INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

OPEN ACCESS JOURNAL

Vol 15, Issue 4, (2026) E-ISSN: 2226-6348

Investigating the Pre-University Students' Perception of Using AI in Improving English Writing Skills

Nor Fadzilah Arom Karoman, Nur Nadiah Fatihah Johari, Mohd Shahrudin Mohmud

Centre of Foundation Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor, Kampus Dengkil, Selangor, Malaysia

Email: fadzilaharom@uitm.edu.my, nadiafatihah@uitm.edu.my, mohds774@uitm.edu.my

DOI Link: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v15-i4/29302

Published Online: 02 November 2026

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools offer accessible support for English writing, but favourable perceptions do not necessarily translate into sustained use. This study investigated Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) pre-university students' perceptions of AI tools in an English writing skills course at a Malaysian public university. A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted with a sample of 225 students drawn from a population of approximately 529. A 20-item questionnaire organised around five Technology Acceptance Model constructs used a five-point agreement scale. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha. Internal consistency coefficients ranged from .781 to .872. Perceived usefulness recorded the highest mean (3.85), followed by perceived ease of use (3.82) and attitude towards use (3.51). Behavioural intention to use (2.90) and self-reported actual system use (2.82) were lower. These results indicate favourable evaluations of AI's usefulness and usability alongside more limited intentions and reported use. The findings support integrating guided AI activities and explicit instruction on evaluating feedback within foundation writing courses. As the study measured perceptions rather than writing performance, the findings do not establish improvements in writing proficiency or causal relationships among acceptance constructs.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, English Writing Skills, Pre-University Students, Technology Acceptance Model, Student Perceptions

Introduction

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in modern educational settings has expanded access to learning support and automated formative feedback. Within English language instruction, digital platforms like ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot offer students real-time assistance with brainstorming ideas, identifying grammatical inaccuracies, and refining draft content. Research on technology-mediated writing indicates that learners view such feedback mechanisms favourably, though these positive evaluations should be distinguished from verified gains in writing performance (Jamshed et al., 2024; Rafida et al., 2024). Consequently,

understanding student attitudes towards AI remains crucial for guiding its effective implementation in writing pedagogy.

Understanding these perceptions is especially pertinent for pre-university learners preparing for academic demands in tertiary education, where mastering structural organization, logical paragraph structure, and appropriate stylistic choices is essential. AI-assisted platforms provide immediate opportunities for students to review draft iterations and receive timely corrective suggestions. Nonetheless, the pedagogical value of these tools hinges on learners' critical evaluation of AI outputs and their commitment to original authorship. Potential risks involving over-reliance, diminished creative autonomy, and academic integrity issues further highlight the need to analyze learner engagement with AI technologies (Al-Othman, 2024; Kılıçkaya, 2024).

Within the Malaysian context, Mizan and Norman (2024) surveyed generative AI acceptance among 153 pre-university students at a private institution. While their work provides foundational evidence regarding this demographic, limited empirical attention has been given to AI-assisted writing within public-university Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) foundation courses. To address this specific context, the present study investigates five Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) constructs: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards use, behavioural intention to use, and self-reported actual system use. By examining whether favorable evaluations align with usage intentions and reported practice, this study offers descriptive insights for educational research and the broader social sciences, informing the principled, guided integration of AI in foundational writing instruction without assuming perceived benefits equate to actual proficiency gains.

Background of Study

The extensive expansion of AI technologies has significantly broadened horizons for tailored and autonomous learning. Generative platforms generate textual content and engage with user prompts, whereas specialized writing applications furnish automated feedback, grammatical corrections, and lexical recommendations (V. G. & N. S., 2025; Saker & Gheider Brahim, 2025). Within academic environments, these digital functionalities provide valuable supplementary resources for students seeking additional opportunities to draft, refine, and polish their written compositions.

This form of instructional support holds particular importance for academic writing, a fundamental competency required for success in tertiary studies. Pre-university learners frequently encounter challenges regarding structural coherence, clarity of expression, and grammatical precision as they transition toward higher education standards (Yazid et al., 2025). While instructor feedback remains indispensable, AI-driven evaluation can complement traditional pedagogy by enabling learners to review draft iterations and examine alternative stylistic options (Kukulska-Hulme & Lee, 2020). Consequently, examining learner perceptions encompasses not only evaluating perceived utility and ease of interaction, but also assessing usage intentions alongside self-reported engagement.

