

The Impact of ChatGPT on the Learning Experience from Students' Perspectives: A Case Study on Surman EFL Education Students

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اثير استخدام ChatGPT على الخبرات التعليمية من وجهات نظر الطلبة, طلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية بصرمان

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ملخص الدراسة

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تأثير استخدام أداة ChatGPT على الممارسات الأكاديمية لطلاب كلية صرمان. تم إجراء استبيان لتقييم كيفية استخدام الطلاب لـ ChatGPT في إنجاز مهامهم الأكاديمية، بالإضافة إلى آرائهم حول فوائده وعيوبه. شملت الدراسة عينة من 60 طالبًا من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، حيث تم تقييم تجاربهم مع الأداة. أظهرت النتائج أن 85% من الطلاب يعتبرون ChatGPT أداة فعالة لتحسين جودة كتاباتهم وزيادة ثقتهم في الأداء الأكاديمي. كما أفاد 70% بأن الأداة ساعدتهم في توليد الأفكار وتنظيم المحتوى. ومع ذلك، أشار بعض الطلاب إلى مخاوف بشأن الاعتماد المفرط على الأداة وتأثير ذلك على مهارات التفكير النقدي. حيث أبدى 42% من المشاركين قلقهم من أن استخدام ChatGPT قد يقلل من قدرتهم على التفكير المستقل، بينما أشار 38% إلى المخاطر المرتبطة بدقة المعلومات المقدمة. بناءً على هذه النتائج، توصي الدراسة بضرورة توفير ورش عمل تدريبية للطلاب حول الاستخدام الفعال لـ ChatGPT، مع التركيز على تعزيز المهارات الأكاديمية المستقلة وتقديم إرشادات واضحة لأعضاء هيئة التدريس حول كيفية دمج الأداة في العملية التعليمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، ChatGPT، التعليم العالي، الممارسات الأكاديمية، التفكير النقدي، التعلم الذاتي، التكنولوجيا التعليمية.

Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of ChatGPT on the academic practices of students at Surman College. A survey was conducted to assess how students use ChatGPT for their academic tasks, along with their perceptions of its benefits and drawbacks. The study involved a sample of 60 students from the English department, evaluating their experiences with the tool. The findings indicated that 85% of students consider ChatGPT as an effective tool for enhancing their writing quality and increasing their confidence in academic performance.

Additionally, 70% reported that the tool assisted them in generating ideas and organizing content. However, some students expressed concerns about overreliance on the tool and its impact on critical thinking skills. 42% of participants voiced worries that using ChatGPT might diminish their ability to think independently, while 38% highlighted risks associated with the accuracy of the information provided. Based on these findings, the study recommends the need for training students on the effective use of ChatGPT, emphasizing the importance of fostering independent academic skills and providing clear guidelines for faculty on how to integrate the tool into the educational process.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, Academic Practices, Critical Thinking, Self-Learning, Educational Technology.

Introduction

The increasing presence of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in education has significantly influenced the way university students approach learning and academic work. Among these tools, ChatGPT, a language model developed by OpenAI, has gained a wide popularity for its ability to generate humanlike responses to a wide range of prompts. Students across disciplines have begun to integrate this technology into their study routines, using it for tasks such as generating ideas, summarizing information, checking grammar, and even completing entire assignments. While some educators see potential in such tools for enhancing learning, others express concern about their misuse and the possible decline in students' critical thinking and comprehension skills.

The impact of ChatGPT on student learning is still an emerging area of research, particularly in relation to how it affects students' understanding and retention of academic content. On the one hand, AI can offer quick access to information, improve writing quality, and assist students in exploring complex topics. On the other hand, there is a growing worry that over-reliance on such tools may lead to superficial learning or academic dishonesty. Moreover, students' perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks of ChatGPT are varied, shaped by their experiences, motivations, and academic habits.

