



## Students' Perceptions and Attitudes Toward the Use of ChatGPT in English Language Writing

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**Abstract:** This study examined Indonesian EFL learners' perceptions and attitudes toward ChatGPT in English language writing and the relationship between them, a pairing few studies have addressed simultaneously. Using a quantitative descriptive-correlational design, data were collected from 110 Indonesian EFL students through an 18-item Likert-scale questionnaire (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.894$ ). Students held positive perceptions of ChatGPT as a writing support tool ( $M = 3.75$ ), while overall attitudes were neutral ( $M = 3.22$ ). This neutral aggregate, however, conceals a meaningful internal structure: skill degradation concern was the dominant attitudinal response (A4:  $M = 4.05$ , 78.2%), while full AI delegation and uncritical output adoption were the most strongly rejected behaviors (A8:  $M = 2.86$ ; A9:  $M = 2.68$ ), suggesting an "aware but resisting passive dependence" orientation. A moderate positive correlation between the two constructs ( $r = 0.482$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) confirms that utility appraisals shape, but do not fully determine, attitudinal formation. These findings suggest that learners are already exercising evaluative agency over AI use, and that instruction should build on rather than ignore this disposition.

**Keywords:** ChatGPT, Perceptions, Attitudes, English language writing, EFL learners

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi dan sikap mahasiswa EFL Indonesia terhadap ChatGPT dalam penulisan bahasa Inggris serta hubungan antara keduanya, sebuah kombinasi yang masih jarang diteliti secara bersamaan. Dengan desain deskriptif-korelasional kuantitatif, data dikumpulkan dari 110 mahasiswa melalui kuesioner skala Likert 18 item (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0,894$ ). Mahasiswa menunjukkan persepsi positif terhadap ChatGPT sebagai alat pendukung menulis ( $M = 3,75$ ), sementara sikap keseluruhan berada pada kategori netral ( $M = 3,22$ ). Nilai netral ini menyimpan struktur internal yang bermakna: kekhawatiran terhadap penurunan kemampuan menulis menjadi respons paling dominan (A4:  $M = 4,05$ , 78,2%), sedangkan pendelegasian penuh kepada AI dan adopsi hasil tanpa evaluasi kritis paling kuat ditolak (A8:  $M = 2,86$ ; A9:  $M = 2,68$ ), mengindikasikan orientasi "sadar namun menolak ketergantungan pasif". Korelasi positif moderat antara kedua konstruk ( $r = 0,482$ ,  $p < 0,001$ ) menunjukkan bahwa persepsi membentuk namun tidak sepenuhnya menentukan sikap. Temuan ini mengimplikasikan bahwa pembelajaran sebaiknya dibangun di atas kecenderungan evaluatif yang telah dimiliki mahasiswa, bukan mengabaikannya.

**Kata kunci:** ChatGPT, Persepsi, Sikap, Penulisan bahasa Inggris, Pelajar EFL

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence has reshaped numerous domains of human activity, and education stands among those most profoundly affected. Within this evolving landscape, ChatGPT, a large language model developed by OpenAI, has emerged as one of the most widely discussed and utilized AI tools in academic settings since its public release in late 2022. Its capacity to generate contextually coherent text, respond to nuanced prompts, and simulate human-like written communication has made it a subject of considerable interest among students, educators, and researchers worldwide (Kasneci et al., 2023). As this tool becomes increasingly accessible to learners at all levels of education, there is growing urgency to understand the ways in which students perceive and relate to its use in specific academic domains, particularly in English language writing, where the cognitive and linguistic demands placed upon learners are especially pronounced.

Writing in a second or foreign language represents one of the most cognitively demanding tasks that EFL learners encounter. Hyland (2019) has characterized second language writing as a multidimensional communicative practice that requires simultaneous management of grammatical accuracy, lexical choice, rhetorical organization, and discourse coherence, each of which poses distinct challenges for learners whose linguistic resources in the target language remain developing. Beyond the structural demands of writing, learners frequently face difficulties initiating tasks, maintaining argumentative continuity, and revising drafts in ways that reflect genuine conceptual development (Warschauer et al., 2023). In contexts where access to qualified instructors or native-speaking interlocutors is limited, these difficulties are further compounded, creating conditions under which students actively seek external sources of assistance (Koltovskaia, 2020). It is precisely within this context of unmet need that the appeal of ChatGPT as a writing aid has gained its most significant traction. Indeed, Teng (2024a) observes that the integration of ChatGPT into EFL writing contexts is rapidly evolving, with both opportunities and persistent challenges that necessitate empirical investigation.

