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ChatGPT Use and Perceptions in B.A. Monograph Writing: A Mixed-Methods Study of Moroccan EFL Students

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A B S T R A C T

Since its release in November 2022, ChatGPT has attracted considerable attention in higher education, particularly for its potential to support academic writing. However, research on its use by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in the Moroccan higher-education context remains limited, especially in relation to extended academic writing tasks such as B.A. monographs. This mixed-methods study investigates Semester 6 EFL students' use and perceptions of ChatGPT in composing their B.A. monographs, focusing on its perceived benefits and limitations, factors related to its acceptance, informed by selected constructs from the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), and ethical concerns surrounding its use. Data were collected from 221 students in the English Department at Ibn Tofail University through an online survey, complemented by semi-structured interviews that provided deeper insights into students' experiences and perceptions. The findings reveal generally positive perceptions of ChatGPT, with students identifying brainstorming and idea generation, vocabulary development, grammar correction, paraphrasing, and the organization of ideas as key benefits. At the same time, students expressed concerns about hallucinations and inaccurate information, overreliance on AI-generated content, and plagiarism and other academic-integrity issues. The findings further highlight the role of UTAUT-related factors in shaping students' acceptance of ChatGPT for academic writing. The study concludes that ChatGPT can serve as a valuable supplementary tool for supporting EFL students' academic writing when used critically and responsibly, while emphasizing the need to foster AI literacy, critical evaluation skills, and responsible AI use within EFL curricula.

Keywords: *Chatgpt, Generative AI, Academic Writing, EFL Students, AI Literacy*

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI (GenAI) tools such as ChatGPT, is increasingly transforming higher education and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. ChatGPT can support students throughout the academic writing process by helping with drafting, revising, brainstorming, summarizing, and language correction, potentially improving the accuracy and efficiency of their writing (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023; Yan, 2023). At the same time, its use raises concerns about unreliable information, excessive dependence on AI, and the potential implications for students' development of academic and critical thinking skills (Barrett & Pack, 2023; Divekar et al., 2024). Students' acceptance of ChatGPT has also been associated with factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of use, price value, and social influence (Chopra et al., 2025; Strzelecki, 2023), while ethical questions concerning authorship, plagiarism, transparency, and responsible AI use have become increasingly important (Draxler et al., 2024; Qu et al., 2025).

The relevance of these issues becomes particularly apparent in the context of B.A. monographs, a substantial academic writing task undertaken by undergraduate students in the final stage of their Bachelor's degree. In the Moroccan EFL context, a B.A. monograph generally requires students to select and investigate a research topic, formulate research questions or objectives, consult and synthesize relevant academic sources, organize ideas into a coherent academic structure, and present their findings in an extended written document in

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English. Students are therefore expected not merely to produce grammatically accurate text, but also to demonstrate the ability to engage critically with sources, develop and support arguments, organize information logically, and follow conventions of academic writing and research. Unlike shorter classroom assignments, the monograph involves an extended and relatively independent writing process, often encompassing topic selection, literature review, drafting, revision, and final presentation. It thus provides a particularly relevant context for examining the role of ChatGPT in academic writing because students may potentially use the technology at multiple stages and for a variety of purposes.

Despite the rapidly expanding literature on ChatGPT in education, an important problem remains insufficiently addressed. Much of the existing research has examined students' general use, perceived benefits, limitations, acceptance, or ethical concerns regarding ChatGPT, often in relation to shorter or more general academic writing tasks. Comparatively little is known about how EFL students use ChatGPT when undertaking an extended, research-based academic writing task such as a B.A. monograph. This is particularly significant in the Moroccan higher-education context, where empirical evidence concerning students' actual practices and perceptions remains limited. Consequently, there is a need to move beyond the general question of whether students use or accept ChatGPT and examine how they use it during an extended academic writing process, what they perceive as its benefits and limitations, what factors shape their acceptance, and how they understand the ethical boundaries surrounding its use. Without such evidence, it remains difficult to determine whether ChatGPT functions primarily as a supportive writing resource, a means of overcoming writing difficulties, or a substitute for aspects of students' own academic work.

Against this background, the present mixed-methods study investigates Semester 6 EFL students at Ibn Tofail University and their use and perceptions of ChatGPT while composing their B.A. monographs. The study has four main objectives: (1) to examine how students use ChatGPT in composing their B.A. monographs; (2) to identify the benefits and limitations they perceive in using the tool for this purpose; (3) to investigate the factors that shape their acceptance of ChatGPT for extended academic writing; and (4) to explore the ethical considerations students associate with its use, particularly in relation to authorship, plagiarism, disclosure, and responsible academic practice. By combining quantitative and qualitative evidence, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' experiences with ChatGPT in this specific academic writing context.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) How do Semester 6 EFL students at Ibn Tofail University use ChatGPT in composing their B.A. monographs? (2) What benefits and limitations do these students perceive in using ChatGPT for this purpose? (3) What factors shape these students' acceptance of ChatGPT for this purpose? (4) What ethical considerations do these students raise regarding their use of ChatGPT in composing their B.A. monographs?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute empirical evidence from the Moroccan EFL higher-education context and to provide a more nuanced understanding of ChatGPT as a support tool for extended academic writing. More specifically, it seeks to clarify how students integrate the technology into their writing practices and how its educational value is shaped by its perceived benefits and risks, students' acceptance of the technology, and their understanding of responsible and ethical academic use.

