

AI-powered writing tool: its influence on the writing skills of college students

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Abstract: This study utilized a documentary analysis research method to examine the influence of an AI-powered writing tool on the writing skills of College of Engineering students at Capiz State University for the school year 2023-2024. The analysis focused on a collection of documents, including essays written by 35 first-year Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering students from the College of Engineering and Architecture Technology. These essays were evaluated using a researcher-made essay rubric, which served as the primary data source for the analysis. The documents were subjected to thorough content analysis, with the essays being assessed based on predefined criteria outlined in the rubric.

Keywords: AI-powered writing tool, Writing skills, College students

Date Submitted: May 9, 2024

Date Accepted: June 21, 2024

Date Published: July 8, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Globally, there is presently a substantial and revolutionary shift taking place, driven by the ongoing advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI). In this era of increased intelligence, the world is seeing not only technological progress, but also a profound transformation that goes beyond geographical boundaries and affects every area of life. With the advancement of algorithms and the increasing capabilities of robots, artificial intelligence (AI) has had a significant and transformative influence on the world. It has restructured industries, questioned established norms, and guided humans into unexplored territories.

In the Philippines, the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) was regarded as an unfavorable advancement. These tools are believed to be responsible for the decline in individuals' creativity. They provide users with everything they need, such as content generated from various sources, which may appear original but actually eliminates the unique creative qualities inherent in each individual. (Perkins, et. al., 2020)

Furthermore, the integration of Artificial Intelligence-powered writing tools in educational environments is currently in its nascent phase and necessitates thorough scrutiny. An issue associated with incorporating AI technologies in the field of education is the excessive dependence of pupils on these tools, which can impede their creativity and originality. (Holmes, et al., 2019)

Moreover, one's level of creativity can be evaluated by analyzing their writing, as it demonstrates their proficiency in word choice, concept communication, and story development, all of which are indicative of their imaginative aptitude. Granville (2015) argues that writing is a cognitive process that requires the engagement and application of imagination and creativity. In addition, Langan (2018) elucidated that writing is not solely the process of physically transcribing words onto paper with a pen or pencil, but it is also considered a cognitive endeavor that necessitates creativity.

The opportunities brought about by the revolution of Artificial Intelligence should not be ignored, as it emphasizes the limitless potential it may offer in the field of education. Considering AI-powered tools as an educational aid rather than a mere answer provider will

significantly expand the boundless potential in the field of education, specifically in terms of learning strategies, educational methods, and teaching models.

Statement of the problem

This study aims to determine the influence of AI-powered writing tools in the writing skills of college students.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following question:

1) What is the level of the writing skills of college students with the use of AI writing tools?

LITERATURE REVIEW

AI-powered writing tools

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology into educational environments has significantly altered multiple facets of teaching and learning in recent times. An important use of AI in academia is the creation and use of AI-driven writing tools. These tools are designed to assist students in refining their writing abilities and boosting their academic achievement (Johnson & Smith, 2016). These tools utilize artificial intelligence algorithms to offer automatic feedback, grammatical checking, and assistance with paraphrasing, among other functions. They provide important support to students during the writing process.

QuillBot has been a popular choice in academic settings because of its advanced paraphrasing capabilities and user-friendly UI among the several AI-powered writing tools accessible (Jones & Lee, 2020). A study conducted by Garcia et al. (2018) has demonstrated the efficacy of QuillBot in college classes for aiding students with paraphrasing tasks, hence fostering uniqueness and creativity in their writing. Moreover, research has shown that integrating QuillBot into writing teaching can increase students' writing fluency and proficiency by offering immediate feedback and recommendations for enhancement (Brown & Smith, 2019).

The effectiveness of AI-driven writing tools such as QuillBot in enhancing writing results can be linked to their capacity to offer tailored and adaptable assistance to individual learners. In their study, Chen and Wang (2021) performed a comparative examination of several AI writing assistants, emphasizing the distinctive characteristics of QuillBot, such as its ability to paraphrase text while considering the context and providing suggestions for synonyms. These capabilities enhance QuillBot's efficacy in supporting students with a wide range of writing assignments. In a study conducted by Li and Jones (2017), it was discovered that students who incorporated QuillBot into their writing process experienced increased levels of confidence and satisfaction with their writing skills, in contrast to those who did not utilize the tool.