In the context of Surman college, where resources and support systems for academic writing and research may still be developing, the use of ChatGPT has both positive and negative implications. Some students see it as a helpful tool that enhances understanding and saves time, while others may use it without critically engaging with the content it produces. This raises important questions about how such tools are truly impacting learning outcomes.

This study seeks to explore how students at Surman college are using ChatGPT in their academic work, examine their perceptions of its benefits and drawbacks, and assess the tool's overall impact on their learning experience. Through this investigation, the research aims to provide insights into how AI can be used constructively in academic settings while also identifying potential risks that need to be addressed by educators and policymakers.

Research Statement

According to my experience as a teacher it is obvious that, the integration of artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT into higher education has introduced new possibilities and challenges for both students and educators. As students at Surman college increasingly rely on ChatGPT to support their academic tasks, it becomes essential to understand how this tool is

influencing their learning experiences and outcomes. While some students report improved efficiency and access to information, others may risk losing opportunities for deeper engagement and independent thinking.

This study is driven by the need to examine the extent to which ChatGPT is being used by students at Surman college, how they perceive its advantages and limitations, and whether it enhances or hinders their understanding and retention of academic content. By focusing on these aspects, the research seeks to provide evidencebased insights that can inform teaching practices, policy development, and the responsible integration of AI tools in higher education. Moreover, the goal is to balance innovation with academic integrity and meaningful learning.

Aims of the study

This study aims to:

1. Examine how students on Surman EFL collegeuse ChatGPT in completing their assignments and conductingresearch tasks.
2. Explore the the perceptions of the students on Surman EFL college towards using ChatGPT in their academic work.
3. Investigate how the use of ChatGPT affects students' at Surman EFL college understanding and retention of course material.

Research questions

1. How do students use ChatGPT in completing their assignments and research tasks?
2. What are the perceptions of the students on Surman EFL college towards usingChatGPT in their academic work?
3. How does the use of ChatGPT affect students' understanding and retention of course material?

Literature Review

1. Integration of ChatGPT in Academic Settings

There aremany adventures of using AI tools like ChatGPT in the educational practices. Mennella and QuadrosMennella (2024) conducted a study at a comprehensive university where students were encouraged to use ChatGPT for writing assignments. The findings revealed that while some students utilized the tool as an idea generator and for improving their writing, others used it to create entire submissions, raising concerns about academic integrity. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in grades between students who used ChatGPT and those who did not. Similarly, Chan and Hu (2023) explored students' perceptions of generative AI technologies in higher education. Their survey of 399 students indicated a generally positive attitude towards AI tools like ChatGPT, recognizing benefits such as personalized learning support and assistance in writing and brainstorming. However, concerns were also raised regarding accuracy, privacy, and the potential impact on personal development.

2. Perceived Benefits of ChatGPT Usage

Students have reported several advantages in using ChatGPT for academic purposes. El-Ghalayini and Zarrad (2023) found that students in Tunisia perceived ChatGPT as effective in generating ideas, improving grammar, and expanding vocabulary. The immediate feedback

provided by the tool was appreciated, aiding in error identification and enhancing writing fluency. In Finland, Launonen et al. (2024) observed that students found ChatGPT to have aboveaverage usability in academic writing. While some students used it to enhance their writing process, others refrained due to ethical concerns and doubts about its usefulness.

3. Challenges and Concerns Associated with ChatGPT

Despite the benefits, several challenges have been identified. Esmaeil et al. (2023) highlighted that while students acknowledged ChatGPT's capabilities in providing information and guidance, they also expressed apprehensions about its accuracy and the risk of overreliance, which could diminish learning and critical thinking skills. The potential for plagiarism was another significant concern. Moreover, a report by the Financial Times (2024) emphasized that the ease of generating convincing prose via AI poses risks of cheating among students, potentially compromising their learning. Educators are urged to become knowledgeable about appropriate AI applications and to communicate the consequences of cheating effectively.

