

Exploring EFL Learners' Attitudes Toward ChatGPT for English Writing: The Role of Contextual Factors

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Abstract

This study investigates EFL learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing and examines the extent to which institutional and teacher-related factors predict these attitudes. In this quantitative study, a survey questionnaire was administered to 136 preparatory-year EFL students in a Saudi higher-education context. Descriptive analysis indicated that learners held generally positive attitudes toward ChatGPT for English writing. Participants also reported moderately positive perceptions of institutional support and teachers' attitudes, although limited training and classroom integration were noted. Multiple regression analysis revealed that institution-related factors significantly predicted learners' attitudes toward ChatGPT use, whereas teacher-related factors did not demonstrate a unique predictive contribution when both variables were considered simultaneously. The study contributes empirical evidence from the Saudi EFL context and extends prior descriptive research by identifying contextual predictors of attitudes toward AI-assisted writing. Implications emphasize the importance of clear institutional policies, AI literacy initiatives, and targeted teacher training to support responsible integration of ChatGPT in language learning.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; ChatGPT; EFL Writing; Learner Attitudes; Activity Theory; EFL Learners

1. Introduction

Writing remains a challenging skill for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners across diverse contexts (Marlina, 2024). In Saudi Arabia, EFL learners often encounter difficulties related to vocabulary development, organization, spelling accuracy, grammar, and the coherent structuring of ideas in English (Al-Seghayer, 2019; Khasawneh, 2023; Mohanna, 2024). These challenges have been attributed to several factors such as insufficient foundational proficiency, overreliance on the first language (Arabic), and limited opportunities for sustained writing practice (Alzahrani, 2025).

In recent years, the emergence of AI-powered language technologies has introduced notable transformations in the field of language learning, particularly in the domain of writing. Among these innovations, ChatGPT an AI-driven conversational model developed by OpenAI has gained considerable attention for its ability to generate natural language responses and provide adaptive feedback tailored to users' needs. As a result, ChatGPT has increasingly been positioned as a promising support tool in EFL writing contexts, with studies highlighting its potential to enhance writing efficiency, linguistic accuracy, and learner engagement (Sarica & Deneme Gençoğlu, 2025).

While existing literature highlights both the potential and limitations of ChatGPT in EFL writing, learners' engagement with the tool is not determined by its functionality alone but is closely linked to their attitudes toward its use. Research on AI in language learning consistently emphasizes the importance of learners' attitudes as key determinants of technology acceptance, continued use, and sustained engagement in educational contexts (Alharthi, 2024). Understanding these attitudes is therefore critical for informing instructional design, institutional adoption strategies, learner engagement, and policy development.

Importantly, attitudes are not innate dispositions but are shaped by social influences (Pickens, 2005). Within formal educational settings, learners' attitudes toward AI technologies may be influenced by institutional policies, guidelines, and support structures, as well as by teachers' attitudes and classroom practices. In the Saudi EFL context, several studies examining AI adoption have primarily relied on technology acceptance models, such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) or Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology" (UTAUT2), to explain learners' intentions and usage behaviors (e.g. Alharbi, 2025; Alotaibi et al., 2025; Sobaih et al., 2024). Although these models provide valuable insights into acceptance-related variables, they offer limited explanatory depth regarding how learners' attitudes are mediated by institutional rules and instructional practices within specific learning environments.

Accordingly, there remains a need for research that systematically examines the predictive role of teacher- and institution-related factors in relation to learners' attitudes toward ChatGPT use for EFL writing, particularly in Saudi context. In response to this gap, the present study examines Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing and investigates whether these attitudes are predicted by institutional- and teacher-related factors. The study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: What are Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing?

RQ2: How do Saudi EFL learners perceive institutional and teacher-related factors associated with the use of ChatGPT for English writing?

RQ3: To what extent do institutional-related and teacher-related factors predict Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing?

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of research on AI-assisted language learning by providing context-specific evidence from the Saudi EFL setting and by identifying the relative importance of institutional and teacher-related factors in relation to learners' attitudes. By examining these contextual predictors, the study offers empirically grounded insights into how educational environments mediate learners' evaluative orientations toward AI-assisted writing tools, thereby informing institutional policy development and pedagogical integration strategies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 ChatGPT in EFL Writing: Affordances and Concerns

Since its release in 2022, ChatGPT has revolutionized the field of second language writing learning with its remarkable ability to provide learners with immediate feedback, generate diverse human-like texts, and answer questions within minutes (Xiao & Zhi, 2023), which offers learners with personalized learning experiences. EFL learners can use ChatGPT for idea generation, brainstorming, providing outlines, editing, and refining content, which accelerates the writing process (S. Kim, 2024), enhances productivity (Yuan et al., 2024) and makes it less stressful (Ozfidan et al., 2024).

