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PERCEIVED EASE OF USE AND UTILISATION OF AI WRITING TOOLS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

AI writing tools have enhanced educational values and academic performance of students. However, the use of AI writing tools, most especially among the final-year undergraduate students have been challenged by studies and observations. These challenges might not be unconnected with students' perceptions. Therefore, the study investigated perceived ease of use and use of AI writing tools among undergraduates in selected universities in South-west, Nigeria. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 6774 final-year undergraduates in the 2025/2026 academic session of the selected universities, including Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Federal University of Technology, Akure and Lead City University, Ibadan, using convenience sampling method. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample table was used to determine a sample size of 364. However, to increase the reliability of the outcome, 450 copies of the questionnaire was administered to respondents across the selected institutions and a total of 430 valid responses were used for analysis. Findings showed that the perceived ease of use of AI writing tools is positive and quite high among the final year students. Result shows that final year students used AI writing tools mostly for grammar and spelling corrections. Findings indicated that academic dishonesty and lack of digital literacy were the major challenges. Therefore, it is recommended that universities should provide regular training to equip students with necessary skills to use AI writing tools effectively to enhance their perceptions of AI.

Keywords

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Perceived ease of use, artificial intelligence, AI writing tools, undergraduates.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) rapid advancement has profoundly reshaped contemporary processes of communication, writing, and knowledge production. AI-powered writing technologies have emanated from basic grammar checkers to sophisticated generative systems capable of producing coherent, stylistically appropriate and contextually relevant contents over the past few years. QuillBot, Wordtune, Rytr, ChatGPT, Grammarly and other AI writing tools including large language model (LLM)-based applications now assist millions of users with tasks including idea generation, content drafting, summarisation, paraphrasing, grammar correction, translation, and editing on a daily basis (Zhang & Dafoe, 2024). Their increasing and easy accessibility through web platforms, mobile applications, and integration into productivity suites has made them essential to students, educators, researchers, writers, administrators, and professionals across diverse academic and non-academic fields of life.

Nonetheless, (Okeke, 2023) posited that not everybody uses AI writing tools despite such fast changes in technology. These tools are welcome and used by many users in their work and in academic writing, and some are reluctant to use them. Issues of accuracy, fear of abuse, lack of digital literacy, perceived complexity, and skepticism about the issue of academic integrity were mentioned as issues that influence how people use these tools.

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Mistakes regarding AI functions, absence of institutional principles, and the different degrees of exposure to digital technologies are also factors that contribute to the dissimilarities in utilisation patterns. Thus, it is essential to know why certain users can easily embrace AI writing tools and others cannot in the digital age where AI competency is emerging as a mandatory skill.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is the technology adoption theory that assists in developing a groundwork to this behavioural difference. This theory suggests that one of the main factors, which determine the adoption and further use of technology, is perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Perceived ease of use is how a person believes that it is less effort he or she has to exert to interact with technology. This involves ease of navigation, clarity of interface, accessibility, ability to produce results quickly, and the extent to which users can easily learn the tool's features. When AI writing systems are intuitive, user-friendly, and require limited technical proficiency, users are more likely to adopt or embrace and rely on them (Park & Heo, 2022). Users who perceive these tools as enhancing writing efficiency and overall academic outcomes demonstrate higher levels of utilisation.

Furthermore, empirical research about this construct specifically in relation to AI writing tools especially within developing country contexts, remains limited. The current literature demonstrates that a large proportion of users in those countries that have not yet established digital infrastructures tend to have inadequate digital skills, they are not aware of AI writing tools, or they are not supported by the institution to adopt or integrate these

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technologies into their academic or work-related processes (Nwosu & Adebisi, 2023). This was perceived to be a problem with unreliable access to internet, little exposure to new technologies and ambiguous policy frameworks on the use of AI. Hence, there is a need for studies that examine how perceived ease of use influence AI writing tool utilisation among different demographic and institutional groups.

