

# Exploring Students' Experiences with Artificial Intelligence (AI) Platforms in Academic Writing

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.908000294>

Received: 22 July 2025; Accepted: 28 July 2025; Published: 08 September 2025

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the experiences of senior high school students at Kiburiao National High School in using artificial intelligence (AI) platforms for academic writing. Employing a case study approach, the research aims to understand students' motivations, the effects of AI reliance on their writing and learning processes, and the extent of its integration into their academic routines. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with five purposively sampled students. Thematic analysis revealed three major themes: (1) Efficiency, Idea Generation and Grammar Support as Key Motivations, (2) Enhanced Writing Quality versus Risks of Over-Reliance, and (3) Frequent Use across Academic Tasks and Writing Stages. Findings indicate that while AI tools such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, and Grammarly improve efficiency, grammar, and organization, overdependence may hinder creativity and critical thinking. This study highlights the need for balanced and guided AI usage, emphasizing its role as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for independent cognitive efforts. The findings underscore the importance of integrating digital literacy and ethical AI usage into educational curricula to maximize benefits while mitigating risks.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, motivation, AI reliance, academic writing, senior high school

## INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping education by providing innovative tools that enhance learning outcomes and simplify academic tasks. In academic writing, AI platforms such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, and Grammarly have gained popularity among students for their ability to assist with grammar, syntax, and idea generation. These platforms allow users to receive real-time feedback, enabling them to organize ideas more effectively and improve the overall quality of their writing. As AI continues to evolve, its role in education grows more significant, offering personalized learning experiences that cater to individual needs. This transformative technology empowers students to overcome challenges in academic writing, including time constraints, limited vocabulary, and difficulties in organizing ideas (Xu, 2024; Selim, 2024).

Studies have highlighted AI's positive impact on students' writing skills and attitudes. Tools like ChatGPT have been shown to enhance vocabulary, refine sentence construction, and improve content quality, fostering greater engagement in writing tasks (Sumakul et al., 2022; Gayed et al., 2022). AI also helps students achieve academic success by providing personalized feedback and boosting their confidence in tackling complex tasks (Khosravi et al., 2022). Despite these benefits, over-reliance on AI platforms raises concerns about diminished creativity, critical thinking, and originality. Researchers have warned that extensive use of AI tools may hinder

students' ability to generate ideas independently, shifting their focus from understanding concepts to completing tasks efficiently (Selwyn, 2019; Marzuki et al., 2023).

In the Philippine context, students face additional challenges such as "learning poverty," exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Lu, 2023). Writing and speaking skills have been particularly affected, with students struggling in areas like grammar, sentence construction, and idea organization (Saavedra & Barredo, 2020). AI platforms have become a crutch for many students, addressing these gaps but potentially undermining the development of foundational skills. This dual impact underscores the need to strike a balance between leveraging AI's benefits and fostering students' independent cognitive abilities.

This study focuses on senior high school students at Kiburiao National High School, exploring their motivations for using AI platforms, the effects on their writing and learning processes, and the extent of their reliance on these tools. By examining students' experiences, this research aims to provide insights that inform teaching strategies and policies for integrating AI in education effectively. Ultimately, the study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the role of AI in academic writing, emphasizing the importance of ethical and balanced usage to maximize its benefits while mitigating risks.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This study utilized a qualitative case study approach to explore students' experiences with Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms for academic writing. A case study design was chosen for its strength in providing an in-depth analysis of specific phenomena within a real-world context. This approach enabled the researcher to gain detailed insights into students' motivations, perceptions, and the effects of AI tools on their academic writing processes.

### **Research Setting**

The study was conducted at Kiburiao National High School, a secondary education institution in Bukidnon, Philippines. This school was chosen due to its diverse student population and their increasing exposure to digital learning tools, including AI platforms. The setting provided an ideal context to investigate the role of AI in academic environments, particularly in tasks requiring writing proficiency.

### **Research Participants and Sampling Procedure**

The participants in this study were five senior high school students purposively selected from Kiburiao National High School. Inclusion criteria required participants to have prior experience using AI platforms such as ChatGPT, QuillBot, or Grammarly for academic writing. The purposive sampling method ensured the inclusion of individuals who could provide rich, relevant insights into the research topic. Although the sample size was small, it is consistent with qualitative research standard, prioritizing depth over breadth to explore individual experiences.

