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EFFICIENCY OVER LEARNING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF CHATGPT USE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: The increasing use of ChatGPT in secondary education has raised questions about its impact on students' learning and academic integrity. However, empirical evidence on junior high school students' perspectives, particularly in the Indonesian context, remains limited. This qualitative descriptive study explores students' perceived benefits, challenges, and ethical strategies in using ChatGPT for academic writing. The study involved five junior high school students (ages 13–15) from SMP Nurul Jadid, Indonesia, selected through purposive sampling based on their experience using ChatGPT for writing tasks. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis. The findings show that students primarily use ChatGPT for efficiency-related purposes, such as quick access to information and task completion, rather than for developing writing skills or critical thinking. Reported challenges were minimal, indicating limited awareness of issues such as AI inaccuracies and overreliance. To address ethical concerns, students developed self-constructed strategies based on selective use and content modification; however, these were found to be insufficient in addressing deeper issues of academic integrity and proper attribution. The study highlights a gap between the pedagogical potential of ChatGPT and students' actual usage, underscoring the need for explicit instruction and clear guidelines to support responsible and learning-focused AI use in secondary education.
Keywords: *students, ChatGPT, academic writing, artificial intelligence, academic integrity, secondary education, educational technology.*

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence has significantly transformed educational practices across the world, particularly through the widespread use of ChatGPT in academic activities. Students increasingly rely on AI-powered tools to complete assignments, generate ideas, summarize information, and assist academic writing tasks. Although these technologies offer accessibility and efficiency, they also raise serious concerns regarding plagiarism, dependency, and the erosion of authentic learning processes. The rapid development of generative AI has challenged traditional understandings of originality, authorship, and independent learning in educational contexts (Perkins, 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023). Academic integrity is therefore becoming more difficult to maintain because AI-generated responses can often resemble genuine student work (Eke, 2023). As generative AI continues to spread among younger learners, educational institutions are increasingly pressured to balance technological innovation with ethical academic practices.

The growing integration of ChatGPT into educational environments has generated extensive scholarly discussions concerning academic integrity and student learning behavior. Educational institutions now face substantial challenges because students can produce convincing academic responses with minimal effort through AI-assisted writing tools (Cotton et al., 2024). At the same time, contradictions emerge when schools encourage digital innovation while simultaneously penalizing AI-assisted academic

work (Davis, 2023). ChatGPT has consequently been viewed both as an educational opportunity and as a disruptive technology capable of undermining scholarly honesty. Excessive dependence on AI-generated content may gradually weaken students' critical thinking and reduce meaningful engagement with learning materials (Singh, 2023). In response to these developments, integrity frameworks and educational accountability systems increasingly require reconsideration within the AI era (Mijwil et al., 2023).

Research on AI-assisted writing has further demonstrated how ChatGPT influences students' learning experiences and writing development. In English as a Foreign Language classrooms, students often perceive ChatGPT as a useful support tool for brainstorming, grammar correction, and idea generation (Almanea, 2026). However, tensions frequently arise between pedagogical support and authentic learning when students become overly dependent on AI-generated outputs (Jung et al., 2026). The influence of ChatGPT on learning outcomes also depends heavily on students' level of engagement and reflection during the writing process. While some students use AI critically to strengthen their understanding, others prioritize efficiency and assignment completion (Khan et al., 2025). Similar findings were reported by Nugroho et al. (2025), who observed that many students viewed ChatGPT primarily as a shortcut for academic tasks. Nevertheless, AI-mediated scaffolding may still support writing development when students actively participate in reflective and dialogic interactions with the technology (Li & Bahari, 2026).

Generative AI has also intensified debates concerning creativity, originality, and academic authorship. Concerns have emerged that students may gradually lose originality because they rely excessively on machine-generated ideas and writing structures (Mahama et al., 2023). The increasing use of AI tools has even raised questions regarding the future of authentic scholarly contribution and academic production (Morocco-Clarke et al., 2024). Furthermore, AI-generated texts complicate traditional understandings of authorship, ownership, and intellectual labor within educational settings (Wise et al., 2024). Many researchers and students are attracted to generative AI because of its perceived usefulness and productivity benefits in academic writing (Garcia, 2025). Among multicultural students, AI tools are frequently employed to improve organization, linguistic accuracy, and writing fluency (Hysaj et al., 2025). These developments indicate that efficiency has become a dominant motivation in students' engagement with generative AI technologies.

