





Subjective norms and behavioral control in using ChatGPT for learning: A comparative explanatory case study

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Abstract

This study demonstrates how social demands and perceived control differently translate into transactional versus introspective engagement with ChatGPT, contextualizing the Theory of Planned Behavior. Using a previous cluster analysis of 279 students, a comparative explanatory case study was carried out. From the separate focus group discussions, four subjective norm themes emerged, including academic pressures, ethical concerns, social and environmental influences, and technological accessibility. Meanwhile, four behavioral control themes surfaced, including collaborative/supportive role, contextual use, knowledge and inspiration, and utilitarian usage. Academic demands were highlighted in both clusters, although Cluster 2 was more motivated by the availability of technology and showed utilitarian usage as the predominant control pattern. Cluster 1 placed more importance on ethical issues and relied less on ChatGPT for utilitarian goals, mostly for inspiration and collaborative purposes. The study concludes that social expectations, ethical awareness, and situational control interact dynamically in students' use of ChatGPT. Depending on the cluster, reflective, guided learning coexists with utilitarian, assignment-driven utilization. Therefore, there must be a balance between efficiency and accessibility, as well as morality and critical thinking, in our educational solutions. In action, scaffolding selective and guided applications of ChatGPT is a step further in integrating ethical and critical AI literacy into curricula.

Keywords: Attitude, Artificial Intelligence, Behavioral control, ChatGPT, Subjective norms, Theory of planned behavior.

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Contents

1. Introduction	33
2. Literature Review	33
3. Methodology	34
4. Results	34
5. Discussion	38
6. Conclusion	40
References	40

Contribution of this paper to the literature

This study contributes to the existing literature on AI-mediated learning settings by showing how the interaction between subjective norms and behavioral control concretely yields two distinct engagement modes with ChatGPT. Methodologically, it demonstrates a comparative explanatory case study with cross-case quantization that links theme prevalence to cluster profiles.

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer a peripheral novelty in schools and universities. It now threads through the everyday routines of studying, writing, and problem-solving (Manprisio, Salam, Mohmad, & Medasani, 2024; Singh, 2023). Among these tools, generative systems such as ChatGPT have become the most visible, offering quick ways to brainstorm topics, draft outlines, clarify concepts, and check explanations when students get trapped in various academic problems (Javaid, Haleem, Singh, Khan, & Khan, 2023). These conveniences matter in real and rather inflexible classrooms where time is tight and expectations are high. Students use AI to meet deadlines, experiment with alternative phrasing, and compare solutions before committing to an answer. At the same time, educators and students alike are aware of these trade-offs caused by AI: over-reliance that dulls effort (Kaur, 2023); new avenues for academic dishonesty (Bin-Nashwan, Sadallah, & Bouteraa, 2023); and broader ethical questions about authorship, attribution, and fairness in assessment (Wang et al., 2023).

To understand how students decide when and how to use ChatGPT, this study turns to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which links intentions and actions to attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen, 1991, 2020; Burgess, Chang, Nakamura, Izmirian, & Okamura, 2017; Miller, 2017). In an AI-mediated learning context, attitudes capture judgments about usefulness and ethical acceptability. Meanwhile, subjective norms reflect the expectations of peers, teachers, and family, and perceived behavioural control covers practical access (e.g., devices, connectivity) and self-regulatory skills (e.g., confidence, restraint).

Prior empirical work notes genuine benefits from AI use, including lighter workload, more structured writing support, and expanded access to explanations, but carries alongside persistent worries about creativity and integrity (AlAfnan, Dishari, Jovic, & Lomidze, 2023; Lingard, 2023; Ngo, 2023; Shakeel, 2024; Zhang, Smith, & Lee, 2024). Studies also hint that norms can pull students in opposite directions. For example, families may stress traditional integrity rules while peers normalize everyday “help” from AI, creating tension about what counts as acceptable support (Kilian, 2026; Rane, Gupta, & Khan, 2024).

A second set of findings centers on control. When access is easy and feedback feels immediate, adoption rises, but so can dependence if self-regulation is weak (Parveen et al., 2024). Conversely, students with stronger self-management tend to use AI as a complement rather than a substitute, treating it as a prompt for reflection, not a shortcut around thinking (Azevedo et al., 2022). These observations suggest that the same tool can serve very different learning paths depending on the mix of social pressure and personal control present in a given course, assignment, or household.