Therefore, this paper will investigate perceived ease of use as determinant of AI writing tools utilisation among undergraduate students in the selected universities in South-west, Nigeria. The study will enhance the existing knowledge of the concept of Artificial Intelligence adoption under the concept of TAM by investigating how the construct predicts or influences utilisation behaviour. The practical implications of the study will also be introduced, which can be used to develop digital literacy programmes, institutional policies, and specific interventions that will enhance the successful and responsible utilisation of AI writing technologies and findings of this research will be considered in the further discussion of the topic of technology acceptance, digital transformation, and the future of AI-driven writing assistance in academic and professional work.

Statement of the problem

Although AI writing tools continue to gain prominence, their utilisation remains inconsistent among students and professionals. The tools are extensively used by some people to enhance the quality of writing, whereas, some people show minimal adoption because of the lack of confidence, skills, or because of the misunderstood use of the tools.

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Being digital literate, aware, and having no institutionalised guidelines are barriers in the seamless adoption of AI tools in many learning institutions. Moreover, it is not clear that the utilisation by the users is influenced by the perceived ease of the tools. Although TAM emphasized perceived ease of use as a key variable that could influence technology acceptance, there were no many empirical studies which addressed AI writing tools in Nigeria. What is the ease of using AI writing tools by undergraduate students in Nigeria? This represents a critical gap in knowledge. Therefore, this study seeks to determine the relationship between perceived ease of use and utilisation of AI writing tools among undergraduate students in selected universities in South-west, Nigeria, thereby addressing the existing gap in literature and practice.

Research questions

1. What is the perceived level of ease of use of AI writing tools among undergraduate students in the selected universities in South-west, Nigeria?
2. What is the purpose of utilisation of AI writing tools among undergraduate students in the selected universities in South-west, Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges to the utilisation of AI writing tools among undergraduate students in the selected universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

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H_0 There is no significant relationship between perceived ease of use and utilisation of AI writing tools among undergraduates in the selected universities in South-west, Nigeria.

Literature review

Perceived ease of use of artificial intelligence

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Davis (1989) has put forward the perspective that two important beliefs which determine the acceptability of technology by an individual exist and these are perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived ease of use is a scale which outlines how a person thinks that the process of using a particular system would be free of strain (Davis, 1989). Perceived ease of use might be described as the feelings that people have towards the amount of effort that should be put to acquire a new technology or product (Doll et al., 1998; Okpala et al., 2021). A large part of the available literature demonstrates that the perceived ease of use plays a vital role since it is the sole factor that leads users to the adoption of new technologies (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000).

Utility, ease and motivations influence users' technology adoption (Kim et al., 2016). When users perceive AI writing tools are easy to navigate, they are more likely to use it. Major indicators of PEOU include the app is easy to learn, utilise, comprehend, and requires minimal effort (Vahdat et al., 2021). This shows that if AI writing tool (app) could be easy to learn, utilize, comprehend and requires minimal effort, more people would be interested in using it. The study conducted by Turingan (2025) reported that respondents' perceptions of

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the ease of use of AI writing tools indicated that these tools were generally considered easy to use. Another study conducted by Nwali and Udumukwu (2025) indicated that most of the respondents perceived AI tools as highly useful, particularly in enhancing writing quality.

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools utilisation by students

This section reviewed extant literature on various types, purposes and challenges associated with the use of artificial intelligent writing tools among students. The study conducted by Jen and Salam (2024) identified some examples of AI tools including but not limited to ChatGPT, Google Bard, Perplexity, BLOOM, ChatSonic, Cloude, Whisper, Jasper Chat, AJET Digital, Dream Writer, Jenni, Kuai Bi Xiao Xi, Inspire, Xiao Ming, A Tong and A Le. QuillBot, Wordtune, Rytr, ChatGPT, Grammarly and other AI writing tools including large language model (LLM)-based applications. These tools now assist millions of users with tasks including idea generation, content drafting, summarisation, paraphrasing, grammar correction, translation, and editing on a daily basis (Zhang & Dafoe, 2024).

