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Correlation Analysis: AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writing Course and Plagiarism Awareness

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A B S T R A C T

In the digital era, plagiarism awareness has become increasingly important, especially with the rapid rise of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in academic writing. Applications such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, and Quillbot assist students in generating, editing, and refining texts, but they also blur the boundaries between legitimate support and potential misconduct. Previous studies have examined students' perceptions of AI in relation to academic integrity and writing quality, yet few have directly investigated whether the frequency of AI use is associated with students' plagiarism awareness. Addressing this gap, the present study examined the correlation between AI usage frequency and plagiarism awareness in an academic writing course. A total of 79 English Education students at Sriwijaya University participated in this quantitative study, with data analyzed using Pearson Correlation. The results revealed a positive but insignificant correlation between the two variables (r = 0.035, p = 0.761). These findings suggest that frequent use of AI tools does not automatically strengthen plagiarism awareness, highlighting the need for institutional regulations and explicit training in academic ethics to guide students toward responsible and ethical AI integration in their writing practices.

Keywords: *Academic Writing, Artificial Intelligence, Plagiarism Awareness*

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INTRODUCTION

In higher education, academic writing is central not only for communication but also for fostering critical thinking, academic rigor, and creativity (Seidaliyeva & Baidabek, 2024; Ulashovna, 2020). Defined by formal style, coherent argumentation, and proper citation, it plays a key role in research-based learning and thesis preparation (Bailey et al., 2025).

The rapid integration of AI tools such as Grammarly, QuillBot, ChatGPT, and Gemini has transformed writing practices, offering assistance with grammar, organization, and feedback (Alaa, 2024; Jen & Hj Salam, 2024; Reis et al., 2023). While these applications improve efficiency, they raise concerns about authorship and originality, potentially complicating academic integrity (Jarrah et al., 2023; Khalil & Er, 2023; Steponenaite & Barakat, 2023). Students themselves hold mixed views: Lund et al. (2025) found that while full AI-generated essays are widely seen as unethical, smaller AI-assisted tasks are judged less consistently. Many educators now emphasize AI literacy and transparency rather than relying solely on AI-detection tools, which remain prone to error.

Despite growing interest, relatively few studies directly explore how AI use relates to plagiarism awareness. Chan (2023) introduced the concept of "AI-giarism" but did not measure usage frequency or ethical awareness. Zhai et al. (2024) showed that over-reliance on AI systems may undermine critical thinking, but did not link this to plagiarism. Other work highlights the dual role of AI in both aiding writing and complicating originality, yet its effectiveness in fostering ethical awareness remains unclear (Mpolomoka et al., 2025). Research on writing quality has shown positive links between AI use and improved writing performance (Dingal et al., 2024), but these studies generally overlook integrity-related outcomes.

Taken together, prior research shows that while AI is reshaping academic writing practices and raising new ethical questions, the specific relationship between the frequency of AI tool use and students' plagiarism awareness remains underexplored. This study addresses that gap by examining English Education students at Sriwijaya University, where academic writing is a required course governed by strict originality policies.

METHOD

This study was employed quantitative research methodology and the correlational design was applied in this study. As stated in Creswell (2017) correlation design is one of non-experimental form of research which can be used by the researchers to measure and describe the degree to which two or more variables or sets of scores are associated. This research focuses on the relationship between AI usage frequency in academic writing course (Independent variable) and plagiarism awareness (Dependent variable) of student of English education study program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya university. Both of variables measured by using questionnaire.

Respondents

As stated by Creswell (2012) that group of individuals who share the same characteristic is called population. The population of this study is students of English education study program of faculty of teacher training and education of Sriwijaya University. the total number of the population is 367, consisting of the 2nd, the 4th, the 6th, and the 8th semester.

Table 1. Population and Sample

No.	Semester	Total
1.	2nd	97
2.	4th	104
3.	6th	96
4.	8th	70
Total		367

Purposeful sampling technique was employed in this study in order to draw the sample from the population. Purposeful sampling technique is where the individuals and sites to study or understand the central phenomenon is intentionally chosen by the researchers (Creswell, 2012). The criterion of the sample of this study is the students who are currently taking or have taken the Academic writing course.