An expanding body of empirical research indicates that the use of ChatGPT in EFL writing is associated with multiple benefits and perceived outcomes. ChatGPT has been acknowledged for its contribution to improving learners' writing skills such as conciseness, grammatical accuracy (Polakova & Ivenz, 2024) vocabulary expansion, and fluency (Alshammri, 2024). A study conducted by Jamshed et al. (2024) found that students using ChatGPT for feedback had a significant reduction in common grammatical errors compared to a control group receiving traditional teacher feedback. ChatGPT use is also associated with higher writing self-efficacy, as learners who used the tool reported greater confidence in their writing abilities compared to non-users (Bouzar et al., 2024). Moreover, the use of ChatGPT in EFL writing has been linked to increased learners' motivation, engagement, and self-directed learning through the immediate and tailored feedback mechanism that promotes continuous improvement (Polakova & Ivenz, 2024; Slamet, 2024).

Despite the previous benefits, the literature also highlights several challenges and concerns surrounding the use of ChatGPT in EFL writing. Among the significant concerns reported in the literature are plagiarism and academic integrity, as the use of ChatGPT may raise the risk of students submitting AI-generated content as their own work (Alkamel & Alwagieh, 2024; Harunasari, 2023; S. Kim, 2024; Yuan et al., 2024). Privacy and security are also among the reported ethical concerns, as ChatGPT platform training involves processing collecting vast

amounts of internet data that might include personal and copyrighted material obtained without explicit consent (Črček & Patekar, 2023). Moreover, EFL learners in several studies have reported that ChatGPT provides insufficient and irrelevant feedback (Bok & Cho, 2023; Xu & Jumaat, 2024). EFL learners in other studies questioned the reliability of the information provided by ChatGPT (Alkamel & Alwagieh, 2024). Another major concern related to cognitive ability is learners' over-reliance on ChatGPT for L2 writing. Excessive dependence on the tool is found to potentially hinder the development of critical thinking and writing abilities (Al-Alami, 2024; Ozfidan et al., 2024; Yuan et al., 2024).

2.2 EFL Learners' Attitudes Toward Using ChatGPT for English Writing

Attitude is a psychological construct that can be broadly defined as “an individual's view of the world” (Schiff, 1970, p. 6). This definition aligns closely with Pickens's (2005) conceptualization of attitude as “a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual's experience and temperament” (p. 44). Attitude encompasses three components: cognition (an individual's beliefs about the object), affection (an individual's feelings about the object), and behavior (an individual's reaction/ response to the object) (Ajzen, 2001; Pickens, 2005; Schiff, 1970). Individuals' attitude towards AI encompasses their perceptions, feelings, and tendencies toward it, including their willingness to adopt and integrate AI technologies across personal, educational, and professional contexts (Kim & Lee, 2024; Pickens, 2005).

Attitude is an influential factor that can shape an individual's behavior toward a particular object (Kim & Lee, 2024; Pickens, 2005). Positive attitudes towards technology have been identified as a crucial prerequisite for initial adoption or sustained engagement (Fan & Zhang, 2024). Prior research suggests that favorable attitudes toward ChatGPT are associated with stronger behavioral intention to use the tool, which in turn may predict learners' actual use, as students who hold more positive attitudes and higher intentions are more likely to engage with ChatGPT for educational purposes (Alotaibi et al., 2025; Polyportis & Pahos, 2025), while negative attitudes can hinder its adoption (Olivier, 2025). Furthermore, learners' attitudes play a critical role in determining how effectively technology can be integrated into language learning contexts (Bristi et al., 2025). Understanding those attitudes guides instructional design, adoption strategies, learner engagement, and policy choices (Alharthi, 2024).

Research on learners' attitudes towards using ChatGPT across various EFL contexts, including Thailand, Vietnam, Iran, UAE, China, and Bangladesh, reveal that learners generally hold positive attitude towards ChatGPT as a supportive writing tool (Al-Alami, 2024; Bristi et al., 2025; Fathi & Rahimi, 2024; Meniado et al., 2024; Xu & Jumaat, 2024). Participants appreciate ChatGPT for enhancing writing skills and subskills (Fathi & Rahimi, 2024; Meniado et al., 2024), saving time and ensuring language accuracy (Al-Alami, 2024), providing writing templates and organizing ideas (Xu & Jumaat, 2024). Likewise, Bristi et al. (2025) found that Bangladeshi learners generally hold positive cognitive and affective attitudes toward ChatGPT, with affective aspects such as enjoyment, satisfaction, and reduced anxiety emerging as the strongest predictors of their behavioral intention to use the tool for academic writing.