Ethical concerns surrounding generative AI have become increasingly central in recent educational research. One major issue involves the growing difficulty of distinguishing AI-generated texts from human writing, particularly as large language models become more sophisticated (Liang et al., 2025). Evidence from scientific publishing demonstrates that reviewers often struggle to accurately identify GPT-generated manuscripts (Ahmet Öztürk et al., 2025). Similarly, AI-detection systems continue to produce inconsistent and unreliable results in academic contexts (Popkov & Barrett, 2025). Although machine-learning-based detection models have been proposed to identify AI-generated texts, ensuring accurate detection remains highly complex (Popescu-Apreutesei et al., 2025). Excessive dependence on surveillance-oriented detection technologies may also damage trust relationships between educators and students, particularly when false accusations occur (Giray et al., 2025).

Another important area of discussion concerns AI literacy and ethical awareness in educational environments. Students' prompt-writing strategies and levels of AI literacy significantly shape the quality and ethicality of AI-assisted academic work (Kim et al., 2026). Ethical sensitivity is therefore increasingly viewed as an essential component of AI-assisted learning practices (Yao, 2026). Responsible ChatGPT use may even contribute positively to academic buoyancy, perseverance, and student wellbeing when appropriate guidance is provided (Kim et al., 2026). In culturally responsive learning environments, empathy and epistemic beliefs also influence how students engage ethically with generative AI technologies (Kurniati et al., 2025). Educational approaches that integrate AI responsibly are consequently needed to preserve academic integrity while still supporting technological adaptation (Hysaj et al., 2024).

Institutional responses to generative AI have likewise become a growing focus within academic research. Traditional anti-plagiarism approaches are increasingly considered insufficient because AI-generated writing fundamentally changes assessment practices and learning evaluation (Kirwan, 2024). As a result, authentic assessment design has been proposed as an alternative strategy

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for strengthening academic integrity and reducing opportunities for unethical AI use (Lehane et al., 2024). Educational institutions nevertheless continue to encounter challenges because many students fail to disclose AI use despite existing transparency policies (Gonsalves, 2025). Ethical evaluation frameworks that consider local educational realities have therefore been recommended rather than relying solely on universal regulations (Vetter et al., 2024). Furthermore, generative AI systems such as ChatGPT, Copilot, and Gemini are already reshaping higher education assessments and learning practices across multiple institutions (Nikolic et al., 2024).

Human-AI collaboration patterns have also attracted growing scholarly attention in academic writing contexts. AI tools are commonly used for brainstorming, paraphrasing, summarizing, drafting, and even full-text generation during academic work (Nguyen et al., 2024). Among medical undergraduates, ChatGPT has frequently been utilized to improve writing fluency and organize academic assignments more efficiently (Wang et al., 2024). When used critically and reflectively, generative AI may even stimulate innovative thinking skills and creative problem-solving abilities (Songkram et al., 2025). However, AI integration simultaneously creates challenges related to dependency, ethical misuse, and weakened research skills (Obura & Emoit, 2024). Academic libraries are therefore increasingly expected to support ethical AI literacy and responsible information practices among students (Panda et al., 2024).

Academic integrity issues related to AI are further shaped by cultural and contextual differences across educational systems. In China, for instance, students experience considerable structural pressures and academic expectations that complicate integrity maintenance during research activities (Chen et al., 2025). Turkish graduate students similarly combine AI assistance with traditional academic support systems to manage demanding writing tasks more effectively (Deniz, 2026). Variations in technological familiarity and institutional support also influence how individuals perceive the benefits and challenges of AI-assisted writing (Udofot & Oladokun, 2026). Teachers' perspectives toward GPT-assisted academic writing are strongly connected to feedback literacy and disciplinary expectations (Yao, 2025). More broadly, generative AI-powered language tools are becoming deeply embedded within global academic communication practices (Raitskaya & Tikhonova, 2024).

