

When AI Meets Academic Integrity: Chatgpt Use and Plagiarism Awareness in a Pesantren-Based University

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Abstrak

Meningkatnya penggunaan alat kecerdasan buatan generatif seperti ChatGPT telah menimbulkan kekhawatiran terkait integritas akademik di pendidikan tinggi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki hubungan antara penggunaan ChatGPT dalam pengerjaan tugas akademik dan kesadaran plagiarisme pada mahasiswa sarjana di sebuah universitas berbasis pesantren di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif korelasional dengan pendekatan cross-sectional yang melibatkan 120 mahasiswa sarjana yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner self-report yang terdiri atas Skala Penggunaan ChatGPT dan Skala Kesadaran Plagiarisme. Analisis statistik deskriptif dan uji korelasi Spearman's Rho dilakukan menggunakan IBM SPSS Statistics 31. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki tingkat penggunaan ChatGPT yang sedang ($M = 31,80$; $SD = 6,59$) serta tingkat kesadaran plagiarisme yang relatif tinggi ($M = 39,12$; $SD = 6,47$). Analisis korelasi menunjukkan tidak terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara penggunaan ChatGPT dan kesadaran plagiarisme ($r = 0,111$; $p = 0,229$). Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa penggunaan ChatGPT tidak secara otomatis berkaitan dengan kesadaran etis mahasiswa terhadap plagiarisme. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya membedakan antara kesadaran plagiarisme dan perilaku yang berkaitan dengan plagiarisme, serta menunjukkan bahwa konteks institusional dan budaya dapat memengaruhi cara mahasiswa berinteraksi dengan teknologi AI. Institusi pendidikan sebaiknya berfokus pada penguatan pendidikan integritas akademik dan praktik penggunaan AI yang bertanggung jawab, daripada hanya mengandalkan pendekatan yang bersifat restriktif.

Kata Kunci: ChatGPT, Integritas Akademik, Kesadaran Plagiarisme, Pendidikan Tinggi, Universitas Berbasis Pesantren.

Abstract

The increasing use of generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT has raised concerns regarding academic integrity in higher education. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between ChatGPT use for academic assignments and plagiarism awareness among undergraduate students at a pesantren-based university in Indonesia. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational design was employed involving 120 undergraduate students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire consisting of a ChatGPT Use Scale and a Plagiarism Awareness Scale. Descriptive statistics and Spearman's Rho correlation analysis were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 31. The findings revealed that students demonstrated a moderate level of ChatGPT use ($M = 31.80$, $SD = 6.59$) and a relatively high level of plagiarism awareness ($M = 39.12$, $SD = 6.47$). The correlation analysis indicated no significant relationship between ChatGPT use and plagiarism awareness ($r = 0.111$, $p = 0.229$). These findings suggest that the use of ChatGPT does not automatically correspond to students' ethical awareness regarding plagiarism. The study highlights the importance of distinguishing between plagiarism awareness and plagiarism-related behavior and suggests that institutional and cultural contexts may influence how students engage with AI technologies. Educational institutions should focus on strengthening academic integrity education and responsible AI-use practices rather than relying solely on restrictive approaches.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Academic Integrity, Plagiarism Awareness, Higher Education, Pesantren-Based University

A. Introduction

The development of generative artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT has transformed academic practices in higher education worldwide. Surveys indicate that more than 50% of students in several countries have utilized ChatGPT for academic assignments (Cotton, Cotton, & Shipway, 2024). The ability to generate coherent text instantly has made ChatGPT a popular tool for brainstorming, outlining, writing, and language editing (Kasneji et al., 2023). However, this accessibility presents serious ethical challenges, particularly concerning academic integrity (Rudolph, Tan, & Tan, 2023).

