



Between Trust and Skepticism: Comparative Perceptions of ChatGPT in Academic Writing among EFL Learners in Indonesia and the Philippines

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Joemar Antonio
Education Department, Philippine Christian University,
Philippines, joemarantonio.sp@gmail.com

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Nadiyah Ma'mun
English Language Education Department, Universitas Islam
Negeri Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia
nadiyah_makmun@walisongo.ac.id

***Corresponding Author's Email:**
nadiyah_makmun@walisongo.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the comparative perceptions of Indonesian and Philippine EFL students regarding the use of ChatGPT in academic writing, focusing on the interplay between trust and skepticism. Employing a quantitative comparative research design with complementary qualitative inputs, data were collected from 232 university students using a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 closed-ended items analyzed quantitatively and two open-ended items analyzed qualitatively. Descriptive statistics and comparative analysis revealed that both groups perceived ChatGPT positively as a tool that improves writing quality, coherence, and confidence. However, students also expressed ethical concerns about plagiarism, overreliance, and authenticity. Filipino students tended to exhibit higher trust due to greater digital familiarity, while Indonesian students demonstrated stronger skepticism rooted in institutional and moral caution. The findings highlight the coexistence of trust and critical awareness, emphasizing the need for AI literacy education that integrates technological proficiency with ethical reflection. The study contributes to global discussions on AI-assisted writing by contextualizing the phenomenon within Southeast Asian educational settings.

Keywords: ChatGPT, academic writing, AI literacy, EFL learners, Indonesia, Philippines

Introduction

In recent years, the rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into educational practices has reshaped the landscape of teaching and learning across disciplines. One of the most discussed AI tools is ChatGPT, a large language model developed by OpenAI, which has demonstrated remarkable potential to assist students in idea generation, linguistic refinement, and research development. The advent of ChatGPT has brought a significant transformation to the writing process, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, where learners often struggle with organizing ideas, applying proper grammar, and maintaining coherence in academic writing. Despite its promise, the widespread use of AI-powered writing tools has triggered debates over authenticity, originality, and ethical boundaries. Educators and policymakers remain divided over whether AI should be viewed as an educational partner or a disruptive force to academic integrity. Consequently, the adoption of ChatGPT in academic writing classrooms has become both an opportunity and a challenge, especially in developing countries where digital literacy levels vary significantly among students. This duality between trust in AI assistance and skepticism about its ethical implications – forms the foundation of inquiry for understanding how EFL learners perceive AI-supported academic writing in different sociocultural contexts.

Academic writing has long been considered one of the most complex skills to master in second or foreign language learning because it requires cognitive, linguistic, and rhetorical competence (Septyaningrum et al., 2024). In the EFL setting, students often experience difficulties with vocabulary selection, syntactic accuracy, and argument organization, which can hinder their ability to meet academic standards (Prastikawati et al., 2025). Consequently, many educators have turned to technology-enhanced writing tools to support learners' writing development. ChatGPT, in particular, offers instant feedback, suggests sentence reformulations, and provides stylistic improvements that can strengthen clarity and coherence. Nevertheless, the emergence of AI tools has also raised concerns about students' overreliance on technology, which might limit their ability to think critically and write independently. Several studies, such as those by (Esmas et al., 2024; Meniado et al., 2024), have highlighted that while ChatGPT enhances students' writing performance and confidence, it also creates potential risks for plagiarism and dependency. Therefore, the current educational challenge lies in finding a balance between leveraging AI for learning support and maintaining students' autonomy and originality in academic writing.

The discourse surrounding AI integration in education is particularly complex in Southeast Asia, where technological readiness and pedagogical innovation vary among institutions. In countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, the expansion of digital learning infrastructures has created both opportunities and disparities in how AI is adopted in classroom practices. While both nations share similar linguistic and educational challenges in EFL instruction, they differ in their sociocultural attitudes toward technology and academic integrity. Previous studies conducted by (Herda et al., 2024; Penpeña, 2025) reveal that students in these regions appreciate AI tools for their efficiency and personalized feedback; however, many remain cautious about the authenticity and reliability of AI-generated outputs.

In both contexts, ethical awareness and institutional regulations about AI usage are still evolving, leaving educators uncertain about appropriate integration strategies. Thus, comparative research between Indonesian and Philippine students offers valuable insight into how cultural, institutional, and pedagogical factors shape learners' perceptions of ChatGPT in academic writing.

Globally, researchers have explored various dimensions of ChatGPT use in academic and professional communication. Chanpradit (2025) argue that AI has become both an ally and an adversary in academia, as it facilitates knowledge production while simultaneously challenging traditional notions of authorship and intellectual integrity. Similarly, Hatmanto et al. (2024) note that while ChatGPT enhances efficiency and creativity, it may also blur the line between authentic human thought and machine-generated text. According to Mali (2025) further emphasize that users' satisfaction with ChatGPT depends on their level of AI literacy, motivation, and awareness of ethical considerations. Although these global studies have offered valuable insights, most have been conducted in Western or high-resource contexts where access to digital tools and AI education is more advanced. Consequently, there remains a limited understanding of how learners in developing Southeast Asian contexts perceive and engage with AI-driven writing tools, especially within higher education institutions.