Table 2. Population and Sample

No.	Semester	Total
1.	6th Indralaya	41
2.	8th Inndralaya	38
Total		79

Instruments

These instruments were validated by using Pearson Correlation Technique. This technique were employed because it allows for measuring how well each items in the questionnairre correlates with the measured construct. The first part is Students' AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writting Course, this part was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this reseach, the responses for this part is a frequency scale which are "Never" (1) "1-2 times" (2) "3-5 times" (3) "6-10 times" (4) and "More than 10 times" (10).

Table 3. Validity and Reliability

NO.	Questions	Responds	TotalScore			Conclusion
			r	p	N	
1.	During your Academic Writing course, how often do you use AI tools in a week?	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.603	<0.001	30	VALID
2.	How often do you use AI when completing the	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times	0.730	<0.001	30	VALID

NO.	Questions	Responds	TotalScore			Conclusion
			r	p	N	
	following types of tasks? [Writing essay]	☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times				
3.	How often do you use AI when completing the following types of tasks? [Writing reading reports]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.709	<0.001	30	VALID
4.	How often do you use AI when completing the following types of tasks? [Answering text-based questions]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	706	<0.001	30	VALID
5.	How often do you use AI when completing the following types of tasks? [Citing references]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.550	0.002	30	VALID
6	When you use AI for writing, how long do you usually use it in one session?"	☐1 = Less than 5 minutes ☐ 2 = 5–15 minutes ☐ 3 = 15–30 minutes ☐ 4 = 30–60 minutes ☐ 5 = More than 1 hour	3.82	0.037	30	VALID
7.	How often did you use the following AI tools during the Academic Writing course? [ChatGPT]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.619	<0.001	30	VALID
8.	How often did you use the following AI tools during the Academic Writing course? [Grammarly]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.453	0.012	30	VALID
9.	How often did you use the following AI tools during the Academic Writing course? [Quillbot]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.659	<0.001	30	VALID
10.	How often did you use the following AI tools during the Academic Writing course? [Gemini AI]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.429	0.018	30	VALID
11.	How often did you use the following AI tools during the Academic Writing course? [Copilot]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.413	0.023	30	VALID

NO.	Questions	Responds	TotalScore			Conclusion
			r	p	N	
12.	How often did you use the following AI tools during the Academic Writing course? [Others]	☐1 = Never ☐ 2 = 1-2 times ☐ 3 = 3-5 times ☐ 4 = 6-10 times ☐ 5 = More than 10 times	0.323	0.082	30	INVALID

Based on the analyses by using SPSS 27, 11 items were considered valid since the r counts are exceeding 0.0361 and the p-values are less than 0.05. on the other hand, one items was considered invalid since the p-value is 0.083 which is greater than 0.05 and the r count is 0.323 which is less than 0.0361.

The second part is adapted from G. Hussein (2022) this questionnaire were checked by writers' advisor to ensure the relevance with this current study. This questionnaire was also validated in two ways. First, an expert judgement process was conducted. The instrument was submitted to subject-matter experts to assess its alignment with the study objectives, relevance to the research topic and the validity of its item. Then, the subjective validity of the instrument was calculated using Pearson Correlation estimation. The results of the validity and reliability test as follows:

Table 4. Validity and Reliability

No.	Questionnairre	Validity Test			Reliability Test	
		Non-Valid Item	Valid Item	Total Item (N)	Cronbach Alpha	Total Item (N)
1.	AI usage Frequency	1	11	12	0.790	11
2.	Plagiarism Awareness	0	28	28	0.847	28

Research instrument that used in this research consists of 2 parts, The first part is Students' AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writing Course, this part was checked by the expert to ensure the relevance with this research objectives and also has been tested by try-out. The researcher conducted a trial on 30 students of English Language Education of Sriwijaya University who have already taken the Academic Writing course. The significance level was set at 5% (two-tailed), with 28 degrees of freedom (df = 30-2). The r-value was 0.0361. Each question in the questionnaire was tested for its correlation (r count) with the total score. To be considered as valid the items' r count must be greater than the r table and the p-value must be less than 0.05.

