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STUDENTS' AWARENESS AND ACADEMIC USE OF CHATGPT: A STUDY AT DRAVIDIAN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an important part of higher education, and ChatGPT is one of the most widely used AI tools for learning and research. This study examines the awareness and academic use of ChatGPT among Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and Research Scholar students of Dravidian University, Kuppam. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 581 respondents, and the data were analysed using simple percentages and frequency distribution. The findings reveal that almost all students were aware of ChatGPT and regularly used it for answering academic queries, writing assignments, research, and improving language skills. Most respondents considered ChatGPT a useful academic tool, while many also expressed concerns about the accuracy of information, plagiarism, over-dependence on AI, and its impact on critical thinking. The study also found strong support for integrating ChatGPT into university learning through library services, training programmes, and AI literacy initiatives. The study concludes that ChatGPT has become a valuable academic support tool, but its effective use requires proper guidance, ethical practices, and information literacy training.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Higher Education, Information Literacy, University Libraries, Digital Learning.

1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming higher education by providing innovative tools that support teaching, learning, and research. Among these tools, ChatGPT has gained significant attention because it helps students answer academic questions, prepare assignments, summarize information, improve writing, and support research activities. Its easy availability and user-friendly interface have encouraged students to use it regularly for academic purposes. However, along with its benefits, ChatGPT has also raised concerns regarding the accuracy of information, plagiarism, academic integrity, and over-reliance on AI-generated content. Therefore, it is important to understand how students perceive and use this technology in their academic work. Dravidian University, Kuppam, has students from different academic programmes who increasingly use digital technologies for learning. This study aims to examine the awareness, usage patterns, perceptions, and concerns related to ChatGPT among Undergraduate students, Postgraduate students, and

Research Scholars of Dravidian University. The findings of the study will help university administrators, faculty members, and librarians develop suitable policies, training programmes, and information literacy initiatives to promote the responsible and effective use of ChatGPT in higher education.

2. Literature Review

The rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed higher education by introducing intelligent tools that support teaching, learning, and research. Among these tools, ChatGPT has gained considerable attention because it assists students in answering academic questions, preparing assignments, summarizing information, improving writing skills, and retrieving research-related information. Recent studies have reported that ChatGPT enhances students' learning experiences by providing instant feedback, encouraging self-directed learning, and improving academic productivity. Baig and Yadegaridehkordi (2024) observed that ChatGPT has become an important educational technology in higher education, supporting academic writing, research, and learning activities. Similarly, Bhullar, Joshi, and Chugh (2024) reported that ChatGPT positively influences student engagement, personalized learning, and teaching practices while creating new opportunities for educational innovation. Sok and Heng (2024) also emphasized that ChatGPT can improve learning effectiveness and academic performance when used appropriately in higher education institutions.

Despite its educational benefits, researchers have also highlighted several challenges associated with the use of ChatGPT. Studies have pointed out concerns regarding the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated information, plagiarism, academic integrity, privacy, over-dependence on AI, and the possible decline of students' critical thinking skills. Albadarin et al. (2024) noted that although ChatGPT has significant educational potential, universities should establish appropriate policies and ethical guidelines for its responsible use. Likewise, Chukwuere (2024) emphasized that ChatGPT should be viewed as a supplementary learning tool rather than a replacement for teachers or traditional learning resources. Although several international studies have examined the educational applications of ChatGPT, empirical research on its awareness and academic use among university students in India remains limited. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the awareness, academic use, perceptions, and concerns regarding ChatGPT among Undergraduate students, Postgraduate students, and Research Scholars of Dravidian University, Kuppam, thereby contributing to the growing literature on Artificial Intelligence in higher education.

4. Research Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the awareness and academic use of ChatGPT among students of Dravidian University, Kuppam. The study covered Undergraduate (UG) students, Postgraduate (PG) students, and Research Scholars enrolled in the university during the study period. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect primary data from the respondents. A total of 638 questionnaires were distributed using a convenient sampling method, of which 581 completed questionnaires were received, resulting in a response rate of 91.07%. The collected data were classified, tabulated, and analysed using simple statistical techniques such as frequency and percentage. The findings are presented in the form of tables to describe the respondents' awareness, usage patterns, purposes of use, perceptions, concerns, and opinions regarding the academic use of ChatGPT.