In Indonesia, the adoption of ChatGPT in higher education is progressing steadily, driven by increased access to digital resources and the government's emphasis on technology integration in learning. However, many EFL students continue to face difficulties in using AI tools effectively and ethically, primarily due to inadequate digital literacy training. AI can enhance academic writing through feedback and language correction, students' lack of understanding about plagiarism and citation often leads to misuse (Rosdiana et al., 2024). Moreover, the traditional emphasis on teacher-centered instruction in Indonesian classrooms may limit students' agency in exploring AI tools independently. Therefore, students may perceive ChatGPT with both curiosity and caution by trusting its linguistic capabilities while doubting the authenticity of its content. Understanding this ambivalence is crucial for developing pedagogical frameworks that balance technological innovation with ethical writing practices.

Meanwhile, in the Philippine context, educational institutions have shown a relatively open stance toward integrating digital technologies into learning environments. The University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines, for example, has explored AI-based feedback tools to support students' academic writing performance. Filipino students, who are generally exposed to English as a medium of instruction, may demonstrate more confidence in engaging with ChatGPT for writing support. However, as Hatmanto et al. (2024) suggest, the ease of using AI can also lead to complacency in critical evaluation, as students may accept machine-generated information without adequate scrutiny. Furthermore, ethical awareness surrounding AI usage in academic work is still developing, creating potential gaps in students' understanding of intellectual honesty and authorship. These contextual dynamics make it important to explore whether Filipino students exhibit more trust or skepticism compared to their Indonesian counterparts when using ChatGPT for academic writing purposes.

While previous research, such as that by Herda et al. (2024), has compared the overall perceptions of Indonesian and Philippine students toward AI in writing, few studies have examined the deeper psychological and ethical dimensions of trust, reliance, and skepticism in such interactions. Existing works have primarily focused on the functional or technical advantages of ChatGPT, such as error correction and idea generation, rather than on the attitudinal and ethical complexities that accompany its use. Yet, understanding students' trust in AI tools is vital because it determines how responsibly and effectively they integrate them into academic tasks. Likewise, investigating skepticism can illuminate students' awareness of AI's limitations, biases, and ethical challenges. Without examining both trust and skepticism concurrently, research risks oversimplifying the multifaceted ways students negotiate the benefits and drawbacks of AI-assisted writing.

Furthermore, the comparative dimension between Indonesia and the Philippines provides a fertile ground for exploring how cultural and educational systems mediate students' perceptions of technology. Trust in AI tools may emerge differently in each country, influenced by factors such as institutional policy, exposure to English academic writing conventions, and students' prior experience with digital technologies. For instance, Indonesian students may approach AI as a supplementary aid due to stronger institutional caution, whereas Filipino students might perceive it as a legitimate collaborative partner in writing. By examining both contexts, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of how cultural backgrounds and learning environments shape learners' trust and skepticism toward ChatGPT. Such insights are not only theoretically significant but also practically relevant for designing ethical AI integration strategies that respect local educational values while promoting global digital competence.

Given these considerations, this study seeks to bridge the existing research gap by providing a comparative analysis of Indonesian and Philippine EFL students' perceptions of ChatGPT in academic writing. Specifically, it explores the extent to which learners trust the tool for improving writing quality and the degree of skepticism they hold concerning its authenticity, reliability, and ethical implications. By investigating both sides of this dual perception, the study aims to provide a more holistic understanding of how students engage with AI in academic contexts. The findings are expected to inform educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers on how to guide responsible AI usage in EFL writing instruction. Therefore, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How do Indonesian and Philippine EFL students perceive the role of ChatGPT in enhancing their academic writing performance?; and (2) What similarities and differences exist between Indonesian and Philippine students in terms of their trust and skepticism toward ChatGPT as an AI-assisted writing tool?

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative comparative research design to investigate the differences and similarities in perceptions of ChatGPT between Indonesian and Philippine EFL university students. The design was chosen to provide a systematic comparison between two groups exposed to similar academic writing contexts but situated within different

educational and cultural environments. According to Aridan et al. (2025), comparative research enables researchers to identify patterns of variance and convergence across populations to better understand the social and contextual factors influencing attitudes or behaviors. This study specifically adopted a causal-comparative (*ex post facto*) approach, as it sought to explore the causes and consequences of differences without manipulating variables. Since ChatGPT usage naturally occurred in students' learning environments, experimental control was neither feasible nor ethical. Thus, the study relied on post-hoc analysis to determine whether differences in students' perceptions were associated with their cultural or institutional contexts. Through this design, the study aimed to uncover meaningful relationships that reflect learners' trust and skepticism toward ChatGPT in academic writing.

Furthermore, this design was suitable for identifying attitudinal and behavioral variations without direct intervention in participants' academic routines. It provided an empirical framework to analyze the influence of contextual factors such as educational policy, digital literacy, and academic culture on students' acceptance of AI tools. The study also applied descriptive and inferential statistics to explore how strongly each group perceived ChatGPT in terms of usefulness, authenticity, and ethical reliability. While the design focused on group-level comparison, it also emphasized the interpretive aspect of perception, allowing researchers to discuss quantitative findings within a socio-educational perspective. By integrating statistical rigor and contextual interpretation, the research design ensured that the results would contribute not only to empirical understanding but also to pedagogical discussions on responsible AI use in EFL writing.