However, literature has also highlighted learners' concerns and unfavorable attitudes. For instance, in a study conducted by Al-Alami (2024), more than half of the participants expressed

their concerns regarding the risk of plagiarism and over-reliance that might hinder the development of their writing skills in terms of sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation in the long run. Moreover, concerns about the accuracy and reliability of ChatGPT's feedback have been identified as a source of negative learner attitudes in specific contexts (Xu & Jumaat, 2024). In the study of Yan (2023), participants expressed predominantly unfavorable attitudes toward ChatGPT's unrestricted use in L2 writing, which raise their concerns about academic integrity and educational equity.

Findings from studies conducted in the Saudi context largely mirror these trends, reporting favorable attitudes toward ChatGPT use for EFL writing alongside persistent concerns related to plagiarism, overreliance, academic integrity and inaccurate information (Alshammri, 2024; Al-Sofi, 2024; Ozfidan et al., 2024) and uncertainty regarding continued use or recommending it to other peers (Selim, 2024). However, despite these insights, existing studies—both globally and within the Saudi context—largely conceptualize attitude as a descriptive outcome, offering limited explanation of how such attitudes are shaped within specific institutional and instructional environments.

2.3 Community Influence on Learners' Attitudes Toward ChatGPT

Attitude is not considered innate; instead, it may develop and change through education and experience (Rosenberg et al., 1960; Triandis, 1979, as cited in Kim & Lee, 2024), and is influenced by social contexts (Pickens, 2005). In the realm of educational contexts, several studies highlighted the potential influence of some factors related to educational institutions and teachers on learners' attitudes toward AI technologies. For instance, Jeilani and Abubakar (2025) found that perceived institutional support plays a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of AI in higher education, emphasizing the importance of fostering supportive institutional environments for AI integration. On the other hand, the absence or lack of support, adequate guidance and instruction may lead to unintentional misuse of AI tools, reflected in issues of academic dishonesty and over-reliance (Kim, 2024) which reflect the behavioral component of attitude. Furthermore, evidence suggests that institutional policies play a regulatory role that can indirectly shape learners' attitudes toward ChatGPT by constraining or legitimizing its use, even when learners hold favorable intentions (Polyportis & Pahos, 2025).

Moreover, prior research has drawn attention to the potential role of teachers in influencing learners' perceptions and adoption of AI technologies. For instance, in a Saudi EFL context, Almanea (2024) found that despite generally positive attitudes toward AI tools, some learners reported concealing their use of ChatGPT from instructors. Similarly, Selim (2024) found that while the majority of Saudi EFL college students demonstrate positive attitudes toward using AI tools in English writing, inconsistent encouragement from instructors was accompanied by uncertainty regarding their intentions to continue using AI writing tools, along with varying views on recommending AI-powered tools to their peers. This suggests that teacher expectations and classroom norms may influence learners' attitudes and their emotional responses related to AI use. Furthermore, Xiao and Zhi (2023) reported that students viewed appropriate teacher guidance as essential for using ChatGPT effectively and responsibly. Their finding suggests that pedagogical framing and instructional support may play an important role

in shaping learners' orientations toward AI tools. However, although prior research has highlighted the relevance of instructional and institutional influences, these factors are often treated as peripheral variables within broader technology acceptance models rather than being systematically examined as independent predictors of learners' attitudes toward ChatGPT use in English writing. Accordingly, there is a need for a framework that situates technology use within its broader sociocultural environment.

2.4 Theoretical Framework: Activity Theory

Activity Theory (AT) originates in Vygotsky's sociocultural framework, which introduced the foundational concept of mediation and the role of social interaction in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky proposed a model of mediated action comprises of three elements: subject, object and mediating artifacts (Engeström, 2001). The subject refers to the individual or group engaged in the activity. The object represents the purpose or goal that motivates the subject's involvement. Mediating artifacts are the instruments or tools that mediate the interaction between the subject and the object (Yang & Kyun, 2022). The model later was expanded by Engeström (1987) by adding three contextual elements: rules, community, and division of labor. Rules can be defined as the norms that govern the subject behavior and the participants' cooperation. Community is the social environment that mediates the interaction between all components of the activity system. The division of labor refers to the organization of actions and distribution of responsibility among the community members (Yang & Kyun, 2022).