Despite these advances, much of the literature still collapses “attitude toward AI” or “AI use” into single aggregate indicators, leaving unclear how norms and control actually combine to produce concrete patterns of use in day-to-day coursework, especially in classrooms of developing countries where access, culture, and policy constraints differ markedly. Addressing this gap, the present study examines how subjective norms and perceived behavioral control interact to shape students’ intentions and actual use of ChatGPT for academic tasks. Specifically, the researchers aim to: (1) map the social influences that encourage or discourage use; (2) describe the forms of control that enable responsible versus dependent use; and (3) trace the pathways from intentions to behavior in authentic coursework. By grounding these mechanisms in local context, the study generates actionable implications for course design and assessment that leverage ChatGPT’s benefits while guarding against over-reliance and integrity risks.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social Influences and Subjective Norms in AI Tool Adoption

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) positions subjective norms as a key driver of intentions. In educational settings, social influences from peers, teachers, and institutional culture strongly shape whether students embrace tools like ChatGPT. Studies consistently find that when important referents (e.g., instructors or classmates) approve of ChatGPT use, students’ intentions to use the tool increase (Tran, Lee, Hung, Kao, & Nguyen, 2024). For example, in a U.S. college sample, Pham, Klaus, and Bateh (2025) observed that social norms had a significant positive effect on students’ intention to adopt ChatGPT for schoolwork. Similarly, a TPB-based survey of Vietnamese undergraduates found that subjective norm was a significant predictor of intentions to use ChatGPT for language learning, alongside attitude and control factors (Tran et al., 2024). However, the strength of normative influence can vary by context. Some educators and institutions enthusiastically encourage AI integration through training workshops and permissive policies, while others impose strict bans or stigmas on its use (Alhajjar, 2025). This leads to divergent normative climates, as Espartinez (2025) noted a “silent acceptance” among Philippine students using ChatGPT discreetly amid unclear official policies. In some cases, subjective norms even emerge as the strongest determinant of AI uptake, whereas in other cases personal attitudes or self-efficacy outweigh social pressure. These variations highlight that prior studies treating user attitude as monolithic risk, overlooking how community and culture shape AI adoption. In sum, the literature suggests that social norms, whether from supportive peers, tech-positive teachers, or a broader culture of academic integrity, critically influence ChatGPT usage, underscoring the importance of examining subjective norms in different educational contexts.

2.2. Technological Accessibility and Perceived Behavioral Control

Even when students are open to using ChatGPT, their actual usage is constrained by their perceived behavioral control. Behavioral control is closely tied to technological accessibility and support. For example,

students with reliable internet access, suitable devices, and sufficient guidance feel more confident in using ChatGPT effectively (Tran et al., 2024). Conversely, those facing infrastructure gaps or lacking training experience have lower control, which dampens adoption. Global research reveals stark disparities in this regard. For instance, Shahzad, Xu, and Javed (2024) found that Chinese university students' acceptance of ChatGPT depended on ease of use and system "intelligence," factors reflecting how manageable and useful they perceived the tool. If students believe they have the necessary skills and that ChatGPT is user-friendly, their intention to use it rises. This is a pattern echoing the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) where perceived ease of use boosts adoption. On the other hand, lack of access can be a decisive barrier. In the Philippines, the urban-rural digital divide exemplifies the role of Behavioral control. Urban students with stable internet and higher digital literacy readily leverage ChatGPT to augment learning, whereas rural students often struggle with poor connectivity and limited ICT resources. Only about 40% of rural areas in the Philippines have reliable internet (versus approximately 80% in urban centers), leading to markedly lower ChatGPT adoption outside cities. This divide means that even highly motivated learners may be unable to use AI tools due to low perceived control over the technology. Moreover, institutional support can enhance behavioral control. For instance, when teachers or universities provide training and encouragement, students' control beliefs improve. Without such support, students might feel anxiety or helplessness toward AI, regardless of its potential benefits. Overall, the literature indicates that technological accessibility and self-efficacy are pivotal in the use of AI. Understanding usage therefore requires accounting for these structural and personal control factors, not just attitudes. Studies that treat technology adoption uniformly often miss this point, as differing levels of behavioral control can lead to widely varying outcomes in AI tool usage.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