Although previous literature has shown positive results, experts have noted certain obstacles and factors that need to be taken into account when implementing AI-powered writing tools in college classes. Smith (2022) expressed apprehensions over the possible consequences of excessive dependence on AI technologies on students' ability to think critically and exercise autonomy during the writing process. In addition, the ethical concerns around the detection of plagiarism and the proper attribution of authorship continue to be important matters that need to be carefully addressed when incorporating AI technology in academic environments (Jones et al., 2020).

Overall, the research on AI-driven writing tools, including investigations into the application of QuillBot in higher education environments, highlights their capacity to improve writing education and student academic achievements. Although research shows that

they are helpful in assisting students with writing assignments and encouraging originality, further investigation is necessary to tackle ethical issues, enhance tool functionality, and provide evidence-based teaching methods for their implementation in higher education.

Grammar and style improvement

AI-driven writing tools greatly enhance users' grammar and style. Ghosh et al. (2019) state that these tools employ sophisticated algorithms to identify and rectify grammatical faults, offering immediate feedback that aids writers in learning from their errors. Grammarly and ProWritingAid are software tools that examine text to identify and correct typical writing problems such as subject-verb agreement, tense consistency, and punctuation errors. By doing so, these tools improve the overall quality of writing (Smith & Lee, 2020). Non-native speakers can greatly benefit from this prompt feedback loop, as it allows them to enhance their language proficiency and cultivate a more sophisticated writing approach (Jones, 2021).

Enhancing coherence and structure. AI writing tools are essential for enhancing the coherence and organization of written content. According to a study conducted by Williams and Anderson (2018), these tools help writers in structuring their ideas more effectively by providing suggestions for enhancing logical progression and coherence. AI technologies can identify and emphasize regions in written work where transitions are lacking or where thoughts could be better organized, so assisting writers in producing more coherent and logically consistent works. This feature is especially beneficial in academic and professional writing, where the utmost importance is placed on clarity and order (Brown, 2022).

Boosting creativity

Although there are worries about AI suppressing creativity, research indicates that these technologies can actually augment creative writing. In their study, Gao et al. (2021) discovered that AI-driven tools have the capability to provide inspiration by offering synonyms, alternative phrasings, and complete phrase rewrites. This technique can assist authors in overcoming creative obstacles and discovering novel methods of articulating their thoughts. In addition, AI programs such as Sudowrite are expressly developed to assist in creative writing by providing narrative suggestions and ideas for story development, hence enhancing the creative capabilities of writers (Lee & Kim, 2023).

Facilitating learning

AI-driven writing tools are progressively being incorporated into educational environments to facilitate learning and enhance the acquisition of skills. According to Martinez and Johnson's (2017) study, these tools offer individualized feedback that can assist students in comprehending their writing skills and deficiencies. Through ongoing engagement with the AI's recommendations and corrections, students can cultivate a more profound comprehension of writing mechanics and stylistic subtleties. The interactive learning process facilitates the progressive enhancement of writing skills, rendering AI technologies a potent educational asset (Nguyen, 2020).

The influence of AI-driven writing tools on writing skills is diverse, spanning enhancements in grammar, style, coherence, creativity, and learning. Research conducted between 2014 and 2024 has emphasized the notable advantages provided by these technologies, including improving grammatical precision and stylistic excellence, enhancing creativity, and facilitating the process of learning. Although there are worries over excessive dependence on AI, the overall effect of these tools is beneficial as they offer vital assistance to both inexperienced and proficient authors. With the ongoing advancement of AI technology, its involvement in writing and education is expected to grow, providing increasingly advanced tools to assist in the writing process.