Academic Use

Research from different educational contexts shows that students employ ChatGPT for several purposes across different stages of the academic writing process (Barrett & Pack, 2023; Črček & Patekar, 2023; Divekar et al., 2024; Wang, 2024). Barrett & Pack (2023) found that students tend to Favor using ChatGPT for academic purposes during the early stages of composition rather than for producing the final version of their work. Similarly, Divekar et al. (2024) found that students reported using ChatGPT for a range of writing-related tasks, including rephrasing, proofreading, drafting, outlining brainstorming and data analysis. Wang (2024) further demonstrated that ChatGPT can provide support for both high-order

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concerns, such as argumentation, structure, coherence and lower-order concerns, including syntax, diction, and grammar. These findings are also reflected in previous research. Črček & Patekar (2023) found that the majority of students used ChatGPT primarily to generate ideas (81.9%), followed by paraphrasing existing texts (46.8%) or summarizing (44.6%) writing part of the assignment (36.1%), and proofreading (31.9%); notably only 18% reported using it to write the entire assignment. Similarly, von Garrel and Mayer (2023) found that students used AI-based tools for a range of academic purposes, including research and literature study (28.6%), translation (26.6%), and text analysis, processing, and creation (24.8%). Helm & Hesse (2025), drawing on Hoffmann & Schmidt (2023), likewise examined students' use of ChatGPT and found that it occurred primarily in the planning phase, especially for literature searching and summarizing. These studies show that students used AI tools as a supportive tool rather than a substitutive one.

Students' use of ChatGPT is also shaped by the circumstances under which they carry out their academic writing. When faced with looming deadlines, students may resort to ChatGPT as a coping mechanism or shortcut to save time and alleviate stress. Abbas et al. (2024) found that students were inclined to use ChatGPT for academic writing in response to academic overload and time pressure. They turned to the tool once they perceived that their remaining time was insufficient to complete their assignments. Students may also turn to ChatGPT when they feel they are running short of ideas or encounter difficulties during the writing process. Zhao et al. (2024) found that students used ChatGPT to address specific difficulties they encountered during the writing process, such as generating ideas, clarifying concepts, and structuring their essays.

Benefits and Limitations

The existing literature highlights several benefits related to the use of ChatGPT in academic writing. Aminah & Aly (2026), for instance, described ChatGPT as a form of support for drafting, revising, and refining written work, which may contribute to greater confidence and lower writing anxiety. At the early stages of writing, ChatGPT can assist with generating initial drafts, brainstorming ideas, and summarizing the literature (Imran & Almusharraf, 2023), as well as supporting essay generation and the structure and organization of written work (Fitria, 2023). A number of other studies have reported improvements in accuracy, coherence and overall academic writing quality through functions such as grammar checking, proofreading, and suggestions for writing structure (Alkamel & Alwagieh, 2024; Barrot, 2023; Mizumoto et al., 2024). These functions may also enhance the efficiency of the writing process by reducing the time and effort required to complete its different stages (Castro et al., 2024; Fauzi et al., 2023; Sallam, 2023; Teng, 2024). In addition, ChatGPT can provide feedback in an intelligible and consistent manner, which can help students better understand the feedback and act upon it during the revision process (Dai et al., 2023). This suggests that its contribution may extend beyond correcting linguistic errors to supporting students as they review and refine their work. The interactive and iterative nature of ChatGPT further allows users to engage in successive exchanges and obtain responses that correspond more closely to their specific writing needs (Yan, 2023). The capabilities of ChatGPT extend beyond its contribution to writing, as it can also help students understand academic content by providing information, clarifying concepts and assisting with research and translation (Kasneci et al., 2023; Klimova & de Campos, 2024).

Irrespective of what has been advanced thus far apropos the benefits of ChatGPT in academic writing, the tool is not without pitfalls. Although ChatGPT has been widely recognized for its ability to spot grammatical and surface-level errors, an important question concerns its ability to address deeper dimensions of academic writing. Algaraady & Mahyoob (2023), for example, found that while ChatGPT successfully identified most surface-level errors, it struggled with problems related to deep structure and pragmatics. A further concern relates to the reliability of information generated by ChatGPT, or what has been referred to in the literature as "AI-hallucinations." The generated responses may appear coherent and credible, but this does not necessarily guarantee their factual accuracy. Several studies have

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echoed this concern, reporting that ChatGPT can generate fabricated content and attribute it to real authors, as well as produce fictitious information and factual errors (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Fui-Hoon Nah et al., 2023; Ngo, 2023). More recently, Adel & Alani (2025) highlighted the persistent problem of hallucination in the use of ChatGPT for literature synthesis. In fact, such findings make critical scrutiny of ChatGPT-generated outputs necessary and raise the need to critically verify what it produces. This concern becomes particularly relevant when users rely excessively on the tool, as such reliance may be detrimental to their critical engagement with information. Darwin et al. (2023), as a good case in point, cautioned that over-reliance on AI tools to generate outputs could hinder critical thinking and increase the risk of "creating echo chambers" (p. 14). Barrot (2023) and Hakimi & Lakhal (2025) echoed this concern, similarly warning that over-reliance on AI-generated content could undermine the development of critical thinking and writing skills.