In the Malaysian educational landscape, the strategic push toward digital integration establishes a timely setting for analyzing AI-mediated writing support (Mizan & Norman, 2024). However, the simple availability of technological tools does not automatically

guarantee student adoption or active participation. Empirical questions persist regarding how pre-university students within a specific course evaluate AI capabilities and how these evaluations descriptively correspond with usage intentions and self-reported behavior. This study investigates these constructs among TESL pre-university students at a public university without attempting to measure user satisfaction as an independent construct.

Although existing literature on AI-assisted language learning covers diverse higher education settings, empirical evidence from those contexts cannot be generalized to a public-university TESL foundation course. As pre-university learners transition from secondary to tertiary education, they form a distinct demographic whose engagement with academic writing support is especially significant. Thus, the current research gap stems not from a total lack of pre-university investigations, but from the need for descriptive data tailored to this specific program and academic setting.

In this regard, Mizan and Norman (2024) explored general generative AI acceptance among 153 pre-university students at a private institution. Expanding upon their foundational work, this investigation specifically examines AI applications utilized within an English writing skills course among Malaysian public-university TESL foundation students. This localized perspective establishes the background for the research problem discussed in the following section.

Problem Statement

While artificial intelligence (AI) tools are recognized for aiding drafting, grammar refinement, vocabulary enrichment, and revision, positive evaluations among tertiary learners do not automatically translate to sustained or routine application in academic writing practices (Bibi & Atta, 2024; Jamshed et al., 2024; Rafida et al., 2024). Distinguishing positive evaluations of utility and accessibility from active, long-term adoption is critical for assessing the actual role of AI in writing instruction.

Recent Malaysian studies highlight ongoing needs for writing assistance among ESL undergraduates (Mat et al., 2025) and grammatical reinforcement among pre-university ESL students (Md Yazid et al., 2025), alongside broader evidence emphasizing digital resource integration in ESL education (Zainuddin et al., 2024). Although these findings underscore a demand for language learning resources, they leave the specific acceptance of AI-assisted writing among public-university TESL foundation students unexplored. Furthermore, while Mizan and Norman (2024) investigated generative AI acceptance in a pre-university context, their work addressed general AI tools rather than targeted applications within a dedicated English writing course.

To address this gap, the present study explores five core constructs of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) which are perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards use, behavioural intention, and self-reported actual system use among Malaysian TESL foundation students. By evaluating these dimensions together, this research offers a descriptive assessment of whether highly favorable evaluations persist alongside lower levels of intention and self-reported engagement. The scope of this study is strictly limited to perceived writing support and does not assess concrete writing proficiency gains or evaluate user satisfaction as an independent variable.

Research Objectives and Questions

The study aims to describe TESL pre-university students' perceptions of using AI tools in an English writing skills course. Its objectives are to examine perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitudes towards AI, and to describe behavioural intention and self-reported actual system use.

The study addresses two research questions:

1. What are students' perceptions of the usefulness and ease of use of AI tools, and their attitudes towards using them for English writing?
2. What are students' reported behavioural intentions and actual system use in relation to AI tools for English writing?

Literature Review

Perceptions of AI in Education

Research on AI in education identifies both favourable perceptions and reservations. Educators and students recognise potential benefits for task support and learning experiences (Delello et al., 2025; Mat Yusoff et al., 2025). However, positive perceptions are not uniform. Delgado et al. (2024) found that teachers identified more limitations than benefits, particularly inappropriate use and insufficient critical review of AI outputs. Their findings also indicated differences across educational stages, supporting the need for training adapted to users' contexts. These contrasting perspectives suggest that AI acceptance should be examined within specific learning settings rather than assumed from its availability.

Across disciplines, learners report benefits alongside concerns about AI. Sami et al. (2025) examined medical students' attitudes in Pakistan, finding perceived educational value while also identifying concerns about credibility. In Spain, Campillo-Ferrer et al. (2025) reported perceived benefits for engagement, motivation, and personalised learning among education students. Slimi et al. (2025) similarly examined higher-education students' views of AI in Oman, including its perceived contribution to feedback and self-directed learning. These findings concern learners' evaluations within their respective settings and should not be treated as evidence of writing improvement in TESL foundation courses.

Fadli and Iskarim (2024) identified students' use of tools including Canva, ChatGPT, and Quizizz, alongside concerns about dependence and reduced interaction. Ngo (2023) and Bonsu and Baffour-Koduah (2023) also examined university students' perceptions of ChatGPT and intentions to use it. Together, these studies support examining usefulness, ease of use, and continued engagement while recognizing that perceived convenience can coexist with concerns about independent learning.