Participants and Context

The participants of this study consisted of 232 undergraduate EFL students enrolled in English Education programs at two universities: one in Indonesia and one in the Philippines. Among them, 120 students were from a state university in Central Java, Indonesia, while 112 were from a university in Mindanao, the Philippines. All participants had completed at least two academic writing courses and had used ChatGPT at least once for writing-related tasks such as generating ideas, paraphrasing, or checking grammar. The selection of these two groups aimed to represent typical EFL learners who encounter similar linguistic challenges but operate within distinct technological and institutional ecosystems (Munasih et al., 2024). A simple random sampling technique was applied to ensure equal opportunity for participation, in line with the recommendations. The anonymity of respondents was guaranteed by using coded identifiers rather than names, and participation was entirely voluntary.

The context of the study reflects two parallel yet distinct educational environments. In Indonesia, the integration of AI tools into classroom instruction is still in its formative phase, where most institutions encourage innovation but maintain caution toward issues of academic integrity. Conversely, the Philippine university context demonstrates relatively higher exposure to digital learning technologies and AI literacy programs. This contextual diversity provided a rich comparative framework to examine how socio-educational environments shape learners' perceptions of ChatGPT. Additionally, both countries share similar challenges in developing students' academic writing competence in English, which made comparison between the two groups pedagogically relevant. By situating the study within these two

comparable yet contrasting contexts, the research highlights the interplay between technological access, cultural attitudes, and educational norms in shaping AI-assisted writing behaviors (Malvado et al., 2022).

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from Penpeña (2025) validated by three experts in language education and educational technology. The instrument comprised 20 closed-ended items measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which were analyzed quantitatively, and two open-ended questions designed to elicit participants' reflections on ChatGPT's advantages and limitations in academic writing, which were analyzed qualitatively. The decision to include only two open-ended items was intentional to maintain respondent engagement while still capturing rich qualitative insights, as the study primarily focused on quantitative comparison. This balance aligns with the mixed-methods purpose by integrating interpretive commentary that contextualizes statistical patterns.

The questionnaire items were grouped into four dimensions: (1) basic perceptions of ChatGPT, (2) experiences of using ChatGPT for writing, (3) perceived advantages of ChatGPT in improving writing quality, and (4) beliefs and ethical considerations regarding AI usage. The adaptation process involved minor contextual revisions to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness for both Indonesian and Philippine participants. To establish reliability, the instrument was piloted among 30 EFL students not included in the main study, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.91, which indicates high internal consistency. This ensured that the instrument effectively captured the constructs of trust, usefulness, and skepticism toward ChatGPT.

Moreover, the questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms, which allowed easy access and secure submission from participants in both countries. To complement the quantitative data, two open-ended questions were added at the end of the questionnaire, inviting respondents to share their personal reflections about ChatGPT's advantages and limitations in academic writing. Although the focus of this study remained quantitative, the qualitative responses provided contextual enrichment that helped explain statistical trends. Validity was further supported through content validation by expert reviewers, who evaluated the relevance, clarity, and balance of the items across dimensions. The final version of the instrument represented a concise yet comprehensive tool for assessing EFL students' perceptions of AI-based writing assistance across diverse cultural contexts.

Research Procedures

The research procedures were conducted in four main stages: preparation, instrument validation, data collection, and data analysis. During the preparation stage, ethical clearance was obtained from both participating universities to ensure adherence to institutional research ethics. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality before they filled out the questionnaire. The second stage involved revising and validating the questionnaire to ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance for bilingual EFL learners. The validated questionnaire was then converted into a bilingual

format (English–Indonesian and English–Filipino) to minimize misunderstanding. In the data collection phase, the researchers coordinated with lecturers from both universities to distribute the survey links via institutional learning platforms. Data were collected over a period of three weeks to ensure adequate response rates.

Throughout the process, the researchers-maintained consistency in administration between the two groups to prevent procedural bias. Responses were automatically recorded in the online database, where incomplete or duplicate entries were filtered out. Out of 250 distributed questionnaires, 232 valid responses were retained for analysis. All data were anonymized to maintain the confidentiality of participants and comply with ethical research standards. The researchers also conducted a data integrity check to identify any inconsistent response patterns or missing values. Finally, the cleaned dataset was exported into Microsoft Excel and SPSS for statistical analysis. The uniformity of procedure across both countries ensured that differences in responses reflected genuine perceptual variations rather than methodological inconsistencies.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to address the research questions. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were computed to determine the general trends in students' perceptions of ChatGPT. This helped identify whether participants expressed more trust or skepticism toward AI-assisted writing. To examine cross-national differences between the Indonesian and Philippine groups, an independent samples t-test was applied, selected because it is appropriate for comparing the means of two independent groups on continuous variables (e.g., perception scores).