The present study adopts Activity Theory (AT) by conceptualizing learning as a mediated activity shaped by the dynamic interactions among its elements: the subject (EFL learners), the mediating tool (ChatGPT), and the object (learning English writing). Institutional- and teacher-related factors are jointly conceptualized as elements of the community that surround and influence learners within the activity system. Within this framework, learners' attitudes are conceptualized as evaluative orientations that reflect how the subject interprets and positions the mediating tool within a socially mediated activity system. Although attitude is not an explicit structural component of Activity Theory, it is treated in this study as a socially constructed variable shaped primarily by the surrounding community, represented here by institutional and teacher-related factors. Applying AT enables a more nuanced examination of how these contextual forces relate to learners' attitudes toward ChatGPT in EFL writing.

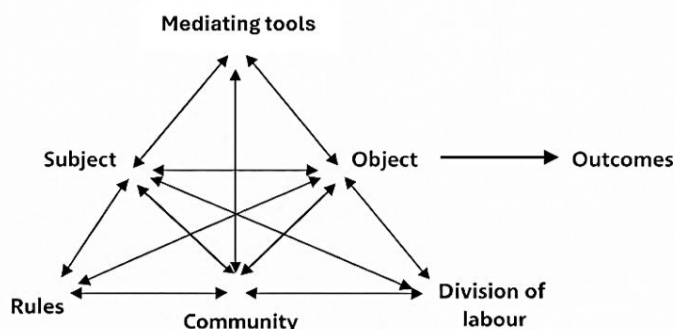


Figure 1. Activity Theory System (Adapted from Engeström, 1987).

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study employed quantitative cross-sectional survey design. A quantitative approach is considered appropriate when the research problem involves determining the best predictors of a particular variable (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Given that the present study seeks to examine whether institutional and teacher related factors predict learners' attitudes toward ChatGPT use in English writing, a quantitative design was deemed suitable. A cross-sectional approach was considered appropriate as data were collected at a single point in time to capture learners' perceptions and evaluative orientations within their current educational context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.2 Participants

A total of 136 Saudi female EFL students participated in this study. They were recruited from the Preparatory Year Program at a public university in Saudi Arabia. All participants studied English as a foreign language and were native Arabic speakers, with ages ranging from 18 to 22 years. Convenience sampling was employed to select participants based on their availability and willingness to complete the questionnaire (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Given the constraints of time, resources, and access to the target population, this method provided a practical and efficient means of data collection.

3.3 Instrument

This study employed a self-administered survey as the primary data collection instrument to examine participants' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for EFL writing, as well as their perceptions of institutional and teacher-related factors associated with its use. This method offers the advantage of providing access to a large number of participants in a time-efficient and cost-effective manner (Perry, 2006).

The questionnaire consisted of four main sections. The first section gathered background information, including participants' consent to take part in the study, Preparatory Year track, English proficiency level, and frequency of ChatGPT use for EFL writing. The second section comprised 10 items adapted from Bristi et al. (2025) and Selim (2024) to assess learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for EFL writing. The attitude scale included two negatively worded items, which were reverse-coded before calculating the overall attitude score. Thus, higher scores consistently represented more positive attitudes toward ChatGPT for EFL writing. The third section included seven items adapted from Meniado et al. (2024) to examine participants' perceptions of institution-related and teacher-related factors. It comprised three items addressing institution-related factors, such as university policies and institutional support, and four items addressing teacher-related factors, including classroom guidance and encouragement. All items were measured using a five-point Likert agreement scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Given that some participants may not possess sufficient English proficiency to fully comprehend the questionnaire items, the survey was translated into Arabic to enhance clarity

and ensure the accuracy of responses.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, the finalized questionnaire, including its Arabic translation, was reviewed by two professors and one colleague, who confirmed the accuracy and equivalence between the English and Arabic versions. To establish reliability, the questionnaire was piloted with 38 participants prior to the main study to identify and resolve any ambiguities. Subsequently, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the survey instrument. The reliability analysis indicated that the survey instrument had acceptable to excellent internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha values for the variables were as follows: Attitudes toward using ChatGPT, $\alpha = .765$; Institution-related factors, $\alpha = .757$; and Teacher-related factors, $\alpha = .911$. These results suggest that the scales are reliable and consistent for use in the main study.

4. Results

4.1 RQ1

The first research question states: "What are Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing?"