A comparative explanatory case study design is used in this study. It is a qualitative research methodology that enables the in-depth examination of complex phenomena within their real-life contexts. According to Yin (2018), a case study is an empirical investigation of a current problem in which it is difficult to distinguish between the phenomena and its setting. This method offers a comprehensive view of the cases under study and is especially helpful for understanding context-specific dynamics through the utilization of multiple data sources. The study's goal of analyzing the distinctive traits and interactions within two different student clusters concerning their attitudes towards ChatGPT, epistemological beliefs, and propensities for academic dishonesty justifies the use of a case study approach. These clusters represent bounded systems, or "cases," that require careful examination to identify their unique behavioral patterns.

3.2. Study Participants

This study was conducted among 3rd year pre-service teachers in Physical Education at a state university in Northern Philippines. Based on their views towards ChatGPT, epistemological beliefs, and propensity for academic dishonesty, the students (n=279) were divided into two separate profiles using cluster analysis. Six (6) individuals from each cluster were selected for the focus group discussion based on the analysis. Twelve students in total participated in the FGD. The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 23 years old, and the majority were male. Cluster 1 comprised students who demonstrated mature epistemological ideas, moderate-to-low attitudes toward ChatGPT, and few academic dishonesty tendencies. Conversely, students in Cluster 2 had higher propensities for academic dishonesty, naive epistemological ideas, and pragmatic and utilitarian attitudes towards ChatGPT.

3.3. Data Gathering Technique

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were used to gather data for this study. Representatives from the two student clusters identified participated in FGDs. From each cluster, six individuals were chosen, resulting in two distinct FGDs customized to each group's traits. To guarantee institutional approval, formal authorization was sought from the college dean before holding the FGDs. A cell phone recorder was used to capture the audio of the FGDs. To promote candid and engaging discussion, the researchers employed a semi-structured interview guide.

3.4. Data Analysis

To produce a textual dataset for study, the recorded focus group discussions were transcribed. The thematic analysis framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was then used to examine the transcribed material. The researchers first read the transcripts several times as part of the familiarization process. Afterward, key passages of text pertinent to the research questions were identified to create preliminary codes. The underlying trends in the data were then captured by grouping these codes into more general themes. Themes were created to represent important facets of the study, including behavioral control and subjective norms when utilizing ChatGPT. To ensure these themes were thorough, consistent with the facts, and logical, they were continually refined.

The qualitative themes in the two clusters were mapped and compared using cross-case quantization. This method facilitated visual comparison of theme frequency between clusters, highlighting common and distinctive patterns in the normative and behavioral factors influencing students' use of ChatGPT.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

During the data gathering, informed consent was obtained from all participants, with assurances of anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. The study adhered to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects, as outlined by Creswell (2014).

4. Results

4.1. Subjective Norms in the Use of ChatGPT for Learning

The thematic analysis presented in Table 1 categorizes the subjective norms influencing students' use of ChatGPT for learning into four major themes, each with associated codes: academic pressures and strategies,

ethical concerns and misuse, social and environmental influences, and technological accessibility and usage. These themes and their codes provide a comprehensive view of the social and contextual factors shaping students' behavior, analyzed through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Table 1. Thematic analysis of the subjective norms in the use of ChatGPT for learning.