3. Objectives of the Study

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To identify the major sources through which students became aware of ChatGPT.
2. To examine the frequency of ChatGPT usage among Undergraduate students, Postgraduate students, and Research Scholars.
3. To identify the major purposes for which students use ChatGPT in their academic and research activities.
4. To assess students' perceptions regarding the usefulness, accuracy, and reliability of ChatGPT.
5. To identify the major concerns associated with the use of ChatGPT in higher education.
6. To examine students' opinions on integrating ChatGPT into university teaching, learning, and library services.
7. To suggest suitable measures for promoting the responsible and effective use of ChatGPT in higher education.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to Academic Status

Academic Status	Distribution of Total Population	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Received
Undergraduate Students	724 (52.57)	335 (52.50)	305 (52.49)
Postgraduate Students	375 (27.23)	201 (31.50)	192 (33.04)
Research Scholars	278 (20.18)	102 (15.98)	84 (14.45)
Total	1377 (100)	638 (100)	581 (100)

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents according to their academic status. Out of a total population of 1,377 students, 638 questionnaires were distributed, and 581 completed questionnaires were received, resulting in an overall response rate of 91.07%. Among the respondents, 305 (52.49%) were Undergraduate students, 192 (33.04%) were Postgraduate students, and 84 (14.45%) were Research Scholars. The highest number of responses was received from Undergraduate students, followed by Postgraduate students and Research Scholars. The distribution of respondents across all three academic categories indicates that the study represents students from different levels of higher education, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of students' awareness and academic use of ChatGPT.

Table 2. Sources of Awareness about ChatGPT

Sources of Awareness	Undergraduate Students	Postgraduate Students	Research Scholars	Total
Friends/Peers	120 (39.30)	50 (26.00)	12 (14.30)	182 (31.30)
Social Media	100 (32.80)	60 (31.30)	18 (21.40)	178 (30.60)
Faculty/Library Resources	40 (13.10)	30 (15.60)	20 (23.80)	90 (15.50)
Online Articles/Videos	35 (11.50)	40 (20.80)	25 (29.80)	100 (17.20)
Others	10 (3.30)	12 (6.30)	9 (10.70)	31 (5.40)
Total	305 (100)	192 (100)	84 (100)	581 (100)

Table 2 shows the major sources through which students became aware of ChatGPT. The findings reveal that Friends and Peers (31.30%) were the most important source of awareness, followed closely by Social Media (30.60%). Online Articles and Videos (17.20%) and Faculty/Library Resources (15.50%) also contributed to creating awareness among students, while 5.40% reported other sources such as workshops, webinars, and technology forums. The results indicate that informal social networks and digital media play a significant role in introducing students to emerging AI technologies, whereas faculty members and

university libraries also contribute by promoting awareness and supporting students in the effective use of ChatGPT for academic learning.

Table 3. Frequency of ChatGPT Usage among Students

Frequency of Usage	Undergraduate Students	Postgraduate Students	Research Scholars	Total
Daily	120 (39.30)	90 (46.90)	50 (59.50)	260 (44.80)
Weekly	140 (45.90)	80 (41.70)	25 (29.80)	245 (42.20)
Occasionally	40 (13.10)	20 (10.40)	9 (10.70)	69 (11.90)
Rarely	5 (1.60)	2 (1.00)	0 (0.00)	7 (1.20)
Total	305 (100)	192 (100)	84 (100)	581 (100)

Table 3 presents the frequency of ChatGPT usage among the respondents. The findings reveal that 260 (44.80%) respondents used ChatGPT daily, while 245 (42.20%) used it weekly, indicating that the majority of students use ChatGPT regularly for academic activities. A smaller proportion, 69 (11.90%), reported occasional use, and only 7 (1.20%) used it rarely. Among the three groups, Research Scholars recorded the highest daily usage (59.50%), followed by Postgraduate students (46.90%) and Undergraduate students (39.30%). The results indicate that ChatGPT has become an important academic support tool, particularly for students engaged in higher-level learning and research.