Acceptance Factors

Students' acceptance of ChatGPT as an assistant in academic writing in higher education has largely been examined through technology acceptance frameworks, notably the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2), developed by Venkatesh, Thong, and Xu (2012), as applied by Strzelecki (2023). Ease of use, corresponding to effort expectancy in UTAUT2, has emerged as a salient dimension of acceptance. Several studies have found that university students perceive ChatGPT as user-friendly, accessible and easy to learn and use without prior training (Aksakallı & Daşer, 2025; Ngo, 2023; Strzelecki, 2023; Yeki et al., 2025). Underlying this perception is the clarity of its interaction and interface, which allows learners to engage with the AI-powered chat in a smooth and comprehensible manner (Aksakallı & Daşer, 2025; Hasanein & Sobaih, 2023; Nguyen & Bich Dieu, 2024). Price value is another dimension of ChatGPT acceptance addressed in the literature. Studies have linked students' acceptance of ChatGPT partly to its free availability (Gasaymeh et al., 2025; Raman et al., 2023). Strzelecki (2023), however, argued that free access of the AI-powered tool made the cost irrelevant, suggesting instead that price value can be understood in terms of time and effort students invest in learning to use it. Social influence has similarly been examined as a determinant of acceptance, though findings remain mixed. Strzelecki (2023) found that social influence exerted a relatively limited effect on behavioural intention to use ChatGPT, a finding that the author associated with the technology's novelty and limited adoption at the time of the study. More recently, however, Chopra et al. (2025) found that social influence had a significant effect on students' behavioural intention to use ChatGPT.

The question of acceptance does not end with the initial adoption of ChatGPT; it also encompasses students' willingness to sustain its use and recommend it to others. Pasupuleti & Thiyyagura (2024) found that satisfaction significantly predicted continuance intention; that is, students who were more satisfied with ChatGPT were more likely to continue using it. They also found that both satisfaction and continuance intention predicted recommendation intention. Put differently, students who were satisfied with ChatGPT and intended to continue using it were more likely to recommend it to others. Similarly, Yu et al. (2024) found that user satisfaction had a significant positive effect on students' continued intention to use ChatGPT. These findings are also evident in Yeki et al. (2025), where students reported favourable attitudes and high behavioural intention toward using ChatGPT for academic writing. Acceptance, therefore, may entail more than initial adoption; it reflects the willingness to continue, when experiences are favourable, and recommend it to others.

Ethics

GenAI in academic writing has become increasingly integrated, which has blurred the boundary between legitimate assistance and practices that may violate academic integrity. For instance, Pasaribu et al. (2025) found that the majority of students agreed that using ChatGPT in academic writing could lead to plagiarism. Ethical concerns, however, may depend on how students perceive their use of GenAI. Qu et al. (2025) distinguished between strategic and conceptual non-disclosure. The former refers to instances in which students deliberately

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choose not to disclose their AI use despite understanding the disclosure requirements set by their institutions, whereas the latter refers to cases in which students do not perceive their use of AI as requiring acknowledgement. This boundary between assistance and authorship is particularly evident in what Draxler et al. (2024) describe as the "AI Ghostwriter Effect," which they define as "the use of personalized generative AI without credit to the AI. Thus, the AI acts as a ghostwriter" (p. 2). This perception is also reflected in Tran et al. (2025), where students viewed ChatGPT as a mere tool rather than a source worthy of citation.

While some students may not view AI use as requiring disclosure, others look to their instructors to determine what constitutes ethical use. Črček & Patekar (2023) found that many students looked to their instructors for guidance, particularly given the novelty of GenAI in academic writing. For some, ChatGPT use was considered ethical "when the instructor says it is okay" (Črček & Patekar, 2023). Such reliance on instructors, however, also brings the need for institutional guidelines to the forefront. Pasaribu et al. (2025) noted that without clear guidelines on the appropriate use of ChatGPT in academic contexts, students are left uncertain about what constitutes ethical or unethical use. An et al. (2025) similarly stressed the importance of establishing course-specific GenAI policies within universities.

METHODS

To answer its research questions, the present study employed a mixed-methods approach to explore Ibn Tofail Semester 6 EFL students' use of ChatGPT in academic writing, their perceptions of its benefits and limitations, its acceptance, and the ethical aspects of its use. This approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Participants

The sample comprised Semester 6 English-major students at the Faculty of Languages, Letters and Arts (FLLA), Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, Morocco. Convenience sampling, a non-probability method, was adopted to recruit respondents for the questionnaire based on their accessibility and availability during the data collection period (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Eligibility was restricted to students who had qualified to undertake their End-of-Study project. Data collection took place during the 2023--2024 academic year. A total of 221 students responded to the questionnaire. However, 11 respondents reported that they did not use ChatGPT and were therefore excluded from the analysis. Of the remaining 210 respondents, 95 (45.2%) were male and 115 (54.8%) were female. For the qualitative data, convenience sampling was also used to recruit 10 participants from the 210 survey respondents, with the help of their B.A. monograph supervisors, to participate in semi-structured interviews.