This question was addressed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores for each item. Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics of students' attitude toward using ChatGPT for EFL writing

Table 1. Students' attitude toward using ChatGPT for EFL writing

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking score
ChatGPT supports me in understanding complex English writing topics better.	4.57	0.652	1
ChatGPT helps me generate better ideas for my English writing.	4.51	0.720	2
ChatGPT supports me in improving the grammar of my English writing.	4.43	0.786	3
ChatGPT helps me improve my vocabulary for English writing.	4.41	0.830	4
I enjoy using ChatGPT for English writing tasks.	3.99	1.085	5
I feel more confident about my English writing performance when I use ChatGPT.	3.96	1.164	6
I plan to continue using ChatGPT as a support tool in my English writing.	3.93	1.146	7
I will recommend my classmates to use ChatGPT for English writing.	3.92	1.116	8

I believe dependence on ChatGPT would negatively affect my ability to write independently in the long run.	3.60	1.238	9
I feel that using ChatGPT for writing is not morally right.	3.02	1.330	10
Overall Mean	4.03	0.615	

As shown in Table 1, the highest mean score was obtained for the item (ChatGPT supports me in understanding complex English writing topics better) with mean 4.57, which corresponds to the Strongly agree level and is supported by a relatively low standard deviation, that indicates a high level of consistency in their responses.

A group of items clustered within similarly high mean values above 4.40, namely (ChatGPT helps me generate better ideas for my English writing) with mean 4.51, (ChatGPT supports me in improving the grammar of my English writing) with mean 4.43, and (ChatGPT helps me improve my vocabulary for English writing) with mean 4.41. All these items fall within the Strongly agree level, indicating a consistent response pattern at the upper end of the scale.

At a slightly lower but still positive level, several items were grouped within the Agree category, including (I enjoy using ChatGPT for English writing tasks) with mean 3.99, (I feel more confident about my English writing performance when I use ChatGPT) with mean 3.96, (I plan to continue using ChatGPT as a support tool in my English writing) with mean 3.93, and (I will recommend my classmates to use ChatGPT for English writing) with mean 3.92. All these items exhibit closely related mean scores, reflecting convergence within the same Likert level (Agree).

Regarding the negatively worded items, the statement (I believe dependence on ChatGPT would negatively affect my ability to write independently in the long run) recorded a reverse-coded mean score of 3.60, which falls within the Agree level. In contrast, the item (I feel that using ChatGPT for writing is not morally right) yielded the lowest reverse-coded mean score of 3.02, corresponding to the Neutral level and showing greater dispersion in responses, as reflected by its higher standard deviation.

The overall mean score of 4.03, which lies within in the Agree to Strongly agree range, confirms a generally positive attitude among students. This pattern reflects a general upward tendency in responses across the scale, with limited divergence observed.

4.2 RQ2

The second research question states: “How do Saudi EFL learners perceive institutional and teacher-related factors related to the use of ChatGPT for English writing?”

To address this question, learners’ perceptions of institutional and teacher-related factors associated with the use of ChatGPT for English writing were examined.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Learners' Perceptions of Institution-Related Factors Related to ChatGPT Use for English Writing

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking score
There are clear guidelines at my university regarding the ethical and responsible use of ChatGPT in completing English writing tasks/assignments.	3.82	1.095	1
My university officially permits the use of ChatGPT for the purpose of learning English writing.	3.76	0.993	2
My university provides adequate support/training on how to use ChatGPT effectively and responsibly.	3.26	1.212	3
Total	3.6	0.824	

Table 2 indicates that students' responses to institution-related factors were distributed mainly between the Agree and Neutral levels. The highest mean score was recorded for the item (There are clear guidelines at my university regarding the ethical and responsible use of ChatGPT in completing English writing tasks/assignments) with mean 3.82, which falls within the Agree level. A closely related item, (My university officially permits the use of ChatGPT for the purpose of learning English writing), obtained a slightly lower but comparable mean score with mean 3.76, also corresponding to the Agree level. In contrast, the lowest mean score was observed for (My university provides adequate support/training on how to use ChatGPT effectively and responsibly) with mean 3.26, which corresponds to the Neutral level. This item also shows relatively higher dispersion, as reflected by its standard deviation.

Overall, the highest-ranked item was related to institutional guidelines, and the lowest-ranked item was related to institutional support and training. The overall mean score of 3.62 which corresponds to the Agree level, along with a standard deviation of 0.824, indicates a moderately positive perception among students toward institutional factors supporting the use of ChatGPT.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Learners' Perceptions of Teacher-Related Factors Related to ChatGPT Use for English Writing

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Ranking score
My teacher shows a positive attitude toward ChatGPT and its use in learning English writing.	3.55	1.067	1
My teacher makes me aware of the advantages and limitations of using ChatGPT in writing.	3.26	1.243	2
My teacher demonstrates how to use ChatGPT during different stages of the English writing process (ex. Planning, drafting, revising, etc).	3.19	1.285	3
My teacher effectively integrates ChatGPT into our	3.10	1.293	4

writing lessons.