Theme	Code	Sample Statements
Academic pressures and strategies	Academic survival	<p>Actually, nalaman ko lang tong ChatGPT noong 2nd year. And then minsan kasi maraming... tambak sa activities, so, ginagamit ko din ChatGPT [R10]</p> <p>(I actually only learned about ChatGPT in my second year. And sometimes there's a pile of activities, so I also use ChatGPT.)</p> <p>yung talagang 30 minutes na tulog sakin, sir. kailangan ko po ng assist, sir. 'dun ko po napagtatanto na need ko po ng tulong, sir. but still, I have an instinct na "ay baka mali ito [R7]</p> <p>(I really only had 30 minutes of sleep, sir. I needed assistance, sir. That's when I realized I needed help, sir. But I still have a feeling that "oh, this might be wrong.)</p>
	Learning dependency	<p>So, parang kapag kinokopya ko yung bagay, it feels like so mali. Parang mali talaga siya. So, noong nalaman ko yung ChatGPT never nagkaspark ng interest to use it po [R9]</p> <p>(So when I copy something, it feels very wrong—really wrong. So when I learned about ChatGPT, I never felt any spark of interest to use it.)</p> <p>Mas gusto kong garwin na lapa yun, sir, or mas gusto kong wag nalang garwin yung activity at all, sir [R9]</p> <p>(I'd rather do it myself, sir, or I'd rather not do the activity at all.)</p>
	Presence of other tools	<p>Pero most of the times talaga, sir, nagrerely po ako sa google scholar, sir [R8]</p> <p>(But most of the time, sir, I really rely on Google Scholar.)</p>
Ethical concerns and misuse	Expectation of competence	<p>I think nasa environment nila 'yun, sir. Yung mga friends ko po ay using ChatGPT, so, me as their friend "ang perfect" ko ganun [R8]</p> <p>(I think it's their environment, sir. My friends use ChatGPT, so as their friend it's like I also have to look "perfect".)</p> <p>Another thing para macontrol, naiisip ko na I'm just fooling myself. In the face of others, "ay ang galing niya kasi nagarwa niya yung ganitong bagay" pero deep inside hindi pala ikaw yung gumagawa so parang niloloko mo lang sarili mo at niloloko mo lang ibang tao. [R9]</p> <p>(Another thing, to keep it in check, I realize I'm just fooling myself. To others it looks like, "wow, you're great because you did this," but deep inside it wasn't really you—so you're fooling yourself and other people.)</p>
	Stigma and concerns	<p>Meron po akong narinig po ako sa news noon po, sir. May isang news writer ata yun na nagcopy paste daw po ata lahat. Syempre, dahil po sa news nay un, nagkaroon po ng paningin sa ChatGPT na for plagiarism po, siya [R9]</p> <p>(I once heard on the news, sir, about a news writer who supposedly copy-pasted everything. Because of that news, people came to see ChatGPT as linked with plagiarism.)</p> <p>for me as well po is 'yung guilt, ganyan po, sir. Like, pagkatapos mong nagarwa mga assignments mo and then, "oo tapos mo nga, pero hindi naman lahat galing sayo." and then 'pag tapos na. [R6]</p> <p>(For me there's also the guilt, sir. After finishing your assignments you think, "Yes, it's done, but not everything came from you," and that feeling lingers.)</p>
Social and environmental influences	Peer influence	<p>one of the factors are my peers or friends, something like that. Like, kunwari iaask po yung assignment, imbes na gagawin po naming, sir, "ichatGPT nalang yan!"... [R5]</p> <p>(One factor is my peers or friends. For example, when someone asks about an assignment, instead of doing it ourselves we say, "Let's just ChatGPT that!")</p>
	Teacher influence	<p>Kasi nakikita din nila... mostly, 'di ba sa mga teacher eh mostly ChatGPT na eh [R10]</p> <p>(Because they also see that—among teachers—it's mostly ChatGPT now)</p> <p>napapadala kasi, sir, because 'yung ibang profs, sir, is kung magbigay sila ng mga homework is talagang parang sila nalang yung subject naming [R4]</p> <p>(It's happening more often, sir, because some professors give so much homework that it feels like their course is the only one we're taking.)</p>
	Cultural and familial influences	<p>Back when I was in elementary kasi sir, my dad hates when I copy in my classmates. [R9]</p> <p>My whole family kasi, sir, is a line of teachers. They are always discriminating me kapag nangongopya ako, sir, parang sinasabi nil ana "parang wala kang utak". [R9]</p> <p>(My whole family, sir, is a line of teachers. They always criticize me when I copy, saying things like "it's like you have no brain.")</p>
Technological accessibility and usage	Convenience and accessibility	<p>sir, kasi most of the students parang nagrerely na siya in their convenience, sir. Kapag kunwari hindi nila alam ang isang bagay, ChatGPT is always there, para ready to ask questions and most of the key concern answers anduun lang [R8]</p> <p>(Sir, most students now rely on what's convenient. If they don't know something, ChatGPT is always there—ready for questions, with most of the key answers right there.)</p> <p>Siyempre, nandiyan siya every day, nagsiseek tayo ng help sa kanya para may malaman tayo. [R6]</p> <p>(Of course, it's there every day; we seek help from it so we can learn something.)</p>
	Curiosity and technology	<p>So curious po ako. So, noong nalalaman ko na siya, sir, parang nagiging basic nalang siya, sir. [R11]</p>