Based on the Cronbach's Alpha result. Both of instruments are highly consistent in measuring what they are measure. And can be used for further analysis.

Procedures

Online questionnaires was employed by the writer in order to collect the data for this study. By enabling respondents to complete and submit the questionnaire online, data collection will be easier. The researcher use questionnaire that consist of 2 parts. The first part is Students' AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writting Course, this part was developed by the researcher for the purpose of this reseach, the responses for this part is a frequency scale which are "Never" (1) "1-2 times" (2) "3-5 times" (3) "6-10 times" (4) and "More than 10 times" (10).

The second part is Students' Awareness of Plagiarism, this second part of the questionnaire is adaped from G. Hussein 2022. Consist of 28 items consist of 13 items about students' awareness of the form of plagiarism and 15 items about students' awareness of what causes plagiarism which is used to measure students' plagiarism awareness level. The responses for this part also a five-point Likert Scale which are (1) "Strongly Disagree" (2) "Disagree" (3) "Somewhat Agree" (4) "Agree" and (5)"Strongly Agree".

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 27 was used to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire. The data was entered and arranged in the SPSS software prior to the analysis. A question that developed to determine the frequency of use of AI-based

tools in academic writing course. Option for this question were 1 (Never), 2 (1-2 times), 3 (3-5 times), 4 (6-10 times), and 5 (More than 10 times) on a five-point frequency scale.

To gauge knowledge of plagiarism, 28 items inspired by Hussein (2022). Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, with one representing "Strongly Agree." The total sum of the 28 items will be computed to determine the plagiarism awareness scores. Respondents' awareness of plagiarism increases with their overall score.

Descriptive statistic will be employed for each variable in order to display the respondents' distribution and general features. For both the frequesncy of AI use and the plagiarism awareness scores, these statistics provide mean and standard deviation..

The relationship between the frequency of AI usage and plagiarism awareness was assessed using the Pearson Product-Moment correlation test. This test used $p< 0.05$ significance level. One metric that shows the direction and degree of the relationship between two variables is the correlation coefficient (r), A positive r value indicates a undirectional relationship, while a negative r value indicates an opposite relationship.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Result of Students' AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writing Course

The students AI usage frequency questionnaire was used to measure the frequency of students using AI-tools during their Academic Writing course. This questionnaire consists of 11 items. To answer this questionnaire the writer range it into "Never" (1), "1-2 times" (2), "3-5 times" (3), "6-10 times" (4), "More than 10 times" (5). The result of the questionnaire is presented below:

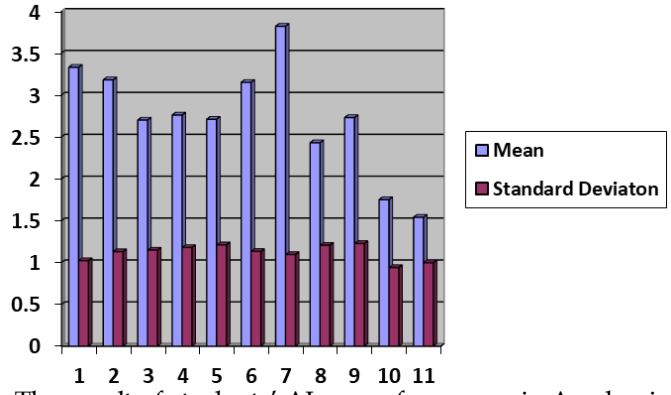

Figure 1. The result of students' AI usage frequency in Academic Writing course

The mean of each item were varied from 1,54 to 3,82 as table above demonstrate that the mean is higher than standard deviation. The degree of variance data is described by the standard deviation. It is deemed abnormal if the standard deviation number is substantially higher than the mean value (Livingston, 2004). On the other hand, the mean value is a good representation that may be utilize as a representation of the full data if the standard deviation value are smaller than the mean value (Sugiyono, 2013).

The descriptive analysis shows that the frequency of AI use in Academic Writing course has overall average score of 2.73 (SD=0.730), which is in the moderate category.

