

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings

The findings of this study are derived from interviews with four English Education students regarding their perceptions of the ethical issues associated with using AI tools for English writing assignments. The participants, referred to as P1 (MAD), P2 (SN), P3 (H), and P4 (H), provided insights into their experiences, opinions, and concerns about AI integration in academic writing. The data is organized based on the research questions, focusing on students' perceptions of ethical issues and their strategies for responsible AI use.

1. Students' Perceptions of Ethical Issues in Using AI Tools for Writing Assignments

Perception refers to students' interpretations, understanding, and attitudes toward a specific phenomenon—in this case, the use of AI tools in academic writing. In the context of this study, students' perceptions of the ethical use of AI tools are closely tied to both the benefits they experience and the concerns they express. These benefits include improved grammar, enhanced vocabulary, increased efficiency, and ease in idea generation. At the same time, ethical concerns emerge, such as dependency on AI, questions of originality and authorship, and transparency in academic integrity. The discussion that

follows presents how students at UIN Antasari articulate and reflect on these perceptions.

The three of the four participants acknowledged the significant benefits of AI tools in assisting with English writing tasks. They highlighted AI's ability to provide detailed explanations, improve language accuracy, and serve as a source of inspiration. For instance, P1 stated, *"AI is very helpful in structuring sentences, especially for those who struggle with arranging words."* Similarly, P2 noted that AI tools like ChatGPT and Quillbot acted as catalysts for creativity, offering examples and refining language use *"I think it is very helpful, and it is a tool to trigger inspiration to write because AI can provide examples."* P3 considers that the flexibility of AI is very helpful in writing English assignments. *"...under certain circumstances AI is able to support English writing assignments. Which is where AI has flexibility as a means of support."* P4 stated that AI is designed to facilitate and help people do their work. *"...the use of AI is very helpful because AI is designed to help facilitate human work, one of which is in the field of education."*

However, alongside these advantages, participants raised several ethical concerns:

a. Dependency on AI

A recurring theme was the risk of over-reliance on AI, which could hinder independent critical thinking and writing skills. P1 admitted,

"I become dependent on AI, to the point where I feel lost when I have to write without its assistance." P3 echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that AI's convenience might reduce cognitive effort, leading to a decline in students' ability to formulate original ideas. *"It makes me dependent because of the flexibility of AI. Where the brain could previously think cognitively, it is given quick information from AI that is practical in providing responses."*

b. Plagiarism and Originality

Participants expressed concerns about the originality of AI-generated content. P4 remarked, *"AI-generated texts often lack personal touch and may resemble existing works, raising questions about authenticity."* P3 further elaborated that while AI could help avoid plagiarism by rephrasing content, the absence of human emotion and personal style in AI writing made it distinguishable from student-authored work.

c. Transparency and Academic Integrity

The issue of whether to disclose AI usage in assignments was divisive. P1 and P2 believed transparency was unnecessary, as AI assistance had become commonplace. P2 stated, *"I don't think it is necessary, because the use of AI has become common knowledge according to the times people have used AI a lot."* In contrast, P3 and P4 argued that acknowledging AI's role was essential to maintain academic honesty. P4 stated, *"Even though AI use is widespread, students should still inform instructors to ensure ethical boundaries are respected."*

d. Institutional Guidelines

All participants agreed on the need for clear institutional policies regarding AI use. P2 emphasized, *"A formal guideline would help students understand the limits of AI assistance and prevent misuse."* P3 added that such policies should address the credibility of AI-generated references and the extent to which AI can be employed in academic work. *"Therefore, lecturers can analyze an AI which can have impacts, risks, and benefits for education."*

2. The Students' Responsible Use of AI Tools while Addressing Ethical Issues

Participants shared various strategies to mitigate ethical risks while leveraging AI tools:

a. Selective Use for Specific Purposes

P3 and P4 emphasized using AI as a supplementary tool rather than a primary writer. P3 explained, *"I use AI only for references or grammar checks, ensuring my own ideas remain central."* P4 added that AI was particularly useful for refining language structure but should not replace critical analysis. *"Obviously I modify the results of my writing with AI, "*

b. Modification and Personalization

All participants stressed the importance of revising AI-generated content to reflect their own voice. P2 noted, *"I always rephrase AI suggestions to align with my writing style and avoid robotic language."*