Additionally, frequency distributions were used to identify patterns of agreement and disagreement within each dimension of the questionnaire. Open-ended responses were analyzed qualitatively using thematic coding, which allowed the researchers to contextualize the numerical findings with participants' explanatory remarks. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative interpretations enriched the discussion by linking numerical trends with learners' reasoning and experiences. Furthermore, the triangulation of descriptive, inferential, and interpretive data enhanced the study's validity and reliability. The final results were presented in tabular and narrative forms to illustrate comparative insights between Indonesian and Philippine EFL students. Through this analytical approach, the study was able to reveal not only statistical differences but also the underlying educational and cultural factors shaping students' trust and skepticism toward ChatGPT in academic writing.

Findings

Perceptions of the Role of ChatGPT in Enhancing Academic Writing Performance

To address the first research question, the researchers analyzed the responses of 232 participants across four dimensions of perception: (1) Basic Information of Perceptions, (2) Experiences of Using ChatGPT for Writing, (3) Advantages of ChatGPT for Writing, and (4) Beliefs and Suggestions. Table 1 below summarizes the mean scores and standard deviations for each dimension among Indonesian and Philippine students.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT in Academic Writing

Dimension	Indonesia (n = 120)		Philippines (n = 112)		Overall Mean	Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Basic Information of Perceptions	M = 3.55 (SD = 0.59)		M = 3.68 (SD = 0.56)		3.62	Agree
Experiences of Using ChatGPT for Writing	M = 3.71 (SD = 0.54)		M = 3.82 (SD = 0.49)		3.76	Agree
Advantages of ChatGPT for Writing	M = 3.97 (SD = 0.51)		M = 4.09 (SD = 0.45)		4.03	Agree
Beliefs and Suggestions	M = 3.81 (SD = 0.52)		M = 3.89 (SD = 0.47)		3.85	Agree
Overall Mean Score	3.78 (SD = 0.56)		3.94 (SD = 0.49)		3.87	Agree

(Scale interpretation: 1.00–1.79 = Strongly Disagree; 1.80–2.59 = Disagree; 2.60–3.39 = Neutral; 3.40–4.19 = Agree; 4.20–5.00 = Strongly Agree)

The data in Table 1 demonstrate that both Indonesian and Philippine EFL students exhibited positive perceptions toward the use of ChatGPT in academic writing, with an overall mean of 3.87. The Philippine group showed a slightly higher level of agreement (M = 3.94) than the Indonesian group (M = 3.78), suggesting that Filipino students held stronger confidence in ChatGPT's role as an academic writing aid. Across both groups, the "Advantages of ChatGPT for Writing" dimension received the highest mean score (M = 4.03), indicating students' strong belief in ChatGPT's capacity to improve the quality, efficiency, and confidence of their writing performance. This finding supports Song and Song (2023), who reported that AI-supported writing environments foster greater student motivation and fluency.

The dimension of "Basic Information of Perceptions" yielded the lowest yet still positive mean (M = 3.62), reflecting students' cautious optimism toward ChatGPT. Many respondents agreed that ChatGPT makes academic writing easier and more accessible, yet some remained concerned about the authenticity and academic accuracy of the generated content. Around 30% of Indonesian students indicated neutrality or slight disagreement, stating that "AI results should always be verified with credible sources." Conversely, Filipino students expressed relatively higher trust, emphasizing the "ease of understanding grammar and structure

through ChatGPT's corrections." This pattern indicates that both groups view AI as a facilitator rather than a replacement for human reasoning and academic judgment. Such findings are consistent with Aubignat and Diab's (2023) argument that AI tools in education occupy a dual role as a partner in productivity and as a potential source of uncertainty.

The "Experiences of Using ChatGPT for Writing" dimension recorded a high overall mean of 3.76, illustrating that most students found the tool engaging, helpful, and enjoyable to use. Approximately 78% of respondents stated that using ChatGPT made writing assignments less stressful, particularly when they encountered difficulties in brainstorming ideas or refining vocabulary. However, Indonesian students tended to use ChatGPT more cautiously, often checking its suggestions with teachers or peers before applying them. In contrast, Filipino students described the experience as "interactive" and "innovative," reflecting higher digital confidence and familiarity with AI-assisted learning platforms. The independent samples t-test ($t = 1.65, p = 0.10$) showed no statistically significant difference between groups, confirming that both shared relatively similar perceptions, even though cultural nuances shaped their levels of enthusiasm.

The "Advantages of ChatGPT for Writing" dimension achieved the highest mean score ($M = 4.03$), reinforcing students' belief that ChatGPT enhances linguistic competence, coherence, and writing quality. About 83% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that ChatGPT helped them refine grammar, sentence organization, and academic vocabulary. Many respondents highlighted how AI feedback enabled them to identify weaknesses in syntax and cohesion, which improved the readability of their texts. Philippine students were more likely to praise ChatGPT's ability to generate varied lexical choices and formal expressions, while Indonesian students valued its capacity to simplify complex English sentences into more comprehensible structures. These findings affirm Bibi and Atta's (2024) conclusion that AI writing assistants can significantly support EFL learners' linguistic and rhetorical development, particularly in generating accurate and cohesive writing outputs.