Table 4. Purpose of ChatGPT Usage among Students

Purpose of Using ChatGPT*	Undergraduate Students (N=305)	Postgraduate Students (N=192)	Research Scholars (N=84)	Total (N=581)
Answering academic queries	230 (75.40)	160 (83.30)	74 (88.10)	464 (79.90)
Writing assignments/reports	190 (62.30)	150 (78.10)	60 (71.40)	400 (68.80)
Research and information retrieval	170 (55.70)	140 (72.90)	80 (95.20)	390 (67.10)
Language translation/improvement	90 (29.50)	80 (41.70)	50 (59.50)	220 (37.90)
Personal use (entertainment, general knowledge, etc.)	200 (65.60)	90 (46.90)	30 (35.70)	320 (55.10)

Table 4 presents the major purposes for which students use ChatGPT. The findings reveal that answering academic queries is the most common purpose, reported by 464 (79.90%) respondents. This is followed by writing assignments and reports (400; 68.80%) and research and information retrieval (390; 67.10%). ChatGPT is also used for personal purposes, such as general knowledge and entertainment, by 320 (55.10%) respondents, while 220 (37.90%) students use it for language translation and improvement. Research Scholars recorded the highest use of ChatGPT for research and information retrieval (95.20%), whereas Undergraduate students reported the highest use for personal purposes (65.60%). The findings indicate that ChatGPT serves as a versatile AI tool supporting students in learning, research, academic writing, and personal development.

Table 5. Perceived Usefulness of ChatGPT in Academic Learning

Response	Undergraduate Students (N=305)	Postgraduate Students (N=192)	Research Scholars (N=84)	Total (N=581)
Very Useful	160 (52.50)	110 (57.30)	60 (71.40)	330 (56.80)
Somewhat Useful	110 (36.10)	60 (31.30)	18 (21.40)	188 (32.40)
Neutral	30 (9.80)	18 (9.40)	6 (7.20)	54 (9.30)
Not Useful	5 (1.60)	4 (2.10)	0 (0.00)	9 (1.50)
Total	305 (100)	192 (100)	84 (100)	581 (100)

Table 5 presents the respondents' perception of the usefulness of ChatGPT in academic learning. The results show that a majority of the respondents, **330 (56.80%)**, considered ChatGPT to be **very useful**, while **188 (32.40%)** rated it as **somewhat useful**. Only **54 (9.30%)** respondents expressed a neutral opinion, and **9 (1.50%)** considered it not useful. Research Scholars reported the highest level of satisfaction, with **71.40%** rating ChatGPT as very useful, followed by Postgraduate students (**57.30%**) and Undergraduate students (**52.50%**). The findings indicate that ChatGPT is widely accepted as a valuable academic tool that supports learning, assignments, and research activities among university students.

Table 6. Perception of Accuracy and Reliability of Information Provided by ChatGPT

Accuracy and Reliability	Undergraduate Students (N=305)	Postgraduate Students (N=192)	Research Scholars (N=84)	Total (N=581)
Yes, mostly accurate	155 (50.80)	100 (52.10)	50 (59.50)	305 (52.50)
Sometimes accurate, needs verification	130 (42.60)	75 (39.10)	30 (35.70)	235 (40.40)
No, often unreliable	20 (6.60)	17 (8.80)	4 (4.80)	41 (7.10)
Total	305 (100)	192 (100)	84 (100)	581 (100)

Table 6 presents students' perceptions regarding the accuracy and reliability of information provided by ChatGPT. The findings show that 305 (52.50%) respondents believed that ChatGPT provides mostly accurate information. Another 235 (40.40%) respondents felt that the information is useful but should be verified before academic use. Only 41 (7.10%) respondents considered ChatGPT to be unreliable. Research Scholars expressed the highest level of confidence in ChatGPT, with 59.50% reporting that it provides mostly accurate information. Overall, the findings suggest that students trust ChatGPT as a useful academic resource but recognize the importance of verifying AI-generated information using reliable sources.

Table 7. Users' Concerns Regarding the Use of ChatGPT

Users' Concerns	Undergraduate Students (N=305)	Postgraduate Students (N=192)	Research Scholars (N=84)	Total (N=581)
Accuracy and reliability of information	200 (65.60)	135 (70.30)	65 (77.40)	400 (68.80)
Ethical concerns (e.g., plagiarism)	180 (59.00)	140 (72.90)	68 (81.00)	388 (66.80)
Over-reliance on AI tools	190 (62.30)	138 (71.80)	72 (85.70)	400 (68.80)
Lack of critical thinking	160 (52.50)	130 (67.70)	60 (71.40)	350 (60.20)

Table 7 presents the major concerns expressed by students regarding the use of ChatGPT. The findings reveal that accuracy and reliability of information and over-reliance on AI tools were the most frequently reported concerns, each identified by 400 (68.80%) respondents. Ethical concerns such as plagiarism were reported by 388 (66.80%) respondents, while 350 (60.20%) believed that excessive use of ChatGPT may reduce critical thinking skills. Research Scholars expressed higher levels of concern across all categories than Undergraduate and Postgraduate students. The findings indicate that although students value ChatGPT for academic purposes, they also recognize the need for its responsible and ethical use.