Some other studies have been conducted on various purposes of using AI tools. The survey conducted by Ahmad, et al (2025) discovered that students agreed that AI tools were used for various purposes including writing for academic papers in terms of spelling, grammar, clarity, coherence, citations, references and plagiarism checking. Students also used AI tools for grammar correction, style recommendations, paraphrasing, content creation, and citation (Malon et al., 2024). Postgraduate students also used AI tools for idea development, spelling checks, paraphrasing, coherence, and searching for relevant literature (Anani, Nyamekye and Bafour-Koduah, 2025). Nevertheless, the use of AI tools is not devoid

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of some challenges including over-reliance, ethical challenges, and institutional inconsistencies in AI policies (Turingan, 2025).

Perceived ease of use and utilisation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools

The study conducted by Izhar, Teh, & Adnan (2025) revealed that perceived ease of use significantly influenced actual use of AI tools for various purposes. Also, Nwali and Udumukwu (2025) discovered that perceived ease of use was a crucial factor in influencing adoption and use of AI tools as most of the academics found AI tools easy to use, especially for routine functions like grammar correction and formatting. Therefore, it could be inferred that the easier the AI tools, the higher the level of usage. In their study, Ahmad, Khairuddin, et al (2025) findings indicated that majority of the students perceived that AI was beneficial to them when used in academic writing. So, it could be inferred that there was a relationship between their perception and use of AI in their academic writing. Turingan (2025) explored students' perceptions on utilisation of AI writing tools and discovered that the respondents perceived that AI tools were generally considered easy to use, thereby significantly positive and influenced their academic writing.

Kim and Kim (2025) examined user perceptions and intentions to continue using generative AI tools and their findings indicated that perceived ease of use significantly affected users' intention to continue using generative AI tools. Du, Dung, Ly, Huong, Triet & Xuan (2025) investigated students' perceptions of AI in academic writing at a university in Vietnam. Their results revealed positive attitudes among participants, as their perceived ease of use (PEOU) was a strong predictor and significantly influenced their behaviour to use

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AI tools. It also indicated that the participants had moderately positive perceptions towards using AI tools to assist with their academic writing, which is an indication of correlation between perceived ease of use (PEOU) and use of AI writing tools. Nguyen and Dieu (2024) investigated third-year Elt students' perceptions of using Chatgpt as an AI writing tool in Vietnam. Their results showed that participants' perceptions of perceived ease of use were relatively positive, thereby showing relationship between PEOU and actual use of AI tools.

Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 6774 final-year undergraduate students in the 2025/2026 academic session of the selected universities. The selected universities included Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo, Federal University of Technology, Akure and Lead City University, Ibadan, using convenience sampling method. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 364 was determined. However, to increase the reliability of the outcome, copies of the questionnaire; being the data collection instrument was administered to 450 respondents across the selected institutions. A total valid response of 430 were used for analysis, presented in frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and correlation, using SPSS software.

Table 1: Population of the study

S/N	Name of the institutions	Number of final year students
1	Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo	1421
2	Federal University of Technology, Akure	3191
3	Lead City University, Ibadan	2162

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Total	**6774**

Results and discussion

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

	Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender			
	Male	155	36.0
	Female	275	64.0
	Total	430	100.
Age			
	18-22	305	70.9
	23-27	96	22.3
	28 and above	29	6.7
	Total	430	100.0
Institutions			
	Ajayi Crowther University	100	23.3
	Lead City University	150	34.9
	Federal University of Technology, Akure	180	41.9
	Total	430	100.0
Level of study			
	400	175	40.7
	500	148	34.4
	600	107	24.9
	Total	**430**	**100**

The table revealed that 430 respondents involved in the study which were from three universities, which included Ajayi Crowther University (23.3%), Lead City University (34.9%) and Federal University of Technology, Akure (41.9%). 64% of the students were female and 36% were male. Most respondents were between 18 and 22 years of age (70.9%), and those aged 23–27 years (22.3%). All students were included, and the 400 level students were best represented (40.7%). The respondents were also spread over diverse

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faculty/colleges with the highest percentage from the Natural Sciences (18.6%) and Management & Social Sciences (18.6%) respectively.