Total

3.3

1.093

As shown in Table 3, students' responses to teacher-related factors were mainly distributed between the Agree and Neutral levels. The highest mean score was obtained for the item (My teacher shows a positive attitude toward ChatGPT and its use in learning English writing) with mean 3.55, which falls within the Agree level.

Two items clustered within similar mean values at the Neutral level, namely (My teacher makes me aware of the advantages and limitations of using ChatGPT in writing) with mean 3.26 and (My teacher demonstrates how to use ChatGPT during different stages of the English writing process (ex. Planning, drafting, revising, etc) with mean 3.19, which falls within the Neutral level.

The lowest mean score was recorded for (My teacher effectively integrates ChatGPT into our writing lessons) with mean 3.10, which also falls within the Neutral level and represents the lowest-ranked item.

The overall mean score of 3.28, which corresponds approximately to the Neutral to Agree range on the 5-point Likert scale, along with a standard deviation of 1.093, indicates a moderate level of agreement with a relatively acceptable dispersion of responses.

4.3 RQ3

The second research question states: "To what extent do institutional-related and teacher-related factors predict Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing?"

To answer this question, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which university-related factors and teacher-related factors significantly predict Saudi EFL learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing.

The normality of the mean scores for students' attitudes, institution-related factors, and teacher-related factors was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Although the variables did not strictly meet the assumption of normality, the relatively large sample size ($N = 136$) reduces concerns regarding this violation, thereby supporting the robustness of the multiple regression analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Table 4 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 4. Model Summary and overall significance of the multiple regression model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
regression	.431 ^a	0.185	0.173	0.55883	15.13	.000 ^b

According to Table 4, the regression model is statistically significant, where $p < .001$, which is less than the assumed significant level (0.05). This finding confirms that the set of predictors, namely institution-related and teacher-related factors, collectively statistically significant contributes to explaining students' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing.

The model summary further shows a moderate positive relationship between the predictors and students' attitudes ($R = .431$).

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .185$) indicates that approximately 18.5% of the variance in students' attitudes is explained by the included predictors, while the adjusted R^2 (.173) confirms the stability of the model. Although the explained variance is moderate, this level is considered acceptable in educational and social science research, particularly when examining attitudinal outcomes influenced by multiple contextual factors.

Table 5. Multiple regression coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta β			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2.883	0.216		13.329	<0.001		
Mean of Institution-related factors	0.28	0.08	0.376	3.51	<0.001	0.535	1.869
Mean of Teacher-related factors	0.042	0.06	0.075	0.704	0.482	0.535	1.869

As shown in Table 5, the regression results indicate that institution-related factors are statistically significant predictors of students' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing ($t = 3.51$, $p < .001$), whereas teacher-related factors do not reach statistical significance within the model ($t = 0.704$, $p = .482$). This comparison shows that only institutional factors contribute significantly to explaining variations in students' attitudes when both predictors are considered simultaneously.

This conclusion is further supported by the standardized beta coefficients, which allow for direct comparison of the relative strength of the predictors. Institution-related factors exhibit a substantially larger standardized effect ($\beta = .376$) compared to teacher-related factors ($\beta = .075$). These values confirm that institutional factors have a markedly stronger influence on students' attitudes than teacher-related factors within the model.

Collinearity statistics indicate no multicollinearity concerns in the model, as tolerance values (.535) exceed the recommended threshold and VIF values (1.869) remain well below the critical value of 5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

In summary, university-related factors significantly predict Saudi learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for English writing, while teacher-related factors contribute minimally and non-significantly, with the model explaining 18.5% of the variance ($R^2 = .185$).

5. Discussion

This study investigates Saudi learners' attitudes toward using ChatGPT for EFL writing, examines their perceptions of institutional and teacher-related factors, and analyzes whether these factors significantly predict learners' attitudes.

Firstly, consistent with previous studies in the Saudi context (Alshammri, 2024; Al-Sofi, 2024; Ozfidan et al., 2024; Selim, 2024), the results indicate that Saudi learners hold positive attitudes toward using ChatGPT for EFL writing. Particularly, the participants appreciate its role in facilitating idea generation, clarifying complex writing topics, and supporting linguistic development through grammar and vocabulary improvement. This favorable attitude may be attributed to the immediate and accessible support that ChatGPT provides during the writing process, particularly in EFL settings such as the Saudi context, where learners often face multiple writing challenges and may have limited opportunities for individualized educational support (Selim, 2024). Moreover, the findings are similar to prior studies in terms of reported concerns about potential overreliance on ChatGPT (Al-Alami, 2024; Alkamel & Alwagieh, 2024; Alotaibi et al., 2025; Ozfidan et al., 2024; Yuan et al., 2024). However, these concerns remain limited and do not outweigh the overall favorable attitude in the present study. Based on the reviewed literature, it can be argued that the advantages of employing ChatGPT tool in language learning outweigh the drawbacks (Alsaawi et al., 2025).