Debates regarding plagiarism and AI-generated writing continue to divide scholars and educational practitioners. Conflicting interpretations remain regarding whether AI-generated content should automatically be categorized as plagiarism (Jarrah et al., 2023). Although ChatGPT possesses substantial capabilities for academic and professional writing, its widespread use simultaneously threatens established integrity standards (Liu et al., 2023). Students' plagiarism behavior in AI-assisted learning environments is often influenced by motivation, attitudes, and personal characteristics rather than technology alone (Galindo-Domínguez et al., 2025). Consequently, educational responses should not focus exclusively on punishment but should also encourage meaningful learning engagement and ethical awareness (Silva et al., 2023). The growing normalization of generative AI has therefore placed academic integrity in an increasingly fragile position within contemporary education (Bin-Nashwan et al., 2023).

Despite the rapidly growing literature on ChatGPT and academic integrity, most existing studies focus primarily on university students and higher education environments. Comparatively little attention has been directed toward junior high school students, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia, where AI literacy, digital supervision, and educational resources may differ substantially from tertiary education contexts. Existing research also tends to prioritize plagiarism detection systems, institutional policies, or writing performance outcomes rather than students' subjective experiences and motivations for prioritizing efficiency over meaningful learning. Consequently, limited knowledge exists regarding how Indonesian junior high school students experience AI use in everyday academic activities and how they negotiate ethical concerns while using ChatGPT for school assignments. Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What challenges do Indonesian junior high school students encounter in using ChatGPT for academic purposes? and (2) How do they navigate AI use while maintaining academic integrity?

This study offers several important novelties to the existing body of literature. First, unlike most previous studies that focus on university students, this research specifically investigates junior high school students as an underexplored demographic in AI and academic integrity research. Second, the

study introduces the concept of "efficiency over learning" to explain how students may prioritize convenience, speed, and task completion over authentic understanding and critical engagement. Third, this study employs a qualitative approach to capture students' lived experiences, ethical reasoning, and personal perspectives regarding ChatGPT use in academic contexts. Finally, the research contributes an Indonesian perspective to global discussions on AI-assisted learning, which remain heavily dominated by Western and higher education environments.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to educational policy, teaching practice, and academic integrity development in the era of generative artificial intelligence. By examining how junior high school students perceive and utilize ChatGPT, this study may help educators and policymakers formulate contextually appropriate guidelines for responsible AI integration in schools. The findings are also expected to assist teachers in designing learning activities that encourage critical thinking, ethical awareness, and authentic student engagement rather than simple task completion. In addition, this study contributes to broader academic discussions regarding the relationship between technological innovation and educational values in contemporary learning environments. Understanding younger students' experiences with generative AI is increasingly important for developing sustainable academic integrity cultures and promoting meaningful learning practices in future educational systems.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore how junior high school students use ChatGPT in academic writing, the challenges they encounter, and how they maintain academic integrity while using AI technologies. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to examine students' lived experiences, perceptions, and ethical reasoning in natural educational settings (Birt et al., 2016). The research was conducted at SMP Nurul Jadid, a private Islamic junior high school in Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia, during November 2025. The school was purposively selected because students had actively integrated ChatGPT into their academic writing practices and the institution supported educational technology research.

Five female students aged 13–15 years from grades 7–9 participated in the study. Participants were selected purposively based on several criteria: (1) active use of ChatGPT for academic writing for at least three months, (2) experience completing graded writing assignments using AI assistance, and (3) willingness to participate with parental consent. The sampling strategy prioritized information-rich participants capable of describing their experiences and ethical considerations in depth. Although the sample size was relatively small, qualitative research emphasizes thematic depth rather than statistical representativeness (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews because this method allows participants to explain their experiences and perspectives in detail (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview questions focused on four areas: patterns of ChatGPT use, perceived benefits, challenges encountered, and students' understanding of academic integrity in AI-assisted learning. To minimize power imbalance, interviews were conducted in an informal and supportive manner, emphasizing that there were no right or wrong answers. Ethical approval was obtained from the school, while informed consent was secured from both participants and parents before data collection began (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All interviews were audio-recorded with permission and supplemented with field notes.