Research question one: What is the perceived level of ease of use of AI writing tools among undergraduate students in the selected universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 3: Perceived ease of use of AI writing tools

S/N	Statements	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	St. D
1.	I find AI writing tools easy to learn.	268 62.3%	96 22.3%	38 8.8%	28 6.5%	3.40	.900
2.	Interacting with AI writing tools does not require much mental effort.	131 30.5%	165 38.4%	77 17.9%	57 13.3%	2.86	.998
3.	The interfaces of AI writing tools are clear and understandable.	142 33.0%	154 35.8%	92 21.4%	42 9.8%	2.92	.965
4.	I can easily navigate AI writing tools without assistance.	192 44.7%	149 34.7%	77 17.9%	12 2.8%	3.21	.833
5.	AI writing tools are user-friendly for academic writing tasks.	166 38.6%	174 40.5%	67 15.6%	23 5.3%	3.12	.862
6.	It is easy for me to become skillful at using AI writing tools.	210 48.8%	131 30.5%	66 15.3%	23 5.3%	3.23	.898
7.	Using AI writing tools fits well with my digital skills.	209 48.6%	159 37.0%	42 9.8%	20 4.7%	3.30	.827

The table indicated that the perceived ease of use of AI writing tools across a diverse range of writing tasks. The findings then revealed that the majority of respondents rated AI writing tools as easy to use, ranging from a mean score of 2.86 to 3.40. The top-rated statement was “I find AI writing tools easy to learn” (x = 3.40), 84.6% of the respondents answered that they agree to a very high degree and 15.4% to a high degree. Also, 85.6% reported that they felt at ease with their digital skills using AI writing tools (x = 3.30), and

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79.4% reported that they felt they could use AI writing tools without assistance (x = 3.21). Additionally, 79.3% found it easy to become proficient with AI writing tools (x = 3.23), and 79.1% found AI writing tools were user-friendly for academic writing tasks (x = 3.12). The mean values of mental effort (x = 2.86) and interface clarity (x = 2.92) were comparatively low, but the majority of them rated these at a high or very high extent.

Overall, the findings showed that the perceived ease of use of AI writing tools is quite high among university students, and that the students feel it is easy to learn, navigate, and use in academic writing tasks. The positive perception is likely to help drive the future use and adoption of AI writing tools within the higher education sector. To corroborate the result, Bello, Suleiman, Abdurrahman, Bashar and Ibrahim (2024) examined the perceptions of ease of use and usefulness of artificial intelligence Chatgpt among undergraduate law students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Their findings indicated that the perceived ease of use of ChatGPT among the students was a positive and moderately high.

Research question two: What is the purpose of utilisation of AI writing tools among undergraduate students in the selected universities in South-west, Nigeria?

Table 4: Purpose of utilisation of AI writing tools

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St. D
I use artificial intelligence (AI) for:							
1.	Summarising lecture notes or articles	174 40.5%	188 43.7%	59 13.7%	9 2.1%	3.23	.759
2.	Grammar and spelling checking.	204 47.7%	142 33.0%	75 17.4%	9 2.1%	3.26	.817
3.	Paraphrasing or summarising content.	137 31.9%	202 47.0%	77 17.9%	14 3.3%	3.07	.790
4.	Drafting essays, reports, or term papers.	123 28.6%	159 37.0%	118 27.4%	30 7.0%	2.87	.908