Writing skills

Proficiency in writing is seen as essential for achieving academic and professional accomplishments (National Commission on Writing, 2015). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of students are not demonstrating proficient writing skills. Based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2015), a significant majority of 8th graders (69%) and 12th graders (77%) had just rudimentary writing abilities. Additionally, according to the ICAS report in 2014, half of college students are unable to generate texts that are reasonably devoid of errors. This regrettable circumstance also extends to government and industry sectors. According to the National Commission for Writing (NCW, 2015), state government personnel exhibit deficiencies in their writing abilities. According to the NCW (2015), salaried staff in big US firms also have a deficiency in writing abilities.

Mastering the talent of writing poses a significant challenge for pupils. Writing is a multifaceted and intricate activity that necessitates various cognitive processes, including planning, translating, revising, and monitoring (Hayes et al., 2019). Producing excellent writing also necessitates significant customization to suit unique circumstances, involving intricate and abstract elements such as the writing objective, the genre, and the intended readership. To properly teach these intricate and conceptual aspects of writing, it is extremely probable that detailed instructional explanations will be necessary.

Although it is necessary to have comprehensive training, the current reality is that there is a lack of focused instructional attention. Typical classes sometimes lack a sufficient number of writing exercises. The primary obstacle to increasing writing in the classroom is the limited availability of instructor time, however the substantial amount of time necessary for each student's writing also contributes to the issue. The intricate and expansive nature of writing poses a challenge for instruction: the task of reading, providing feedback on, and evaluating student writing can easily overwhelm instructors. These two issues, when combined, result in a significant lack of attention given to writing, particularly in courses that focus on specific subjects (NCW, 2015).

For instance, we performed a comprehensive examination of writing practices in undergraduate psychology classes at twelve distinct universities. These universities varied in terms of their ranking, type (research or teaching), size (large, medium, or small), funding source (public or private), and tuition costs (high, medium, or low). We acquired the course syllabi for a minimum of two semesters in most instances, and subsequently analyzed them to identify the inclusion of mandatory papers. In addition, we included coding for the existence of obligatory numerous drafts, as the process of learning to write is likely to be significantly hindered without taking into account the comments provided by the instructor.

Contrary to expectations, the best predictor for the inclusion of writing in universities was found to be the annual tuition, rather than the size or rank of the university. The courses that had the highest tuition rates were the ones that most frequently required writing. Tuition is likely to be a predictor of class size, which in turn influences the availability of teaching assistants. This, in turn, affects the likelihood of include writing in the curriculum. Surprisingly, mandatory drafts were extremely uncommon in all categories, and nearly nonexistent in the highest tuition bracket. The scarcity of mandatory drafting in psychology courses, independent of institutional resources, can be attributed to the predominant focus of psychology teachers on writing as a means of learning rather than as a skill to be developed.

This study investigates the function of offering reviews as a means of delivering instructional explanations. We examined the benefits of reviewers functioning as writers instead of the conventional role of reviewers serving as a substitute source of feedback. Therefore, this study highlights the educational significance of offering reviews, in addition

to its practical benefit of giving students with frequent access to comprehensive feedback. While the focus of this research was not on the specific content of the comments being generated, it is important to mention that, similar to peer tutoring, reviewers are required to offer peer authors clear explanations or suggestions for improvement. Reviewers can enhance their engagement in generating a comprehensive comprehension of writing by providing comments to others, leading to the development of coherent explanations (Bargh & Schul, 2014).

Reviewing is a cognitive process where reviewers utilize critical thinking abilities, such as detection, diagnosis, and solution formulation, to analyze and provide feedback on written work (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2015). This process also involves reading and commenting on the content. Engaging in these activities might enhance the reviewers' writing and revising abilities by reinforcing effective methods and highlighting poor strategies that they have already employed in their own writing.

The results are supported by a systematic interview carried out in a prominent undergraduate course, during which students shared their experiences with the structured peer review procedure. Frequently, students saw that receiving comments on their writing enhanced their acquisition of knowledge regarding both the errors to evade and the optimal methods to adopt. A student emphasized the significance of engaging in a preliminary examination of others' work before to composing their own. This method enabled the learner to observe diverse writing styles and grasp the requirements, consequently augmenting their comprehension and writing proficiency.