Perceptions of AI in ESL and TESL

Similar perceptions can be observed within English as a Second Language (ESL) and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) contexts. AI is increasingly perceived as a useful resource for enhancing learner engagement, providing personalised support, and facilitating independent language learning. AI-assisted tools provide learners with immediate feedback and opportunities for individualised practice, allowing them to develop language skills according to their learning needs (Alqaed, 2024). AI has also been explored as a means of

supporting self-regulated learning among ESL learners, particularly in relation to independent reading practice (Al Rawas et al., 2026).

From the educators' perspective, AI is valued for its potential to support instructional preparation and increase teaching efficiency. However, questions remain regarding how extensively teachers should rely on AI and how such reliance may influence their instructional roles (Ken et al., 2026). Additionally, the use of AI in language learning raises concerns related to authenticity. ESL learners may experience uncertainty regarding how others perceive their use of generative AI, particularly when independent language production is highly valued (Wang & Fussell, 2024, 2026). Therefore, although AI is increasingly accepted as a useful support mechanism in ESL and TESL, its implementation requires careful consideration of learner autonomy, authenticity, and appropriate levels of AI assistance.

Within English language education more specifically, the acceptance of AI is also influenced by users' perceptions of the technology itself. Learners and teachers recognise the potential of AI to support personalised language learning and improve engagement, while educators have expressed concerns regarding plagiarism, excessive reliance on AI, and possible reductions in students' creativity and critical thinking (Al-Othman, 2024; Kılıçkaya, 2024). Previous research further indicates that acceptance of AI can be influenced by factors such as its perceived usefulness, ease of use, users' technological knowledge, and the availability of appropriate support and training (An et al., 2023; Firdaus et al., 2025). These factors are particularly relevant when examining learners' perceptions of AI as an educational tool.

Karmila et al. (2026) reported favourable perceptions of AI's usefulness and ease of use in English language learning among Indonesian students. This evidence supports examining technology acceptance within language education, while differences in programme level and learning tasks limit direct transfer to TESL foundation writing instruction.

Perceptions of AI in English Writing

The potential of AI has received particular attention in English writing instruction. Studies generally report positive student perceptions of AI-assisted writing, particularly in relation to improving writing performance, generating ideas, correcting language errors, and obtaining immediate feedback. Learners appreciate the assistance AI provides with grammar, composition, and the overall writing process (Jamshed et al., 2024; Rafida et al., 2024). Positive perceptions have similarly been reported among ELT and EFL students who use AI tools to support their writing development (Altamimi, 2025; Alyami et al., 2025; Syafei & Nuraeningsih, 2025).

Despite these advantages, the use of AI in writing is not without limitations. Learners and educators have raised concerns regarding over-reliance on AI and the possibility that excessive assistance may reduce learners' independent engagement with the writing process (Tan, 2025). Educators also recognise the usefulness of AI-assisted feedback but emphasise the importance of appropriate guidance when integrating such feedback into ESL writing instruction (Pathivada et al., 2025). Thus, students' positive perceptions of AI-assisted writing appear to be associated with the usefulness and accessibility of the support provided, while concerns remain regarding the manner and extent to which AI should be incorporated into writing instruction.

Writing-specific evidence further illustrates the importance of task and context. Punar Özçelik and Yangın Ekşi (2024) found that learners viewed ChatGPT as helpful for formal register but less useful for informal writing. Anggraeni (2025) reported perceived assistance with ideas, phrasing, and grammatical revision, together with challenges in AI-supported English writing. Al-Raimi et al. (2024), studying Omani EFL learners in a preparatory studies setting, found positive views of AI writing tools and reported uses including translation, grammar checking, and idea generation.

Mun (2024) combined writing feedback evidence with learners' perceptions, reporting reduced grammatical and lexical errors in the AI-supported group, alongside concerns about reliability and dependence. Sumakul et al. (2022) explored eight EFL students' experiences of AI in a writing class and reported positive views of its support for writing processes and language. These studies indicate potential benefits but also show why perceived usefulness should be distinguished from independently assessed writing outcomes.

Bibi and Atta (2024) explicitly examined perceptions, experiences, and satisfaction with ChatGPT as an English writing assistant. Their satisfaction findings concern the measures used in that study. They provide useful comparative context, but satisfaction cannot be inferred as a separate outcome in the present study because its questionnaire measures five acceptance-related constructs.

AI Assisted Writing in Pre University Education

The literature reviewed here includes university EFL and ELT writing contexts (Altamimi, 2025; Alyami et al., 2025; Rafida et al., 2024; Syafei & Nuraeningsih, 2025), as well as secondary-school writing (Alghasab, 2025). Pre-university research is also available: Mizan and Norman (2024) examined perceptions of generative AI among students at a Malaysian private university. Thus, the gap concerns the specificity of the writing-course and institutional context, rather than the complete absence of research involving pre-university learners.