The use of ChatGPT received the highest score (M=3.82, SD= 1.095), followed by the frequency of AI use per-week (M= 3.33 SD= 1.130). AI Copilot (M=1.54, SD= 0.997) and Gemini AI each received the lowest average scores (M=1.75, SD= 0.940).

Students reported moderate levels of use in writing reading reports (M=2.70, SD=1.148), citing sources (M=2.71, SD=1.211), and answering text-based quetions (M=2.76, SD= 1.179) for AI use related to assignment.

This questionnaire also provided the information on what students used AI- tools during their academic writing course

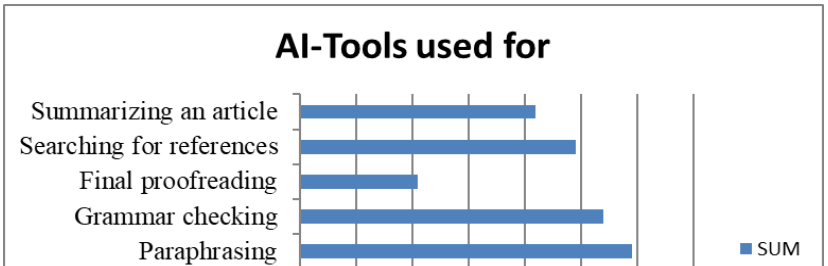

Figure 2. The result of students' AI usage frequency in Academic Writing course

Based on the survey results on 79 respondents regarding the use of AI-tools in Academic Writing course, it was found that the most utilize function of AI-tools was for paraphrasing activities, proved by 59 responds or 74.7% by the respondents. This shows that students tend to use AI to change the sentence or word order to avoid plagiarism and improve the quality of their written language.

Furthermore, the most common purpose for using AI-tools was determining ideas or topics (55 respondents or 69.6%). The second purposes were creating an outline and checking grammar, which were used by 54 respondents (68.4%) each. The results show that AI-tools are essential in the early planning stages of writing and help with the technical aspects of language.

In addition, the rate of using AI to find references was quite high (49 respondents or 62%), indicating that students used AI as an initial literature source before using formal academic sources. On the other hand, 42 respondents (53.2%) used article summaries, indication the role of AI in facilitating comprehension and extraction of information from readings.

Compared to the planning stage, the use of AI was lower at the initial draft writing stage (34 respondents or 43%). This may indicate that some students became more confident to write their own drafts after using AI for outlines or ideas. The last proofreading function was used the least by 21 respondents or 26.6%. This may because students prefer to check grammar and verify on their own.

The Result Of Students' Plagiarism Awareness

The students Plagiarism Awareness questionnaire was used to measure the plagiarism awareness of the samples. This questionnaire consists of 2 parts, 13 items for students' awareness of the forms of plagiarism and 15 items for students' awareness of the cause of plagiarism, 28 items in total. To answer this questionnaire the writer range it into "Strongly Disagree" (1), "Disagree" (2), "Somewhat Agree" (3), "Agree" (4), "Strongly Agree" (5). The result of the questionnaire is presented below:

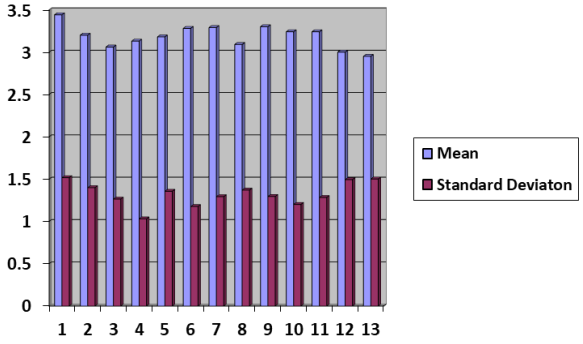

Figure 3. The Result of Students Plagiarism Awareness

According to the descriptive analysis, students' overall mean score for their awareness of plagiarism form is 3.18 (SD= 1.321), which is considered to be moderate. "Transferring information from the internet and fomulating it without mentioning its source" (M=3.44 SD= 1.517) gets the highest mean score. This is followed by "paraphrasing or summarizing information from the source without explicit acknowledgement" (M=3.29, SD= 1.2930), and

"mixing materials copied from multiple sources without mentioning their sources" (M=3.30, SD= 1.295). The lowest mean score is for citing fictitious sources that do not exist (M= 2.95, SD= 1.501).