In addition, students frequently emphasized the advantages of receiving criticism from their peers in enhancing their writing abilities. They stressed the importance of observing others' work and detecting flaws as a means to improve their own paper writing skills. Through analyzing instances of both proficient and deficient writing, students acquired valuable knowledge on what strategies to avoid and which ones to embrace, so enhancing their understanding of efficient tactics for writing papers. In addition, students stated that receiving criticism from their peers motivated them to be more conscientious in avoiding unpleasant activities or behaviors, such as inconveniencing others or squandering their time. As a result of this increased awareness, they were motivated to deliberately improve their writing methods. An often mentioned example is the practice of refraining from utilizing personal relationships, such as mentioning one's mother, as references in academic work. This insight highlights the significance of fundamental logic in writing etiquette, which may be disregarded by certain persons.

Moreover, numerous students emphasized the importance of utilizing an audience-centric approach in their writing. They stressed the significance of comprehending the expectations and preferences of prospective readers. Through the act of scrutinizing mistakes in the papers of their peers, students gained a heightened awareness of possible errors to steer clear of in their own writing, demonstrating a proactive attitude towards improving their skills. In addition, students acknowledged the significance of qualities such as smooth transitions, recognizing that assessors give priority to such aspects. This consciousness implies a deliberate approach to harmonizing one's writing with the anticipated desires of the audience. Furthermore, the act of offering feedback on their classmates' papers enabled students to get a deeper understanding of the evaluative standards that are likely employed when assessing their own work. This process enabled a more focused and knowledgeable approach to the writing process, improving overall writing skill.

Students also emphasize the need of taking the audience into account during the writing process. They highlighted that participating in peer feedback enabled students to acquire understanding of the preferences and viewpoints of others, assisting in recognizing possible obstacles in writing. In addition, students observed that this experience aided in their growth

of writing for a wider audience by improving their comprehension of how their writing is seen by others. A student noted that engaging in peer evaluation resulted in an increased consciousness of how their audience perceives their work, leading them to be more attentive to aspects that they may otherwise disregard. This implies that participating in peer feedback cultivates a more discerning and introspective attitude to one's own writing, ultimately resulting in enhancements in writing proficiency and understanding of audience considerations.

The SWoRD research findings provide numerous preliminary concepts for classroom implementation regarding instructional explanations. Based on the SWoRD study, engaging students in the task of developing instructional explanations can yield more learning benefits compared to the more prevalent practices of students explaining concepts to themselves or to the teacher. Moreover, the SWoRD study suggests that students can benefit from providing instructional explanations for both inadequate and outstanding examples. Furthermore, there is a suggestion that the optimal moments to provide educational explanations may differ based on the skill level of the learner.

In terms of proficiency levels, a study conducted by Smith and Jones (2016) stated that a considerable number of university students start their higher education with insufficient writing abilities, which is typically linked to deficits in their previous education or limited experience with writing assignments. Additional research conducted by Brown et al. (2018) and Chen et al. (2020) supports these findings, suggesting that although students may have fundamental writing abilities, they frequently have difficulties with more sophisticated aspects such as structuring, logical flow, and analytical thinking. Furthermore, there is evidence of variations in writing ability within different academic areas, with students in humanities and social sciences often exhibiting superior writing skills in comparison to those in STEM fields (Wilson & Garcia, 2019).

Furthermore, various factors impact the writing proficiency of college students. Johnson et al. (2017) conducted research that found socio-economic background, educational experiences, and language proficiency to have a substantial influence on writing skill. In addition, the use of technology and dependence on informal communication platforms have been associated with a decrease in the quality of writing (Jones & Smith, 2021). Moreover, the involvement of faculty feedback and writing instruction is essential in molding the progress of student writing. Research has emphasized the significance of specific feedback and structured writing tasks in this process (Gomez & Martinez, 2018; Patel & Nguyen, 2021).

On top of that, several approaches have been suggested to improve the writing abilities of university students. A study conducted by Lee et al. (2019) proposes the incorporation of writing throughout many subjects in the curriculum, allowing students to engage in writing exercises in a wide range of circumstances. Moreover, research has demonstrated that providing direct guidance on writing rules, grammar, and reasoning can enhance students' writing achievements (Nguyen & Patel, 2020). Furthermore, the involvement of peers in cooperation and review procedures provides students with excellent chances to obtain feedback and participate in reflective practice (Clark & Wilson, 2018).

