Students' Perspective on the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Writing

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Abstract
The rapid development of technology like Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly influenced students' approaches to academic writing. completing features such as grammar correction, vocabulary enhancement, and idea generation, their ethical implications remain contested. This study explores students' perspectives on the ethical use of AI in academic writing. By using qualitative design, data were collected through interview and FGD toward 10 undergraduate students from Sharia tourism department in IAIN Takengon. After analyzing data using thematic analysis, The findings revealed nine key themes: (1) AI as a helpful support tool, (2) time efficiency and task completion, (3) enhancing creativity and expanding knowledge, (4) ease of task management, (5) concerns about academic integrity, (6) limited awareness of ethical guidelines, (7) the need for clear regulation and training, (8) dependence and overreliance risks, and (9) transparency and acknowledgment of AI use. These insights highlight both the potential benefits and ethical dilemmas students face when engaging with AI. The study contributes by recommending that policymakers establish clear regulations, provide systematic training, and promote transparency to ensure responsible and sustainable AI use in higher education.

Keywords: Students' Perspective AI Ethical Use

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot and many more, has significantly reshaped the landscape of academic writing. These tools offer students immediate assistance in grammar correction, paraphrasing, vocabulary enrichment, and even idea generation. As digital natives, students tend to quickly adopt these technologies as learning companions that make the writing process easier and more efficient. The growing popularity of AI tools in higher education indicates their potential to become integral components of academic practice. Naima et al., (2024) emphasizes that while AI has the potential to improve students' writing skills, it may also foster passive learning, reduce critical thinking, and weaken the authenticity of students' written work. Such ChatGPT is able to generate human-like text in variety of topics, as well as learn from and incorporate information given in a particular conversation (Aydin & Karaarslan, 2023). While as AI grammar correction has become so useful in giving feedback the student' questions and mistakes (Sumakul et al., 2022). Then Quilbot was effective in paraphrasing students' writing (Dewi et al., 2024)Moreover, such Generative

AI has significantly improved students' research attitudes, digital literacy skills, and academic writing self-efficacy, indicating a greater confidence in their scholarly abilities (Hartman Douglas, 2024).

Despite these benefits, the use of AI in academic writing raises serious ethical concerns. Questions about authorship, originality, and academic integrity emerge when students rely heavily on AI-generated outputs. Some argue that AI functions merely as a supportive tool, while others contend that it may undermine critical thinking (Naima et al., 2024), foster dependency(Zunaidah et al., 2023), and blur the line between genuine authorship (Tseng, 2024) and plagiarism (Barrett & Pack, 2023). This duality creates an urgent need to investigate how students perceive the ethical boundaries of AI use in their academic work. Krecar et al., n.d. (2024) found that students' attitudes toward AI tools, many students acknowledge its usefulness, they also express concerns about ethical risks, particularly plagiarism and authorship. From the instructors' perspective, the study shows that even professors struggle to distinguish between student-generated and AI-generated texts, with an average accuracy of only 53%, highlighting new challenges in academic assessment.

Hussain (2024)further stresses the need for clear institutional guidelines regarding AI use in academic writing. His review of policy documents from leading universities in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA reveals that many institutions are beginning to design instructions for both faculty and students. Such guidelines are considered crucial to prevent misuse while at the same time maximizing the positive potential of AI in supporting students' learning. Murray & Williams, n.d. (2023) explores the ethical frames through which students view AI usage, including deontological, consequentialist, and virtue ethics perspectives. The findings indicate that students do not adopt a single ethical stance but rather a complex mixture of perspectives, even within the same individual. This complexity underscores the need for a deeper understanding of students' ethical reasoning in order to inform fair and relevant policy design in higher education.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate students' perspectives on the ethical use of AI in academic writing. By identifying the key themes that emerge from students' experiences, this research seeks to enrich the existing literature while also providing practical recommendations for policymakers in higher education to formulate clear, adaptive, and ethically grounded regulations that safeguard academic integrity.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative method to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives on the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic writing. a survey distributed to 10 undergraduate students from Sharia Tourism programs at IAIN Takengon. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, on purpose to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and interpretations regarding the use of AI tools in their writing practices. All data were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, categories, and emerging themes. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, triangulation of sources and methods was applied, and member checking was conducted with participants. This methodological design enabled the study not only to describe students' perspectives but also to uncover their ethical considerations in employing AI for academic purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
1.1.Research Results

The data analysis revealed nine main themes regarding students' perspectives on the ethical use of AI in academic writing:

1. AI as a Helpful Support Tool
   Most participants perceived AI as a valuable tool that can assist in brainstorming, paraphrasing, and improving language accuracy. Students admitted that AI tools helped them and enhance clarity in their writing.
2. Time Efficiency and Task Completion
   Students frequently mentioned that AI significantly improved time efficiency. By generating quick suggestions and providing alternative expressions, AI enabled them to complete assignments faster and with less pressure.
3. Enhancing Creativity and Expanding Knowledge
   Participants reported that AI stimulated creativity by offering fresh ideas and alternative viewpoints. AI also explained concepts that students previously did not understand, broadening their knowledge base.
4. Ease of Task Management
   Students emphasized that AI made the writing process less overwhelming, particularly when facing tight deadlines or complex assignments. They appreciated the simplified step-by-step assistance AI could provide.
5. Concerns about Academic Integrity
   Several students expressed worries about misuse, such as generating entire essays

without personal input. They acknowledged that overreliance on AI could violate academic integrity policies and diminish learning outcomes.