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim in Bahasa Indonesia and translated into English using a back-translation procedure to maintain semantic accuracy (Egilsson et al., 2022). Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis framework (2006, 2022), involving familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, developing themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the final report. NVivo 14 software was used to facilitate systematic coding and data organization. Reflexive thematic analysis was selected because it allows flexible and in-depth interpretation of participants' subjective experiences related to AI use and academic integrity.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study followed Lincoln and Guba's criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Credibility was strengthened through member checking and peer debriefing with qualitative research experts (Santos et al., 2020). Thick description was applied to support transferability (Varela et al., 2021), while an audit trail and reflexive journal were maintained to enhance dependability and confirmability (Bowen, 2009; Carcary, 2020; Dodgson, 2019). Despite its contributions, the

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study has several limitations, including the small sample size, reliance on self-reported data, and focus on a single educational context, which may limit broader generalization (Smith & McGannon, 2018). Nevertheless, the study provides valuable insights into junior high school students' experiences with ChatGPT and academic integrity in Indonesian educational settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceived benefits of ChatGPT use

The findings demonstrate a clear instrumentalisation of ChatGPT among students, where the tool is predominantly framed as an efficiency-maximising mechanism rather than a cognitively developmental resource. Across participants, four interrelated benefit categories emerged: accelerated information access, task completion facilitation, affective reassurance, and competitive optimisation. Collectively, these patterns indicate that ChatGPT is primarily appropriated within a performance-oriented epistemology of learning.

Students consistently emphasised speed and reduced cognitive effort. Zulfa's statement that "AI contains everything we need, so we don't have to think for too long" exemplifies a substitution-oriented use pattern, where epistemic labour is partially transferred from learner to machine. Rather than functioning as scaffolding for conceptual development, ChatGPT is positioned as a cognitive shortcut. This aligns with prior work suggesting that generative AI frequently reduces cognitive load but does not necessarily enhance conceptual depth (Garcia, 2025; Wang et al., 2024).

A similar instrumental logic is evident in task completion narratives. Students described ChatGPT as a contingency tool activated under time pressure or difficulty, indicating that usage is primarily triggered by performance constraints rather than learning objectives. This supports concerns that AI adoption in academic contexts often reflects strategic task optimisation rather than epistemic engagement (Mahama et al., 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023). In such cases, learning becomes secondary to output completion.

Notably, AI use extended beyond routine assignments into competitive academic contexts. This suggests that generative AI is embedded within broader achievement economies, where students leverage technological tools to maintain relative advantage. Such behaviour extends existing literature by highlighting how academic competitiveness intensifies instrumental AI use, particularly in high-stakes or time-constrained environments (Hysaj et al., 2025; Nugroho et al., 2025).

An affective dimension further complicates this instrumentalisation. Students reported reduced anxiety and increased perceived security when using ChatGPT. While this aligns with literature describing AI as a non-judgemental learning support (Kim et al., 2026; Kurniati et al., 2025), the present data suggest that such comfort may function as an emotional substitute for epistemic confidence rather than as a catalyst for competence development.

Crucially, no participant explicitly linked ChatGPT use to improvements in writing competence or critical thinking. This absence is theoretically significant: it indicates that AI adoption is decoupled from metacognitive awareness of learning outcomes. In other words, ChatGPT is valued for *production efficiency*, not *epistemic transformation*. This supports concerns that generative AI may shift students toward output-oriented learning regimes (Perkins, 2023; Eke, 2023).

Table 1. *Perceived benefits of ChatGPT use*

This analysis is supported by 15 direct quotes from the transcript, indicating a utilitarian rather than pedagogical pattern of use.

Table 1. Perceived Benefits of ChatGPT Use by Participants

Benefit Category	Frequency	Representative Quotes
Ease of information access	5/5	"Everything we need is in AI and we don't need to think too long" (Zulfa); "I can immediately get answers without looking for a book for a long time" (Nadifa, emphasizing fast access in the context of daily tasks).
Task completion assistance	5/5	"ChatGPT helps complete tasks when I feel difficulty" (Nadifa); "Help finish the essay when the deadline is close, but I still change it a little" (Atikatul, showing partial dependence).

Psychological comfort	2/5	"I feel comfortable because it can explain completely" (Ulivia); "No more fear of being wrong because AI provides a complete explanation" (Sitti, reduced anxiety but did not mention increased understanding).
Competitive advantage	2/5	"For competitions when time was very tight" (Zulfa); "In essay competitions, AI helps with quick ideas so you don't lose" (Sitti, school competition context).