Students in pre-university programmes are preparing for tertiary academic work, making their evaluation of AI-supported writing relevant to foundation instruction. The broader evidence does not fully establish how TESL foundation students in a Malaysian public university evaluate AI within an English writing skills course, or how their perceived benefits compare with behavioural intention and reported use. The present study contributes descriptive evidence on these dimensions without claiming that its population or setting has never previously been studied.

The preparatory context examined by Al-Raimi et al. (2024), together with the Malaysian pre-university study by Mizan and Norman (2024), shows that research beyond undergraduate and postgraduate programmes already exists. The remaining need is therefore a closer examination of AI acceptance in the specific TESL foundation English writing context and of the distinction between perceived benefits, intentions, and reported use.

Technology Acceptance Model

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains technology acceptance through perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness concerns the extent to which users believe that a technology enhances their performance, whereas perceived

ease of use concerns the extent to which they believe that using it requires little effort. TAM is grounded in the Theory of Reasoned Action and connects these perceptions with attitudes, behavioural intention, and use. Subsequent technology acceptance research has incorporated additional social and contextual influences, including the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

In this study, perceived usefulness concerns students' beliefs that AI supports English writing, and perceived ease of use concerns their experience of interacting with AI tools. Attitude towards use, behavioural intention, and self-reported actual system use provide additional descriptions of acceptance. Research involving English teachers and pre-service EFL teachers supports the relevance of these constructs to language education (An et al., 2023; Firdaus et al., 2025). However, the present descriptive analysis does not test the relationships proposed by TAM or establish that one construct predicts another.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to investigate students' perceptions and reported use of AI tools in an English writing skills course. A descriptive design was appropriate for summarising participants' responses without manipulating instructional conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The analysis addressed five TAM-related constructs: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, attitude towards use, behavioural intention to use, and actual system use.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of approximately 529 TESL pre-university students enrolled in a Malaysian public university. The planned sample was 226 students, with sample-size planning informed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The analysis included 225 valid respondents: 187 female students (83.1%) and 38 male students (16.9%). Participants were selected through simple random sampling. This sampling approach was intended to give eligible students an equal opportunity to participate; sample size alone does not establish representativeness or eliminate non-response bias.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from TAM (Davis, 1989). The questionnaire included two demographic questions on gender and class, followed by 20 items, with four items for each of the five constructs. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert agreement scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Actual system use was measured through students' agreement with statements about their use of AI, rather than through independently recorded usage logs. No separate user satisfaction construct was included in the reported analyses. The administered questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was administered online through Google Forms. Participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and the voluntary nature of participation. The Google Forms link was distributed to the eligible student population via student WhatsApp groups.Responses were exported to IBM SPSS Statistics. Mean composite

scores were calculated for each four-item construct on the original five-point scale. Construct means and standard deviations were used to describe the response patterns, and Cronbach's alpha assessed the internal consistency of each construct. A coefficient of .70 was used as a conventional reference point for acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The analyses were descriptive; no inferential tests of relationships among constructs or tests of writing improvement were undertaken.

Reliability Analysis

Table 1 presents the internal consistency coefficients for the five constructs. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .781 to .872, exceeding the .70 reference point (Nunnally, 1978). Behavioural intention to use recorded the highest coefficient (.872), and perceived ease of use recorded the lowest (.781). These results support the internal consistency of the responses in this sample; they do not, on their own, establish the validity of the questionnaire.

Table 1
Reliability Coefficients for Each Construct

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Perceived Usefulness	.854	4
Perceived Ease of Use	.781	4
Attitude Towards Use	.850	4
Behavioural Intention to Use	.872	4
Actual System Use	.862	4

Findings

Overview of the Five Constructs

Table 2 summarises the reported descriptive statistics. Perceived usefulness recorded the highest mean (M = 3.85, SD = 0.81), followed by perceived ease of use (M = 3.82, SD = 0.80) and attitude towards use (M = 3.51, SD = 0.91). Behavioural intention to use (M = 2.90, SD = 0.99) and actual system use (M = 2.82, SD = 0.95) were lower and slightly below the midpoint of the five-point agreement scale. The pattern indicates that students evaluated AI's usefulness and usability more favourably than their intention to use it and their reported use. These differences describe the responses and are not claims of statistical significance.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for the Five Constructs