With respect to the second research question, it was found that participants moderately acknowledged the presence of institutional guidelines and support regarding the use of ChatGPT for English writing. This could be explained by the rapidly adoption of new technologies in various sectors, including the educational sector in Saudi Arabia, in line the Saudi Vision 2030, which highly emphasizes the importance of the digital transformation in promoting efficiency, productivity, and innovation across all fields (Alotaibi et al., 2025; Ozfidan et al., 2024). Similarly, participants reported moderately positive perceptions of teachers' attitudes toward ChatGPT. This finding contrasts with Selim's (2024) study in the Saudi context, in which learners reported limited encouragement from university instructors regarding the use of AI-powered tools for academic writing. The difference may indicate a gradual shift in teachers' attitudes toward greater acceptance of AI tools for language learning, although further research is needed to confirm whether this trend reflects broader instructional change.

However, the results highlight an inadequacy in the support and training provided by both universities and teachers regarding the effective and responsible use of ChatGPT. In addition, limited classroom integration of the tool was identified as an area requiring further enhancement. This pattern may be attributed to the relatively recent introduction of generative AI tools in educational settings, whereby both institutions and teachers may still be in an exploratory phase, with policies and attitudes developing more rapidly than pedagogical integration or established instructional routines. Recent studies conducted in the Saudi context similarly report insufficient training for EFL learners (Al-Sofi, 2024; Ozfidan et al., 2024; Selim, 2024) and emphasize the need for more effective teacher-led integration of AI tools in language classrooms (Alotaibi et al., 2025; Al-Sofi, 2024).

Thirdly, the regression results indicate that university-related factors significantly predict learners' attitudes toward ChatGPT use for EFL writing, whereas teacher-related factors contribute minimally and do not reach statistical significance when both predictors are considered simultaneously. This suggests that learners' evaluative orientations toward ChatGPT-assisted writing are more closely aligned with institutional signals—such as policies,

guidelines, and official support—than with teachers’ attitudes or classroom-level practices. One possible explanation is that, in institutionally regulated contexts such as Saudi higher education, learners may rely on institutional approval to assess the legitimacy and appropriateness of using emerging technologies. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Polyportis and Pahos (2024), who showed that institutional policies can legitimize the use of ChatGPT, thereby indirectly fostering more favorable attitudes toward it. Similarly, Fan and Zhang (2024) reported that when universities promote AI literacy and frame AI as a human-centered support tool, students demonstrate greater understanding, trust, and more positive attitudes toward AI-assisted learning. Another possible explanation is that teachers operate within institutional constraints. In other words, teachers’ influence may be embedded within broader institutional structures that legitimize the use of ChatGPT but have not yet translated into consistent training or systematic classroom integration.

Drawing on Activity Theory, the significant predictive role of institutional factors indicates that formalized community norms—such as university policies, guidelines, and institutional support—play a dominant role in shaping learners’ evaluative orientations toward the tool. By contrast, the non-significant predictive role of teacher-related factors may reflect the limited instructional enactment of ChatGPT within the activity system. Although teachers are part of the community, their influence appears constrained by institutional rules that regulate classroom practices. As a result, teachers’ generally positive attitudes toward ChatGPT may not translate into consistent modeling or integration, reducing their capacity to function as effective mediators of learners’ attitudes.

6. Conclusion

This study set out to explore Saudi learners’ attitudes toward using ChatGPT for EFL writing, assess their perceptions of institutional and teacher-related factors, and analyze whether these factors significantly predicted learners’ attitudes. The results show that Saudi learners demonstrated overall positive attitudes toward using ChatGPT for EFL writing, particularly in terms of idea generation, grammar support, vocabulary development, understanding complex writing tasks. The research has also shown that learners reported moderately positive perceptions of both institutional support and teachers’ attitudes; however, training opportunities and classroom integration of ChatGPT were perceived as limited. Furthermore, the regression analysis revealed that institution-related factors significantly predicted learners’ attitudes toward ChatGPT use, whereas teacher-related factors did not demonstrate a unique predictive contribution.

The present study contributes to the rapidly expanding field of AI in language learning by identifying the relative importance of educational institutions and teachers in relation to learners’ attitudes, thereby offering empirically grounded insights into how educational environments mediate the adoption of AI-assisted writing tools. Moreover, this work provides empirical evidence from the Saudi EFL context, addressing a gap in research that has largely focused on general perceptions of AI without systematically examining the contextual factors that shape learners’ evaluative orientations toward ChatGPT use.

