



Motivation and Overdependence on ChatGPT: A Correlational Study Among EFL Students

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Abstract

The rapid development of technology with the advent of AI tools such as ChatGPT in the field of education provides practical steps for EFL students, especially in assisting them in completing academic writing. However, there is still little research focusing on the relationship between student motivation and overdependence on AI tools. To determine the relationship between motivation levels and overdependence on ChatGPT to assist with academic writing among EFL students, the researcher employed a quantitative correlational study. The participants of this study were selected through a purposive sampling method, consisting of 26 EFL students who are currently taking or have completed an academic writing course. The questionnaire data were collected online via Google Forms. The analysis results indicated that there was no significant correlation between motivation levels and overdependence on ChatGPT among EFL students, as evidenced by a Sig. value of 0.454 ($p > 0.05$). It can be concluded that there are factors that have a greater influence than motivation on the level of EFL students' dependence on ChatGPT. Therefore, educational institutions and educators can establish structured guidelines for academic writing so that the use of AI in assignments can still be accountable and not violate academic ethics. Additionally, the limitations of this study include a small sample size and low variable variance. Therefore, future researchers addressing the same topic may consider adding or utilizing external variables and employing specific research methods to conduct a more in-depth exploration.

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INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is essential for improving English language learners' ability since it calls for mastery of concepts like vocabulary, grammar, coherence, and organizational structure (Campbell, 2019). It employs more sophisticated language and scholarly vocabulary. The argument makes sense as it moves forward while keeping the target audience in mind (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022). Students with strong writing abilities are able to express themselves clearly, communicate their ideas effectively, and succeed both academically and professionally (Yoon, 2011). At the university level, academic writing is an increasingly common means to evaluate students. Students are required to perform research and finish a variety of written tasks. Nevertheless, a lot of students struggle to learn the required abilities (AlMarwani, 2020). In practice, students often encounter various obstacles. Research by Nenotek et al. (2022) showed that students mostly struggle with content and structure when it comes to academic writing. In response to these complex challenges, technological innovation is developing rapidly. The world of language education has shifted in that direction to gain full benefit from it.

Academic writing requires the use of AI-powered writing assistance. Students also use AI tools more often because of their language skills. They see technology as a "savior" that helps them meet high academic standards by overcoming their linguistic limitations. They improve quality and efficiency by assisting with citations, language, structure, and disciplinary norms (Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024). ChatGPT is a widely used AI tool among students. A well-known large language model (LLM) driven by artificial intelligence (AI), ChatGPT is an OpenAI tool that has lately drawn interest due to its possible uses and consequences in a number of domains, including academic writing (Bom, 2023). Song and Song (2023) underlined that, in comparison to conventional approaches, ChatGPT's 12-week writing instruction course greatly enhanced the writing abilities (vocabulary, grammar, and organization) and motivation of Chinese EFL students. Similarly Mahapatra (2024) showed how ChatGPT, when utilized as a formative feedback tool, greatly enhanced the academic writing abilities of English as a Second Language (ESL) students. ChatGPT has the potential to help students learn, but there are new issues. Students might depend too much on AI tools. This phenomenon was revealed in interviews related to a study conducted by Song and Song (2023) showed that students frequently get too reliant on ChatGPT. Their inability to think critically and creatively is hindered by their propensity to look for AI assistance for every sentence. One of the main challenges EFL students face in using AI for academic writing is overdependence. Therefore, EFL students must pay close attention to the output generated by AI by evaluating it critically, rather than simply accepting it at face value.

Most EFL students have the ability to complete their academic writing assignments on their own, but some of them prefer to rely on AI to make their assignments easier, which leads to excessive dependence on it. This behavior is largely driven by excessive anxiety, not to mention the difficulties they face when trying to complete academic writing assignments independently; as a result, they cannot resist using AI as a tool to assist them. It has been noted that rather than finding solutions on their own, students believe the solutions provided by AI are better (Chan & Hu, 2023). Without a process of critical evaluation when encountering or accepting AI-generated answers, students engage in passive learning (Meyer et al. 2023; Sain et al. 2024). The difficulties students face during the academic writing process do indeed tend to lead to excessive dependence on AI. Such behavior will lead to further problems, as students will simply accept the output generated by AI without further evaluation, which has the potential to diminish their critical thinking (Sain et al., 2024). Furthermore, academic ethics issues may also arise when such reliance diminishes students' linguistic creativity and leads to academic dishonesty, beginning with students submitting AI-generated texts without citing sources (Hong, 2023). According to previous studies, process-based learning, balanced use guidelines, and critical AI literacy can all help avoid this issue (Baer, 2025; El Ouidani & Madaoui, 2024; Meyer et al., 2023). Since overdependence can diminish students' cognitive and behavioral, it is important to identify factors that can or prevent this behavior.