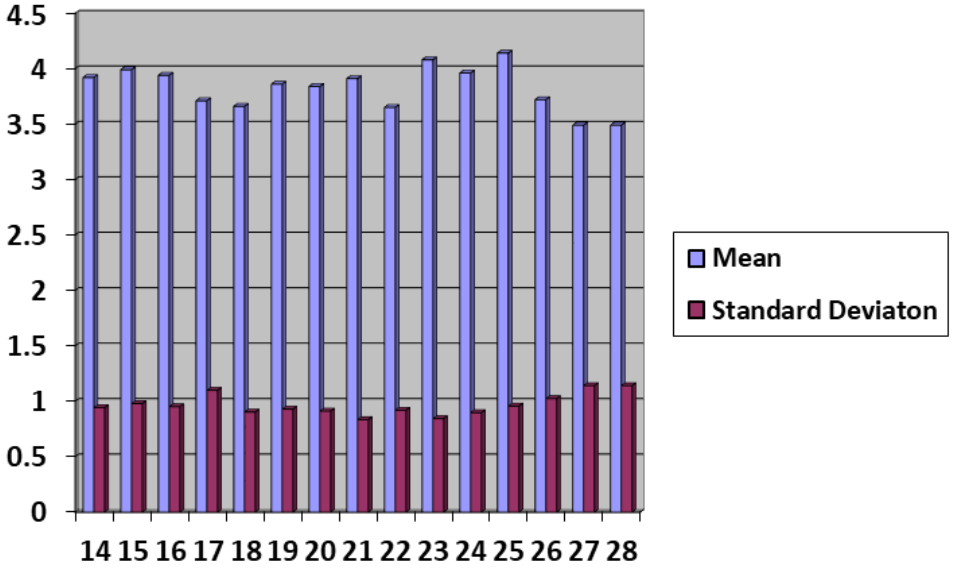

Figure 4. The result of Students Plagiarism Awareness

With an overall mean score of 3.82 (SD= 0.966), the descriptive results shows that students are generally well-informed about the reason for plagiarism. The highest mean score (M=4.14, SD= 0.957) is "large number of burdens and tasks required of students", followed by "lack of student ability to paraphrase using their own style" (M=4.08, SD= 0.844) and desire to conduct research rapidly and earn a higher degree (M=3.91, SD= 0.835). The lowest scores are for "copying and pasting is commonplace", and "everyone does it and the student thinks that no one will discover him or her" both M=3.49, SD=1.142.

Statistical Analysis

Normality Test

Prior to the correlation analysis, the normality test of the data was tested in order to know whether the data had a normal distribution or not. This research applied Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to identify the normality of the data, and the reluts of the analysis as presented below.

Table 5. Normality Test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro=Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig	Statistic	Df	Sig
AI Usage Frequency	0.82	79	0.200	0.973	79	0.92
Plagiarism Awareness	0.88	79	0.200*	0.973	79	0.10

As shown in the table above, the p-value of Students' AI usage Frequency in Academic Writing Course was (0.200), and the p-value of Students' Plagiarism Awareness was (0.200). it was concluded that all the instruments have the normal distribution.

Correlation between AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writing Course and Plagiarism Awareness

To answer the research question by correlating the respondents' answers to the AI usage frequency questionnairre and their Plagiarism Awareness, this research applied Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Table 6. Correlation between AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writing Course and Plagiarism Awareness

		Plagiarism Awareness
Students' AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writing Course	Pearson Correlation	0.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.761
	N	79

According to the results of the Pearson Correlation test, the value of r= 0.035 and the p-value = 0.761 (p > 0.05) were obtained. A positive r value indicates a direct relationship: the more frequently students use artificial intelligence in academic writing course, the greater the likehood that they are aware of plagiaism. However, this correlation is not statistically significant and is very weak. This indicates that there is insufficient evidence to prove that there is a significant correlation between awareness of plagiarism and the frequency of AI use.