Instruments and Procedure

To collect the quantitative data, a self-report questionnaire (Google Forms) was employed. The questionnaire was distributed online via WhatsApp. The questionnaire gathered data on students' use of ChatGPT in academic writing, their perceptions of its benefits and limitations, factors related to its acceptance, and the ethical aspects of its use. The questionnaire comprised 24 items divided into five sections, in addition to demographic questions for descriptive purposes. Except for the multiple-response items in the Academic Use section, the questionnaire items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with a mid-point labelled undecided (3). The first section focused on the academic use of ChatGPT and included three questions adapted from Črček & Patekar (2023). The second section examined students' perceptions of ChatGPT's benefits and consisted of six items adapted from Ngo (2023). The third section focused on students' perceptions of ChatGPT's limitations and included six items, also adapted from Ngo (2023).

The fourth section addressed factors related to students' acceptance of ChatGPT and comprised six items adapted from Strzelecki (2023) and Pasupuleti & Thiyyagura (2024). Finally, the fifth section, developed by the researchers based on a review of the relevant

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literature on the ethical use of ChatGPT in academic writing, addressed ethical considerations and comprised three items. The section initially included six items; however, three were removed due to low item-total correlations, resulting in a final three-item Ethical Considerations section. To gain deeper insight into students' lived experiences, a semi-structured interview guide was used in interviews with 10 participants drawn from the sample. The interview questions were developed from the questionnaire items, with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of students' use of ChatGPT, its benefits and limitations, factors influencing its acceptance, and ethical considerations. Each interview took about 10 minutes and the interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent for later analysis. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured of the confidentiality, voluntary participation and anonymity of their responses; interview participants were similarly informed and assured, and were assigned pseudonymous codes (P1-P10) to protect their identities.

Data Analysis

In the quantitative phase, the questionnaire data collected from Ibn Tofail Semester 6 EFL students were analysed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to examine students' responses across the questionnaire's five sections. Composite subscale scores were interpreted as low (1.00-2.33), moderate (2.34-3.67) or high (3.68-5.00) based on mean-score ranges adapted from Dacillo, Dizon, Ong, Pingol, and Cleofas (2022). Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Benefits (α = .813), Limitations (α = .856), and Acceptance Factors (α = .852) subscales yielded alpha coefficients above .80, while the Ethical Considerations subscale, reduced to three items following item-total correlation analysis, yielded α = .657. The overall 21-item scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency (α = .904), based on the criteria of (George & Mallery, 2019).

In the qualitative phase, interview audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Given that the interview questions were developed based on the study questionnaire and research questions, the data were analysed using a deductive approach to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The transcripts were read and organized into five predetermined categories reflecting the study's research questions: academic use, benefits, limitations, acceptance and ethical considerations.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Quantitative Results

Table 1. Students' Self-reported Proficiency in Using ChatGPT for Academic Writing

Response	n	%
Strongly agree	49	23.3
Agree	69	32.9
Neutral	67	31.9
Disagree	19	9.0
Strongly disagree	6	2.9
Total	210	100%

Note. $M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.026$.

Students' self-reported proficiency in using ChatGPT for academic tasks was assessed using a single item (see Table 1). More than half of respondents (56.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that they considered themselves proficient, while 31.9% remained neutral and 11.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The overall mean was M = 3.65 (SD = 1.026), which indicates a moderate level of self-reported proficiency.

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Table 2. Reasons for Using ChatGPT for Academic Writing

Reason	n	%
I want to complete my assignment easily and fast	110	57.9%
Time allotted for completing an academic assignment is not enough	80	42.1%
I don't know how to cite/reference sources	53	27.9%
I am not good at academic writing	43	22.6%
I am not motivated to write it myself	22	11.6%

Note. N = 190 valid responses; 20 respondents did not provide a response to this item.

Students' reasons for using ChatGPT were examined using a multiple-response item, in which respondents could select more than one option (Table 2). The most frequently reported reason was the desire to complete assignments easily and quickly (57.9%), followed by insufficient time to complete the assignment (42.1%). Other reported reasons included difficulty citing sources (27.9%), perceived weakness in academic writing (22.6%), and lack of motivation to write independently (11.6%).

Table 3. Purposes for Using ChatGPT for Academic Writing

Purpose	n	%
Generating ideas	126	70.0%
Editing/Proofreading (grammar, punctuation, mechanics of writing)	115	63.9%
Summarising/Paraphrasing	105	58.3%
Checking facts	62	34.4%
Writing part of the assignment	42	23.3%
Writing the whole assignment	12	6.7%

Note. N = 180 valid responses; 30 respondents did not provide a response to this item.