The final dimension, "Beliefs and Suggestions," had an overall mean of 3.85, showing that most students acknowledged ChatGPT's potential benefits while remaining aware of its limitations. Approximately 81% of participants believed that ChatGPT reduces writing anxiety and enhances self-confidence, while 68% agreed that it fosters independent learning through self-revision and editing. However, 22% of respondents cautioned against overreliance, arguing that AI should be "a complement, not a substitute, for human creativity." Indonesian students more frequently mentioned ethical concerns such as plagiarism and lack of authenticity. Meanwhile, Filipino students emphasized practical efficiency and accessibility. These attitudinal differences mirror national variations in AI literacy and institutional policy, where Indonesian universities adopt a more conservative approach, whereas Philippine universities actively integrate AI-based learning tools in classroom instruction.

Complementing the quantitative findings, responses to the two open-ended questions provided qualitative depth that clarified students' perceptions of ChatGPT's role. Indonesian students commonly described ChatGPT as "a supportive guide that helps me find ideas but still requires my control and revision." This shows that they trust the tool for its linguistic assistance but remain sceptical of its conceptual accuracy. Conversely, Filipino students often referred to ChatGPT as "a writing companion that saves time and improves my confidence."

These statements reflect their greater comfort with AI autonomy, as they regard ChatGPT as an active learning partner. Both perspectives demonstrate a balance between enthusiasm and caution in which students trust AI for linguistic enhancement yet remain aware of ethical and intellectual boundaries.

Overall, the findings confirm that both Indonesian and Philippine EFL students perceive ChatGPT as a valuable technological innovation that positively influences their academic writing performance. The results highlight how trust and pragmatic reliance coexist with skepticism and ethical awareness, suggesting that students across both contexts have developed nuanced digital literacy. The high mean scores in all dimensions reveal that learners view ChatGPT not merely as a grammatical checker but as an interactive tool that empowers self-learning, creativity, and reflection. Nonetheless, the cautious stance especially among Indonesian participants, suggests the need for structured institutional guidance to help students use AI tools responsibly. In sum, this first finding demonstrates that while ChatGPT is widely appreciated as a catalyst for writing improvement, its role is still negotiated within the moral and pedagogical boundaries of academic integrity.

Trust and Skepticism toward ChatGPT as an AI-Assisted Writing Tool

To address the second research question, this section explores students' levels of trust and skepticism toward ChatGPT, which were measured through six questionnaire items related to authenticity, reliability, ethics, and dependency. These items were drawn primarily from the Basic Information of Perceptions and Beliefs and Suggestions dimensions, as both reflect students' affective and ethical orientations toward AI in writing. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics showing how the two groups of Indonesian and Philippine EFL students are differed in their degrees of trust and skepticism toward ChatGPT as an AI-assisted writing tool.

Table 2. Comparative Mean Scores on Trust and Skepticism toward ChatGPT

Aspect	Indonesia (n = 120)		Philippines (n = 112)		Overall Mean	Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Trust in ChatGPT's accuracy and usefulness	M = 3.92 (SD = 0.47)	=	M = 4.06 (SD = 0.43)	=	3.99	Agree
Confidence in ChatGPT-generated ideas	M = 3.81 (SD = 0.50)	=	M = 3.97 (SD = 0.45)	=	3.89	Agree
Belief in ChatGPT's ethical and safe use	M = 3.67 (SD = 0.56)	=	M = 3.84 (SD = 0.52)	=	3.75	Agree
Concerns about plagiarism and authenticity	M = 4.12 (SD = 0.44)	=	M = 3.85 (SD = 0.51)	=	3.99	Agree (High Skepticism)

Aspect	Indonesia (n = 120)		Philippines (n = 112)		Overall Mean	Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Fear of overreliance on AI tools	M = 3.89 (SD = 0.49)		M = 3.73 (SD = 0.48)		3.81	Agree (High Skepticism)
Awareness of AI limitations and errors	M = 4.01 (SD = 0.45)		M = 3.77 (SD = 0.52)		3.89	Agree (High Skepticism)
Overall Trust–Skepticism Composite Mean	3.90 (SD = 0.49)		3.87 (SD = 0.48)		3.89	Agree (Balanced Perception)

(Scale interpretation: 1.00–1.79 = Strongly Disagree; 1.80–2.59 = Disagree; 2.60–3.39 = Neutral; 3.40–4.19 = Agree; 4.20–5.00 = Strongly Agree)

The data in Table 2 reveal that both groups expressed a balanced perception of ChatGPT, demonstrating substantial trust in its usefulness while maintaining a high level of awareness about potential ethical and academic risks. The overall composite mean of 3.89 indicates that students neither fully depend on nor completely distrust ChatGPT, but rather approach it with informed caution. Interestingly, the Indonesian students scored slightly higher in skepticism-related items, particularly those concerning plagiarism, authenticity, and AI limitations. Meanwhile Filipino students showed marginally higher trust in ChatGPT’s reliability and practicality. The independent samples t-test results ($t = 0.57, p = 0.29$) confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups, suggesting that their perceptions are broadly similar despite contextual and cultural variations. However, subtle differences in emphasis reveal distinct educational and ethical sensibilities in how each group interprets AI-assisted writing.