Academic integrity has become one of the central concerns surrounding the use of generative AI in higher education. ChatGPT complicates the issue of plagiarism by blurring the distinction between legitimate learning assistance and academic misconduct (Kovari, 2025). Recent empirical research confirms these concerns. Campo, Delgado, and Etxabe-Urbieto (2025) found a significant positive correlation between ChatGPT use frequency and self-reported plagiarism behavior among Spanish students. Similarly, Cotton, Cotton, and Shipway (2024) revealed that many students do not understand the ethics of using AI outputs, often using them without adequate paraphrasing or citation. The rapid adoption of generative AI in educational settings has outpaced the development of institutional policies and ethical guidelines, creating a situation where students and educators alike must navigate uncharted territory regarding appropriate use. Unlike traditional forms of plagiarism, where source material is clearly identifiable, AI-generated text presents a unique challenge because it does not originate from a single human author yet may closely resemble human writing. This ambiguity makes it difficult for students to determine when they have crossed the line from acceptable assistance to academic dishonesty. These findings underscore the urgent need for research that examines not only how students use AI tools but also how they understand the ethical boundaries governing such use.

Despite these findings, existing studies predominantly examine plagiarism behavior associated with ChatGPT use, while limited attention has been paid to plagiarism awareness as a foundational aspect of academic integrity. Awareness represents an individual's understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, why it is considered unethical, and what consequences may arise from engaging in such practices. In higher education, awareness is often viewed as a prerequisite for ethical decision-making because students cannot be expected to avoid academic misconduct if they lack a clear understanding of plagiarism itself. Therefore, examining plagiarism awareness may provide a more fundamental perspective on academic integrity than focusing exclusively on observable misconduct (Galindo-Domínguez et al., 2025; Habiba & Jaya,

2025). This distinction is critical because awareness serves as an antecedent to ethical behavior (Jereb et al., 2018). Without adequate awareness, even well-intentioned students may inadvertently commit plagiarism, while those with high awareness are better equipped to make informed ethical decisions when using AI tools. Some studies have found significant correlations between AI use and academic dishonesty, while others have reported weak or non-significant relationships. These inconsistencies point to the importance of institutional context in shaping how students perceive and use AI technologies. In faith-based settings, academic integrity is often intertwined with broader moral and spiritual values, which may influence how students approach AI use differently from their counterparts in secular institutions. Previous findings regarding AI use and academic misconduct have not always been consistent, suggesting that contextual and institutional factors may shape students' engagement with generative AI. Furthermore, most research on ChatGPT and academic integrity has been conducted in Western public university contexts (Campo et al., 2025; Cotton et al., 2024; Kasneci et al., 2023). Findings from these contexts may not be generalizable to non-Western and faith-based higher education settings, where cultural and religious values uniquely frame understandings of academic ethics.

University of Kiai Abdullah Faqih (UNKAFA) Gresik is an Islamic higher education institution that integrates pesantren (Islamic boarding school) traditions with modern academic practices. UNKAFA is characterized by internalized values of *amanah* (honesty), textual learning traditions such as *makna gandul*, and close academic supervision (Haq & Aziz, 2024; Huda, 2024). These characteristics may provide a relevant context for understanding students' responses to AI technologies, although they were not directly measured in the present study.

Accordingly, this study investigates the relationship between ChatGPT use for academic purposes and plagiarism awareness among undergraduate students at a pesantren-based university in Indonesia.

B. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional correlational survey design to examine the relationship between ChatGPT use and plagiarism awareness among undergraduate students (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were collected at a single point in time to provide an overview of the variables at the time of the study.

Participants

The population consisted of 494 undergraduate students in their 4th and 6th semesters at University of Kiai Abdullah Faqih (UNKAFA), Gresik, East Java. Using purposive sampling, participants were selected based on two criteria: (1) enrollment in the 4th or 6th semester, and (2) prior experience using ChatGPT for academic purposes. These semesters were selected because students had already experienced sufficient academic writing activities and were more likely to have used ChatGPT for academic purposes. A total of 120 valid responses were obtained and included in the analysis. This sample size exceeded the minimum requirement for correlational analysis and was considered sufficient to provide stable estimates of the relationship between the variables under investigation. The purposive sampling strategy ensured that all participants had relevant experience with ChatGPT, which was essential for examining the relationship between use patterns and awareness.

Instruments

Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire consisting of 19 items measured on a five-point Likert scale, with anchors adjusted according to item type (e.g., Strongly Disagree–Strongly Agree and Never–Very Often). The questionnaire comprised two sections.

ChatGPT Use Scale (Variable X): Developed based on the dimensions proposed by Campo et al. (2025) and Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2025), this scale consists of 9 items measuring three dimensions: frequency of use (3 items), perceived intensity (3 items), and type of use for academic tasks (3 items). A sample item is: "I use ChatGPT to generate ideas or outlines for assignments."