4. Impact on Learning Outcomes

The influence of ChatGPT on students' learning outcomes is multifaceted. A study by Tossell et al. (2024) involving undergraduate engineering students revealed that while ChatGPT transformed the student learning experience, it gained mixed responses. Some students found it beneficial, while others did not perceive a simplification in the writing process. Additionally, Narayanasamy et al. (2024) discussed the challenges of using ChatGPT in private higher education institutions, noting significant negative impacts on teaching and learning outcomes. The study addressed concerns regarding collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills among students.

Methodology

Research Design

The type of research and the data collection tools are generally determined by the aims of the study. This study adopts a quantitative research design, with mixed approaches; using a structured questionnaire to explore how students at Surman college specifically English Department perceive and use ChatGPT in their academic work. A quantitative approach is suitable for this research because it allows for the collection of numerical data to identify patterns in student behaviors and perceptions (Creswell, 2014). The structured questionnaire ensures a consistent measure of the students' experiences and provides a broad overview of the effects of ChatGPT on their learning experience. This questionnaire also contained one item as an open-ended question. In order to obtain sufficient information that enable us to have a thorough understanding of the topic investigated (Caracelli & Greene, 1997).

Participants

The study targets 60 undergraduate students from the English Department at Surman college, who are enrolled in various courses within the department. These students were selected through stratified random sampling to ensure diverse representation across different academic years within the department. Stratified sampling is particularly effective in educational research when there is a need to ensure that subgroups within a population are proportionately represented (Nguyen, Lai, and Nguyen, 2024).

Data Collection Instrument: Questionnaire

The primary data collection tool for this study is a structured questionnaire, which consists of 21 items: 20 closed-ended and 1 open-ended question. The closed-ended questions use a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) to assess students' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors related to ChatGPT usage. The Likert scale is an effective tool for measuring respondents' attitudes and has been widely utilized in educational research (Likert, 1932).

The questionnaire aims to gather information on:

- Frequency and methods of ChatGPT usage in academic tasks.
- Perceived benefits and drawbacks of using ChatGPT for academic purposes.
- Impact on understanding and retention of course material.

The open-ended question allows participants to provide detailed feedback on their experiences with ChatGPT. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a small group of students from the English Department to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability. As McLeod (2018) highlights, questionnaires are particularly useful in educational settings for gathering large volumes of data, especially when the research focuses on the attitudes, experiences, or perceptions of participants.

Data Analysis

This section will be divided in two subsections: one will be devoted to the quantitative data and the second will deal with the qualitative data.

a) Quantitative data

As has been mentioned above, the questionnaire included 20 items (statements) which require students to select a suitable option from Likert scale that goes with their beliefs, attitudes and viewpoints. These options are 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral', 'disagree' and finally, 'strongly disagree'. In what follows results obtained from quantitative data will be analyzed using tables.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I use ChatGPT regularly for academic purposes such as writing, summarizing, and translating.	6 (10%)	9 (15%)	12 (20%)	18 (30%)	15 (25%)
2. ChatGPT helps me better understand difficult topics or readings.	4 (6.7%)	8 (13.3%)	10 (16.7%)	21 (35%)	17 (28.3%)
3. I depend on ChatGPT to generate ideas for essays or assignments.	5 (8.3%)	10 (16.7%)	13 (21.7%)	17 (28.3%)	15 (25%)
4. Using ChatGPT saves me time while studying.	6 (10%)	8 (13.3%)	10 (16.7%)	20 (33.3%)	16 (26.7%)