Theme	Code	Sample Statements
		(I was curious. When I got to know it, sir, it just became something basic/ordinary to me.)
	Level of intelligence	<p>magkakaiba po kasi ng hype yung mga students. Yung mga behind po, yung dishonest na po sila usually ginagamit nalang nila ChatGPT because 'di na po kaya ng utak po ng iba. [R9]</p> <p>(Students have different levels, after all. Those who are behind—the dishonest ones—usually just use ChatGPT because they feel they can't handle it mentally anymore.)</p> <p>...hindi naman nating maitatangi 'yung lack of knowledge talaga. Kasi, sir, mga bagay talaga tayo na hindi natin alam [R6]</p> <p>(...we can't deny that there really is a lack of knowledge. Because, sir, there are truly things we don't know.)</p>

The theme of academic pressures and strategies includes the codes *academic survival*, *learning dependency*, and *presence of other tools*. Students frequently described using ChatGPT as a strategy to cope with overwhelming workloads and limited time, as expressed by one participant: “Minsan kasi maraming tambak sa activities, so, ginagamit ko din ChatGPT” [R10] (“Sometimes, when there are too many activities piled up, I also use ChatGPT”). While some students found the tool indispensable for academic survival, others expressed reservations, emphasizing their reliance on alternative resources like Google Scholar (“Pero most of the times talaga, sir, nagre-rely po ako sa Google Scholar, sir”) [R8].

The second theme, ethical concerns and misuse, comprises the codes *expectation of competence* and *stigma and concerns*. Students articulated feelings of guilt and self-deception, as one noted: “In the face of others, 'ay ang galing niya kasi nagawa niya yung ganitong bagay,' pero deep inside hindi pala ikaw yung gumagawa” [R9] (“In the face of others, 'Wow, she's great because they accomplished this,' but deep inside, you know it wasn't really you”). Stigma surrounding ChatGPT's association with plagiarism further added to these concerns, as another participant shared: “Nagkaroon po ng paningin sa ChatGPT na for plagiarism po siya” [R9] (“There is a perception that ChatGPT is for plagiarism”). These ethical considerations mirror the conflicting pressures students face between academic expectations and personal accountability.

The third theme, social and environmental influences, is informed by the codes *peer influence*, *teacher influence*, and *cultural and familial influences*. Peer encouragement was a recurring factor, with students often motivated to use ChatGPT by their friends: “Kunwari iaask po yung assignment, imbes na gagawin po naming, sir, 'ichatGPT nalang yan’” [R5] (“For instance, if someone asks about an assignment, instead of doing it, we'd say, 'Just use ChatGPT.'”). However, familial values sometimes deterred misuse, as one student remarked: “My whole family kasi, sir, is a line of teachers. They are always discriminating me kapag nangongopya ako” [R9] (“My whole family is in teaching. They always criticize me when I copy”). These responses illustrate the contrasting social norms influencing students' decisions.

The final theme, technological accessibility and usage, includes the codes *convenience and accessibility*, *curiosity and technology*, and *level of intelligence*. Many students acknowledged that ChatGPT's constant availability made it a convenient resource for academic tasks, as one participant explained: “Kapag kunwari hindi nila alam ang isang bagay, ChatGPT is always there” [R8] (“When students don't know something, ChatGPT is always there”). However, this accessibility also contributed to over-reliance among students who felt academically inadequate, as one participant noted: “Yung dishonest na po sila usually ginagamit nalang nila ChatGPT because 'di na po kaya ng utak po ng iba” [R9] (“Those who resort to dishonesty usually use ChatGPT because they can't handle it intellectually anymore”).

4.2. Behavioral Control in the use of ChatGPT for Learning

On the other hand, Table 2 reveals the perceived behavioral control influencing students' use of ChatGPT for learning. Four themes emerged from the analysis: collaborative and supportive role, contextual and conditional use, knowledge and inspiration, and utilitarian usage. These themes and their corresponding codes can provide an understanding of how students exercise agency and control in their engagement with ChatGPT.