Motivation plays a crucial role in determining how students interact with tools when faced with challenging tasks, such as academic writing. It influences whether students use artificial intelligence to enhance their learning or merely as a shortcut to avoid cognitive difficulties. Motivation is a factor that can prevent overdependence, which is students' drive to achieve higher levels in order to attain desired results. In the scientific literature, motivation is frequently defined as the process that starts and maintains goal-directed action (Schunk et al., 2010). An interest in or pleasure of the activity at hand serves as the driving force behind intrinsic motivation. Instead than

being the result of outside pressure, it originates from within the person. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, originates from sources outside the person. Extrinsic motivators include coercion, the threat of punishment, and incentives like money and grades (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2012). Engaging in actions for their own reason, for the enjoyment and fulfillment they provide, is known as intrinsic motivation. People who are intrinsically driven pursue their interests freely, fully, and without the need for pecuniary incentives or limitations (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Consequently, students who are driven by intrinsic motivation tend to place a high value on their efforts in completing tasks, perceiving ChatGPT as a refinement instrument rather than a substitute for individual cognitive function. On the other hand, behavior driven by outside motivation is done not because of liking or interest, but because the behavior is a way to achieve other goals or consequences (for example, grades, praise, or rewards) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Therefore, students who are predominantly motivated in this way are more likely to use AI compulsively and without reflection.

Many studies have proven that overdependence can inhibit students' cognitive and behavioral abilities, as well as their motivation, in an educational context. However, the majority of the material now in publication concentrates more on these detrimental effects than the underlying reasons. The precise statistical relationship between motivation types and overdependence has not yet been thoroughly investigated in quantitative research, which represents a significant research gap. Although the outcomes are known, it is still unclear from empirical research how motivation functions as a predictor, whether it increases or decreases reliance. Furthermore, Jiang and Hong (2025) have suggested that future studies should explore factors such as motivation to understand levels of addiction. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between motivation and the risk of dependency on ChatGPT among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

This study has proposed the following hypotheses:

- a) Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): There is a significant relationship between student motivation and the overdependence of ChatGPT usage among EFL students.
- b) Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant relationship between student motivation and the overdependence of ChatGPT usage among EFL students.

These findings will provide highly specific recommendations for lecturers, student counselors, and policymakers. These findings may be used to determine the protective function of motivation and to guide the development of curriculum initiatives that promote independence and guard against an excessive reliance on AI. In addition, strategies can be developed to help students use AI tools wisely so they can successfully meet the demands of academic writing assignments. Specifically, this quantitative research seeks to answer the following research question: (1) To what extent does motivation correlate with overdependence on ChatGPT among EFL students?

METHODS

This research used a quantitative with correlational design. According to Ary et al. (2010), the correlation shows how strongly matched scores are related to one another and whether the relationship is positive or negative. This study uses the correlation approach to determine if there is a significant relationship between student motivation and the overdependence of ChatGPT usage in academic writing tasks. A highly helpful statistic that can be used without a scatterplot to show the direction and strength of a link between two variables is the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r).

The participants in this study were 26 students who were taking or had completed an academic writing course, namely second- and third-year students. They were selected using a non-probability sampling method, namely purposive sampling. Rai and Thapa (2015), purposive sampling focused on particular characteristics of an interest population to assist in addressing the research questions. Initially, there were 31 students participating in this study, but the researcher found five outliers and therefore needed to eliminate them.

