my own thinking process.” (Amelia)

“..... and our lecturers often remind us not to rely on AI” (Ainin)

“Yes, some lecturers feel that using AI does not reflect the original abilities of students. However, many of my friends still use AI. The pressure is indeed there, but it is more of a reminder to be careful, not a prohibition.” (Lutfiyah)

The majority of participants demonstrated a strong understanding of the importance of honesty when using AI technologies for academic writing. They agreed that while AI can speed up and improve writing, its application must still adhere to ethical and educational standards of responsibility. Students noted that the use of AI is not intended to replace their ability to write autonomously but rather to serve as a supplemental tool for refining grammar, generating ideas, and correcting technical errors. To ensure that the work remains unique and meets academic requirements, they also acknowledged the necessity of reviewing and editing the AI-generated findings. The study examines university students' understanding of academic integrity regulations and their perspectives on AI-related academic misconduct (Lund et al., 2025).

Furthermore, universities have the opportunity to establish a comprehensive framework that outlines suitable AI methods, fosters transparency, and enhances students' ethical awareness, given the acknowledged need for institutional clarity. Students may be better equipped to use these technologies ethically and ensure that AI is utilised as a learning tool rather than as a shortcut that violates academic values by integrating AI literacy into academic skill training.

Students' Perceived Control over Their Behavior with AI

This finding aligns with current studies that highlight both the potential and challenges associated with integrating artificial intelligence into higher education. Artificial intelligence is known to enhance academic writing by assisting with material processing, drafting, and detecting plagiarism. However, the accessibility of usage necessitates that students become more responsible and comprehend the ethical consequences of their actions.

The majority of students state that even when they use AI-generated information, they take conscious care to ensure the authenticity of their academic work. Students report that they frequently use AI tools as a starting point or writing aid rather than depending on them to generate assignments in their whole. The most often cited approach is rewriting or paraphrasing AI output. According to students, they utilise ChatGPT, for instance, to create preliminary thoughts or rough drafts that they then carefully edit in their own words to ensure the finished output accurately represents their understanding and unique voice.

"I make sure that the results from AI are only used as inspiration. I rewrite it in my own style and perform a plagiarism check." (Ainin)

"I think I can control the use of AI. I use AI to come up with ideas, compose sentences, or look for references. I read it first and rewrite it with my own writing and language style." (Lutfiyah)
"I can control its use because I have the principle that AI is a tool, not the final answer." (Fadlan)

"I am quite capable of controlling the use of AI because I am aware that AI can be a double-edged sword. If not controlled, we might lose our ability to think independently. I use AI as an accompanying tool, not as the determinant of content." (Amelia)

Students report that using plagiarism detection tools, such as Grammarly or Turnitin, to review their work helps them identify any inadvertent overlaps or resemblances to previously published works. Using paraphrase tools or incorporating AI-generated ideas is a highly valued preventative measure that helps students avoid inadvertent academic misconduct.

"I always remodel the content from AI, adding personal reflections, and using plagiarism detection applications before submitting assignments." (Amelia)

"Usually, I read it first, then I change it using my own language. After that, I check it using plagiarism tools to see if the answers are safe." (Lutfiyah)

This response demonstrates students' ethical awareness and a positive outlook on the use of AI in academic writing while simultaneously acknowledging the challenges in upholding academic integrity in the digital age. With the proper setup, artificial intelligence can help students study more effectively on their own, resulting in a more enjoyable learning experience for each student (Ghannam et al., 2025).

Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study supports Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour by demonstrating that several interconnected factors influence students' use of AI tools in academic writing. Students claim that they commonly utilize AI tools as a starting point or a writing assistance rather than relying on them to create entire assignments. The most frequently mentioned method is rewriting or paraphrasing AI output. Students use ChatGPT, for example, to generate basic ideas or rough drafts. In general, students have a positive attitude towards the use of AI, viewing it as a valuable tool for addressing fundamental writing issues, such as grammar, vocabulary, and idea development. Subjective norms, however, have two effects: while peer behaviour frequently normalises and promotes the use of AI, there is also ambiguity and uncertainty that raise questions and ethical concerns. Students' readiness to embrace new technologies and their desire to uphold academic integrity often conflict due to this uncertainty. Many students believe they are aware of and capable of using AI tools ethically. They employ a range of techniques to ensure their work is both unique and morally sound, including fact-checking, rewriting AI-generated text, and utilising plagiarism detection software.

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