A multiple-response item, in which respondents could select more than one option, captured the specific purposes for which students used ChatGPT in academic writing (see Table 3). Generating ideas was the most frequently reported purpose (70.0%), followed by editing and proofreading (63.9%) and summarising or paraphrasing (58.3%). Checking facts was reported by 34.4% of respondents, while 23.3% used ChatGPT to write part of the assignment. Writing the whole assignment was the least reported purpose (6.7%).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Benefits, Limitations, Acceptance Factors and Ethical Considerations Items

Item	Statement	M	SD
Benefits			
B1	Saves time when completing assignments	4.27	0.742
B2	Provides information across diverse fields	4.31	0.674
B3	Translates learning materials into other languages	4.01	0.827
B4	Improves understanding of theories and concepts	4.08	0.775
B5	Improves efficiency and productivity in writing	3.86	0.861
B6	Offers personalized, adaptive learning experiences	3.91	0.878
Overall Benefits		4.07	0.572
Limitations			
L1	Can produce fictional scholars/authors	3.76	1.049
L2	Can exhibit logical errors and contradictions	3.80	0.961
L3	Cannot provide up-to-date information	3.58	1.092
L4	Can produce inaccurate information with continued use	3.59	1.069
L5	Unable to assess the credibility of sources	3.50	0.994
L6	Unable to assess the reliability of information	3.41	1.042
Overall Limitations		3.60	0.790
Acceptance Factors			
AF1	Easy to use	4.48	0.771
AF2	Cost-effective	4.09	0.939
AF3	Interaction is clear and understandable	4.19	0.808
AF4	Important others think I should use it	3.51	1.050
AF5	Would recommend it to peers	3.85	0.969
AF6	Intend to continue using it for academic purposes	3.99	1.017
Overall Acceptance Factors		4.01	0.706
Ethical Considerations			

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EC1	Concerned it could lead to plagiarism	3.91	0.947
EC2	Professors view heavy use as unethical	3.85	0.969
EC3	University should set ethical guidelines	4.13	0.952
Overall Ethical Considerations		3.96	0.736

Note. Item statements are presented in abbreviated form for reporting purposes. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Full item wording is available upon request.

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the constructs examined in the study: Benefits, Limitations, Acceptance Factors, and Ethical Considerations. Findings show that students reported high perceived benefits (M = 4.07, SD = 0.57), moderate perceived limitations (M = 3.60, SD = 0.79), high acceptance (M = 4.01, SD = 0.71), and high ethical considerations (M = 3.96, SD = 0.74).

Benefits was assessed using six items on students' perceptions of the merits of using ChatGPT for academic writing. According to Table 4, the respondents rated all six items highly, with mean scores ranging from 3.86 to 4.31. The item that topped the list was ChatGPT's ability to provide information across diverse fields (M = 4.31, SD = 0.67), followed by its ability to save time when completing assignments (M = 4.27, SD = 0.74). Two other benefits also received mean scores above 4.00, namely, improving understanding of theories and concepts (M = 4.08, SD = 0.78) and translating learning materials into other languages (M = 4.01, SD = 0.83). The remaining two items, concerning personalized and adaptive learning experiences (M = 3.91, SD = 0.88) and improving efficiency and productivity in writing (M = 3.86, SD = 0.86) recorded mean scores below 4.00, although both remained within the high range.

The Limitations construct comprised six items on students' perceptions of the demerits of using ChatGPT for academic writing. Table 4 shows that respondents reported mean scores ranging from 3.41 to 3.80. ChatGPT's ability to exhibit logical errors and contradictions topped the list (M = 3.80, SD = 0.96), followed by its ability to produce fictional scholars or authors (M = 3.76, SD = 1.05). The remaining four items received moderate ratings, with means below 3.68, ranging from 3.41 to 3.59.

The Acceptance Factors construct comprised six items on students' perceptions of their willingness to use ChatGPT for academic writing. As shown in Table 4, the item which topped the list in influencing students' acceptance was ease of use (M = 4.48, SD = 0.77). The second was clarity of interaction with ChatGPT (M = 4.19, SD = 0.81) followed by cost-effectiveness (M = 4.09, SD = 0.94) both recording high ratings. With mean scores less than 4.00 came three items, namely intention to continue using ChatGPT for academic purposes (M = 3.99, SD = 1.02), willingness to recommend ChatGPT to peers (M = 3.85, SD = 0.97), which also fell within the high range, and the influence of important others on the decision to use ChatGPT (M = 3.51, SD = 1.05), falling within the moderate range.

Ethical Considerations were examined through three items on students' perceptions of ethical concerns related to the use of ChatGPT for academic writing. While students generally viewed ChatGPT as beneficial for academic writing, they also voiced concerns regarding the ethical use of ChatGPT. The item that topped the list was the belief that the university should establish guidelines for using ChatGPT ethically in academic writing (M = 4.13, SD = 0.95). This was followed by concerns that ChatGPT use could lead to plagiarism (M = 3.91, SD = 0.95) and that professors view heavy use of ChatGPT as unethical (M = 3.85, SD = 0.97). All three items fell within the high range.

Qualitative Findings

Academic Use

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews showed that participants used ChatGPT for a range of academic tasks, including generating ideas, selecting topics, summarizing, paraphrasing, checking language and clarifying concepts. Its use was generally directed towards supporting specific aspects of academic work rather than replacing students' own work altogether. For instance, P1 described turning to ChatGPT when struggling to generate ideas: "I often find myself in a position where I want to generate ideas and I have a

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lack of them about a certain topic." Other participants reported using ChatGPT to select a research topic (P9), clarify difficult concepts (P5), summarize information (P6, P8), and paraphrase text (P4). However, one participant avoided ChatGPT for academic work because of concerns about its effects on language development. "In the academic work, I don't prefer ChatGPT because it will not give me more opportunity to improve my skills in language" (P3).