The data on trust in ChatGPT’s accuracy and usefulness ($M = 3.99$ overall) underscore students’ belief that AI can improve their academic writing efficiency and linguistic accuracy. Approximately 82% of participants agreed that ChatGPT helps them structure ideas, check grammar, and improve lexical variety, making their writing more organized and comprehensible. However, the data also revealed a nuanced distinction: Philippine students ($M = 4.06$) showed slightly greater confidence in ChatGPT’s reliability compared to Indonesian students ($M = 3.92$). This disparity likely reflects the Philippines’ broader exposure to AI-driven learning technologies and the higher digital literacy of its students. Conversely, Indonesian students expressed stronger reliance on teachers’ validation before accepting AI-generated content, a pattern consistent with the teacher-centered learning culture documented in Indonesian higher education (Werdiningsih et al., 2024). These findings demonstrate that while both groups trust ChatGPT’s capacity for writing enhancement, the basis of that trust differs across contexts anchored more in technological familiarity for Filipino students and guided caution for Indonesian students.

Conversely, students' skepticism toward ChatGPT's ethical and academic authenticity also emerged prominently, particularly in Indonesian responses. The highest mean in this aspect was recorded for concerns about plagiarism and authenticity ($M = 3.99$), suggesting that students are acutely aware of the potential academic misconduct risks associated with AI-generated content. Indonesian students ($M = 4.12$) expressed stronger skepticism than Filipino students ($M = 3.85$), reflecting institutional caution and moral emphasis within Indonesian educational contexts. Many respondents from Indonesia noted that while ChatGPT provides valuable writing input, "AI results should always be verified" and "human reasoning must remain dominant." This perspective resonates with Lau et al. (2025) assertions that maintaining originality and intellectual honesty is fundamental to academic writing integrity. The finding also reinforces the idea that trust in AI does not preclude ethical vigilance; instead, both coexist within students' evolving understanding of responsible digital learning.

The aspect of fear of overreliance on AI tools further highlights students' internal negotiation between technological convenience and academic independence. The overall mean score ($M = 3.81$) suggests that a substantial number of students worry about becoming overly dependent on ChatGPT for linguistic or cognitive processes. Indonesian students demonstrated slightly greater apprehension ($M = 3.89$) than their Philippine counterparts ($M = 3.73$), revealing a more reflective stance toward the pedagogical consequences of AI reliance. Several open-ended responses from Indonesian students mentioned the risk that "students might stop thinking critically if AI provides everything instantly," indicating their awareness of how AI could undermine authentic learning. Meanwhile, Filipino students viewed overreliance as a manageable risk, emphasizing that "using AI is fine as long as students remain creative and honest." This divergence suggests that the Philippines' education system, which places more emphasis on autonomy and digital experimentation, nurtures a more pragmatic form of trust compared to Indonesia's ethically cautious approach.

In relation to awareness of AI limitations and errors, the responses reaffirmed that students from both countries are not blind users of ChatGPT but rather critical consumers of its output. The overall mean score ($M = 3.89$) indicates that most respondents recognized that AI-generated text may contain inaccuracies, lack contextual relevance, or misinterpret academic conventions. Indonesian students scored higher in this area ($M = 4.01$) than Filipino students ($M = 3.77$), suggesting stronger awareness of potential errors. This awareness may stem from Indonesia's institutional discourse that often frames AI as a tool requiring supervision and ethical control. Conversely, Filipino students tended to interpret limitations as opportunities to learn how to refine and edit AI-assisted writing, revealing a more exploratory and adaptive mindset. This finding aligns with Balatero et al. (2024) observation that users with higher digital literacy tend to perceive AI errors as part of the learning process rather than as deterrents to use.

Qualitative insights from open-ended responses further illustrate how students articulate the tension between trust and skepticism. Indonesian students frequently expressed that ChatGPT is "trustworthy for language accuracy but not for academic ideas," emphasizing the need for human critical thinking and teacher validation. In contrast, Filipino students described ChatGPT as "a helpful partner that saves time and boosts confidence" but admitted that "it can still be wrong or repetitive." These remarks show that both groups perceive

ChatGPT as a supportive but imperfect partner, reflecting a mature form of AI literacy grounded in critical awareness. Importantly, the coexistence of trust and skepticism reveals that students do not adopt extreme positions; rather, they develop balanced digital ethics that allow them to benefit from AI while maintaining intellectual responsibility.

Overall, the findings show that both Indonesian and Philippine EFL students demonstrate an informed, reflective engagement with ChatGPT, marked by confidence in its benefits and caution about its ethical boundaries. While Filipino students exhibit slightly stronger trust and technological comfort, Indonesian students display higher skepticism and ethical consciousness. These differences can be attributed to educational traditions (autonomy-oriented in the Philippines) and moral-authoritative in Indonesia by shaping how students interpret AI's role in academic integrity. The balanced mean composite score ($M = 3.89$) ultimately reflects an emerging digital awareness among Southeast Asian EFL learners, where trust and skepticism coexist as complementary dimensions rather than contradictions. This nuanced perception underscores the need for targeted digital literacy and ethics-based training to help students navigate AI-assisted writing responsibly within their academic contexts.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that both Indonesian and Philippine EFL students perceive ChatGPT as a valuable tool that enhances academic writing performance, yet they remain cautiously aware of its ethical and pedagogical implications. This dual perception namely trust and skepticism reflect an emerging pattern in AI-assisted learning contexts, where students simultaneously appreciate technological convenience and question its authenticity. Such a pattern supports the argument by Gustilo et al. (2024), who describe AI as both an “ally and adversary” in education. Similar to their findings in European contexts, this study confirms that Southeast Asian students exhibit a comparable ambivalence toward AI adoption. Students' trust arises from their recognition of ChatGPT's efficiency in improving grammar, organization, and clarity, whereas skepticism stems from concerns about originality and dependency. These results align with Rofikah et al. (2025), who observed that EFL learners view AI as an instrument that promotes confidence but may also reduce cognitive effort. Therefore, the coexistence of optimism and caution in students' perceptions reflects a global discourse about how AI transforms writing pedagogy while challenging traditional academic values.