The researcher collected data through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms using a Likert scale (1-4). This questionnaire, containing 27 statements, measured motivation and dependency and had been previously validated. Each exhibited very high reliability values of 0.959 and 0.933, respectively. The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) is composed of 12 items divided into seven subscales that assess students' perceived amotivation and three types of extrinsic motivation (introjected, identified, and external regulation) and three types of intrinsic motivation (motivation to know, motivation toward accomplishment, and motivation to experience

stimulation) (Vallerand et al., 1992). Additionally, the researcher employed the dependence on AI scale by Morales-García et al. (2024). These criteria were broken down into five key components: (1) Feeling of vulnerability, addressing the perceived insecurity when lacking access to technological tools; (2) Concern about relevance and performance, related to performance anxiety and the need to integrate technologies in the workplace and academic setting; (3) Need to maintain an updated image, reflecting the social motivation behind the use of emerging technologies; (4) Seeking external validation, indicating emotional dependence on these tools for decision-making; and (5) Fear of personal obsolescence, considering the fear of human replacement by technological automation.

The data collection process was conducted in a chronological order. The researcher employed the following procedures to collect data: (1) designing and validating the instrument, (2) distributing the questionnaire online via Google Forms, (3) screening and preparing valid data for analysis, (4) analyzing the data using SPSS, and (5) interpreting the results of the data analysis.

The researcher analyzed the obtained data using correlational analysis with SPSS version 27. According to Ary et al. (2010), the correlation shows how strongly matched scores are related to one another and whether the relationship is positive or negative. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) is well-suited for this research and can be used without a scatter plot or an indication of the strength of the relationship between variables. Before conducting an analysis using Pearson's correlation, certain assumption tests must be met, including tests for normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section provides a detailed explanation of the findings from the study on the relationship between motivation levels and overdependence on ChatGPT among EFL students.

Finding

The three assumptions: normality, linearity, and heteroscedasticity are assumptions that must be met in a parametric analysis of Pearson's correlation. The researcher analyzed the data to determine the correlation between motivation and the overdependence of ChatGPT use among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Several statistical tests were performed to ensure the validity of these findings. A survey consisting of 27 statements on a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree) was conducted via Google Forms. Here is the data:

Table 1. Tests of Normality

Variables	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Motivation	0.932	26	0.086
Overdependence	0.957	26	0.328

In the analysis of data normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used because the sample size was less than 50 ($N = 26$). Table 1 shows the respective significance values (Sig.) for motivation and overdependence to be 0.086 and 0.328. Since both values are higher than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded that the data for both variables are normally distributed. Therefore, the normality assumption is met, allowing for the use of parametric statistical tests in subsequent analyses.

Table 2. Linearity of Deviation

Deviation from	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Linearity	117.010	11	10.637	0.643	0.765

Regarding the assumption of linearity, the Deviation from Linearity test obtained a significance value of 0.765. Since this value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), it indicates that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables meets the linearity assumption, meaning that their relationship pattern can be considered linear. This shows that the evaluation of the relationship between the two variables can be appropriately conducted using the Pearson correlation model.

Table 3. Test of Heteroscedasticity

Model		Unstandardized	Std. Error	Standardized	t	Sig.
		Coefficients B		Coefficients Beta		
1	(Constant)	- 2.798	4.523		-0.619	0.542
	Motivation	0.129	0.106	0.240	1.210	0.238

a. Dependent Variable: Abs_RES

As shown in Table 3, the heteroskedasticity test indicates that the significance value of the motivation (Sig. = 0.238) is larger than 0.05. This shows that the unexplained part of the data does not change when the independent variables are at different levels. The next step a Pearson correlation analysis can be performed because the assumption of homoscedasticity is met. The interpretation is expected to yield sound analytical results regarding the relationship between these variables, especially since all three assumptions have been met and the correlation coefficient obtained is likely unbiased.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Motivation and Overdependence

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Deviation	Statistic
MOV	26	14	35	49	42.35	0.896	20.875
OV	26	15	36	51	42.19	0.723	13.602
Valid N (listwise)	26						

Descriptive statistics for the variables of student motivation (MOV) and overdependence (OV) are presented in Table 3 above. The mean score for motivation is 42.35 (SD = 4.569), with a range of 14 and a minimum of 35 and maximum of 49. The mean score for excessive dependence is slightly lower, at 42.19 (SD = 3.688), with a range of 15, from a minimum of 36 to a maximum of 51. Overall, these results indicate that students exhibit high levels of motivation and excessive dependence, as the mean scores of both variables are near the upper end of the scale. Furthermore, the variability analysis shows that the standard deviation for motivation (4.569) is higher than that for excessive dependence (3.688). This indicates that students' motivation levels are more dispersed than their levels of excessive dependence. In other words, while the level of excessive dependence is relatively consistent across the sample, there is greater variation in students' motivation levels.