The theme of a collaborative and supportive role includes the codes *support during pressure*, *supportive role*, and *use with other tools*. Students often described ChatGPT as a reliable companion during challenging times, as one noted, “during the time na sobrang tambak and gahol sa oras, as well as pagod na din po... during sa bagyo na din po, I decided to inquire sa ChatGPT” [R7] (“During the time when there were so many tasks and I was short on time, as well as feeling exhausted... during a storm, I decided to inquire with ChatGPT”). ChatGPT's perceived role as a “buddy” or “friend” reflects how students rely on it for emotional and academic support, especially when under stress. This theme also highlights ChatGPT's integration with other tools, as one participant shared, “Since nasanay po ako na ako lapa ang gumagawa ng activities ko po, ginagamit ko po yung Google or Google Scholar po” [R7] (“Since I'm used to doing my activities on my own, I use Google or Google Scholar”).

The second theme, contextual and conditional use, comprises the codes *decision support* and *ethical concerns*. Students often emphasized their agency in making final decisions, with ChatGPT serving as an assistant rather than the primary source of answers. One student explained, “nasa akin yung final decision at sya lang yung nag aassist sa akin for me to get that decision that I want” [R6] (“The final decision is mine, and it just assists me in getting the decision I want”).

Ethical considerations also influenced behavioral control, as some students hesitated to use ChatGPT due to trust issues or concerns about academic integrity. For instance, one participant remarked, “Recently ko lang po nagagamit dahil hindi kopa po siya masyadong pinagkakatiwalan” [R7] (“I've only started using it recently because I don't fully trust it yet”).

Table 2. Thematic analysis of behavioral control in the use of ChatGPT for learning.

Theme	Code	Sample Statements
Collaborative and Supportive Role	Support during pressure	<i>During the time na sobrang tambak and gahol sa oras, as well as pagod na din po... during sa bagyo na din po, I decided to inquire sa ChatGPT [R7]</i> (During a time when I was swamped with tasks and short on time, and already exhausted—even during a storm—I decided to ask ChatGPT.)
	Supportive role	<i>...half teacher and half friend. For me, I treat her as a friend, kasi kung minsan yung ChatGPT talaga yung part na matatakbuhan mo, as in! [R2]</i> (...half teacher and half friend. For me, I treat it like a friend, because sometimes ChatGPT is really the one you can run to, for real!) <i>...parang buddy ko siya in my studies... [R8]</i> (...it's like my study buddy...)
	Use with other Tools	<i>Since nasanay po ako na ako lapa ang gumagarwa ng activities ko po, ginagamit ko po yung google or google scholar po [R7]</i> (Since I'm used to doing my activities myself, I use Google or Google Scholar.) <i>ChatGPT is not a bad thing po, sir. You just have to know to use it properly, but don't use it often. Still, you have to study using literature. [R8]</i> (ChatGPT isn't a bad thing, sir. You just have to know how to use it properly, but don't use it too often. You still have to study using the literature.)
Contextual and Conditional Use	Decision support	<i>...pero sa part ko kasi, sir, nasa akin yung final decision at sya lang yung nag aassist sa akin for me to get that decision that I want [R6]</i> (...but for me, sir, the final decision is mine and it only assists me so I can arrive at the decision I want.) <i>para siyang... assistant, parang ako yung boss [R6]</i> (It's like... an assistant, and I'm the boss.)
	Ethical concerns	<i>Recently ko lang po nagagamit dahil hindi kopa po siya masyadong pinagkakatiwalan. [R7]</i> (I've only started using it recently because I don't quite trust it yet.) <i>I'd rather not do the activity kung gagamit lang ako ng ChatGPT, sir [R9]</i> (I'd rather not do the activity if it would mean just using ChatGPT, sir.)
Knowledge and Inspiration	Exploration	<i>ganun din po ako. Nalaman ko lang din po yung ChatGPT noong 2nd year. [R11]</i> (Same with me. I only learned about ChatGPT in my second year.)
	Guided learning	<i>kumukuha lang po ako ng guide lang po. I used ChatGPT as a guide lang po. [R7]</i> (I only use it as a guide. I use ChatGPT just as a guide.)
	Idea generation	<i>And parang pinagkukuhanan mo lang siya ng idea, at some point kinocopy mo lang po yung some words and paragraphs niya. [R8]</i> (And it's like you just draw ideas from it, and at some point you end up copying some of its words and paragraphs.) <i>Yung topic ko po, sir, inilalagay ko po sa ChatGPT, and then nagpaparowide ako ng pwedeng maging objectives, tapos nirere... parang nagbebase po ako 'dun sa binibigay niyang mga objectives para maiconnect po sa lesson plan ko, sir [R4]</i> (I put my topic into ChatGPT, sir, then ask it to provide possible objectives, and I sort of base my lesson plan on those objectives so I can connect them to my lesson plan, sir.)
	Supplementary knowledge	<i>Kasi, kapag as in wala talagang idea sa isang bagay, siya ang nagproporvide ng knowledge pero, sometimes din hindi naman tama yung knowledge na... dapat... [R3]</i> (Because when you really have no idea about something, it provides the knowledge, but sometimes that knowledge isn't actually correct...)
Utilitarian Usage	Copy-paste practices	<i>Pag di na din po kaya ng knowledge ko na irephrase yung nasa ChatGPT, may possible po na kinokopya ko nalang po yung answer doon. [R4]</i> (If I can't manage to rephrase what's in ChatGPT, it's possible I just copy the answer from there.) <i>May mga times na copy - paste nalang ginagarwa natin, sir. [R5]</i> (There are times when we just copy and paste, sir.)
	Dependent	<i>Kasi minsan, sir, ginagarwa nalang naming yung isang bagay para pumasa. Hindi na para makapaglearn. [R6]</i> (Because sometimes, sir, we just do something to pass—not to learn.) <i>For example, imbes na “for basis” lang eh kinukuha natin lahat, in a way that brinibring out niya yung unintelligent sa atin [R5]</i> (For example, instead of using it just “as a basis,” we take everything, in a way that brings out the unintelligent in us.)
	Paraphrasing support	<i>gagawin nalang nila is to copy paste or either iparaphrase yung mga andun [R8]</i> (What they'll do is just copy-paste or paraphrase what's there.) <i>I am not using ChatGPT po, sir. parang yung ginagamit ko lang is yung paraphrasing... [R9]</i> (I'm not using ChatGPT, sir. It's like I only use paraphrasing...)