The findings of this study offer practical implications for higher-education stakeholders,

particularly within Saudi EFL contexts. Educational institutions should foster a supportive environment that promotes the responsible and effective use of ChatGPT for English writing by establishing clear policies, providing structured AI literacy initiatives, and ensuring consistent training. Given the significant predictive role of institutional factors, strengthening institutional guidance may help legitimize appropriate AI use and encourage more favorable learner attitudes. In addition, educators should be provided with clear pedagogical guidelines and targeted professional developments - such as workshops and training sessions - to equip them with the skills required for effective classroom integration of AI-assisted writing tools. Teachers can also play an important role in raising learners' awareness of both the capabilities and limitations of ChatGPT by modeling appropriate use across different stages of the writing process, thereby supporting responsible engagement and mitigating risks related to overreliance or academic integrity concerns.

Despite these valuable insights, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted within the Saudi EFL context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings. Future research could replicate this investigation across diverse institutional and cultural contexts to enhance external validity. Second, the study employed a quantitative design based on learners' self-reported responses, which may not fully reflect actual practices. Future research is therefore encouraged to adopt mixed-method approaches, such as interviews or classroom observations, to provide deeper insight into how learners use ChatGPT in authentic learning situations. Third, learners' attitudes do not necessarily translate into actual behavior; accordingly, future studies could examine the relationship between reported attitudes and observable use of AI tools in writing tasks. Finally, although attitude was treated as a unified construct in the current study, it is widely conceptualized as comprising cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Future research could examine whether contextual factors differentially predict these distinct dimensions, which may offer deeper insights into how institutional and instructional influences relate to learners' beliefs, emotions, and behavioral intentions toward ChatGPT use.

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Appendix

Survey Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in this survey on the use of ChatGPT in English writing among university students. The purpose is to explore your attitudes, practices, and views on the role of teachers and institutional support.

Participation is voluntary. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidential, and the results will only be used for academic research. The survey takes about 5–10 minutes. There are no risks or financial rewards for participation.

Your honest responses will help enhance the understanding of how ChatGPT is used in English writing and its role in effectively supporting the learning process. Thank you very much for your participation.

Consent: By selecting “I Agree” below, you confirm that you voluntarily agree to participate.

☐ I Agree ☐ I Do Not Agree

Background Information

- Are you currently a foundation-year student at King Abdulaziz University?
 - Yes
 - No
- Please specify your track:
 - General English track (ELIA)
 - Academic English track (ELIS)
 - English major track (ELIE)
 - English for environmental sciences track (ELIG)
 - Communication and media track (ELIC)
 - English for arts and humanities track (ELCA)
 - Health track (ELIH)
 - Diploma
- Current English Level:
 - Level 1
 - Level 2
- How often do you use ChatGPT for English writing?
 - Frequently (daily/weekly)
 - Occasionally (monthly)
 - Rarely

- Never

Students' Attitude Toward ChatGPT as a Writing Learning Tool

This section aims to explore your opinions and feelings about using ChatGPT in English writing. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1	ChatGPT supports me in understanding complex English writing topics better.
2	ChatGPT helps me generate better ideas for my English writing.
3	ChatGPT helps me improve my vocabulary for English writing.
4	ChatGPT supports me in improving the grammar of my English writing.
5	I believe dependence on ChatGPT would negatively affect my ability to write independently in the long run.
6	I enjoy using ChatGPT for English writing tasks.
7	I feel more confident about my English writing performance when I use ChatGPT.
8	I feel that using ChatGPT for writing is not morally right.
9	I plan to continue using ChatGPT as a support tool in my English writing.
10	I will recommend my classmates to use ChatGPT for English writing.

Community Influence (Institution and Teachers)

This section asks about your perceptions of your university and teachers regarding the use of ChatGPT for English writing. Your responses will help us understand the support and guidance provided. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

11	My university officially permits the use of ChatGPT for the purpose of learning English writing.
12	There are clear guidelines at my university regarding the ethical and responsible use of ChatGPT in completing English writing tasks/assignments.
13	My university provides adequate support/training on how to use ChatGPT

	effectively and responsibly.
14	My teacher shows a positive attitude toward ChatGPT and its use in learning English writing.
15	My teacher effectively integrates ChatGPT into our writing lessons.
16	My teacher demonstrates how to use ChatGPT during different stages of the English writing process (ex. Planning, drafting, revising, etc).
17	My teacher makes me aware of the advantages and limitations of using ChatGPT in writing.

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Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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