These challenges are not merely theoretical; they are measurable and cross-contextual. Thi et al. (2025) found, in a large-scale mixed-methods study of 314 Vietnamese EFL students, that learners recruited AI writing tools at every stage of the writing process, and that frequency of AI use was significantly and positively correlated with perceived writing benefits, a pattern the researchers interpret as direct evidence of learners filling instructional gaps they could not independently close. Similarly, Wang (2025), using a UTAUT-based structural equation model with 238 Chinese EFL undergraduates, identified performance expectancy, specifically the belief that ChatGPT would compensate for personal writing limitations, as among the strongest predictors of actual AI adoption, positioning its use as a purposive response to unmet academic writing needs rather than incidental curiosity. At the same time, Nelson et al. (2025) found that EFL students' most prominent concern was not academic penalty but the fear that continued AI reliance would erode the writing competencies they already struggled to build independently. Al-Obaydi & Pikhart (2025) similarly found that AI feedback was sought precisely because conventional instructional feedback was inconsistent, delayed, and insufficient. That such patterns emerge consistently across culturally and institutionally distinct contexts, namely Vietnam, China, Iraq, and the Czech Republic, suggests that the writing support deficits driving ChatGPT adoption are neither incidental nor locally specific, and it is this cross-contextual urgency that the perceptual and attitudinal questions of the present study seek to address.

ChatGPT has been observed functioning as a writing resource in diverse ways among student populations: generating initial drafts, offering paraphrasing alternatives,

providing explanations of grammatical structures, and suggesting organizational frameworks for written arguments (Farrokhnia et al., 2024). Empirical studies have further confirmed that ChatGPT can support the pre-writing, during-writing, and post-writing stages of composition, serving as a self-learning scaffold for idea generation, structural planning, and revision (Yan, 2023). Unlike static grammar-checking tools or autocorrect functions, ChatGPT engages with users through iterative dialogue, producing responses tailored to the specific parameters of each prompt, a quality of tutorship that distinguishes it from prior automated writing assistance tools (Barrot, 2023) and makes it a potentially powerful scaffold for EFL learners navigating complex writing assignments. Su et al. (2023) demonstrated how collaborative engagement with ChatGPT in argumentative writing classrooms can support idea development and structural organization, particularly for learners who struggle to sustain argumentative continuity. Liu & Ma (2024) further demonstrated, through TAM-based structural equation modeling with 405 EFL learners, that perceived usefulness mediates the relationship between ease of use and behavioral engagement with ChatGPT, underscoring the centrality of utility perception in AI tool adoption among EFL populations.

However, this same interactivity raises substantive concerns about academic integrity, the authenticity of student-produced work, and the longer-term consequences of sustained AI dependency on the development of independent writing competence (Cotton et al., 2024). Baidoo-Anu & Ansah (2023) similarly noted that while ChatGPT holds significant potential for personalized and interactive learning, its uncritical adoption risks diminishing higher-order thinking skills, a concern that resonates strongly in EFL writing contexts. Scherer et al. (2019), in their large-scale meta-analytic review of 114 TAM studies involving over 34,000 teachers, similarly confirmed that technology acceptance is shaped not only by perceived utility but by a complex of affective and normative variables, a pattern that appears to extend to student populations engaging with AI tools in writing contexts.

Despite the growing volume of scholarship on ChatGPT in education, the existing literature reveals a notable gap with respect to studies that simultaneously investigate both students' perceptions and their attitudes toward the tool within the specific context of English language writing. Many studies have addressed learner perceptions of ChatGPT's usefulness in relative isolation, and others have focused predominantly on ethical dimensions such as plagiarism and academic dishonesty (Lim et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023). Comparatively fewer studies have adopted a correlational design to examine whether and to what extent perceptions of ChatGPT's utility predict the affective, cognitive, and behavioral orientations that learners develop toward the tool. This gap represents a limitation in the empirical base available to educators who must make evidence-informed decisions about if and how to incorporate AI writing tools into formal instruction.

The present study was designed to address this gap by examining EFL learners' perceptions and attitudes toward ChatGPT in English language writing, and by investigating the relationship between these two constructs. Three research questions guided the inquiry: (RQ1) What are students' perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT in English language writing? (RQ2) What are students' attitudes toward the use of ChatGPT in English language writing? (RQ3) Is there a significant relationship between students' perceptions and their attitudes toward the use of ChatGPT in English language writing? Addressing these questions holds practical and theoretical significance, practically for English language educators and curriculum designers seeking evidence-based guidance on AI tool integration, and theoretically for the field of ELT, which stands to benefit from a more comprehensive understanding of how technology acceptance and attitudinal formation intersect in the context of AI-assisted writing.