Benefits

The qualitative data showed that participants linked ChatGPT with three main categories of benefits: time and task efficiency, language and writing support, and conceptual and informational support. For instance, P6 used the tool to summarize a complex text; "I used ChatGPT to help summarize the essay, it saves me time and helped me to get the information better." In a similar vein, P8 turned to ChatGPT under a tight deadline to outline an unfamiliar topic: "I had to write about this topic on Digital culture, and I only had four days … ChatGPT helped me outline it and gave me the major themes and points to look for. It was effective for me." Time and task efficiency also extended to managing a period of academic overload. P7 described using ChatGPT to organize priorities, adding that it "helped me feel less stressed and more in control of my time." Language and writing support included grammar checking and correcting problems in writing (P9, P5), while conceptual and informational support included summarizing complex texts (P6) and clarifying difficult concepts (P5).

Limitations

Although ChatGPT aided students in their academic writing, participants also voiced concerns about the reliability and accuracy of its output. For example, P2 was critical of its accuracy: "it gives around 30% of the answers... always errors for me … the accuracy level is very low," noting that even a small degree of inaccuracy made it difficult to rely on the information. P9 also voiced concern about fabricated citations: "from time to time, it brings to me fake references. For instance, the author is real, but the book title doesn't exist." Concerns about the lack of references or sources were also raised by P6 and P8, who reported that ChatGPT sometimes provided information without supporting sources. Aside from accuracy and sourcing, P10 voiced a distinct concern related to the potential effects of relying heavily on ChatGPT: "I am afraid if I rely on it a lot, my critical thinking and problem-solving will be affected."

Acceptance Factors

The qualitative data showed that participants' responses regarding ChatGPT acceptance focused on convenience and social influence, as well as their willingness to continue using the tool for academic purposes. For example, P9 pointed to the merits of ChatGPT: "ChatGPT is easy, provide clear answers and also free." Social influence also emerged in participants' responses. P10 explained, "I saw everyone use it and I am curious about using it. They say good things about it." Similarly, P8 reported that their friends had spoken positively about ChatGPT: "My friends were talking about how ChatGPT was very useful, easy and fast. So, I gave it a try and it was very helpful." It is worth mentioning that participants expressed a willingness to continue using ChatGPT for academic purposes. P1 stated, "once you use AI, there's no going back," while P9 explicitly noted, "it is tempting. I will not stop using it for academic purposes." However, not all participants shared this view, P3 avoided using ChatGPT for academic purposes, instead preferring search engines such as Google.

Ethical Considerations

Participants also voiced ethical concerns about the use of ChatGPT in academic writing, particularly regarding acknowledgement of its use, professors' views, and the need for clear institutional guidance. Several participants expressed concern that the use of ChatGPT without appropriate acknowledgement could lead to plagiarism. P4 pointed to a practice among students of copying ChatGPT's output without credit: "almost all students or

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those who are using ChatGPT, they copy what ChatGPT wrote for them without referring to ChatGPT, … so it is important to mention the AI tool that has been used." Some participants described personal strategies to avoid this. P8, for instance, explained, "If I copy everything it gives me, it might count as plagiarism. So, I always try to write down on my notebook the most important ideas and then I rewrite them in my own words." Participants also referred to their professors' views concerning the appropriate use of ChatGPT. P4 reported that their professor regularly discussed the ethical use of AI tools as well as "how we should interact with ChatGPT," while P7 noted that "some professors see it as a helpful tool if used responsibly, not for cheating or copying. It's important to know the limits." P8 expressed a similar view, stating, "Yeah, we discuss it with our professors. Most of them say that it's okay it is good to use ChatGPT mostly for brainstorming and organizing thought, not for writing full essays." Participants also called for clearer institutional guidance, with P9 stating "I have no idea about ethical considerations, I wish my university is clear about this by providing roadmap or guidelines to use it correctly."

Discussion

RQ1: How do Semester 6 EFL students at Ibn Tofail University use ChatGPT in composing their B.A. monographs?

This study explored Moroccan EFL students' perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in academic writing. The first question in this study sought to determine how students use ChatGPT in the process of academic writing. The findings indicate that students generally viewed ChatGPT as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for their own academic work. Such a finding is in line with existing research, which suggests that students favour using ChatGPT during the early stages of writing rather than for composing the whole output (Barrett & Pack, 2023). In the present study, students most frequently reported using ChatGPT for generating ideas, editing, proofreading, and summarizing or paraphrasing, whereas only a subset reported using it to write the whole assignment. This is largely consistent with Črček & Patekar (2023), who similarly found that the majority of students used ChatGPT primarily to generate ideas, though only 18% reported using it to write the whole assignment. In a similar vein, the qualitative findings corroborated the quantitative results, with students describing their use of ChatGPT to generate ideas (P1), find research topics (P9), clarify difficult concepts (P5), summarize information (P6 and P8), and paraphrase text (P4). These findings also align with Divekar et al. (2024), who found that students used ChatGPT for different writing-related tasks. Overall, the present findings confirm previous research, showing that students tend to use ChatGPT for specific writing tasks rather than producing the entire assignment.