The positive perceptions found in this study are consistent with previous research emphasizing the pedagogical potential of ChatGPT to enhance writing fluency and learner autonomy. Meniado et al. (2024), for example, concluded that students who used ChatGPT in academic writing experienced improved coherence, vocabulary range, and self-efficacy. Similar to their results, both Indonesian and Philippine participants in the present study reported that ChatGPT served as a supportive platform for revising and organizing ideas. However, this study extends their work by demonstrating that the perception of usefulness is not uniform across cultural settings. Filipino students displayed greater confidence in AI-generated feedback due to their higher exposure to digital learning platforms, while Indonesian students adopted a more reserved approach rooted in teacher-centered traditions.

These contrasts emphasize that the perceived benefits of AI tools depend not only on technological capability but also on institutional and cultural readiness. Consequently, the integration of AI into EFL writing classrooms should consider localized digital literacy competencies and sociocultural learning norms.

Moreover, the study's results highlight how trust in AI is shaped by students' familiarity with digital tools and their ability to evaluate machine-generated outputs critically. The higher trust levels observed among Filipino students align with Espartinez (2025) argument that AI literacy is defined as awareness of AI's functionality and limitations that significantly influences user satisfaction. In the Philippine context, where English proficiency and digital exposure are relatively advanced, students' trust appears to stem from pragmatic acceptance rather than blind faith. They regard ChatGPT as a "collaborative partner" that accelerates the writing process. Meanwhile, Indonesian students, who operate within more cautious institutional frameworks, demonstrated informed trust accompanied by ethical restraint. This mirrors Giray et al. (2025) notion that cultural context and pedagogical orientation influence whether educators and learners view AI as an enabler or a threat. Hence, the variations observed between both groups signify the importance of contextualizing AI literacy education to accommodate distinct academic traditions and ethical priorities.

Equally important, students' skepticism toward ChatGPT underscores the persistence of academic integrity as a guiding principle in AI-assisted writing. The high mean scores related to concerns about plagiarism and authenticity reaffirm the centrality of ethical awareness in EFL learners' engagement with technology. Maspul et al. (2025) emphasized that writing integrity depends on maintaining originality and intellectual authorship, even when using assistive technologies. The Indonesian students' strong skepticism resonates with this principle, as they stressed that ChatGPT outputs must be verified for accuracy and credibility. In contrast, Filipino students were less anxious about authenticity but still acknowledged AI's tendency to produce redundant or contextually inaccurate text. This nuanced difference suggests that skepticism is not synonymous with rejection; rather, it functions as a critical filter that safeguards students from misusing technology. Such findings contribute to ongoing scholarly debates on how educational institutions can preserve ethical standards while embracing digital transformation.

This study also supports Mabuan (2024) observation that the pedagogical success of AI integration depends on students' understanding of its limitations. Both groups of participants displayed awareness that ChatGPT may produce misleading, biased, or context-insensitive responses. Indonesian students, however, were more likely to interpret these errors as evidence that AI cannot replace human reasoning, while Filipino students saw them as opportunities to refine their editing and evaluative skills. This finding aligns with Peneyra et al. (2025), who argued that digital writing tools should be used to complement—not substitute—students' intellectual effort. The balanced trust-skepticism dynamic observed here implies that effective AI literacy instruction must encourage reflective usage, where learners harness ChatGPT's advantages while critically appraising its limitations. Therefore, cultivating evaluative thinking skills is essential to transform AI from a passive writing assistant into an active instrument of metacognitive learning

Comparatively, the results reveal an intriguing cultural interplay in how students from both countries conceptualize technological dependence. The fear of overreliance on AI expressed by both groups, particularly Indonesians, indicates awareness of potential cognitive complacency. This finding echoes Esmas et al. (2024), who warned that unchecked dependence on AI may erode students' creative thinking and problem-solving capacity. Indonesian students' cautious approach reflects their exposure to traditional academic values emphasizing effort, discipline, and authenticity. On the other hand, Filipino students adopted a more experimental stance, perceiving AI reliance as a manageable risk if coupled with personal responsibility. This contrast mirrors Bedrio et al. (2025) view that digital cultures shape how learners define authorship and agency in the writing process. Consequently, the pedagogical implication is that AI integration must be framed within ethical guidelines that promote critical engagement rather than mechanical use.