Construct	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceived Usefulness	3.85	0.81
Perceived Ease of Use	3.82	0.80
Attitude Towards Use	3.51	0.91
Behavioural Intention to Use	2.90	0.99
Actual System Use	2.82	0.95

Perceived Usefulness

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation for each item under Perceived Usefulness. The highest mean was observed for "Using AI tools enhances my English writing skills" (M = 3.99, SD = 0.87), indicating favourable perceptions of AI support for writing; this item does not demonstrate an objective performance gain. Similarly, students agreed that "AI tools help me complete my writing assignments more quickly" (M = 3.88, SD = 0.90), highlighting perceived efficiency benefits. Slightly lower means were observed for "AI tools improve the quality of my writing" (M = 3.82, SD = 1.03) and "AI tools make it easier to write in English" (M = 3.72, SD = 1.05), suggesting modest variability in perceived language enhancement support.

Table 3
Mean and Standard Deviation for Perceived Usefulness Items

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Using AI tools enhances my English writing skills	3.99	0.87
AI tools help me complete my writing assignments more quickly	3.88	0.90
AI tools improve the quality of my writing	3.82	1.03
AI tools make it easier to write in English	3.72	1.05

Perceived Ease of Use

Table 4 presents descriptive results for items under Perceived Ease of Use. Students found AI tools intuitive and manageable, with the highest agreement for "I find AI writing tools easy to use" (M = 4.05, SD = 0.92). "Learning to operate AI tools for writing is easy for me" also scored high (M = 3.85, SD = 0.93), reinforcing positive user experiences. Meanwhile, "Interacting with AI tools does not require a lot of effort" (M = 3.80, SD = 1.12) and "I find it easy to get AI tools to do what I want them to do" (M = 3.55, SD = 1.13) received comparatively lower agreement, particularly for obtaining the desired output.

Table 4
Mean and Standard Deviation for Perceived Ease of Use Items

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning to operate AI tools for writing is easy for me	3.85	0.93
I find AI writing tools easy to use	4.05	0.92
Interacting with AI tools does not require a lot of effort	3.80	1.12
I find it easy to get AI tools to do what I want them to do	3.55	1.13

Attitude Towards Use

As shown in Table 5, respondents moderately agreed that AI integration in writing is beneficial. The statement "AI tools for writing are beneficial" achieved the highest mean (M = 3.73, SD = 0.99), followed by "Using AI tools makes writing more interesting" (M = 3.54, SD = 1.20). The lower mean for "Using AI tools for writing is a good idea" (M = 3.16, SD = 1.05)

indicates less favourable agreement with this statement. The survey results do not establish the reasons for this response.

Table 5
Mean and Standard Deviation for Attitude Towards Use Items

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Using AI tools for writing is a good idea	3.16	1.05
I like the idea of using AI tools to assist with my writing	3.61	1.13
AI tools for writing are beneficial	3.73	0.99
Using AI tools makes writing more interesting	3.54	1.20

Behavioural Intention to Use

The results in Table 6 show comparatively weaker behavioural intentions. Students expressed comparatively greater agreement with recommending AI tools ("I will recommend AI writing tools to others," M = 3.35, SD = 1.14) but displayed weaker intentions to use them independently ("I intend to use AI tools for my future writing assignments," M = 2.99, SD = 1.12). The lowest mean ("I am likely to use AI tools for writing even when not required," M = 2.43, SD = 1.22) indicates weaker intention to use AI when it is not required.

Table 6
Mean and Standard Deviation for Behavioural Intention to Use Items

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
I intend to use AI tools for my future writing assignments	2.99	1.12
I will recommend AI writing tools to others	3.35	1.14
I will continue using AI tools for writing as much as possible	2.81	1.16
I am likely to use AI tools for writing even when not required	2.43	1.22

Actual System Use

As shown in Table 7, Actual System Use yielded the lowest means overall. Students moderately agreed with "I use AI tools for different types of writing tasks" (M = 3.34, SD = 1.07) but expressed lower agreement with spending substantial time using AI ("I spend a significant amount of time using AI tools for writing," M = 2.70, SD = 1.15). The item "I rely on AI tools for writing more than traditional methods" (M = 2.33, SD = 1.17) recorded the lowest agreement, indicating lower agreement with relying on AI more than traditional methods.