P1 mentioned that personal input was crucial to prevent detection of AI-generated text by instructors. *“I give the AI detailed and structured instructions so that it does not become an obstacle.”*

c. Critical Evaluation of AI Outputs

Participants highlighted the need to verify AI-provided information. P4 described a strategy of cross-referencing sources: *“I ask AI to include links to references so I can check their validity.”* P3 also compared outputs from multiple AI tools to ensure accuracy. *“I used it only as a reference material as well as a comparison material.”*

d. Role of Educators

Participants suggested that instructors should provide explicit guidance on ethical AI use. P4 proposed, *“Lecturers can provide instructions on recommended and discouraged uses of AI.”* P3 recommended workshops to educate students on balancing AI assistance with independent learning. *“...therefore AI is becoming a very common tool. Therefore, educational institutions can determine which AI tools are valid for use in the academic field.”*

B. Discussion

This study's findings enhance the ongoing conversation regarding the ethical considerations of AI in academic writing, especially in the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education. The responses from

participants illuminate intricate viewpoints regarding the advantages and obstacles associated with AI tools, emphasising significant themes that converge with wider discussions in educational technology, academic integrity, and teaching methodologies.

1. Students' Perceptions of Ethical Issues in Using AI Tools for Writing Assignments

The participants unanimously acknowledged the efficiency of AI tools in enhancing their writing processes. AI's ability to generate ideas, correct grammatical errors, and provide structured feedback was seen as invaluable, particularly for EFL learners who often struggle with linguistic accuracy and fluency (Hyland, 2016). P2's remark that "AI helps refine my language and makes my writing more academic" aligns with studies demonstrating how AI-assisted writing tools can scaffold language development, especially for non-native speakers (Koltovskaia, 2020).

However, this perceived benefit coexists with significant ethical concerns. The most prominent issue, as raised by P1 and P3, was the risk of cognitive dependency—where students increasingly rely on AI for tasks that traditionally required independent critical thinking. This phenomenon resonates with concept of "technocentrism," where technology becomes a crutch rather than a tool for empowerment. P3's observation that "AI makes me lazy to think critically because answers are instantly available" underscores a critical challenge: while AI streamlines writing, it may inadvertently weaken students'

ability to engage deeply with content, formulate original arguments, and develop their academic voice.

A recurring dilemma in the interviews was the question of originality in AI-assisted writing. Participants recognized that AI-generated texts often lack the personal nuance and creativity of human writing, leading to what P4 described as "robotic and impersonal" submissions. This concern mirrors broader critiques of AI-generated content as derivative, drawing from pre-existing data without true understanding or creativity (Bender et al., 2021).

Interestingly, participants employed strategies to mitigate this issue, such as extensively revising AI outputs to reflect their own style (P2) or using AI only for brainstorming and grammar checks (P3). These practices suggest that students are aware of the ethical boundaries but navigate them in varied ways. This aligns with research advocating for AI as a co-writer rather than a sole author (Luckin, 2018), where human agency remains central to the writing process.

However, the blurred line between "assistance" and "substitution" raises questions about academic integrity. While some participants (P1, P2) argued that AI use does not require disclosure, others (P3, P4) emphasized transparency to avoid misrepresentation. This division reflects ongoing debates in higher education about whether AI-assisted writing constitutes plagiarism or legitimate aid (Eaton, 2021). The lack of consensus among participants indicates a pressing need for clearer institutional policies.

2. The Students' Responsible Use of AI Tools while Addressing Ethical Issues

A striking finding was the participants' call for structured guidelines on AI use in academia. P4's statement that "*universities should provide clear rules on how and when AI can be used*" highlights a gap in current academic frameworks. Without standardized policies, students are left to self-regulate, leading to inconsistencies in ethical practice.

This aligns with recent scholarship advocating for AI literacy programs in universities (Ng et al., 2021). Such programs could educate students on:

- a) Ethical boundaries (e.g., when AI crosses into plagiarism),
- b) Critical engagement (e.g., verifying AI-generated sources),
- c) Transparency norms (e.g., citing AI assistance where required).

Moreover, participants suggested that instructors play a more active role in guiding AI use. P3 proposed that "*lecturers can analyze valid AI for academic*," emphasizing the need for faculty to curate approved tools and demonstrate responsible usage. This echoes pedagogical models where educators act as mediators between technology and learners (Selwyn, 2019).

The rapid evolution of AI necessitates ongoing dialogue between students, educators, and policymakers. While AI undeniably enhances accessibility and efficiency in writing, its integration must be carefully managed to preserve academic rigor. Potential directions for future research include:

- a) Longitudinal studies on how AI affects writing skill development over time,
- b) Cross-cultural comparisons of AI use in EFL vs. native English contexts,
- c) Instructor perspectives on detecting and regulating AI-assisted submissions.