## METHOD

**Research Design;** This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design to systematically characterize students' perceptions and attitudes toward ChatGPT in English language writing and to examine the statistical relationship between these two constructs. The descriptive component documented central tendency and variability, while the correlational component determined the direction and magnitude of the association. This design is appropriate when the aim is to capture phenomena as they naturally occur without experimental manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Research Subjects;** Participants were 110 EFL learners selected through purposive sampling, with prior documented ChatGPT experience in English writing tasks as the sole inclusion criterion, confirmed via a screening question at the opening of the survey (Fraenkel et al., 2019). Focusing exclusively on experienced users ensured that responses reflected informed, practice-based perceptions rather than hypothetical judgments. Ethical standards including voluntary participation, informed consent, and full respondent anonymity were upheld throughout, and no personal identifying information was retained in the dataset.

**Research Procedure;** The study was conducted in a single cross-sectional phase. Following instrument development and expert validation, the questionnaire was distributed to eligible participants, with the screening question placed first to confirm inclusion before respondents accessed the main items. Participants completed the survey independently within a single data collection window, after which responses were cleaned, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis. No intervention or experimental treatment was administered at any stage; the entire procedure was observational and self-report based.

**Research Instrument;** Data were collected using an 18-item researcher-developed Likert-scale questionnaire rated on a five-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), organized into two theoretically grounded subscales. The perceptions subscale (P1-P7) operationalized perceived usefulness (P1-P5) and perceived ease of use (P6-P7) in alignment with the Technology Acceptance Model (Granić & Marangunić, 2019), while the attitudes subscale (A1-A11) captured affective, behavioral, and cognitive orientations consistent with the ABC Attitude Model (Hussain, 2024). Subscale means were interpreted on a scale ranging from Strongly Negative (1.00-1.80) to Strongly Positive (4.21-5.00). Content validity was established through expert review by ELT and educational technology specialists assessing item relevance, clarity, and construct representativeness. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's Alpha of  $\alpha = 0.894$  for the full instrument,  $\alpha = 0.864$  for the perceptions subscale, and  $\alpha = 0.872$  for the attitudes subscale, all exceeding the accepted 0.70 threshold and reflecting good to excellent internal consistency (Taber, 2018).

**Data Analysis;** Descriptive statistics including means (M), standard deviations (SD), frequency counts, and percentages of positive responses (combined Agree and Strongly Agree) and negative responses (combined Disagree and Strongly Disagree) were computed per item to address RQ1 and RQ2. To address RQ3, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to assess the direction, magnitude, and statistical significance of the relationship between the two subscale mean scores. All analyses were performed at a significance level of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## RESULT

### **Students' Perceptions Toward ChatGPT in English Writing (RQ1)**

The first research question asked: What are students' perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT in English language writing? Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, frequency counts, and positive and negative response percentages were computed for the seven perception items. Results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Students' Perceptions Toward ChatGPT in English Language Writing (N = 110)

No.	Indicators of Perception	Mean	Standard Deviation	SA	A	N	D	SD	% Pos	% Neg
P1	ChatGPT helps me write better in English	3.67	0.78	15	49	42	3	1	58.2%	3.6%
P2	Using ChatGPT makes my writing tasks easier to complete	3.81	0.76	16	62	29	1	2	70.9%	2.7%
P3	ChatGPT helps me get ideas when I write in English	3.78	0.89	24	46	34	4	2	63.6%	5.5%
P4	I find ChatGPT helpful in organizing my writing structure	3.79	0.72	16	57	36	0	1	66.4%	0.9%
P5	ChatGPT helps me understand how to write well in English	3.71	0.83	18	50	34	8	0	61.8%	7.3%
P6	I find ChatGPT easy to use for English writing tasks	3.76	0.77	17	54	36	2	1	64.5%	2.7%
P7	It does not take long for me to learn how to use ChatGPT effectively	3.75	0.89	20	54	27	7	2	67.3%	8.2%
Overall		3.75	0.60							

**Note:** SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree. % Pos = combined percentage of SA and A. % Neg = combined percentage of D and SD. Interpretation scale: 1.00-1.80 = Strongly Negative; 1.81-2.60 = Negative; 2.61-3.40 = Neutral; 3.41-4.20 = Positive; 4.21-5.00 = Strongly Positive.

As presented in Table 1, the overall mean for students' perceptions was 3.75 (SD = 0.60), falling within the Positive interpretive range. This result indicates that the majority of participants hold favorable cognitive appraisals of ChatGPT as a tool for supporting English language writing tasks, a finding that is theoretically congruent with the perceived usefulness dimension of TAM (Granić & Marangunić, 2019; Scherer et al., 2019). Among individual items, P2 recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.81, SD = 0.76) and the highest positive response rate, with 62 respondents agreeing and 16 strongly agreeing (78 total, 70.9%), indicating that the large majority of students perceive ChatGPT as effective in making writing tasks easier to complete.