Table 7
Mean and Standard Deviation for Actual System Use Items

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use AI tools for writing regularly	2.91	1.12
I use AI tools for different types of writing tasks	3.34	1.07
I spend a significant amount of time using AI tools for writing	2.70	1.15
I rely on AI tools for writing more than traditional methods	2.33	1.17

Discussion

Students' favourable evaluations of usefulness and ease of use are consistent with writing-focused research reporting that learners value AI assistance with feedback and language revision (Rafida et al., 2024; Syafei & Nuraeningsih, 2025). In the present study, the highest item mean concerned the ease of using AI writing tools (M = 4.05), while perceived usefulness was the most favourably evaluated construct overall. These findings suggest that students recognise AI as a potentially accessible source of writing support, although their responses represent perceptions rather than evidence of improved writing proficiency.

The lower means for behavioural intention and self-reported use distinguish perceived benefits from sustained engagement. TAM offers a framework for considering these dimensions, but the descriptive results do not establish a predictive pathway from usefulness or ease of use to intention and behaviour (Davis, 1989). Previous language-education research also considers technological and pedagogical knowledge alongside acceptance (Firdaus et al., 2025). Whether training, task requirements, access, or other contextual factors explain the present response pattern requires further investigation.

The results extend the pre-university evidence provided by Mizan and Norman (2024) to an English writing course in a public-university TESL foundation context. This contribution is relevant because acceptance can vary with learning tasks and institutional settings. It supports attention to how AI is introduced within writing instruction, rather than assuming that positive perceptions of the technology will lead to independent use.

For teaching, the findings suggest the value of guided activities in which students compare AI suggestions with their own drafts, explain revision decisions, and evaluate whether feedback meets the task requirements. Concerns about authenticity and responsible use in earlier research support retaining teacher guidance and students' responsibility for their writing (Al-Othman, 2024; Wang & Fussell, 2024, 2026). These are instructional implications, rather than interventions whose effectiveness was tested in this survey.

Limitations and Future Research

The study was conducted in one public-university TESL pre-university context, which limits generalisation to other programmes and institutions. Responses were self-reported, and the actual system used items that measured agreement with usage statements rather than verified frequency or duration. The descriptive survey cannot establish causation, explain why behavioural intention and use were lower, or demonstrate improvement in English writing.

No separate satisfaction scale was analysed, and internal consistency evidence does not replace instrument validation.

Future research could combine surveys with interviews to examine learners' reasons for using or avoiding AI, distinguish between tools and writing tasks, and compare students across institutional contexts. Longitudinal data and usage records could clarify changes in engagement, while independently assessed writing tasks would be needed to examine proficiency outcomes. Further validation of the adapted questionnaire would also strengthen interpretation of the constructs.

Conclusion

This study examined TESL pre-university students' perceptions of AI tools in an English writing skills course at a Malaysian public university. Students evaluated perceived usefulness and ease of use favourably, whereas behavioural intention and self-reported actual system use received lower agreement. The findings therefore indicate recognition of AI's potential support for writing alongside more limited intentions and reported engagement. They contribute context-specific evidence to the existing pre-university literature and suggest incorporating guided AI activities, feedback evaluation, and clear expectations for responsible use into foundation writing instruction. As the study relied on descriptive self-report data, its conclusions concern acceptance and perceived support; they do not establish that AI improved students' writing proficiency.

References

Alghasab, M. B. (2025). English as a foreign language (EFL) secondary school students' use of artificial intelligent (AI) tools for developing writing skills: Unveiling practices and perceptions. Cogent Education, 12(1), Article 2505304. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2025.2505304

Al-Othman, A. A.-A. M. (2024). Using artificial intelligence in English as a foreign language classrooms: Ethical concerns and future prospects. Arab World English Journal, Special Issue on CALL (10), 85–104. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/call10.7

Alqaed, M. A. (2024). AI in English language learning: Saudi learners' perspectives and usage. Advanced Education, (25), 125–142. https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.318972

Al-Raimi, M., Mudhsh, B. A., Al-Yafaei, Y., & Al-Maashani, S. (2024). Utilizing artificial intelligence tools for improving writing skills: Exploring Omani EFL learners' perspectives. Forum for Linguistic Studies, 6(2). https://doi.org/10.59400/fls.v6i2.1177

Al Rawas, R. S. A., Mohammed, M. B., & Kamsin, I. F. (2026). Artificial intelligence in supporting self-regulated reading among English as a second language learners: A systematic review. Arab World English Journal, 17(3), 274–295. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol17no3.15

Altamimi, D. H. F. (2025). Unlocking potential: Saudi EFL male students' perspectives on AI tools for enhancing English writing proficiency. Arab World English Journal, Special Issue on AI, 40–58. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/AI.3

Alyami, A., Alotaibi, S., & Khan, W. (2025). Saudi EFL learners' perceptions of using artificial intelligence and its impact on their writing skills. Arab World English Journal, 16(1), 349–365. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol16no1.22