In conducting this study, the researcher used 27 statements, 12 of which were questions to assess motivation using the theory from Vallerand et al. (Vallerand et al., 1992) The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), which consists of six subscales that assess students' perceived three types of extrinsic motivation (introjected, identified, and external regulation) and three types of intrinsic motivation (motivation to know, motivation toward accomplishment, and motivation to experience stimulation) and 15 statements to assess the dependence on AI scale by Morales-García et al. (2024), which consists of five key components: (1) Feeling of vulnerability; (2) Concern about relevance and performance; (3) Need to maintain an updated image; (4) Seeking external validation; and (5) Fear of personal obsolescence. The data from the participants who participated in filling out this questionnaire consisted of 26 EFL students. The following is the data obtained.

Table 5. Student Motivation Questionnaire

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Extrinsic Motivation — External Regulation				
Q1	I study English in order to complete my assignments on time and earn good grades.	26	3.35	0.797
Q2	I study English because my lecturer expects me to do my assignments well.	26	3.23	0.652

Extrinsic Motivation — Introjected Regulation				
Q3	I study English so that I won't feel left behind.	26	3.42	0.703
Q4	I feel bad when I don't make progress learning English.	26	3.54	0.508
Extrinsic Motivation — Identified Regulation				
Q5	I study English to get better at grammar and communication.	26	3.27	0.778
Q6	I learn English because it supports my goal of becoming fluent.	26	3.46	0.508
Intrinsic Motivation — To Know				
Q7	I study English because I like finding new things in the language.	26	3.38	0.571
Q8	I enjoy learning about how English works and how meanings are formed.	26	3.27	0.533
Intrinsic Motivation — Toward Accomplishment				
Q9	I feel satisfied when I complete my English tasks.	26	3.73	0.452
Q10	I study English to improve my performance.	26	3.38	0.496
Q11	I feel more confident when I make progress.	26	3.62	0.496
Intrinsic Motivation — To Experience Stimulation				
Q12	I feel excited when I learn English through interesting activities.	26	3.69	0.471

The above questionnaire is useful for measuring student motivation. From the results, we can determine which type of motivation influences students the most: intrinsic or extrinsic. Question 9 (Q9) yields the highest average score of 3.74. The statement in question 9 is "I feel satisfied when I successfully complete my English tasks." Another significant result is the average score of 3.69 for question 12 (Q12), which has the statement "I feel excited when I learn English through interesting activities." Additionally, question 11 (Q11) has an average score of 3.62 with the statement "I feel more confident when I make progress." The three highest average results in this questionnaire show that intrinsic motivation significantly contributes to students' learning motivation. Students with high intrinsic motivation tend to study to gain personal satisfaction from successfully completing a task, as shown in the table above.

Table 6. Student Overdependence Questionnaire

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Concern about Relevance and Performance				
Q1	I feel that I need ChatGPT to complete my academic writing more quickly.	26	2.92	0.560
Q2	I use ChatGPT because I am afraid that my writing will be irrelevant.	26	3.00	0.566
Q3	I am worried that my academic performance will get worse if I don't use ChatGPT.	26	2.62	0.571
Feeling of Vulnerability				
Q4	I have a hard time writing academic work when I don't have access to ChatGPT.	26	2.77	0.710
Q5	I feel insecure when I have to write without using ChatGPT.	26	2.54	0.647
Q6	I am worried that my academic writing won't be as good if I don't use ChatGPT.	26	2.50	0.707
Seeking External Validation				
Q7	I use ChatGPT to make sure my writing is correct.	26	3.19	0.402
Q8	I feel more confident in my writing after receiving feedback from ChatGPT.	26	2.96	0.445
Q9	I trust ChatGPT's advice more than I trust my own	26	2.12	0.864