Plagiarism Awareness Scale (Variable Y): Developed based on the dimensions proposed by Jereb et al. (2018) and modified to include AI-specific aspects following Kovari (2025), this scale consists of 10 items measuring four dimensions: knowledge of plagiarism definitions and forms (3 items), attitudes toward academic dishonesty (3 items), risk perception (2 items), and awareness of ethical practices (2 items). A sample item is: "Using ChatGPT-generated results without citing the source is a form of plagiarism."

Content validity was evaluated by two experts in English language education and educational research. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and respondents were informed that their data would be used solely for research purposes. The questionnaire was administered in both online (Google Forms) and offline (printed) formats to accommodate variations in internet access among students living in Islamic boarding schools.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 31. The analysis proceeded in three stages.

Validity and Reliability Testing: Item validity was assessed using Corrected Item-Total Correlation. All items demonstrated satisfactory validity and were retained for analysis. Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ indicating acceptable reliability (Taber, 2018). The instrument demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .860$).

Descriptive Statistics: Mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were calculated to describe ChatGPT use levels and plagiarism awareness levels.

Correlation Analysis: The Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the data were not normally distributed ($p < .05$), therefore Spearman's Rho was employed to examine the relationship between variables. The strength of correlation coefficients was interpreted based on Guilford's (1956) classification: 0.00–0.19 (very weak), 0.20–0.39 (weak), 0.40–0.59 (moderate), 0.60–0.79 (strong), 0.80–1.00 (very strong). Additional Mann-Whitney U tests were conducted to examine differences based on demographic characteristics. This multi-stage analytical approach allowed for comprehensive examination of the data, from instrument validation through descriptive characterization to inferential testing. The use of nonparametric tests was appropriate given the non-normal distribution of the data, ensuring that the correlation results were statistically robust.

C. Results and Discussion

Result

Respondent Profile

A total of 120 undergraduate students participated in this study. The majority were female ($n = 103$, 85.8%), while male students comprised 14.2% ($n = 17$). By semester level, 33.3% ($n = 40$) were in their 4th semester and 66.7% ($n = 80$) in their 6th semester. All respondents reported having used ChatGPT for academic purposes.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for both variables. The ChatGPT Use variable (Variable X) had a mean score of 31.80 (SD = 6.59) out of a maximum possible score of 45. The Plagiarism Awareness variable (Variable Y) had a mean score of 39.12 (SD = 6.47) out of a maximum of 50.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ChatGPT Use (X)	120	15	45	31.80	6.588
Plagiarism Awareness (Y)	120	12	50	39.12	6.471

The descriptive findings indicate that ChatGPT has become a commonly used academic tool among the respondents, particularly for diverse academic purposes such as generating ideas, organizing assignments, and supporting learning activities. At the same time, the relatively high level of plagiarism awareness suggests that most students possess a clear understanding of academic integrity principles and ethical academic practices. These findings provide an initial indication that the use of AI-assisted tools does not necessarily correspond with lower levels of awareness regarding plagiarism and responsible academic conduct. Further dimensional analysis revealed that among the three ChatGPT use dimensions, "type of use" had the highest mean ($M = 10.97$, $SD = 2.89$ out of 15), followed by perceived intensity ($M = 10.58$, $SD = 2.71$) and frequency of use ($M = 10.25$, $SD = 2.85$). For plagiarism awareness, the knowledge dimension had the highest mean ($M = 11.83$, $SD = 2.46$ out of 15), followed by attitudes ($M = 11.42$, $SD = 2.39$), awareness of ethical practices ($M = 7.98$, $SD = 1.93$ out of 10), and risk perception ($M = 7.89$, $SD = 1.87$ out of 10).

Correlation Results

As shown in Table 2, the Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient between ChatGPT use and plagiarism awareness was $r = 0.111$, with a significance value of $p = 0.229$. Since the p-value exceeded the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), there was no significant relationship between the two variables. The correlation coefficient indicated a very weak positive association.