The findings suggest that students' use of ChatGPT was also shaped by the academic demands they faced. Time, in particular, appeared to be an important consideration; the most frequently reported reason for using ChatGPT was to complete assignments quickly and easily, followed by not having enough time to finish them. Participants' lived experience brought these findings to life. P8, faced with only four days to complete a task on "Digital Culture," explained that ChatGPT helped him "outline it, gave [him] the major themes and points to look for," while P7 reported turning to the tool to organize priorities during a stretch of academic workload. This finding resonates with Abbas et al. (2024), who found that academic workload and time pressure were linked to students' use of ChatGPT. It is also consistent with Zhao et al. (2024) who found that students turned to ChatGPT in response to specific difficulties they encountered during the writing process. This adds to previous research by showing how time pressure and academic workload can influence students' use of ChatGPT for academic tasks.

RQ2: What benefits and limitations do these students perceive in using ChatGPT for this purpose?

With respect to the second research question, the findings indicate that students held positive perceptions of the benefits of ChatGPT in academic writing. The quantitative results showed that students highly valued the different benefits ChatGPT offers during the writing

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process, chief amongst them its ability to provide information across diverse fields and save time when completing assignments. These results are consistent with those of Imran and Imran & Almusharraf (2023); Sallam (2023); Teng (2024) who found that ChatGPT can be useful in supporting different aspects of academic writing and improving the efficiency of the writing process. The qualitative findings corroborated this positive perception further. Participants commented that ChatGPT is useful for saving time, clarifying difficult material, and supporting their language use during writing. P6, for instance, stated that using ChatGPT to summarize a complex text "saves me time and helped me to get the information better," while P5 used it to clarify difficult concepts. P9 relied on it for "grammar checks, and language." These findings are consistent with previous studies which highlighted the role of ChatGPT in academic writing across different aspects including writing efficiency, explanations, personalized feedback, and language-related support (Aminah & Aly, 2026; Barrot, 2023). They are also in line with Al-Zubaidi et al. (2024), who, in a study conducted at Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech, Morocco, reported several benefits of ChatGPT for students, including writing and language support, information gathering, and time management. This consistency across these studies suggests that ChatGPT's value in academic writing lies in its ability to support several aspects of the writing process rather than serving one single purpose.

However, students who found ChatGPT useful in academic writing also held a clear view on where it could fall short. The quantitative data pointed primarily to concerns about the reliability of the tool. Logical errors and contradictions topped the list of concerns, followed closely by concerns about ChatGPT generating fabricated references or fictitious scholars. These concerns have also been documented in the existing literature, particularly in relation to "AI hallucination," which can result in the fabrication of inaccurate or entirely fictitious information (Adel & Alani, 2025; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Fui-Hoon Nah et al., 2023; Ngo, 2023). The qualitative data added to these concerns. Participants were critical of the accuracy of the tool's output. For example, P2 commented that "around 30% of the answers... always errors for me." In a similar vein, P9 recalled instances where ChatGPT generated "fake references," while P8 reported the absence of sources altogether, which made it difficult to verify the information. Moreover, P10 expressed concern about the consequences of over-reliance on ChatGPT in academic writing, commenting that with overreliance, "critical thinking and problem solving will be affected." These concerns are also reflected in the Moroccan context, as Al-Zubaidi et al. (2024) voiced concerns related to fabricated information, unreliable sources, and the effects of ChatGPT use on students' critical thinking. This concern about critical thinking is consistent with Darwin et al. (2023) and Hakimi & Lakhal (2025), who similarly warned that excessive reliance on AI can stifle students' critical thinking and writing skills. This convergence with previous research suggests that the benefits students link with ChatGPT coexist with concerns about reliability and overreliance, both of which remain salient limitations in academic writing.

RQ3: What factors shape these students' acceptance of ChatGPT for this purpose?

For the third research question, the findings indicate that ease of use was the highest-rated factor amongst the surveyed students. The quantitative results showed that students perceived ChatGPT as easy to use, clear in its interaction, and cost-effective, with each factor receiving a high rating. These findings are in line with previous research (Aksakallı & Daşer, 2025; Ngo, 2023; Strzelecki, 2023; Yeki et al., 2025), which characterized ChatGPT as user-friendly, accessible, and easy to learn and use without prior training. Clarity of interaction with ChatGPT is consistent with Aksakallı & Daşer (2025), Hasanein & Sobaih (2023), and Nguyen & Bich Dieu (2024). Cost-effectiveness also accords with findings reported by Gasaymeh et al. (2025) and Raman et al. (2023). By contrast, social influence received the lowest rating among the acceptance factors, a result consistent with Strzelecki (2023), who similarly reported a limited effect of social influence on students' behavioural intention to use ChatGPT. However, this result is not supported by the more recent findings of Chopra et al. (2025), who found social influence to significantly predict behavioural intention. Students' lived

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experiences illustrated this positive perception. P9, for instance, commented "ChatGPT is easy, provide clear answers and also free," directly echoing the high ratings for ease of use, clarity of interaction and cost-effectiveness. When asked about what motivated them to start using ChatGPT, only P10 and P8 mentioned social influence in their responses. P10 elucidated that positive comments about ChatGPT sparked his curiosity, while P8 similarly reported that a friend's positive comments encouraged them to try it. The fact that social influence was mentioned by only two participants, even when asked directly about what motivated them to start using ChatGPT, lends further support to Strzelecki (2023) finding of a limited effect of social influence. These findings suggest that students placed greater importance on ChatGPT's practical qualities, especially ease of use, clear interaction, and cost-effectiveness, than on the influence of others.