	abilities.			
	Need to Maintain an Updated Image			
Q10	I use ChatGPT to stay up to date with technological developments.	26	3.23	0.430
Q11	I use ChatGPT because I want to seem like a modern student.	26	2.58	0.643
Q12	I feel that using ChatGPT has improved my academic image.	26	2.65	0.629
	Fear of Personal Obsolescence			
Q13	I am worried that my academic writing skills will get weak because I use ChatGPT too much.	26	3.19	0.749
Q14	I am concerned that ChatGPT will make humans increasingly unnecessary in academic writing.	26	3.08	0.688
Q15	I feel that ChatGPT could replace me when it comes to producing academic writing.	26	2.85	0.784

The above questionnaire is useful for measuring student overdependence in ChatGPT. The researcher can identify the main reasons behind students' excessive use of ChatGPT. Question 10 (Q10) yields the highest average score of 3.23. The statement in question 3 is "I use ChatGPT to stay up to date with technological developments." Another significant result is the average score of 3.19 for question 7 and 13 (Q7 and Q13), which have the statement "I use ChatGPT to make sure my writing is correct." and "I am worried that my academic writing skills will get weak because I use ChatGPT too much." Based on the results of the questionnaire, the three highest averages indicate that many students are dependent on the use of ChatGPT in completing academic writing in order to keep up with the times, as AI technology is rapidly advancing in the current era. In addition, students also use ChatGPT as an assistive technology to evaluate whether their academic writing performance complies with the requested format. Nevertheless, many of them are also concerned that their academic writing skills may decline with excessive use of ChatGPT. It can be concluded that they are still aware of the negative effects that AI tools can have if used beyond reasonable limits.

Table 7. The Result of the Correlational Analysis between Students' Motivation and Frequency of Usage in ChatGPT

		Motivation	Frequency of Usage
Motivation	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.154
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.454
	N	26	26
Frequency of Usage	Pearson Correlation	-0.154	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.454	
	N	26	26

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate a coefficient of -0.154. This value suggests a very weak correlation between the two variables, which is statistically negligible since it is close to zero. Although the relationship is negative, the significance value (Sig.) of 0.454 ($p > 0.05$) indicates that there is no statistically significant correlation. Therefore, the observed pattern of relationships does not apply to the population. For clarity, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated as 0.0237 (2.37%). It can be concluded that student motivation does not influence the degree of students' reliance on ChatGPT; this can be attributed to the fact that, based on the results of the analysis above, student motivation accounts for only 2.37% of the variation in the degree of reliance, while the remaining variation is due to factors not examined in this research.

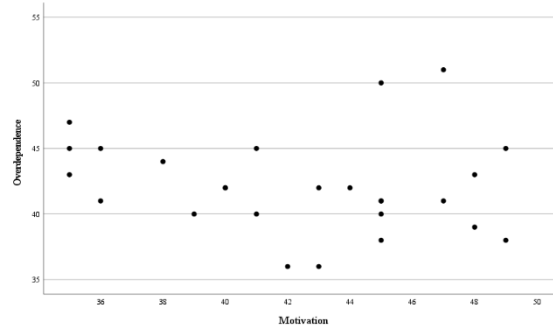


Figure 1. Scatter Plot Motivation and Overdependence

The scatter plot showing the relationship between student motivation and overdependence on ChatGPT is shown in Figure 1. As can be seen in the figure, there is no clear linear relationship between the variables. Changes in the level of reliance on ChatGPT are not always correlated with students' motivation levels, as the data points are scattered across various motivation levels. This figure is consistent with the results of the Pearson correlation analysis, which also indicates that the relationship between motivation and overdependence is weak.

Discussion

This study examines the relationship between student motivation and overdependence on ChatGPT in the context of academic writing among EFL students. The results of the Pearson correlation analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between student motivation and ChatGPT reliance. Therefore, the hypothesis that the two are related is rejected. The study also found that student motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, cannot predict the extent to which individuals rely on artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT. However, an interesting statistical finding emerged: highly motivated students also exhibited high reliance on ChatGPT. It can be said that overly relying on AI tools can happen to anyone, regardless of how motivated they are, because this does not guarantee that EFL students will not become dependent on them.