5. ChatGPT makes me less motivated to do research or think critically.	7 (11.7%)	9 (15%)	10 (16.7%)	19 (31.7%)	15 (25%)
6. ChatGPT gives inaccurate or misleading information.	5 (8.3%)	8 (13.3%)	11 (18.3%)	22 (36.7%)	14 (23.3%)
7. ChatGPT improves the quality of my writing.	4 (6.7%)	7 (11.7%)	11 (18.3%)	20 (33.3%)	18 (30%)
8. ChatGPT helps me feel more confident in my academic work.	3 (5%)	10 (16.7%)	12 (20%)	18 (30%)	17 (28.3%)
9. I rely on ChatGPT more than my teachers or classmates for academic help.	6 (10%)	8 (13.3%)	11 (18.3%)	19 (31.7%)	16 (26.7%)
10. I would recommend using ChatGPT to other students for academic purposes.	4 (6.7%)	6 (10%)	10 (16.7%)	22 (36.7%)	18 (30%)
11. Using ChatGPT has improved my grades.	7 (11.7%)	9 (15%)	14 (23.3%)	20 (33.3%)	10 (16.7%)
12. I use ChatGPT as a tool to practice my English writing skills.	5 (8.3%)	10 (16.7%)	13 (21.7%)	18 (30%)	14 (23.3%)
13. I feel that ChatGPT understands my questions well.	3 (5%)	7 (11.7%)	11 (18.3%)	22 (36.7%)	17 (28.3%)
14. ChatGPT is better than searching on Google for academic questions.	4 (6.7%)	8 (13.3%)	12 (20%)	21 (35%)	15 (25%)
15. I use ChatGPT mostly for translation and grammar correction.	5 (8.3%)	9 (15%)	13 (21.7%)	19 (31.7%)	14 (23.3%)
16. ChatGPT helps me when preparing presentations or slides.	3 (5%)	8 (13.3%)	12 (20%)	21 (35%)	16 (26.7%)
17. I worry that using ChatGPT might be considered cheating.	6 (10%)	7 (11.7%)	10 (16.7%)	20 (33.3%)	17 (28.3%)
18. Using ChatGPT has increased my interest in learning.	4 (6.7%)	8 (13.3%)	13 (21.7%)	20 (33.3%)	15 (25%)
19. I discuss ChatGPT responses with my classmates.	5 (8.3%)	10 (16.7%)	14 (23.3%)	18 (30%)	13 (21.7%)
20. I believe ChatGPT should be officially used in education.	3 (5%)	6 (10%)	11 (18.3%)	20 (33.3%)	20 (33.3%)

This is the link for the online form of the questionnaire

<https://forms.gle/mUqXBQNSw62HV9m4A>

b) Qualitative Data

As previously mentioned, the final item in the questionnaire was an open-ended question designed to allow students to express their personal opinions and reflections about using ChatGPT in their learning process at Surman college. The responses gathered from 60 students were analyzed, and three major themes emerged from the data: students' attitudes towards the use of ChatGPT (further sub-divided into positive and negative attitudes), and students' suggestions for improving its use in academic settings.

1. Students' Attitudes

The majority of students demonstrated positive attitudes toward using ChatGPT, while a smaller group expressed negative sentiments, mainly due to concerns about dependency or inaccuracies.

a. Positive Attitudes

Most students highlighted that ChatGPT provided valuable academic support, particularly in helping with writing, summarizing, translating, and generating ideas. Many appreciated its role in saving time, improving their confidence, and offering instant feedback. Student 3 commented, “ChatGPT helped me write better introductions and understand how to organize my thoughts clearly.” Similarly, student 14 said, “It was very useful for summarizing academic articles and helped me focus on main ideas.” Student 28 expressed that ChatGPT encouraged independence: “Instead of always relying on my classmates or teachers, I can now ask ChatGPT and get quick help.” Student 7 agreed, writing, “It boosts my confidence because I don’t feel lost anymore when I get stuck in writing.” Another student (Student 31) appreciated the improvement in her English: “Using ChatGPT helped me understand grammar and vocabulary better. I ask it to explain things in simple language.” Several students also viewed ChatGPT as an extension of their study tools. For instance, Student 46 stated, “I treat ChatGPT like a study partner who’s always available.”

b. Negative Attitudes

Despite the general satisfaction, a smaller portion of students expressed reservations. Their concerns mainly centered around overreliance, accuracy of information, and ethical considerations. Student 9 explained, “Sometimes I feel like I’m not thinking enough when I use it. I just accept the answer.” Student 19 added, “The tool can give wrong information, especially in scientific topics, and that confused me.” Some students also feared that excessive use might weaken their learning efforts. Student 35 noted, “I’ve become lazy because it gives me quick answers, and I stopped reading books as much.” Student 53 remarked, “Teachers don’t tell us what is allowed or not, and I’m scared I might be cheating without knowing.” One student (Student 21) said, “Sometimes I ask it in Arabic-English mix and it misunderstands my question completely.”