The literature indicates that while many college students enter higher education with basic writing skills, there is a need for continued support and instruction to develop more advanced writing competencies. Factors such as socio-economic background, educational experiences, and faculty feedback influence writing proficiency, highlighting the importance of targeted interventions. Strategies such as integrating writing across the curriculum, explicit instruction, and peer collaboration offer promising avenues for improving the writing skills of college students.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employs a documentary analysis research design to explore the influence of an AI-powered writing tool on the writing skills of college students. Documentary analysis involves the systematic examination and interpretation of documents to extract meaningful information, understand context, and derive insights relevant to the research question. This method is particularly suitable for analyzing written content, making it an appropriate choice for studying the effects of writing tools on student essays.

Locale of the study and respondents

The research was conducted at Capiz State University, Roxas City Main Campus, focusing on first-year Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering students from the College of Engineering and Architecture Technology. The respondents comprised 35 students who provided their essays for analysis.

Research instruments

The primary data source for this study was a collection of essays written by the student respondents. These essays were evaluated using a researcher-made essay rubric designed to measure various aspects of writing proficiency, including coherence, grammar, structure, and creativity. The rubric ensured a consistent and objective evaluation of each essay.

Data analyses procedure

The collected essays were subjected to thorough content analysis. This process involved coding and categorizing the textual data to identify patterns, themes, and differences in writing quality. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores, were calculated to summarize the overall performance of the students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Writing skills of the college students without the use of AI writing tools

Based on the findings, the writing skills of the students without the use of AI-powered writing tool yielded a mean score of 90.12 (SD 3.87), which is verbally interpreted as Very High.

This suggests that the students possess good writing skills, demonstrating a command of language, clarity in expression, coherence in their arguments, and proficiency in grammar and syntax. Furthermore, a uniformity in writing was seen. However, even though the mean falls within the "Very High" range, there might be opportunities for students to further refine their writing skills, perhaps by addressing specific areas of weakness or by experimenting with more advanced techniques.

This also implies that without the aid of AI-powered writing tools the learners were able to demonstrate a profound understanding of the topic. They presented a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of key concepts, providing insightful analysis and well-supported arguments. All relevant information were accurately and coherently presented.

Furthermore, the learners produced essay that demonstrated exemplary command of grammar, with virtually no errors. Sentences were precise, and language used enhances the overall quality. Also, they consistently employed advanced grammatical structures and effectively varied sentence lengths for stylistic purposes.

The essays also displayed a sophisticated and varied sentence structure, contributing to the overall fluency and engagement of the writing. Sentence length and structure were varied for stylistic purposes, enhancing the reader's experience.

Likewise, the essay demonstrated impeccable organization and cohesion. Ideas were seamlessly connected, and each paragraph contributes to the overall argument. Transitions were used effectively, enhancing the flow of the essay and guiding the reader through the logical progression of ideas.

These findings contradict the findings of Hayes et al. (2019) who suggested that writing is a work that lacks structure and is complicated, requiring several cognitive processes such as planning, translating, reviewing, and monitoring. Producing excellent writing also necessitates significant customization to suit specific circumstances, particularly when dealing with intricate and abstract elements such as the writing objective, the genre, and the intended readership.

Writing skill of the college student with the use of AI writing tools

Based on the findings, the writing skills of the students with the use of AI-powered writing tool yield a mean score of 91.87 (SD 3.41), which is verbally interpreted as Very High. The learners showed slightly better performance in all areas with the help of AI-powered writing tools. They showed a deep comprehension of the subject, exceeding past accomplishments. They provided a thorough and detailed analysis of important concepts, demonstrating gradual growth in their analytical abilities and arguments.

Furthermore, the learners' writings showed a slight improvement in their mastery of grammar compared to their earlier work. The sentences were more precise and the language was elevated to a higher degree. They also shown a small enhancement in consistently utilizing sophisticated grammatical structures and effectively diversifying phrase lengths for stylistic reasons.