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5.	Generating ideas or outlines for assignments.	93 21.6%	185 43.0%	96 22.3%	56 13.0%	2.73	.944
6.	Improvement on coherence and writing style.	131 30.5%	119 27.7%	132 30.7%	48 11.2%	2.77	1.005
7.	Plagiarism checking or originality improvement.	116 27.0%	151 35.1%	122 28.4%	41 9.5%	2.80	.946
8.	Translating academic materials	111 25.8%	150 34.9%	78 18.1%	91 21.2%	2.65	1.081
9.	Checking citations and referencing format	146 34.0%	113 26.3%	77 17.9%	94 21.9%	2.72	1.149
10.	Examination or test preparation	237 55.1%	95 22.1%	55 12.8%	43 10.0%	3.22	1.016

This table showed that students use AI writing tools to engage in various academic tasks, with the mean values ranging between 2.65 and 3.26, suggesting moderate to high use. The most often-used purpose was grammar and spelling checking (x = 3.26); 80.4% agreed or strongly agreed that they use AI tools for this purpose. Students reported using AI tools primarily for learning support (x = 3.23; 84.2%) and revision (x = 3.22; 77.2%) and for language improvement. Similarly, a substantial proportion of respondents reported using AI tools for paraphrasing or summarising content (x = 3.07; 78.9%), while moderate levels of utilisation were recorded for drafting essays, reports, or term papers (x = 2.87; 65.6%), plagiarism checking or originality improvement (x = 2.80; 62.1%), improving coherence and writing style (x = 2.77; 58.2%), and generating ideas or outlines for assignments (x = 2.73; 64.6%). The lowest mean values out of the listed activities was found for checking citations and referencing formats (x = 2.72; 60.3%) and translating academic materials (x = 2.65; 60.7%).

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Findings showed that students mostly use AI writing tools for grammar and spelling corrections, summarising academic texts, preparing exams, and paraphrasing text, and less often to translate text, check citations, or enhance the coherence and writing style of text. This suggests that AI writing tools are mainly employed to enhance learning efficiency, comprehension, and writing accuracy in academic activities. To support the findings, Karunanayaka, Weerasinghe and Somarathna (2025) investigated usage of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for academic activities among the Library and Information Studies final-year undergraduates at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). Findings revealed that AI writing tools were used for various academic purposes including completion of assignments, research topics finding, summarizing literature, and drafting papers by the LIS final-year undergraduates at OUSL.

Question three: What are the challenges to the utilisation of AI writing tools among undergraduate students in the selected universities in South-west, Nigeria*?*

Table 5: Challenges to the use of artificial intelligence (AI)

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	St. D
1	Fear of academic misconduct or plagiarism limits my use of AI writing tools	237 55.1%	95 22.1%	55 12.8%	43 10.0%	3.22	1.016
2	I lack adequate digital skills and guidance to effectively use AI writing tools	183 42.6%	160 37.2%	51 11.9%	36 8.4%	3.14	.928
3	Limited internet access affects my ability to use AI writing tools regularly	175 40.7%	123 28.6%	92 21.4%	40 9.3%	3.01	.998
4	High subscription fees discourage me from using AI writing tools	126 29.3%	189 44.0%	51 11.9%	64 14.9%	2.88	.997

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5	I am unsure about institutional policies guiding the use of AI writing tools	121 28.1%	192 44.7%	77 17.9%	40 9.3%	2.92	.910
6	AI writing tools sometimes generate content that lacks originality	86 20.0%	207 48.1%	101 23.5%	36 8.4%	2.80	.855
7	Over-reliance on AI writing tools may negatively affect my writing skills	100 23.3%	201 46.7%	110 25.6%	19 4.4%	2.89	.809
8	AI writing tools do not sometimes align with academic writing standards	92 21.4%	141 32.8%	175 40.7%	22 5.1%	2.70	.860
9	I am concerned about data privacy and security when using AI writing tools	80 18.6%	145 33.7%	181 42.1%	24 5.6%	2.65	.844
10	AI writing tools occasionally misinterpret my prompts or instructions	107 24.9%	105 24.4%	80 18.6%	138 32.1%	2.42	1.178