An, X., Chai, C. S., Li, Y., Zhou, Y., Shen, X., Zheng, C., & Chen, M. (2023). Modeling English teachers' behavioral intention to use artificial intelligence in middle schools. Education and Information Technologies, 28(5), 5187–5208. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11286-z

Anggraeni, S. A. (2025). Pemanfaatan AI dalam pengembangan keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris: Manfaat, tantangan, dan persepsi pengguna. Karimah Tauhid, 4(8), 5888–5905. https://doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.v4i8.19961

Bibi, Z., & Atta, A. (2024). The Role of ChatGPT as AI English Writing Assistant: A Study of Student's Perceptions, Experiences, and Satisfaction. Annals of Human and Social Sciences, 5(1), 433–443. https://doi.org/10.35484/ahss.2024(5-I)39

Bonsu, E.M. & Baffour-Koduah, D. (2023). From the Consumers' Side: Determining Students' Perception and Intention to Use ChatGPT in Ghanaian Higher Education. Journal of Education, Society & Multiculturalism, 4(1), 1-29. https://doi.org/10.2478/jesm-2023-0001

Campillo-Ferrer, J. M., López-García, A., & Miralles-Sánchez, P. (2025). Student perceptions of the use of gen-AI in a higher education program in Spain. Digital, 5(3), 29. https://doi.org/10.3390/digital5030029

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. MIS Quarterly, 13(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008

Delello, J. A., Sung, W., Mokhtari, K., Hebert, J., Bronson, A., & De Giuseppe, T. (2025). AI in the classroom: Insights from educators on usage, challenges, and mental health. Education Sciences, 15(2), Article 113. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15020113

Delgado, N., Campo Carrasco, L., Sainz de la Maza, M., & Etxabe-Urbieta, J. M. (2024). Aplicación de la Inteligencia Artificial (IA) en Educación: Los beneficios y limitaciones de la IA percibidos por el profesorado de educación primaria, educación secundaria y educación superior [Application of artificial intelligence in education: Benefits and limitations perceived by primary, secondary, and higher education teachers]. Revista Electrónica Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado, 27(1), 207–224. https://doi.org/10.6018/reifop.577211

Fadli, F. & Iskarim, M. (2024). Students' Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence Technology to Develop 21st Century Learning Skills. Lentera Pendidikan : Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, 27(1), 178-190. https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2024v27n1i11.

Firdaus, R., Habibi, A., Hendra, R., Fauzee, M. S. O., Oktaria, S. D., Sofwan, M., & Alqahtani, T. M. (2025). Factors affecting Indonesian pre-service EFL teachers' AI acceptance and use. Texto Livre, 18, Article e57135. https://doi.org/10.1590/1983-3652.2025.57135

Jamshed, M., Ahmed, A. S. M. M., Sarfaraj, M., & Warda, W. U. (2024). The impact of ChatGPT on English language learners' writing skills: An assessment of AI feedback on mobile. International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies, 18(19), 18–36. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v18i19.50361

Karmila, E., Fakhruddin, Z., Dalle, A., Saepudin, S., & Mujahidah, M. (2026). The students' perception to artificial intelligence (AI) in English language learning. Al Lughawiyaat: Journal of English Language Teaching, 7(1), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.31332/alg.v7i1.13069

Ken, T. J., Zaini, M. H., & Rahman, M. J. A. (2026). Perceived artificial intelligence support and reliance in instructional media generation: A survey of Malaysian ESL teachers. International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 25(7), 624–644. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.25.7.28

Kılıçkaya, F. (2024). Using artificial intelligence to generate content: Language lecturers' concerns about plagiarism and creativity. In Y. Özkan, H. Tuncer, & E. Bada (Eds.), An approach to digitalization in language teaching from different perspectives: A reflection of empirical work (pp. 31–44). Nova Science Publishers. https://doi.org/10.52305/VVEQ4787

Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 30(3), 607–610. https://doi.org/10.1177/001316447003000308

Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Lee, H. (2020). Intelligent assistants in language learning: An analysis of features and limitations. In K.-M. Frederiksen, S. Larsen, L. Bradley, & S. Thouësny (Eds.), CALL for widening participation: Short papers from EUROCALL 2020 (pp. 172–176). Research-publishing.net. https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2020.48.1184

Mat, M., Hashim, H., & Sulaiman, N. A. (2025). Uncovering the ESL undergraduates' needs for a web-based writing module. Arab World English Journal, (Special Issue on CALL No. 11), 111–125. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/call11.7