Table 2. Spearman's Rho Correlation Test Results

Variable	ChatGPT Use	Plagiarism Awareness	
ChatGPT Use	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	0.111
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.229
	N	120	120
Plagiarism Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	0.111	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.229	.
	N	120	120

Additional Analysis

Additional Mann–Whitney U tests indicated no significant differences in either ChatGPT use or plagiarism awareness based on gender or semester level (all $p > .05$).

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between ChatGPT use for academic assignments and plagiarism awareness among undergraduate students at a pesantren-based university in Indonesia. The findings reveal three key results: (1) ChatGPT use among students was at a moderate level ($M = 31.80$ out of 45), (2) plagiarism awareness was relatively high ($M = 39.12$ out of 50), and (3) there was no significant correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.111$, $p = 0.229$). These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on AI and academic integrity by providing empirical evidence from a faith-based higher education context that has been underrepresented in previous research.

Main Finding: No Significant Relationship

The non-significant finding also challenges the assumption that increased exposure to AI tools necessarily leads to diminished ethical awareness. Some educators and policymakers have expressed concern that widespread use of generative AI will erode students' understanding of academic integrity. However, the present findings suggest that this concern may not be supported empirically, at least in the context studied. Students appear capable of using AI tools while maintaining awareness of plagiarism and ethical academic practices. This is not to say that AI use never leads to ethical problems, but rather that the relationship between AI use and academic integrity is more nuanced than a simple cause-and-effect model would suggest. The absence of a significant correlation between ChatGPT use and plagiarism awareness suggests that the use of AI technology does not automatically correspond to students' ethical awareness regarding plagiarism. This finding aligns with several previous studies that have reported weak or non-significant relationships between AI use and academic integrity-related variables. Galindo-Domínguez et al. (2025) found that the frequency of ChatGPT use for academic purposes had no significant relationship with students' plagiarism behavior, while Habiba and Jaya (2025) reported that the relationship between AI usage frequency and plagiarism awareness tended to be weak and statistically insignificant. Similarly, Fajt and Schiller (2025) found only weak correlations between attitudes toward ChatGPT use and aspects of academic ethics. The dimensional analysis of ChatGPT use revealed that the "type of use" dimension had the highest mean score ($M = 10.97$ out of 15), followed by perceived intensity ($M = 10.58$) and frequency of use ($M = 10.25$). This pattern indicates that students employed ChatGPT for a variety of academic activities—such as brainstorming, outlining, and language editing—rather than using it with high frequency for a single purpose. This varied pattern of use may be associated with more reflective engagement with AI tools, potentially contributing to the

absence of a significant correlation with plagiarism awareness. Kasneci et al. (2023) argued that ChatGPT's impact on academic integrity depends heavily on *how* students use it, not just *how often*, and the present findings provide empirical support for this argument.

These consistent findings across different contexts suggest that the relationship between AI technology adoption and academic integrity is not linear or automatic. Students do not passively adopt technological tools; rather, they actively interpret and integrate such tools into their learning practices according to personal goals, academic expectations, and institutional norms. Consequently, the educational implications of ChatGPT cannot be understood solely through the frequency of use, but must also consider the broader social and educational environment in which technology is embedded. Rather, plagiarism awareness appears to be shaped by a constellation of factors beyond mere technology use, including understanding of academic ethics, prior learning experiences, institutional policies, and individual characteristics (Jereb et al., 2018; McCabe, Treviño, & Butterfield, 2001). Educational technologies should be understood as tools whose effects depend on how they are interpreted and used within specific social and educational contexts (Selwyn, 2016).

The Significance of "No Relationship"

An important implication of this finding is that frequent engagement with ChatGPT does not necessarily undermine students' awareness of academic integrity. Students may perceive ChatGPT as a learning aid rather than a substitute for their own academic work. This suggests that the ethical implications of AI use depend less on the frequency of use and more on students' understanding of responsible AI practices. The dimensional analysis supports this interpretation: the "type of use" dimension had the highest mean among ChatGPT use variables, suggesting that students use ChatGPT for a variety of academic activities rather than merely using it with high frequency. Kasneci et al. (2023) argued that ChatGPT's impact on academic integrity depends heavily on *how* students use it, not just *how often*. The present findings provide empirical support for this argument.