P4 followed closely (M = 3.79, SD = 0.72, 66.4% positive), with 57 respondents agreeing and 16 strongly agreeing and notably zero selecting Disagree, reflecting near-universal recognition of ChatGPT's organizational utility. P3 (M = 3.78, SD = 0.89, 63.6% positive) similarly confirmed that students value ChatGPT as an idea generation tool. Items P5 (M = 3.71, 61.8% positive), P6 (M = 3.76, 64.5% positive), and P7 (M = 3.75, 67.3% positive) also registered within the Positive range. P1 yielded the lowest perception mean (M = 3.67) with 64 respondents responding positively (15 SA + 49 A), suggesting somewhat more moderate agreement regarding direct writing quality improvement.

**Students' Attitudes Toward ChatGPT in English Writing (RQ2)**

The second research question asked: What are students' attitudes toward the use of ChatGPT in English language writing? The eleven-item attitudes subscale was analyzed using the same descriptive framework, with results presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics for Students' Attitudes Toward ChatGPT in English Language Writing (N = 110)

No.	Indicators of Attitudes	Mean	Standard Deviation	SA	A	N	D	SD	% Pos	% Neg
A1	I think using ChatGPT in English writing is a good idea	3.37	0.78	7	40	50	13	0	42.7%	11.8%
A2	I feel more comfortable using ChatGPT than asking a friend or teacher	3.12	1.14	11	33	36	18	12	40.0%	27.3%
A3	I believe ChatGPT helps me learn English writing better	3.57	0.83	13	48	38	11	0	55.5%	10.0%
A4	I am worried that using ChatGPT too much will make my own writing skills worse	4.05	0.83	35	51	20	3	1	78.2%	3.6%
A5	I think ChatGPT should be allowed to be used in English writing class	3.48	0.86	13	38	51	5	3	46.4%	7.3%
A6	I find it hard to start writing in English without using ChatGPT	3.22	1.04	8	42	33	20	7	45.5%	24.5%
A7	I often use ChatGPT to do my writing task from start to finish	3.06	1.01	9	27	41	28	5	32.7%	30.0%
A8	I prefer letting ChatGPT write for me rather than writing by myself	2.86	1.12	7	30	25	37	11	33.6%	43.6%
A9	I usually take ChatGPT's answer and use it right away without	2.68	1.09	5	23	29	38	15	25.5%	48.2%

A10	checking it first I feel less confident writing in English when ChatGPT is not available	2.99	0.98	3	35	38	26	8	34.5%	30.9%
A11	I tend to use ChatGPT even for simple writing tasks	3.05	0.98	4	35	42	21	8	35.5%	26.4%
Overall		3.22	0.65							

**Note.** SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree. % Pos. = combined percentage of SA and A. % Neg. = combined percentage of D and SD. Interpretation scale: 1.00-1.80 = Strongly Negative; 1.81-2.60 = Negative; 2.61-3.40 = Neutral; 3.41-4.20 = Positive; 4.21-5.00 = Strongly Positive.

As shown in Table 2, the overall attitude mean was 3.22 (SD = 0.65), falling within the Neutral interpretive range. The most prominent finding is A4, 'I am worried that using ChatGPT too much will make my own writing skills worse,' which recorded the highest attitude mean (M = 4.05, SD = 0.83) and the highest positive response rate in the entire subscale: 35 respondents strongly agreed and 51 agreed, yielding a combined 86 respondents (78.2%) expressing this concern. This item is the only one in the entire attitudes subscale to fall within the Positive interpretive range, underscoring that concern about skill degradation is not a peripheral sentiment but a dominant affective response. This pattern is consistent with the findings of Teng (2024a), whose systematic review of 20 empirical studies on ChatGPT in EFL writing contexts identified AI dependency and the potential erosion of critical thinking skills as among the most persistently reported learner concerns.

A3 (M = 3.57, SD = 0.83, 55.5% positive) indicates a majority cognitive belief that ChatGPT contributes to writing development. A5 (M = 3.48, SD = 0.86, 46.4% positive) shows moderate cognitive acceptance of formal classroom integration, though 51 respondents (46.4%) selected Neutral, indicating that nearly half remain undecided. The behavioral attitude items A6 through A11 all yielded Neutral overall interpretations. Most significantly, A8 (M = 2.86, SD = 1.12) and A9 (M = 2.68, SD = 1.09) recorded the two lowest means in the subscale, with 48 respondents (43.6%) and 53 respondents (48.2%) responding negatively respectively, indicating that the majority of participants reject both a preference for AI-generated writing over self-composed text and a tendency to adopt ChatGPT outputs without critical review.