The results also indicated that students expressed a strong intention to continue using ChatGPT for academic writing and to recommend it to their peers. These findings align with Pasupuleti & Thiyyagura (2024), who found that satisfaction significantly predicted students' continuance intention and that both satisfaction and continuance intention predicted recommendation intention. Yu et al. (2024) found a similar effect of satisfaction on continuance intention, and Yeki et al. (2025) likewise found favourable attitudes and high behavioural intention toward using ChatGPT for academic writing. The qualitative findings further provided evidence of students' willingness to continue using ChatGPT. P1 remarked that "once you use AI, there's no going back," while P9 explicitly voiced his intention to keep using it for academic purposes. However, P3 reported avoiding ChatGPT for academic purposes altogether. Despite this contrasting view, students' strong intention to continue using ChatGPT for academic purposes is consistent with previous research reporting similar intentions among students.

RQ4: What ethical considerations do these students raise regarding their use of ChatGPT in composing their B.A. monographs?

Concerning the fourth research question, the findings indicate that although students generally perceived ChatGPT positively for academic writing, they also voiced clear ethical concerns. The quantitative results revealed that the most pressing concern among students was the need for establishing clear university guidelines on the ethical use of ChatGPT, followed by the concern that ChatGPT use can be conducive to plagiarism, and the perception that professors regard heavy use of ChatGPT as unethical. Still, all three items fell within the high range. These findings tie well with previous studies in which the need for clear course-specific guidelines on GenAI use is stressed (An et al., 2025; Pasaribu et al., 2025). Črček & Patekar (2023), for instance, urged universities and educators to establish clear guidelines regarding the use of AI in education. This finding also resonates with Al-Zubaidi et al. (2024), who reported that Moroccan educational authorities and universities have remained largely silent on the matter, while students continue to use ChatGPT with insufficient training or guidance. Regarding the second-rated concern, the findings dovetail well with Pasaribu et al. (2025), who found that most students agreed that ChatGPT use could lead to plagiarism. Finally, the perception that professors regard heavy use of ChatGPT as unethical is in agreement with the findings of Črček & Patekar (2023), who found that students often resorted to their instructors to determine what constitutes ethical use in the absence of formal policies.

The qualitative findings further illuminated these ethical concerns. Participants called for clear institutional guidance on the use of ChatGPT. P9, for example, expressed a wish for the university to provide a "roadmap or guidelines to use [ChatGPT] correctly." Participants also raised concerns about plagiarism issues. Regarding copying ChatGPT's output without acknowledgement, P4 commented, "almost all students or those who are using ChatGPT, they copy what ChatGPT wrote for them without referring to ChatGPT, … so it is important to mention the AI tool that has been used." P4's comment mirrors what Draxler et al. (2024) call the "AI Ghostwriter Effect," in which AI-generated text is used without acknowledging the AI tool. It is noteworthy that students devised personal strategies to avoid plagiarism; P8, for example, explained, "If I copy everything it gives me, it might count as plagiarism. So, I always

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try to write down on my notebook the most important ideas and then I rewrite them in my own words." Participants also referred to their professors' stance toward ChatGPT. P4 noted that their professor regularly discussed the ethical use of AI tools, including "how we should interact with ChatGPT." P7 added that "some professors see [ChatGPT] as a helpful tool if used responsibly, not for cheating or copying. It's important to know the limits." In a similar vein, P8 commented that "most [professors] say that it's okay it is good to use ChatGPT mostly for brainstorming and organizing thought, not for writing full essays." The findings confirm earlier concerns about plagiarism and the need for clearer institutional guidance, while also stressing the role of professors in shaping students' understanding of ethical ChatGPT use.

CONCLUSION

This mixed-methods study examined Semester 6 EFL students' use and perceptions of ChatGPT in composing B.A. monographs at Ibn Tofail University. The findings show that ChatGPT should be understood not merely as a text-generation tool but as a technology whose value depends on how students use, evaluate, and regulate its outputs. The study highlights the need to develop students' AI literacy through prompting skills, critical evaluation of generated content, fact-checking, source evaluation, citation and disclosure practices, and awareness of ethical and academic integrity issues. ChatGPT can support academic writing when used to complement rather than replace students' reasoning, research, linguistic development, and authorship. Universities and instructors should therefore provide clear, context-sensitive guidelines concerning acceptable AI assistance and responsible use in academic writing. However, the findings are limited to Semester 6 EFL students at one Moroccan university. Future research should involve diverse institutions and learners and examine actual AI-assisted writing practices longitudinally to better understand how GenAI shapes academic writing.

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