Table 8. Opinion on Integrating ChatGPT into University Learning Platforms

Opinion	Undergraduate Students (N=305)	Postgraduate Students (N=192)	Research Scholars (N=84)	Total (N=581)
Yes	195 (63.90)	135 (70.30)	60 (71.40)	390 (67.10)
No	65 (21.30)	40 (20.80)	15 (17.90)	120 (20.70)
Not Sure	45 (14.80)	17 (8.90)	9 (10.70)	71 (12.20)
Total	305 (100)	192 (100)	84 (100)	581 (100)

Table 8 presents respondents' opinions on integrating ChatGPT into university learning platforms. The results show that 390 (67.10%) respondents supported the integration of ChatGPT into teaching and learning activities, while 120 (20.70%) opposed the idea and 71 (12.20%) were uncertain. Support was highest among Research Scholars (71.40%) and Postgraduate students (70.30%). The findings indicate that most students have a positive attitude towards incorporating ChatGPT into higher education. However, they also expect universities to provide appropriate training, ethical guidelines, and academic support to ensure its effective and responsible use.

6. Major Findings

1. The study achieved a high response rate of 91.07%, with 581 valid responses collected from Undergraduate students, Postgraduate students, and Research Scholars.
2. Friends/Peers and Social Media were the major sources through which students became aware of ChatGPT, indicating the important role of informal networks and digital platforms in creating awareness.
3. A majority of the respondents (87.0%) reported using ChatGPT either daily or weekly, demonstrating its regular use for academic and learning activities.
4. The primary purpose of using ChatGPT was to answer academic queries (79.90%), followed by writing assignments and reports (68.80%) and research and information retrieval (67.10%).
5. Most respondents (56.80%) perceived ChatGPT as a very useful academic tool, while another 32.40% considered it somewhat useful for learning and research.
6. More than half of the respondents (52.50%) believed that ChatGPT provides mostly accurate information, whereas 40.40% felt that its responses should be verified before academic use.
7. The major concerns expressed by the respondents were the accuracy and reliability of information (68.80%), over-reliance on AI tools (68.80%), ethical issues such as plagiarism (66.80%), and the possible decline of critical thinking skills (60.20%).
8. A majority of the respondents (67.10%) supported the integration of ChatGPT into university teaching and learning platforms, indicating a positive attitude towards the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence in higher education.

7. Recommendations

1. **Organize regular AI literacy programmes:** Universities and libraries should conduct workshops, seminars, and training programmes to help students understand the effective and responsible use of ChatGPT for academic learning and research.
2. **Develop institutional guidelines:** Higher education institutions should establish clear policies on the ethical use of ChatGPT, addressing issues such as plagiarism, citation of AI-generated content, academic integrity, and responsible usage.
3. **Promote information verification:** Students should be encouraged to verify ChatGPT-generated information using reliable academic sources, such as textbooks, scholarly journals, and library databases, before using it in assignments or research.
4. **Integrate ChatGPT as a supplementary learning tool:** Faculty members should encourage the use of ChatGPT to support teaching, learning, brainstorming, and research while emphasizing that it should complement, rather than replace, traditional learning methods and critical thinking.
5. **Strengthen the role of university libraries:** University libraries should develop AI support services by providing user guides, online tutorials, reference assistance, and dedicated awareness programmes to help students use ChatGPT effectively and ethically.

8. Conclusion

The present study examined the awareness, academic use, and perceptions of ChatGPT among students of Dravidian University. The findings reveal that ChatGPT has become a widely used Artificial Intelligence tool for learning, assignments, and research activities. Most students considered ChatGPT useful and supported its integration into university teaching and learning. However, they also expressed concerns regarding the accuracy of information, plagiarism, over-dependence on AI, and its impact on critical thinking. Therefore, universities and libraries should promote the responsible and ethical use of ChatGPT through training programmes, awareness initiatives, and clear institutional guidelines. With proper guidance, ChatGPT can serve as a valuable supplementary tool to enhance teaching, learning, and research in higher education.

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