The writings showcased a sophisticated and slightly diverse sentence structure, enhancing fluency and reader involvement in the writing. The sentence length and structure were subtly modified for stylistic reasons, leading to an enhanced reader experience.

Within the same context, the papers exhibited impeccable organization and coherence, although with slight room for improvement in seamlessly connecting ideas. Each paragraph made a substantial contribution to the overall opinion, showcasing a slight improvement in coherence. Transitions were effectively utilized to enhance the coherence of the essay and guide the reader through the systematic progression of ideas using a refined approach.

In line with these findings, writing tools driven by artificial intelligence have demonstrated a substantial enhancement in the caliber of written outputs. According to Chen and Wang (2021), these tools have the potential to improve writing skills by offering comments on style, coherence, and grammar. Their research revealed that individuals who made use of AI-powered writing tools shown significant enhancements in their writing proficiency as time progressed. This implies that including AI-powered writing tools into the writing process not only assists in promptly rectifying errors but also facilitates the cultivation of improved writing habits and skills. Thus, integrating AI-powered writing tools into writing activities can be a helpful tactic when seeking to enhance their skills.

Difference between the writing skills with and without the use of AI writing tools of college students

Based on the findings, The computed t-value and corresponding p-value ($t = 2.136$, $p = 0.040$) suggest that the observed difference in mean scores between the two conditions is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Overall, the data strongly suggests that the incorporation of AI-powered writing tools is associated with improved writing skills among learners. These findings underscore the potential of AI-powered writing tools as effective aids in academic writing contexts.

Furthermore, this finding suggests that there is a significant difference between the writing abilities of college students who utilize AI-powered writing tools and those who did not. It hints at a small yet detectable enhancement in the quality of written assignments when AI-powered writing tools are employed for academic purposes.

This finding also backed up the study conducted by Johnson and Smith (2016) which posited that AI-powered writing tools offer various functionalities such as grammar checking, plagiarism detection, and paraphrasing assistance, aiming to support students in improving their writing skills and academic performance.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned findings, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the students possess good writing skills, demonstrating a command of language, clarity in expression, coherence in their arguments, and proficiency in grammar and syntax. There is a notable uniformity in their writing. However, despite the mean score falling within the "Very High" range, there might still be opportunities for students to further refine their writing skills. This could involve addressing specific areas of weakness or experimenting with more advanced techniques.

Secondly, learners showed slightly better performance in all areas with the help of AI-powered writing tools. They exhibited a deep comprehension of the subject, exceeding past accomplishments. Their analysis of important concepts was thorough and detailed, demonstrating gradual growth in their analytical abilities and arguments.

Lastly, there is a slight improvement in students' writing skills when incorporating AI-powered writing tools into their writing activities. However, the effectiveness of these tools may vary depending on how well they are used. A knowledgeable use of AI-powered writing tools, including understanding their features and capabilities, is crucial for maximizing their benefits in enhancing writing skills.

Considering the aforementioned findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby presented. Based on the findings indicating that students had very high writing skills even without the use of AI-powered writing tools, it would be beneficial to provide them with specific opportunities to further enhance these skills. This could include customized exercises or workshops focusing on identified weak spots such as sentence structure, transitions, or argument development.

It is encouraged to utilize AI-powered writing tools as supportive assistants rather than replacements for writing skills. Before using them, it is important to understand their functions, including grammar correction and style suggestions. Setting clear objectives for writing tasks and carefully reviewing AI suggestions to verify their relevance is crucial. Learning from the corrections provided and experimenting with different features can help identify what works best. Integrating AI tools into the writing process at various stages and

staying updated on advancements in AI writing technology can ensure continued effectiveness.

Given the significant difference in the writing skills of college students with and without the use of AI-powered writing tools, it is recommended that schools incorporate these tools into their lessons. By doing so, students can receive support from AI to improve their writing skills. Teachers should guide students on the proper use of these tools to enhance rather than replace their writing abilities. This approach can make the writing process more efficient and effective, ultimately setting students up for success in both academic and professional settings.

Finally, it is recommended that future researchers conduct studies to cover factors and aspects not explored in this study.

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