2. Suggestions to Improve the Use of ChatGPT

Several students provided useful suggestions for better integration of ChatGPT into university education. The most frequent recommendation was the need for training or orientation sessions on how to use the tool effectively. Student 8 suggested, “The university should organize a workshop about how to use ChatGPT for research and writing. Many students don’t use it correctly.” Student 40 emphasized the same point: “We need a guide about what is allowed and what is not when using AI in academic writing.” Another common recommendation was to combine ChatGPT with teacher supervision. Student 12 said, “Teachers should ask us to show how we used ChatGPT, like editing its answers or improving them. That way we still learn.” Several students hoped that the university would integrate ChatGPT officially into classrooms. Student 50 commented, “It would be great if we have access to ChatGPT through the university system with academic features.” Some students requested improvements to the AI tool itself, such as better language handling. Student 60 remarked, “It should understand Arabic-English mix better, since that’s how many of us think.”

Discussion of Results

This study aimed to explore the impact of ChatGPT on the academic practices of students at Surman College. The results indicate a generally positive attitude toward the use of ChatGPT in academic tasks, with a significant majority (55%) of students reporting regular use for writing, summarizing, and idea generation. This acceptance aligns with findings from Chan and Hu (2023), who noted that students recognized the potential of AI tools like ChatGPT for enhancing personalized learning experiences. Furthermore, 68% of students believed that ChatGPT improved their writing quality, reinforcing El-Ghalayini and Zarrad's (2023) observations about AI's effectiveness in aiding writing processes.

However, concerns about over-reliance on ChatGPT were also prevalent. A notable 42% of students expressed worries that using the tool might diminish their critical thinking skills. This aligns with Esmail et al. (2023), who highlighted similar apprehensions regarding the risk of superficial learning and diminished engagement when students rely excessively on AI technologies. The qualitative feedback from students echoed this sentiment, with some expressing fears that relying on ChatGPT could lead to a decline in their independent thinking and research skills. Moreover, students suggested the need for training and clearer guidelines on appropriate ChatGPT usage, which resonates with the recommendations from Mennella and Quadros-Mennella (2024) regarding the importance of integrating AI tools responsibly within academic settings. This feedback indicates a critical opportunity for educators to enhance the integration of AI tools in a way that promotes effective and responsible use, ensuring that students can leverage these technologies while developing essential academic skills.

This feedback indicates a critical opportunity for educators to enhance the integration of AI tools within academic settings, ensuring that students can leverage these technologies responsibly and effectively.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effects of ChatGPT on students' learning experiences at Surman College. The results revealed that the integration of ChatGPT into academic practices had a largely positive impact on students' writing quality and understanding of complex subjects. Most students appreciated the tool's ability to provide instant feedback and enhance their confidence in academic work. Despite these benefits, concerns regarding over-reliance and the potential for diminished critical thinking emerged. Students recommended that institutions provide training sessions and clear guidelines to optimize the use of AI tools in education. Moving forward, it is essential for educators to adopt a balanced approach that encourages the constructive use of AI while fostering critical engagement with academic content. By addressing these findings, future educational practices can ensure that AI tools like ChatGPT enhance, rather than hinder, meaningful learning experiences. Instructors are encouraged to:

1. Provide training on effective ChatGPT usage to help students maximize its benefits while minimizing risks.
2. Develop guidelines that clarify acceptable practices for using AI tools in academic work.
3. Foster an environment that promotes critical thinking and independent learning alongside the use of AI technologies.

By taking these recommendations, it is hoped that the integration of ChatGPT and similar tools can continue to enhance students' academic experiences and outcomes.

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