### Relationship Between Perceptions and Attitudes (RQ3)

The third research question asked: Is there a significant relationship between students' perceptions and attitudes toward the use of ChatGPT in English language writing? Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was computed using the mean scores from both subscales. Results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3** Pearson Correlation Between Students' Perceptions and Attitudes Toward ChatGPT in English Language Writing (N = 110)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson r
Perceptions	3.75	0.60	<b>0.482**</b>
Attitudes	3.22	0.65	

**Note.** \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Correlation strength interpretation (Schober & Schwarte, 2018) : 0.00-0.19 = Negligible; 0.20-0.39 = Weak; 0.40-0.69 = Moderate; 0.70-0.89 = Strong; 0.90-1.00 = Very Strong.

As shown in Table 3, Pearson correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between students' perceptions and attitudes toward ChatGPT in English language writing ( $r = 0.482$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The null hypothesis that no

significant relationship exists between the two constructs is therefore rejected at the 0.05 significance level.

## DISCUSSION

### Discussion of Students' Perceptions Toward ChatGPT in English Writing (RQ1)

The finding that students hold overall positive perceptions of ChatGPT as a writing support tool ( $M = 3.75$ ) is consistent with the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use constructs of TAM, as validated by Granić & Marangunić (2019) and Scherer et al. (2019). The strongest endorsement was recorded for task facilitation (P2:  $M = 3.81$ , 70.9% positive), which aligns with Farrokhnia et al. (2024), who identified task facilitation as among the most frequently cited strengths of ChatGPT in educational settings. This finding is further echoed by Baidoo-Anu & Ansah (2023), whose review of ChatGPT's educational benefits prominently features its capacity to reduce task-completion burden for learners.

The near-zero negative response rate for P4 ( $M = 3.79$ , 66.4% positive, 0% Disagree) reflects near-universal recognition of ChatGPT's organizational utility, aligning with Su et al. (2023), who found that students in argumentative writing classrooms reported ChatGPT's structural scaffolding as particularly valuable. P3 ( $M = 3.78$ , 63.6% positive) further confirms that students value ChatGPT as an idea generation tool, a function Barrot (2023) likewise identifies as one of the tool's most educationally significant affordances in second language writing contexts. Guo & Wang (2024) noted that students recognized ChatGPT's particular strength in content organization at the brainstorming and structural planning stages, though they also noted its relative limitations in providing the kind of individualized guidance characteristic of human instruction. Marzuki et al. (2023) similarly identified, through interviews with EFL teachers across Indonesian universities, that AI writing tools were most valued for their capacity to improve content structure and organizational coherence, findings that parallel the perception pattern evidenced in P3 and P4 of the present study.

P6 and P7, which operationalize perceived ease of use, reflect learners' assessments that ChatGPT imposes minimal operational barriers. Yan (2023) corroborates this, with EFL learners reporting high usability satisfaction during a one-week ChatGPT writing practicum. Polakova et al. (2024) further support this pattern, demonstrating in a quasi-experimental study of 110 EFL university students that learners reported minimal difficulty engaging with ChatGPT's feedback interface and perceived its iterative prompting mechanism as accessible and efficient. Liu & Ma (2024) additionally demonstrated through structural equation modeling that EFL learners' positive attitudes toward ChatGPT's usefulness strongly predict their behavioral intention to use the tool, with perceived ease of use exerting its influence indirectly through perceived usefulness, providing additional theoretical grounding for the perception-attitude relationship examined in the present study.

P1 yielded the lowest perception mean ( $M = 3.67$ ), suggesting more moderate agreement regarding direct writing quality improvement. This may reflect an awareness among students that AI-generated text does not automatically translate to writing competence development, a distinction Warschauer et al. (2023) identify as central to understanding the pedagogical contradictions of AI-generated writing. Collectively, these findings demonstrate strong alignment with both the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use constructs of TAM, consistent with systematic reviews by Granić & Marangunić (2019), which confirm that perceived usefulness and ease of use are robust antecedents of technology adoption across a wide range of educational contexts.

### Discussion of Students' Attitudes Toward ChatGPT in English Writing (RQ2)

The neutral overall attitude mean ( $M = 3.22$ ) reflects a complex and differentiated attitudinal landscape consistent with the ABC Attitude Model (Hussain, 2024), wherein affective, behavioral, and cognitive components may develop in response to distinct sets of

experiences and evaluative considerations. Far from representing mere indifference, this neutral aggregate conceals a highly meaningful internal structure: a pattern in which students simultaneously demonstrate strong affective concern about skill degradation (A4) and active behavioral resistance to uncritical AI reliance (A8 and A9). This bifurcation of attitudinal responses across the affective and behavioral dimensions deserves particular attention, as it suggests that EFL learners are not passive recipients of AI-mediated assistance but rather self-aware agents who are actively negotiating the terms of their engagement with the technology.