The findings indicated that respondents experienced a moderate to high level of challenges in using AI writing tools, with mean scores ranging from 2.42 to 3.22. The greatest concern was academic dishonesty/plagiarism with 77.2% of participants agree or strongly agree that this restricts their use of AI writing tools (x = 3.22). This was followed by a lack of digital skills and guidance (x = 3.14; 79.8%) and insufficient internet access (x = 3.01, 69.3%), reflecting the fact that technical competence and infrastructure are key challenges to effective use of AI. also, some key limitations mentioned by a significant number of respondents included uncertainty regarding institutional policies (x = 2.92; 72.8%), the overreliance on AI tools that impact writing (x = 2.89; 70.0%), and high subscription costs (x = 2.88; 73.3%). Respondents also noted that the content created by AI might be unoriginal (x = 2.80; 68.1%). In comparison, misalignment with the academic writing standards (x = 2.70; 54.2%) and data privacy and security concerns (x = 2.65; 52.3%) were reported as

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minor challenges. The least reported challenge faced by the respondents was that the AI writing tools often misinterpret prompts or instructions (x = 2.42), with 49.3% agree or strongly agree, suggesting that there was relatively less concern about how easily the AI tools followed instructions.

Findings indicated that respondents experienced ethical issues concerning academic dishonesty, lack of digital literacy and support, lack of internet access, insufficient guidance or unclear policies, and high costs for premium AI services in the successful implementation of AI writing tools. Conversely, problems with timely interpretation, data protection, and consistency with academic standards were considered to be relatively minor problems. To substantiate the result, Offor, Nwaru and Offiah (2024) surveyed the challenges of using artificial intelligence on academic performance of undergraduate students in public universities in Anambra State. Findings revealed that challenges encountered by students included academic dishonesty, as a result of indiscriminate use and generation of irrelevant results.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between perceived ease of use and utilisation of AI writing tools among the undergraduates in the selected universities in Nigeria.

Table 6: Pearson product moment correlation between perceived ease of use and utilisation of AI writing tools

Variables	X	SD	N	R	P	Remark
Perceived ease of use	22.04	3.11	430	.255	.000	Significant Positive Relationship

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Utilisation of AI writing tools	58.53	7.76	430	.255	.000	Significant Positive Relationship

The table presented the Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) analysis examining the relationship between perceived ease of use and the utilisation of AI writing tools among university students. The results show that respondents had a mean value of 22.04 (SD = 3.11) for perceived ease of use and a mean value of 58.53 (SD = 7.76) for utilisation of AI writing tools. The findings revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between perceived ease of use and the utilisation of AI writing tools ($r = .255$, $p = .000$). Therefore, since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance ($p < .05$), the relationship is statistically significant. The positive correlation indicates that as students perceive AI writing tools to be easier to learn, understand, and use, their level of utilisation of these tools also increases. This finding implies that improving the usability, accessibility, and user-friendliness of AI writing tools may encourage greater adoption and more frequent utilisation among university students.

To support the result, Arslan, Ghezel, Tarabah, Serevan & Naqavi (2025) investigated the impact of perceived usefulness and ease of use of AI on AI ethics maturity level in Iran and Pakistan ICT Sectors. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between PEOU and AIE, suggesting that easier-to-use AI systems contributed to improved ethical maturity. This implies that PEOU significantly propelled students' acceptance and incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools into academic activities.

Recommendations

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Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made;

1. Universities should provide regular training to equip students with necessary skills to use AI writing tools effectively, thus enhancing their perceived ease of use.
2. Educational institutions should integrate user-friendly AI platforms into teaching and learning to encourage students' acceptance and constant use of AI for academic purposes.
3. AI developers should ensure that artificial intelligence tools are simple and supported with clear user guides to reduce technical challenges and promote adoption among students.

Conclusion

The perceived ease of use significantly influenced the adoption and utilization of AI writing tools among final year undergraduate students. When artificial intelligence writing tools are considered simple, available, and user-friendly, undergraduates, most especially the final year students, are more likely to use them for various academic purposes. This implies that enhancing the usability and accessibility of AI writing tools can improve their acceptance, educational values and academic outputs of students.

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