Awareness Versus Behavior

The distinction between plagiarism awareness and plagiarism behavior is critical in interpreting these findings. While Campo, Delgado, and Etxabe-Urbieta (2025) found a significant positive correlation between ChatGPT use frequency and self-reported plagiarism behavior among Spanish students, the present study found no such relationship with plagiarism awareness. This apparent contradiction can be explained by two key differences. The demographic composition of the sample reflects the broader student population of the English Language Education program, with a higher proportion of female students (85.8%) compared to male students (14.2%). The larger representation of 6th semester students (66.7%) compared to 4th semester students (33.3%) may be relevant when interpreting the findings. However, additional analyses indicated no significant differences in ChatGPT use or plagiarism awareness based on these demographic characteristics (all $p > .05$), suggesting that the non-significant correlation between the main variables was consistent across gender and semester level. This homogeneity across subgroups strengthens the robustness of the main finding.

First, awareness and behavior are distinct constructs. An individual may possess high awareness of plagiarism yet still engage in plagiarism under pressure or time constraints (Jereb et al., 2018). Conversely, someone with low awareness might unintentionally commit plagiarism. The absence of correlation between ChatGPT use and awareness does not contradict the existence of a correlation between ChatGPT use and behavior they measure different domains of academic integrity. This distinction has important implications for research and practice. Studies that focus exclusively on behavior may miss the role of awareness in shaping ethical conduct, while those that focus exclusively on awareness may not capture actual behavior. Future research should examine both constructs simultaneously to provide a more complete picture of academic integrity in the AI era. The emphasis on honesty and responsibility in pesantren-based education may create a protective effect, helping students maintain ethical awareness even as they adopt new technologies.

Second, cultural and institutional contexts differ significantly. Campo et al. (2025) conducted their research at public universities in Spain, with cultural characteristics and academic policies distinct from those of UNKAFA. These contextual characteristics may provide one possible explanation for the findings; however, the present study did not directly measure these factors. Therefore, future studies should investigate whether pesantren values influence students' plagiarism awareness and AI-related academic behavior.

Methodological Considerations

Several methodological factors may explain the non-significant correlation observed in this study. First, the relatively high plagiarism awareness score may have reduced score variability, which potentially weakened the correlation coefficient. When variance in one variable is restricted, the correlation with another variable tends to weaken (Goodwin & Leech, 2006). Second, social desirability bias may have influenced participants' responses, particularly because plagiarism awareness involves ethical judgments (Paulhus, 1991). In the UNKAFA environment, where values of honesty are strongly emphasized, respondents may have been inclined to provide answers aligned with social norms. Future research employing vignette-based instruments or incorporating social desirability scales could address these limitations.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference; the absence of correlation does not imply that ChatGPT use and plagiarism awareness are conceptually unrelated, but rather that the relationship was not statistically detected in this data. The generalizability of findings is limited to the pesantren-based university context and may not apply to other institutional settings. Additionally, the present study did not directly measure factors such as internalized values, textual learning traditions, or supervision practices that may influence the relationship between AI use and academic integrity. Future research employing mixed-methods designs, incorporating social desirability scales, or using vignette-based instruments could address these limitations and provide deeper insights into the relationship between AI use and academic integrity.

D. Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between ChatGPT use for academic assignments and plagiarism awareness among undergraduate students at a pesantren-based university in Indonesia. The findings showed that students reported moderate levels of ChatGPT use and relatively high levels of plagiarism awareness. However, no significant relationship was found between the two variables ($r = 0.111$, $p = 0.229$), indicating that the extent to which students used ChatGPT was not associated with their level of plagiarism awareness. These findings contribute to the growing discussion on artificial intelligence and academic integrity by highlighting that plagiarism awareness and plagiarism-related behavior should be treated as distinct constructs. The results suggest that the use of AI tools does not necessarily correspond with students' ethical awareness regarding plagiarism. Therefore, concerns about academic integrity should not focus solely on the presence of AI technologies but also on how students understand and apply ethical academic practices.

From a practical perspective, higher education institutions should prioritize academic integrity education, digital literacy development, and responsible AI-use guidelines rather than relying exclusively on restrictive approaches. Future research should employ alternative methodological approaches, such as mixed-methods designs or scenario-based instruments, and explore contextual factors that may influence the relationship between AI use and plagiarism awareness.

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