The dominance of A4 ( $M = 4.05$ , 78.2% positive) as the sole Positive-range item in the entire attitudes subscale is a particularly noteworthy finding. The widespread affective apprehension about skill degradation coexists with the overall positive perceptions data, reflecting the tension Hyland (2019) identifies between AI-mediated scaffolding and the internalization of writing competence. This concern is empirically supported by Warschauer et al. (2023), who observe that AI-assisted writing creates a genuine risk of undermining independent writing competence. Yan (2023) similarly found that participants expressed concern about long-term skill implications despite recognizing ChatGPT's immediate practical utility. Mahapatra (2024) additionally found that while ChatGPT had a significant positive impact on ESL students' academic writing skills, participants flagged ongoing concerns about dependency. Teng (2024a), synthesizing 20 empirical studies on ChatGPT in EFL writing, identifies learner over-reliance and reduced critical thinking as the most consistently reported challenges, lending systematic-review-level support to the affective concern pattern observed in A4.

What distinguishes the present findings, however, is that the concern expressed through A4 is not accompanied by behavioral capitulation to that dependency. The data from A8 and A9 reveal a critically important and undertheorized dimension of learner behavior that warrants extended discussion. A8, 'I prefer letting ChatGPT write for me rather than writing by myself' ( $M = 2.86$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ), and A9, 'I usually take ChatGPT's answer and use it right away without checking it first' ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ), recorded the two lowest means across all 18 items in the entire instrument. With 43.6% and 48.2% of respondents respectively responding negatively to these items, the data indicate that a substantial portion of the sample is actively declining to delegate the writing process entirely to the AI and declining to adopt its outputs without critical evaluation. These two items represent the behavioral extreme of AI dependency, and the fact that learners resist them most strongly, despite holding positive perceptions of the tool's utility, is a finding of considerable theoretical and pedagogical weight.

This pattern constitutes what may be described as an 'aware but resisting passive dependence' orientation, a disposition in which students cognitively recognize the utility of ChatGPT, affectively fear its long-term consequences, and behaviorally resist its most passive applications. Darwin et al. (2024), in a large-scale exploration of EFL students' perceptions of AI in critical thinking development, found that students who were aware of AI's potential to generate over-reliance were more likely to engage with it selectively and evaluatively, approaching it as a tool to be interrogated rather than uncritically adopted. This parallels the behavioral profile observed in A8 and A9, where learners who fear the consequences of dependency simultaneously decline the behaviors most associated with it. Werdiningsih, Indrawati, et al. (2024), in a qualitative case study of three Indonesian EFL students with varying proficiency levels, similarly observed that even students who valued ChatGPT as a linguistic support tool consistently described strategies for preserving their own voice and resisting full delegation, a pattern that is directly analogous to the behavioral resistance reflected in A8. This tripartite structure of engaged, critical technology use aligns with the metacognitive self-regulation literature in second language writing. Teng (2025), in a mixed-methods study of 40 EFL undergraduates, demonstrated that learners with higher levels of metacognitive awareness were significantly more likely to approach ChatGPT as a feedback resource to be interrogated and selectively incorporated rather than as an authoritative text generator to be

uncritically accepted, a finding that directly parallels the behavioral pattern observed in A8 and A9.

This 'aware but resisting' orientation also resonates with the findings of Werdiningsih, Marzuki, et al. (2024), whose investigation of postgraduate EFL students at Indonesian universities found that learners strategically combined ChatGPT use with peer consultation and primary source verification, demonstrating that even heavy AI users maintained evaluative agency over AI-generated content. Kim et al. (2025) further support this, demonstrating in a *British Journal of Educational Technology* study on learner agency in LLM-powered writing environments that actively revising AI-generated text was associated with more creative and coherent writing outcomes, while minimally edited AI text was linked to increased dependency, underscoring that the behavioral stance toward AI outputs has measurable consequences for writing development. The behavioral resistance evidenced in A8 and A9 also resonates with the learner agency framework advanced by Godwin-jones (2024), who argues that learner-AI interactions in second language contexts are not inherently passive or deterministic but are shaped by the degree to which learners exercise evaluative judgment over AI-generated content.

Gerlich (2025) extends this concern, warning that widespread uncritical AI adoption risks producing what he terms 'cognitive offloading,' a gradual displacement of independent thinking by automated content generation that weakens learners' analytical capacities over time. This concern is given direct empirical grounding by Fan et al. (2024), whose randomised experiment comparing learners supported by ChatGPT, a human expert, and checklist tools found that while the ChatGPT group showed the highest short-term essay score improvement, they exhibited significantly fewer metacognitive processes such as evaluation and orientation during writing, a pattern the authors interpret as evidence of 'metacognitive laziness.' Crucially, the behavioral resistance observed in A8 and A9 in the present study suggests that many learners are intuitively guarding against precisely this mechanism: by declining to fully delegate writing and declining to accept AI output without review, they preserve the metacognitive engagement that Fan et al. (2024) identify as essential for genuine knowledge gain and transfer. This reading is further supported by Cotton et al. (2024), who found that pedagogically structured AI exposure fosters critical engagement, and by Warschauer et al. (2023), who advocate for an AI literacy framework that emphasizes corroboration and incorporation of AI-generated content rather than passive acceptance.