Interpretation of the Study

After determining the statistical results, the study's interpretations were necessary to provide an explanation for the findings. Several elements would be described in order to answer the research's questions.

First, the findings of Students' AI Usage Frequency in Academic Writing Course questionnaire presented that the students have a moderate rate of AI usage in their academic writing course (M= 3.37, SD= 0.730). This indicates that students use AI in Academic Writing course to a moderate extent. This shows that although AI is beginning to be used in academic processes, it is still not the main source for composing assignments.

Second, the high score for ChatGPT shows how popular it is as a multi-purpose tool for depeloving ideas, building writing structures, and helping to improve language. Using AI to write essays and the high weekly frequency show that students use it as a support rather than as their main tool. On the other hand, Students may not fully understand Gemini AI and Copilot tools or believe that their functions are irrelevant compared to more popular AI tools such as ChatGPT and Grammarly. Some students still use manual methods or traditional sources even though AI is used for specific tasks such as creating citations, answering text-based questions, and writing categorized reading reports. Previous study (Black & Tomlinson, 2025) shows tht students tend to use AI selectively based on task complexity, familiarity, and perceived accuracy.

The finding of what students used AI for, during their academic writing course has been revealed that students used AI-tools more often in the pre-writing stage and improve the quality of their writing than in the final editing stage. This is revelant to the purpose of using AI to save time and improve the quality of their academic writing (Santoso & Prasetiyo, 2023).

The fourth findings is that students have moderate awareness of various types of plagiarism. This indicates that although students are aware of some types of academic misconduct, their understanding is still weak. Students are more aware of direct copying from the internet without citations, possibly due to institutional efforts to prevent this practice. However, the low awareness of citations from non original sources suggest that students may underestime or be unaware of the importance of making false references.

On the contrary, students are well aware of the causes of plagiarism, indicating that they can identify the main elements that may cause it. Previous study (Guraya, 2018) found that time pressure and inadequate academic writing training are the main causes of plagiarism, with high scores for causes related to workload and limited paraphrasing skills. Interestingly, lower normalized plagiarism scores and the belief that they will not be caught suggest that students may not fully acknowledge culural factors or attitudes as the primary drivers.

The last finding is that although the correlation is positive, the r value is very low (0.035) and insignificant (p-value 0.761). this shows that the frequency of AI use does not really have an effect on students' awareness of plagiarism. Therefore, understanding of academic ethics does not automatically increase with increased use of AI. In another study, Muhaemin et al. (2024) found a moderate and significant correlation between information literacy and the use of AI text generators (r = 0.672, p = 0.05). which differ fom this studys' results, this may be because this study focused in plagiarism awarenss rather than information literacy. While, research on the correlation between ChatGPT use and plagiarism shows a positive but indirect relationship, with moderating effects such as age and educational level (Campo et al., 2025). This suggest that demogaphic factors may play a role in the relationship between AI use and plagiarism behavior. These findings suggest that academic awareness cannot be improved solely through th euse of AI. Other factors, such as AI literacy, academic ethics training, and institutional policies, may be more important.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine whether there was any significant correlation between students' AI usage frequency in academic writing courses and their plagiarism awareness. Using data from 79 English Education students at Sriwijaya University, two questionnaires were administered to assess students' AI usage frequency and their plagiarism awareness. The findings revealed that there is no significant correlation between the two variables, with students reporting an average level of AI usage and a moderate level of plagiarism awareness. While this differs from prior research that emphasized either students' perceptions of AI misuse (Chan, 2023), the impact of AI on writing quality (Dingal et al., 2024), or the risks of over-reliance on AI systems (Zhai et al., 2024), the present study specifically contributes by addressing the gap regarding the direct relationship between AI usage frequency and plagiarism awareness in the context of English education students. By doing so, this study clarifies that frequent AI usage in academic writing does not automatically predict stronger or weaker plagiarism awareness. This insight emphasizes the need for educational institutions to focus not only on regulating AI use but also on explicitly fostering students' understanding of academic integrity and plagiarism ethics.

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