

Perception of the use of ChatGPT in academic work among undergraduate students in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION & AIM

ChatGPT is a widely used generative pre-trained transformer. It was recorded that within two months of its release in November, 2022 its users had risen to over 100 million (The Guardian, 2023). It has since found its way into the academic environment with stakeholders within the higher education system chief of which are students and lecturers deriving immense benefits from its use. There are however burgeoning immediate concerns about its ethical use by undergraduate students amidst concerns for the development of critical employability skills by this category of users. This expressed latter concern at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife led the researchers to investigate awareness and utilization of ChatGPT for academic purposes among undergraduate students at the institution; determine students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT for academic work and how they perceive the influence of ChatGPT on their academic performance and their development of critical skills. Lastly, the study determined the students' level of awareness of the ethical issues and concerns that may arise when integrating ChatGPT's outputs into their academic activities.

METHOD

A descriptive survey research design was employed. The sample comprised 380 students selected across more than 8 of the 14 faculties in the study area. Data was collected through the use of an instrument that captured the demographic details, awareness and usage patterns, perceived benefits and challenges, and ethical concerns that surround ChatGPT for academic work. The instrument which has 15 items has an overall Cronbach alpha reliability of 0.74. Data were analysed descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages.

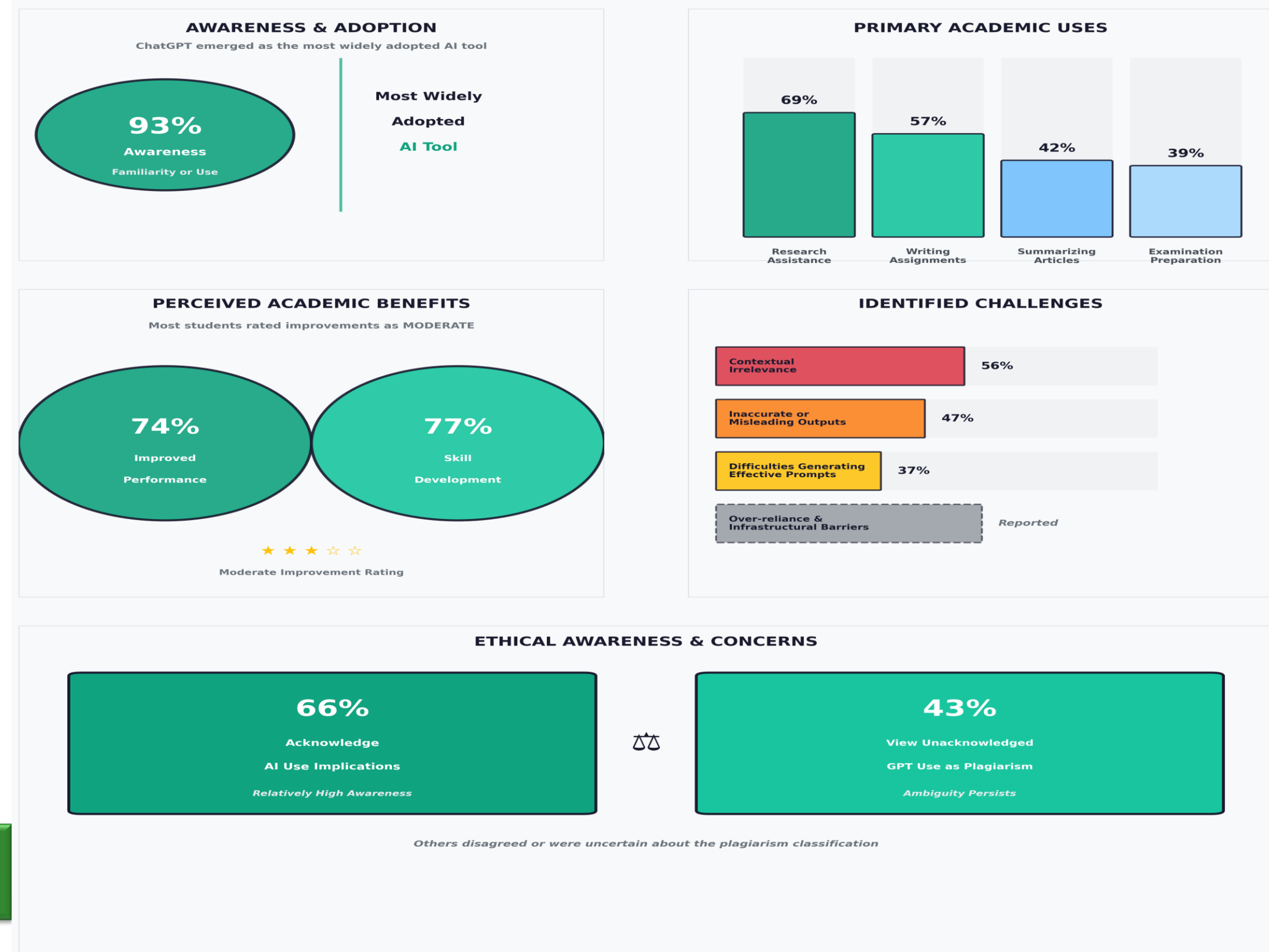
RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Findings revealed that awareness of ChatGPT was nearly universal, with 93% of respondents reporting familiarity or use. ChatGPT emerged as the most widely adopted AI tool, and was primarily employed for research assistance (69%), writing assignments (57%), summarizing articles (42%), and examination preparation (39%). Students perceived notable academic benefits, with 74% reporting improved performance and 77% recognizing contributions to skill development, although most rated these improvements as moderate. Challenges included inaccurate or misleading outputs (47%), difficulties generating effective prompts (37%), and contextual irrelevance (56%), alongside concerns about over-reliance and infrastructural barriers. Ethical awareness was relatively high, with 66% acknowledging the implications of AI use, yet ambiguity persisted, as only 43% viewed unacknowledged GPT use as plagiarism while others disagreed or were uncertain. The results are not surprising and are consistent with Aristovnik, et al. (2025) which examined higher education students' perceptions of ChatGPT's effectiveness and applications which revealed that students primarily use ChatGPT for brainstorming, summarization, and research assistance. Concerns were raised in the study about its reliability in factual accuracy and its role in classroom learning and its limitations in fostering critical thinking, interpersonal communication, and decision-making skills, emphasizing the need for ethical AI regulations in academic settings. Oyetoro & Olujajo (2025) also reported misinformation as one of the challenges of adopting technology into teaching by pre-service language teachers use.

ChatGPT in Academic Contexts:

Awareness, Utilization, Perceptions & Ethical Considerations

A Study of Undergraduate Students



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Near-universal awareness (93%) with ChatGPT as the dominant AI tool
- Primary uses: research assistance, writing support, summarization, and exam prep
- Students report moderate improvements in performance (74%) and skills (77%)
- Significant challenges remain: contextual irrelevance, accuracy, and prompt engineering
- Ethical awareness is present but consensus on plagiarism implications is lacking

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that ChatGPT is widely perceived as beneficial but moderated by accuracy, ethical, and infrastructural concerns. It recommends the widespread dissemination and deployment of institutional AI policies, the integration of digital literacy programs, and investment in digital infrastructure to ensure responsible and equitable use in higher education.

FUTURE WORK / REFERENCES

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