Mat Yusoff, S., Mohamad Marzaini, A. F., Hao, L., Zainuddin, Z., & Basal, M. H. (2025). Understanding the role of AI in Malaysian higher education curricula: An analysis of student perceptions. Discover Computing, 28(1), Article 62. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10791-025-09567-5

Md Yazid, N. H., Sulaiman, N. A., & Hashim, H. (2025). Needs analysis of pre-university ESL students for the development of a web-based grammatical competence module. The International Journal of Technologies in Learning, 33(1), 1–23. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-0144/CGP/v33i01/1-23

Mizan, N. A., & Norman, H. (2024). Pre-university students' perception in using generative AI: A study at a Malaysian private university. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 14(8), 894–906. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i8/22455

Mun, C. Y. (2024). EFL learners' English writing feedback and their perception of using ChatGPT. Journal of English Teaching Through Movies & Media, 25(2), 26–39. https://doi.org/10.16875/stem.2024.25.2.26

Ngo, T. T. A. (2023). The Perception by University Students of the Use of ChatGPT in Education. International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET), 18(17), 4–19. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v18i17.39019

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). Psychometric theory (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.

Pathivada, R., Swain, S. K., & Papinaidu, M. (2025). Faculty perceptions of artificial intelligence AI assisted feedback in English as a second language (ESL) writing in engineering colleges of North Coastal Andhra Pradesh. In 2025 3rd DMIHER International Conference on Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare, Education and Industry (IDICAIHEI). IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/IDICAIHEI65991.2025.11377591

Punar Özçelik, N., & Yangın Ekşi, G. (2024). Cultivating writing skills: The role of ChatGPT as a learning assistant—a case study. Smart Learning Environments, 11, Article 10. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-024-00296-8

Rafida, T., Suwandi, S., & Ananda, R. (2024). EFL students' perception in Indonesia and Taiwan on using artificial intelligence to enhance writing skills. Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun, 12(3), 987–1016. https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v12i3.1520

Saker, C., & Ghedeir Brahim, M. (2025). Meeting academic writing needs: Exploring the perceptions of PhD students at El-Oued University on the efficiency of AI writing assisting tools. El-Quari'e Journal of Literary, Critical and Linguistic Studies, 8(3), 311–325. https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/276338

Sami, A., Tanveer, F., Sajwani, K., Kiran, N., Javed, M. A., Ozsahin, D. U., Muhammad, K., & Waheed, Y. (2025). Medical students' attitudes toward AI in education: Perception, effectiveness, and its credibility. BMC Medical Education, 25, Article 82. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-025-06704-y

Slimi, Z., Benayoune, A., & Alemu, A. E. (2025). Students' perceptions of artificial intelligence integration in higher education. European Journal of Educational Research, 14(2), 471-484. https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.14.2.471

Sumakul, D. T. Y. G., Hamied, F. A., & Sukyadi, D. (2022). Students' perceptions of the use of AI in a writing class. In Proceedings of the 67th TEFLIN International Virtual Conference & the 9th ICOELT 2021 (pp. 52–57). Atlantis Press. https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220201.009

Syafei, M., & Nuraeningsih. (2025). Leveraging artificial intelligence in writing: ELT students' perspectives and experiences. International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 24(5), 416–430. https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.5.22

Tan, J. M. (2025). Analyzing written performance of learners with AI assistance: Challenges, limitations, and perceived effectiveness. Environment and Social Psychology, 10(4), Article 3275. https://doi.org/10.59429/esp.v10i4.3275

Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. MIS Quarterly, 27(3), 425–478. https://doi.org/10.2307/30036540

V. G., A. L., & N. S., P. K. (2025). Generative artificial intelligence in enhancing English language skills: A systematic review. Studies in Media and Communication, 13(4), 256–267. https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v13i4.7763

Wang, Y., & Fussell, S. R. (2024). They may have seen my ChatGPT tab: Exploring social perceptions of AI-assisted writing for ESL students. In ACM International Conference Proceeding Series (pp. 13–15). Association for Computing Machinery. https://doi.org/10.1145/3690712.3690717

Wang, Y., & Fussell, S. R. (2026). "It's safer to say I don't use it": Exploring ESL students' self-perceptions as AI-assisted writers. Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, 10(1), Article GROUP011. https://doi.org/10.1145/3799448

Zainuddin, N. M., Mohamad, M., Zakaria, N. Y., Sulaiman, N. A., Jalaludin, N. A., & Omar, H. (2024). Trends and benefits of online distance learning in the English as a second language context: A systematic literature review. Arab World English Journal, (Special Issue on CALL No. 10), 284–301. https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/call10.18