### **Research Instrument**

A semi-structured interview guide served as the primary data collection tool, designed to capture participants' motivations, experiences, and perceptions of AI platforms in academic writing. The guide included open-ended questions, enabling participants to share detailed insights while keeping discussions aligned with the research objectives. To ensure credibility and reliability, the instrument underwent validation by a panel of 10 experts with advanced degrees in education, research methodologies, and academic writing. Their feedback helped refine the instrument, enhancing its clarity and relevance to the study. The final version of the guide featured questions addressing motivations for using AI platforms, perceived benefits and challenges, and the extent of AI integration into academic tasks.

## **Data Gathering Procedure**

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed flexibility in exploring various aspects of students' experiences with AI tools while maintaining consistency in addressing the research objectives. The interviews focused on understanding why students used AI platforms, their perceptions of the benefits and drawbacks, and their reflections on the tools' impact on their learning and writing processes.

The researcher began by submitting a formal permission letter to the school principal to obtain approval for the study. Upon approval, informed consent forms were distributed to participants, detailing the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and measures to ensure confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting, with participants encouraged to express their thoughts openly. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. To maintain ethical integrity, pseudonyms were used to anonymize participants, and all collected data were securely stored.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on the framework by Naeem et al. (2023). This involved several steps: familiarization, where interview transcripts were reviewed multiple times; coding, where key phrases and ideas were labeled descriptively; and theme development, where codes were organized into broader categories to identify patterns and relationships. The themes were then reviewed for coherence and relevance before being synthesized into a narrative that addressed the research questions. Ethical protocols were strictly observed throughout the study, adhering to the guidelines of Central Mindanao University. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without consequences, and all procedures were conducted with the utmost respect for their privacy and well-being.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Presentation of Findings**

The findings revealed three major themes from the thematic analysis of interview responses: Efficiency, Idea Generation, and Grammar Support as Motivations, Enhanced Writing Quality versus Risks of Over-Reliance, and Frequent Use Across Academic Writing Tasks and Stages. These themes encapsulate the participants' experiences and perceptions of using AI platforms in their academic writing.

### **Efficiency, Idea Generation, and Grammar Support as Motivations**

Participants frequently highlighted efficiency and grammar support as the primary reasons for using AI platforms. They found these tools particularly beneficial in generating ideas quickly, addressing time constraints, and improving grammar and sentence construction. For instance, one participant remarked that AI platforms made writing easier and faster by providing clear structures for ideas. These findings align with existing literature that underscores AI's role in enhancing productivity and addressing specific challenges in academic writing.

### **Enhanced Writing Quality versus Risks of Over-Reliance**

While most participants acknowledged the improvement in their writing quality, such as better organization and vocabulary, they also expressed concerns about becoming overly reliant on AI tools. One participant shared their difficulty generating unique ideas without the aid of AI, reflecting a potential drawback: diminished creativity and critical thinking. This duality emphasizes the need for guided and balanced use of AI in academic settings to ensure it complements, rather than replaces, students' cognitive efforts.

### **Frequent Use Across Academic Writing Tasks and Stages**

Participants reported extensive use of AI tools across various stages of the writing process, from brainstorming to editing. Many noted their frequent reliance on these platforms for essays, research papers, and other academic tasks. Despite this, some participants demonstrated reflective practices, ensuring that AI outputs

aligned with their ideas. This theme underscores the versatility of AI platforms while raising concerns about dependency and the impact on independent thinking.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored senior high school students' experiences with AI platforms in academic writing, focusing on their motivations, the effects of reliance on these tools, and the extent of their usage. The findings revealed that while AI platforms significantly enhance writing efficiency, quality, and grammar, their overuse may hinder creativity and critical thinking. Participants highlighted the convenience of these tools in managing academic tasks but also raised concerns about dependency and originality.

In conclusion, AI platforms offer substantial benefits for academic writing, especially in addressing time constraints and improving technical aspects like grammar and organization. However, the risks associated with over-reliance necessitate balanced use to maintain originality and intellectual growth. These results emphasize the need for educational institutions to incorporate AI literacy and ethical guidelines into their teaching practices, ensuring that students harness the benefits of AI while retaining their creative and analytical capabilities.

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