Therefore, it cannot be said that a lack of motivation to study causes EFL students to overuse AI tools like ChatGPT, because many of them face difficulties stemming from limited language proficiency including a lack of understanding of grammar and a limited vocabulary while, on the other hand, students actually have strong concepts they wish to convey. Consequently, the use of ChatGPT is expected to help them ensure that their academic writing meets existing academic standards, thereby serving as a tool to bridge this gap. This aligns with the compensation strategy outlined by Oxford (1990), in which learners use aids or media to understand concepts despite their limited knowledge. Similarly, the study by Meniado et al. (2024) highlighted the positive aspects of ChatGPT in assisting EFL students throughout the entire academic writing process from the initial stages to the final draft including organizing ideas, brainstorming, and editing drafts. Therefore, adopting AI tools like ChatGPT for writing in a second or foreign language is crucial. This tool helps students navigate complex cognitive processes and overcome the limitations of their foreign language proficiency. This approach has nothing to do with a lack of motivation; rather, it is a strategic method to bridge these gaps while meeting academic writing standards.

In addition to these limitations, students often feel afraid of making mistakes and lack confidence in their writing abilities due to their English proficiency. This triggers concerns about receiving poor grades because of their limitations, leading them to use ChatGPT to avoid these risks. This AI tool helps EFL students check and revise their writing and ensure that their grammar is correct. Therefore, rather than being driven by a desire to take shortcuts, using AI in this context is a self-defense mechanism to cover up deficiencies in competence. Cheng (2004) recognized cognitive anxiety and avoidance behavior as important aspects of writing anxiety while developing the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). Fear of receiving a poor grade and excessive concern over performance are signs of cognitive anxiety. Students' "mental pressure from the possibility of criticism" is directly explained by this. Additionally, in the digital age, Cheng's avoidance behavior dimension, in the way students attempt to evade the writing task, can be reinterpreted. Instead of completely quitting writing, students "outsource" the cognitive load to ChatGPT in order to avoid the stress of writing poorly. ChatGPT is widely accepted among

students. Using AI wisely can help avoid ethical issues. Students will see it as a tool that can improve their writing and make the learning process more efficient. Rather than viewing AI as a threat, students see it as a helpful resource (Chan & Hu, 2023; Salam, 2025).

Academic writing is a challenging task that requires exceptional cognitive abilities. According to Kellogg (2008), the writers must concurrently handle planning, interpreting ideas, and analyzing text, which significantly strains working memory during the writing process. Therefore, many years of intentional effort are necessary to become a great writer in order to lessen this cognitive load and allow writers to shift from knowledge-telling to knowledge-transforming. Due to the high cognitive load, students often employ pragmatic strategies to complete assignments. Even though they are highly motivated academically, one approach is to use AI technology, such as ChatGPT, for assistance. Chan and Hu's (2023) study found that students view generative AI as a useful tool for writing assistance and brainstorming. It works well as a scaffold to lessen cognitive demands. Salam (2025) discovered that students' opinions of ChatGPT's usability and convenience of use greatly influence their positive attitudes toward technological change, which in turn becomes a major factor influencing their intention to keep using the tool.

Furthermore, the study's findings suggest that students do not use ChatGPT to plagiarize entire essays. Rather, they view it as a highly helpful writing assistant. Consequently, they can increase their productivity and overcome language barriers. Ultimately, using artificial intelligence (AI) in academic writing helps students cope with high cognitive demands. Using AI is not merely taking a shortcut; it is a highly effective, adaptive approach. With ChatGPT as a thinking partner, students can focus on developing complex ideas. They can also overcome the linguistic and technological barriers that are typically the biggest challenges. Consequently, students can more easily develop their ideas and improve the quality of their academic writing.

College students often face heavy academic workloads due to curricula that require the completion of a large number of semester credit hours. This can create an imbalance between the time allotted for independent study and the total weekly workload. Students must complete academic writing assignments that require lengthy cognitive processes and significant time to produce high-quality essays and articles.