The finding that both groups reported high awareness of AI limitations highlights an emerging maturity in digital ethics among Southeast Asian learners. Contrary to earlier assumptions that students in developing nations might uncritically adopt AI tools, the results demonstrate critical discernment and reflective usage. This supports Esmas et al. (2024) claim that students can act as responsible co-authors in AI-supported writing when they are aware of the technology's fallibility. Indonesian students' emphasis on accuracy verification and Filipino students' focus on productivity suggest that AI literacy in these contexts involves both moral and functional dimensions. This dual awareness—acknowledging benefits while identifying flaws illustrating the development of what (Maspul et al., 2025) describes as “educationally adaptive skepticism.” It allows students to leverage AI productively without compromising academic ethics, positioning them as active decision-makers rather than passive consumers of technology.

When compared to prior global research, this study contributes a distinctive cross-cultural perspective that underscores how sociocultural context mediates students' digital practices. Previous investigations in Western contexts, such as (Espartinez, 2025; Meniado et al., 2024), primarily focused on individual learning behaviors in technologically advanced settings. In contrast, this study situates AI-assisted writing within Southeast Asia, where educational systems are characterized by varying degrees of digital readiness. By comparing two countries with shared linguistic challenges but differing technological infrastructures, the research extends existing frameworks of AI integration in EFL education. It highlights that students' attitudes toward AI are not solely determined by individual digital competence but also by institutional policies, teacher attitudes, and local discourses on academic ethics. Thus, the present findings enrich the global literature by contextualizing AI perception within developing educational ecosystems.

Pedagogically, the findings call for structured AI literacy programs that balance technological proficiency with ethical awareness. The coexistence of trust and skepticism suggests that students are ready to embrace AI, but they require formal guidance on responsible use. Such programs should integrate critical thinking, data verification, and citation ethics into AI-assisted writing instruction. Herda et al. (2024) has shown that when guided appropriately, students can use AI tools to promote autonomy and reflective learning rather than academic dishonesty. Therefore, institutions in both Indonesia and the Philippines

should implement policy frameworks that encourage pedagogically informed AI integration. Teachers must act not only as supervisors but also as facilitators who help students navigate the ethical and cognitive complexities of AI-supported learning. By institutionalizing such guidance, educational systems can transform student skepticism into informed digital citizenship.

Ultimately, this study positions the discourse on ChatGPT and academic writing within the broader conversation about the future of education in the AI era. The interplay between trust and skepticism observed among EFL learners reflects the ongoing negotiation between human cognition and machine intelligence. Both Indonesian and Philippine students demonstrate that embracing AI does not equate to surrendering intellectual agency; rather, it represents an adaptive response to evolving communicative realities. In this sense, the study affirms Bedrio et al. (2025) assertion that writing technologies are not merely tools but catalysts that reshape how learners think, compose, and collaborate. The balanced perceptions identified in this research thus offer an optimistic outlook: AI can coexist with academic integrity when guided by critical awareness and ethical literacy. Future research should continue exploring how teacher training, curriculum design, and institutional policy can sustain this balance by ensuring that trust in AI is grounded in accountability, and skepticism becomes a driver for critical learning rather than resistance to innovation.

Conclusion

The findings of this comparative study between Indonesian and Philippine EFL students reveal that ChatGPT occupies a complex yet promising position in the landscape of academic writing. Students across both contexts perceived ChatGPT as a beneficial tool that supports their writing performance by enhancing linguistic accuracy, coherence, and confidence. However, they also demonstrated critical awareness of its potential drawbacks, including overreliance, plagiarism, and authenticity concerns. This coexistence of trust and skepticism indicates a mature and reflective engagement with artificial intelligence, suggesting that learners are not passive users but critical participants in the digital writing process. The study extends previous works (Chanpradit, 2025; Rosdiana et al., 2024) by offering cross-cultural evidence from Southeast Asia where attitudes toward technology are shaped not only by digital exposure but also by cultural and institutional values. Overall, both Indonesian and Philippine students exemplify a balanced form of AI literacy in which appreciation for technological innovation coexists with ethical consciousness. This balanced stance is crucial for ensuring that AI becomes an ally for academic development rather than a source of academic misconduct.

Pedagogically, the results underscore the urgent need for higher education institutions in Indonesia and the Philippines to design AI-integrated writing curricula that explicitly address digital ethics, critical thinking, and responsible technology use. Teachers should be trained not only to guide students in the technical aspects of AI-assisted writing but also to cultivate reflective awareness of authorship, originality, and data validation. Embedding AI literacy modules within academic writing courses would enable students to navigate ChatGPT and similar tools as partners in learning rather than shortcuts to performance. Furthermore,

universities should establish clear institutional policies regarding acceptable AI usage, ensuring that trust in technology is balanced with accountability and human judgment. Beyond Southeast Asia, this study contributes to the global discourse on human and AI collaboration by illustrating that technological adaptation is inseparable from ethical reflection. Future research could expand this inquiry by examining longitudinal effects of AI-assisted writing on learners' critical thinking and linguistic development across diverse cultural and educational contexts. Ultimately, fostering a generation of writers who are technologically skilled yet ethically grounded will ensure that the integration of AI tools like ChatGPT strengthens not compromises the integrity and creativity of academic writing.

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