Challenges in using ChatGPT

In contrast to the extensive risk discourse in the literature, participants reported a relatively narrow range of challenges, primarily limited to informational overload and infrastructural constraints. This divergence suggests a potential disconnect between academic discourse on AI risks and students' lived experiences of AI use.

Information overload emerged as the primary cognitive limitation. Rather than insufficient information, students experienced difficulty in *evaluating excessive outputs*, indicating that the challenge is not access but epistemic filtering. Zulfa's remark regarding "too many definitions" reflects a known limitation of large language models: their tendency to generate broad, non-prioritised responses that may impede decision-making processes (Jung et al., 2026).

Interestingly, overload occasionally prompted epistemic withdrawal from AI use, as students reverted to independent reasoning. This suggests a paradoxical effect: while AI reduces cognitive effort, excessive output ambiguity may reintroduce human judgement. However, this does not necessarily indicate improved critical thinking, but rather situational disengagement from the tool.

More striking is the absence of spontaneously reported high-risk concerns such as hallucination, bias, or overreliance. This absence is theoretically consequential, as it indicates limited AI literacy and weak internalisation of widely documented risks in generative AI systems (Liang et al., 2025; Bin-Nashwan et al., 2023). In epistemic terms, students appear to operate with a functional rather than critical understanding of AI.

Structural constraints further shaped usage patterns. Limited device access and unstable internet connectivity positioned AI use within broader digital inequality frameworks. This reinforces arguments that AI benefits are unevenly distributed and contingent upon infrastructural conditions rather than individual capability alone (Obura & Emoit, 2024; Panda et al., 2024).

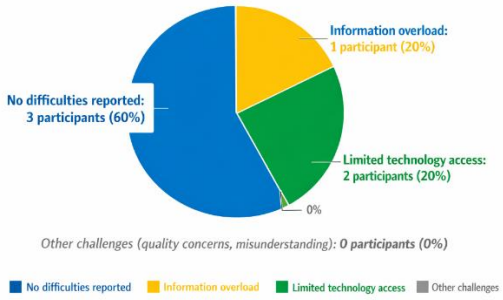


Figure 1. *Distribution of reported challenges*

Overall, the data suggest that the "problem space" of AI use for students is not ethical or epistemic risk, but rather usability and access, highlighting a significant misalignment with academic discourse that prioritises integrity concerns.

Strategies for maintaining academic integrity

The data reveal that students construct informal and individually calibrated ethical frameworks for AI use, characterised by procedural rather than principled reasoning. The dominant logic across participants is a "needs-based ethics," where acceptability of AI use is determined by situational necessity rather than codified academic norms.

This subjective operationalisation of "need" introduces epistemic ambiguity. Deadlines, difficulty, and competition were all used as legitimising conditions for AI use, suggesting that ethical boundaries are dynamically adjusted according to performance pressure. Such findings align with literature describing student ethics in AI contexts as situationally adaptive rather than normatively grounded (Perkins, 2023; Vetter et al., 2024).

A second dominant strategy involves surface-level textual modification. Students equate linguistic alteration with authorship transformation, revealing a conceptual conflation between paraphrasing and originality. This reflects a critical gap in attribution literacy, where

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academic integrity is reduced to textual dissimilarity rather than transparent acknowledgment of generative assistance (Gonsalves, 2025).

Importantly, ethical reasoning remains detached from learning-oriented considerations. Integrity is framed in terms of "not overusing AI" rather than preserving epistemic development. This suggests that academic integrity is operationalised as behavioural restraint rather than as commitment to learning authenticity (Singh, 2023; Wise et al., 2024).

Table 2. *Student strategies for maintaining academic integrity*

Strategy	Frequency	Description	Limitations
Needs-based use	5/5	Use only when necessary/urgent	Subjective definition of "need"
Content modification	3/5	Change some words/select important parts	Lacks attribution awareness
Self-reliance priority	2/5	Avoid if can do independently	Unclear evaluation criteria
Information verification	1/5	Replace if information doesn't match needs	Focused on preference, not accuracy

All five participants articulated some version of a needs-based ethical framework. Representative statements included:

> "There are limitations use only when needed" (Zulfa)
>
> "Boundaries when I don't find the information I'm looking for" (Ulivia)
>
> "When I can do it myself, no need to use ChatGPT" (Nadifa)
>
> "Only when needed and urgent" (Atikatul)
>
> "Use ChatGPT only when needed" (Sitti)

Patterns of AI dependence

The longitudinal self-reports indicate a high degree of behavioural stability in ChatGPT use, with no evidence of progressive reduction in reliance. Instead, AI use appears routinised, embedded within writing practices as a persistent support system rather than a transitional scaffold.