To manage their ever-increasing workloads, students often use time-saving strategies, such as AI tools. There is empirical support for this practical behavior. For example, Strzelecki (2025) found that performance expectancy, the belief that using AI will lead to academic achievement and efficiency, is the best predictor of students' intention to use ChatGPT. Therefore, using AI is a strategic response to high academic demands, not an attempt to avoid effort. Students use AI to improve their academic performance and efficiency, thereby enabling them to better manage their workload. According to Ravšelj et al. (2025), students mostly utilize ChatGPT for cognitively taxing tasks that significantly increase learning effectiveness and material understanding, like brainstorming, summarizing texts, and reducing difficult information. In addressing challenges such as excessive workloads and tight deadlines which students frequently face, these findings suggest that a practical solution to these challenges is to use AI as a tool to lighten their workload. If students focus on improving their skills and academic performance rather than using this tool as a substitute for their own writing, it will have a positive impact on their academic progress.

This behavior is a practical strategic approach designed to help them cope with excessive cognitive load and time constraints. Therefore, it cannot be immediately concluded that the use of ChatGPT or other AI tools even when used with slightly excessive frequency is a result of a lack of motivation or a violation of academic ethics; rather, it serves as a tool to assist EFL students in overcoming the challenges they face. Therefore, there needs to be a shift in the pedagogical approach to academic writing by breaking the process down into structured steps to meet the needs of EFL students and emphasizing the importance of digital literacy so that students do not use AI tools like ChatGPT merely as a shortcut without evaluating the output provided, thereby ensuring that students retain control over their writing.

This study provides insights into the relationship between student motivation and overdependence on ChatGPT in academic writing; however, it only captures this phenomenon at a single point in time, whereas technological advancements and students' skills continue to evolve over time. Therefore, future research requires a more in-depth and longitudinal approach such as a long-term cohort study to yield more meaningful findings. Data collected over time is crucial for understanding changes in how students interact with AI whether the tool helps develop more mature thinking skills or has the opposite effect. In addition, other considerations such as external factors

that influence the level of dependence of EFL students on ChatGPT should be taken into account. Since there is no empirically significant relationship between students' motivation and overdependence on ChatGPT, this influence likely originates from factors such as excessive cognitive load and the time constraints faced by EFL students. This aspect is important to consider so that educators can adjust the next steps to be taken in accordance with the needs and anxieties faced by the students.

CONCLUSION

It can be said that there is no significant relationship between motivation and excessive dependence on ChatGPT among EFL students in academic writing, which suggests that dependence on AI is more likely influenced by external factors rather than student motivation. These external factors could include time constraints and a heavy workload. Thus, it can be indicated that merely increasing students' motivation is not sufficient to reduce their dependence on AI such as ChatGPT. There is a need for interventions that genuinely address and resolve the problems that EFL students face during the academic writing process. Because if these problems cannot be thoroughly addressed, they will tend to take shortcuts where AI tools indeed become the easiest choice.

Therefore, educational institutions should provide guidance on the ethical use of AI without violating academic ethics and develop pedagogical approaches that are appropriate to students' needs without overburdening them cognitively, and they should be able to use AI such as ChatGPT as a responsible aid. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations, among which is the lack of participants, as there were fewer than 30 participants, resulting in findings that are less in-depth and less generalizable to the overall population. In addition, this study only focuses on two aspects: motivation and excessive dependence on ChatGPT, without considering other influences that may have a greater impact on the level of excessive dependence, especially since the results obtained were not significant in terms of the relationship between the two aspects. Therefore, future research can add other variables, particularly external factors that have a significant potential to influence the level of dependence on ChatGPT, as well as use larger and more diverse samples so that the results obtained can be generalized. In addition, future research can also employ a mixed-methods approach by incorporating interview results regarding why EFL students may rely on AI, so that the findings provide a more in-depth presentation of evidence.

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DECLARATION OF AI USE

The authors used Gemini, QuillBot, and Grammarly to enhance the language, clarity, and readability of the manuscript. Following the use of this tool, the authors carefully reviewed and revised the AI-assisted content as necessary. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and final content of the publication.

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