The moderate behavioral dependency indicated in A6 ( $M = 3.22$ , 45.5% positive) warrants continued attention. A proportion of respondents report finding it difficult to begin writing without ChatGPT, a pattern Su et al. (2023) associate with over-reliance on AI scaffolding at the pre-writing stage. This finding is also consistent with Alharbi (2023), who in a pedagogical overview of automated writing assistance tools noted that the initiating functions of AI tools carry a particular risk of fostering dependency in low-confidence writers. Nazari et al. (2021), in a randomised controlled trial examining 120 postgraduate EFL students' engagement with an AI-powered writing assistant, found that while the tool significantly improved short-term writing performance and self-efficacy, students in the AI-equipped group showed a measurable increase in behavioral reliance on the tool for task initiation, a finding that contextualises the initiation dependency pattern observed in A6 and underscores its cross-contextual relevance. Marzuki et al. (2023) further observed that EFL learners without adequate AI literacy training often defaulted to surface-level reliance on AI tools at the ideation stage, bypassing deeper reflection and meaning-making processes. The initiation scaffolding that ChatGPT provides at the pre-writing stage may, if unmanaged, reduce learners' capacity for independent ideation.

A3 ( $M = 3.57$ , 55.5% positive) indicates that a majority of respondents hold a cognitive belief that ChatGPT contributes positively to writing development. This is consistent with Barrot (2023), who argues that AI tools can serve as effective sources of language input and structural feedback, and with Teng (2024b), who found that students

engaging with ChatGPT iteratively developed stronger metacognitive awareness of their own writing weaknesses. Boudouaia et al. (2024) further support this trajectory, finding that exposure to ChatGPT in writing tasks led to significantly higher acceptance scores over time as students increasingly recognized its utility for structuring arguments and generating content ideas. A5 (M = 3.48, 46.4% positive) presents a more divided picture: while a slim majority lean toward accepting formal classroom integration, the 46.4% neutral response rate indicates that nearly half the sample remains undecided. Chan (2025) attributes precisely this kind of institutional ambivalence to the absence of clear policy guidance on AI use in academic writing contexts, suggesting that the uncertainty reflected in A5 is less about personal reluctance and more about institutional silence on the question.

Among the behavioral attitude items (A6-A11), the most consequential findings concern A8 (M = 2.86, 43.6% negative) and A9 (M = 2.68, 48.2% negative), the two lowest-scoring items in the entire attitudes subscale. Taken together with A4's dominance as the highest-scoring attitudinal item, these three items compose a theoretically coherent portrait: students are affectively concerned about skill loss (A4), and they are behaviorally declining to engage in the two forms of AI use most directly associated with that loss, full delegation (A8) and uncritical adoption (A9). Cotton et al. (2024) found that pedagogically structured AI exposure fosters this kind of critical engagement, and the present data raise the possibility that such a disposition may also emerge from learners' own metacognitive orientation, independent of explicit instruction. The finding that A10 (M = 2.99) and A11 (M = 3.05) also reflect cautious and moderate behavioral tendencies further reinforces the overall picture of a student population that maintains meaningful agency over its use of the tool. Nazaretsky et al. (2022) argue that effective AI tool use in educational contexts depends fundamentally on learners developing calibrated trust in AI systems, a kind of selective reliance that neither uncritically accepts nor wholly rejects AI outputs. The behavioral pattern evidenced in A8 and A9 suggests that many learners in the present study have arrived at precisely this calibration intuitively, representing a form of self-regulated technology engagement that educators can build upon.

### **Discussion of the Relationship Between Perceptions and Attitudes (RQ3)**

The statistically significant moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.482$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between students' perceptions and attitudes toward ChatGPT in English language writing supports the predictive logic of TAM (Granić & Marangunić, 2019; Scherer et al., 2019). It demonstrates that positive appraisals of a technology's utility and accessibility serve as antecedents to positive behavioral orientations. This correlation strength is interpreted as moderate according to the classification framework proposed by Schober & Schwarte (2018), in which values between 0.40 and 0.69 indicate a moderate association between variables.