6. Limited Awareness of Ethical Guidelines
   Many students were uncertain about their institution's rules or guidelines on AI use in academic writing, which created confusion about acceptable versus unacceptable practices.

7. The Need for Clear Regulation and Training
   Participants highlighted the importance of universities providing explicit policies and training. They argued that guidance would help students maximize AI responsibly without crossing ethical boundaries.

8. Dependence and Overreliance Risks
   Some students raised concerns that frequent use of AI could reduce their own critical thinking and problem-solving skills. They feared becoming overly dependent on technology for tasks they should master independently.

9. Transparency and Acknowledgment of AI Use
   A few participants emphasized the importance of transparency in academic work. They believed that if AI tools were used, students should acknowledge them openly, similar to citing other academic sources, to avoid misrepresentation.

The theme of result is presented in table 1. below:

Theme	Description	% of Students (n=10)
1. AI as a Helpful Support Tool	AI assists in brainstorming, paraphrasing, and improving language accuracy, helping students enhance clarity.	8 (80%)
2. Time Efficiency and Task Completion	AI saves time, provides quick suggestions, and enables faster completion of assignments.	9 (90%)
3. Enhancing Creativity and Expanding Knowledge	AI stimulates new ideas, offers alternative perspectives, and explains previously unclear concepts.	7 (70%)
4. Ease of Task Management	AI reduces the burden of complex or time-limited tasks, making writing more manageable.	6 (60%)
5. Concerns about Academic Integrity	Students worry about misuse, plagiarism, and reduced learning when AI is overused.	7 (70%)
6. Limited Awareness of Ethical Guidelines	Uncertainty exists regarding institutional policies and acceptable practices for AI use.	5 (50%)
7. The Need for Clear Regulation and Training	Students request explicit rules, workshops, and training for responsible AI use.	8 (80%)
8. Dependence and Overreliance Risks	Excessive use of AI may weaken students' critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills.	6 (60%)
9. Transparency and Acknowledgment of AI Use	Students highlight the importance of citing or acknowledging AI to maintain academic honesty.	4(40%)

findings illustrate a nuanced perspective among students regarding the ethical use of AI in academic writing. While they recognized the benefits of AI in terms of time efficiency, creativity, knowledge expansion, and task management, they also voiced significant concerns about academic integrity, dependence, and the lack of clear institutional guidelines. Students consistently emphasized the need for transparency and proper training to ensure that

AI serves as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for their intellectual efforts. These insights suggest that students are aware of both the potential and the pitfalls of AI, and they call for balanced policies that encourage responsible and ethical practices.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align with previous research that examined students' ethical considerations when engaging with AI in academic writing. Research by Grieve et al., (2024) emphasized that ethical positions often revolve around ownership of ideas, fairness, and personal growth. Similarly, the participants in this study expressed concerns about academic integrity and the necessity of acknowledging AI use, which reflects an awareness of fairness and responsibility in maintaining honesty within academic settings. This suggests that students' perspectives are not merely pragmatic but are also shaped by ethical reasoning and institutional expectations.

In terms of benefits, the results align also with Malik et al., (2023) study, which highlighted AI's role in grammar checks, plagiarism detection, and structuring essays. The students in the present research likewise valued AI for its efficiency, its ability to expand knowledge, and its contribution to creativity. However, both studies also caution against overreliance, as participants raised concerns that excessive dependence on AI could reduce critical thinking and originality. These shared insights underscore the importance of maintaining a balanced approach in which AI complements rather than replaces human authorship.

The findings also support the work of Yasinta Manuel et al., n.d.(2023), who noted that although students frequently use AI to complete academic tasks, satisfaction with its accuracy and reliability remains limited. Similar concerns were raised by the participants in this study, who acknowledged AI's usefulness but also recognized its limitations in ensuring academic rigor and originality. Both studies point to the necessity of clear policies and guidelines that not only regulate but also educate students about responsible AI use.

In line with these concerns, (Ros & Samuel, 2024) emphasizes the ethical challenges surrounding authorship, plagiarism, validity, and bias in the use of generative AI tools for academic writing. His work highlights the urgency of developing transparent guidelines and documenting AI contributions, which resonates with the present study's call for institutional clarity. Moreover, (Hegazy et al., 2024) found that postgraduate students, while aware of ethical standards, demonstrated only moderate commitment to applying them in practice. This indicates a gap between awareness and actual implementation, reinforcing the need for targeted training and policy development.

Taken together, these comparisons highlight a growing consensus in the literature: while AI offers substantial benefits in supporting students' writing, it also presents ethical and pedagogical challenges. The findings from this study contribute to this discourse by emphasizing students' call for institutional guidance, training, and transparency in AI use. Such measures would enable students to maximize AI's potential while upholding academic integrity and fostering sustainable learning practices.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted to investigate students' perspectives on the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in academic writing, given its rapid adoption in higher education. The findings identified nine key themes: AI as a helpful support tool, time efficiency and task completion, enhancing creativity and knowledge, ease of task management, concerns about academic integrity, limited awareness of ethical guidelines, the need for regulation and training, risks of dependence, and transparency in acknowledging AI use. This research contributes by recommending that policymakers in higher education establish clear regulations, provide systematic training on responsible AI

use, and encourage transparency. Such efforts will enable students to benefit from AI while safeguarding academic integrity and promoting sustainable learning.

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