This finding directly challenges classical scaffolding assumptions, which posit a gradual withdrawal of support as competence increases. In contrast, participants reported either stable or increasing dependence, suggesting that ChatGPT functions as a form of *permanent cognitive delegation* rather than temporary assistance (Li & Bahari, 2026).

The persistence of reliance is theoretically significant. It suggests that AI integration, in the absence of pedagogical mediation, may stabilise dependency structures rather than promote autonomy. Students' increased efficiency in using the tool does not translate into reduced reliance, indicating that procedural mastery of AI replaces rather than reduces dependence.

This pattern aligns with emerging critiques of AI-mediated learning, which argue that generative systems may restructure learning into cycles of assisted production rather than independent knowledge construction (Nguyen et al., 2024). Consequently, AI becomes embedded in epistemic practice as an infrastructural dependency rather than an optional tool.

However, these conclusions must be interpreted within contextual constraints, including rural educational infrastructure and limited access to alternative learning resources. Such conditions likely amplify dependence by reducing viable non-AI alternatives.

The integrated findings indicate a systematic reconfiguration of learning practices under generative AI conditions, characterised by a shift from epistemic engagement to performance optimisation. ChatGPT is predominantly appropriated as a tool for efficiency maximisation rather than cognitive development, reinforcing concerns that AI adoption in education is driven by productivity imperatives rather than pedagogical intent (Garcia, 2025; Sullivan et al., 2023).

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings problematise classical scaffolding models. Rather than facilitating gradual internalisation of skills, ChatGPT appears to stabilise external cognitive support. This suggests a structural shift from scaffolding to *persistent cognitive outsourcing*, where support does not diminish over time but becomes integrated into routine academic production (Li & Bahari, 2026).

In relation to academic integrity, the study reveals a disjunction between formal institutional norms and student-generated ethical frameworks. Students operate with situationally contingent

ethics that prioritise practicality over principled attribution. This reinforces the argument that academic integrity in AI contexts is increasingly negotiated at the individual level rather than governed by shared epistemic standards (Cotton et al., 2024; Almanea, 2026).

A critical implication concerns the epistemic orientation of learning. The absence of learning-focused rationales for AI use indicates a decoupling between task completion and knowledge construction. In this configuration, academic work risks becoming output-driven rather than process-oriented, undermining the developmental function of education (Perkins, 2023; Eke, 2023).

Finally, structural inequality and infrastructural constraints remain central to AI adoption patterns. These findings reinforce that AI integration is not merely a pedagogical issue but a socio-technical one, shaped by access, literacy, and institutional mediation (Obura & Emoit, 2024). Without explicit instructional intervention, generative AI is likely to consolidate efficiency-driven learning cultures rather than foster critical, reflective, and autonomous learning practices.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how junior high school students in rural Indonesia use ChatGPT in academic writing. The findings show a consistent pattern: ChatGPT is mainly used as a performance-oriented tool for efficiency and task completion rather than for learning development.

Students primarily value ChatGPT for speeding up academic work and reducing cognitive effort, with little evidence of its use for improving writing skills or critical thinking. Challenges were limited and mostly related to information overload and access constraints, while key risks such as hallucination and overreliance were largely unrecognized, indicating low AI literacy.

Ethical use was guided by informal, needs-based judgments rather than formal academic principles. Although students attempted to regulate usage, their strategies lacked clear understanding of attribution and academic integrity.

Overall, the findings suggest that AI use in this context reinforces efficiency-driven learning unless explicitly guided by pedagogy. Without structured instruction, ChatGPT tends to support task completion rather than meaningful learning.

While limited to a small rural sample, the study highlights the need for explicit AI literacy and pedagogical frameworks to ensure responsible and learning-oriented use of generative AI in secondary education.

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