The moderate rather than strong magnitude of the correlation coefficient is theoretically significant. It confirms that perceptions, while a meaningful predictor, do not solely account for the variance in attitudes. Additional factors not captured within the perceptions subscale also shape students' attitudinal profiles, including institutional policies, individual differences in prior technology experience, academic integrity dispositions, and broader pedagogical culture (Farrokhnia et al., 2024; Rudolph et al., 2023). The result aligns with the ABC Attitude Model (Hussain, 2024), in that cognitive appraisals constitute one contributing dimension of a broader tripartite attitudinal system, alongside affective and behavioral components that may operate with some degree of independence from cognitive evaluation alone. This finding is reinforced by broader TAM research in educational contexts: Granić (2022) and Granić & Marangunić (2019) consistently demonstrate that while perceived usefulness is a robust predictor of technology acceptance, additional affective and normative variables complement the cognitive pathway, a pattern that the present  $r = 0.482$  appears to replicate in the EFL ChatGPT context.

Song & Song (2023) similarly found that positive perceptions of AI-assisted writing tools among EFL students were linked to enhanced motivation and engagement, but that these attitudinal gains were shaped by additional factors including feedback quality and institutional support, underscoring the moderate nature of the perception-attitude relationship. Liu & Ma (2024) provide further convergent support: in their TAM-based investigation of EFL learners' ChatGPT use, they found that attitude toward usefulness was a significant but partial predictor of behavioral intention, with other variables also contributing to learners' ultimate behavioral dispositions. The moderate correlation observed in the present study is thus consistent with a growing body of evidence suggesting that in AI-assisted writing contexts, the pathway from utility perception to attitudinal orientation is real but not deterministic, a finding that positions the 'aware but resisting passive dependence' dynamic identified in the attitude data as a meaningful moderating factor. Almansour (2024), in a TAM-based structural equation modeling study of 211 EFL learners' behavioral intentions to adopt ChatGPT, similarly demonstrated that while perceived usefulness was the strongest predictor of behavioral intention, individual-level moderating variables including education level and gender differentially shaped the strength of that relationship, confirming that utility perception alone does not fully determine learners' attitudinal and behavioral orientations toward the tool.

## CONCLUSION

This study investigated the perceptions and attitudes of 110 EFL learners toward the use of ChatGPT in English language writing, and examined the relationship between these two constructs. The investigation yielded three principal findings, each corresponding to one of the study's research questions.

In response to RQ1, students hold overall positive perceptions of ChatGPT as a writing support tool ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ), with the strongest endorsements recorded for task facilitation and organizational support. Positive response rates exceeded 60% across all perception items, and the overall pattern aligns with the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use constructs of TAM (Granić & Marangunić, 2019). In response to RQ2, overall attitudes were neutral ( $M = 3.22$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ), yet this aggregate conceals a theoretically meaningful internal structure. The dominant affective concern about skill degradation (A4:  $M = 4.05$ , 78.2% positive) coexists with active behavioral resistance to full AI delegation and uncritical output adoption, as evidenced by A8 and A9 recording the two lowest means across all 18 instrument items ( $M = 2.86$  and  $M = 2.68$  respectively). This pattern constitutes an "aware but resisting passive dependence" orientation, wherein students cognitively value the tool, affectively fear its consequences, and behaviorally decline its most passive applications, a finding supported by Darwin et al. (2024), Kim et al. (2025), Teng (2025), and Werdiningsih, Marzuki, et al. (2024), and interpretable through the ABC Attitude Model (Hussain, 2024). In response to RQ3, a moderate, statistically significant positive correlation was identified between perceptions and attitudes ( $r = 0.482$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), confirming that favorable utility appraisals tend to align with more favorable attitudinal orientations while the two constructs retain meaningful independence, consistent with Almansour (2024) and Liu & Ma (2024).

These findings carry practical and theoretical implications for English language education. Educators are well-positioned to leverage students' receptiveness to ChatGPT as a supplementary writing resource while designing instructional frameworks that require active, evaluative engagement with AI-generated content rather than passive adoption, as recommended by Warschauer et al. (2023) and Teng (2024a). For institutional policymakers, the findings underscore the need for clear, evidence-informed guidelines on the pedagogically productive use of AI writing tools in EFL contexts, as highlighted by Barrot (2023), Chiu (2024), and Su et al. (2023).

Several limitations merit acknowledgment. The reliance on self-reported data introduces social desirability bias, and the single-site design, drawing exclusively from one

university in Banten, Indonesia, limits generalizability across diverse populations, cultural settings, and institutional environments. The cross-sectional nature of the study means that attitudinal change over time remains unexamined, and the absence of demographic disaggregation leaves potential variation across proficiency level, gender, and prior technology experience unaddressed. Future research would benefit from mixed-method designs that incorporate observational or think-aloud data, longitudinal tracking of attitudinal change over extended ChatGPT use, demographic subgroup analyses, and comparative studies across diverse EFL contexts and institutional settings.

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