Moving on, the theme of knowledge and inspiration captures the codes *exploration*, *guided learning*, *idea generation*, and *supplementary knowledge*. Students reported using ChatGPT primarily as a guide or inspiration for tasks such as lesson planning or generating objectives. One participant stated, “*Yung topic ko po, sir, inilalagay ko po sa ChatGPT, and then nagpaparowide ako ng pwedeng maging objectives*” [R4] (“I input my topic into ChatGPT, and it provides possible objectives”). This theme reflects students’ use of ChatGPT to fill knowledge gaps while remaining aware of its limitations, such as inaccuracies.

The final theme, utilitarian usage, includes the codes *copy-paste practices*, *dependency*, and *paraphrasing support*. While some students admitted to relying heavily on ChatGPT for tasks, others acknowledged the risk of losing critical thinking skills. One participant shared, “*Kasi minsan, sir, ginagarwa nalang naming yung isang bagay para pumasa. Hindi na para makapaglearn*” [R6] (“Sometimes, we just do something to pass, not to learn”). Copy-paste practices and paraphrasing were frequently mentioned as strategies to save time, reflecting the tool’s utilitarian value for efficiency rather than intellectual engagement.

Overall, the themes reveal how students perceive and exercise control over their use of ChatGPT for learning. Behavioral control is shaped by practical needs, ethical awareness, and reliance on the tool’s functionality. While ChatGPT is viewed as a supportive aid, students often condition its use based on their own decision-making and concerns about integrity.

5. Discussion

The visual model in Figure 1 uses Ajzen (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to show how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control interact to influence students' intentions and behaviours when utilising ChatGPT for academic reasons.

The approach starts with attitudes towards ChatGPT. This captures how students view the platform's effectiveness, moral implications, and capacity to enhance learning. It is known that behavioural intentions are founded on positive attitudes, such as acknowledging its value in creating ideas and lowering workloads. In view of ChatGPT, students generally view the tool as a useful tool for managing academic obligations, especially under tight deadlines (Cotton, Cotton, & Shipway, 2024). However, Hua (2023) pointed out that while ChatGPT increases productivity, excessive use may reduce intellectual engagement. Similar patterns of conflict in the adoption of other academic tools were noted by Cheng, Hung, and Hsu (2021), which is consistent with the tension between perceived benefits and disadvantages of AI use.

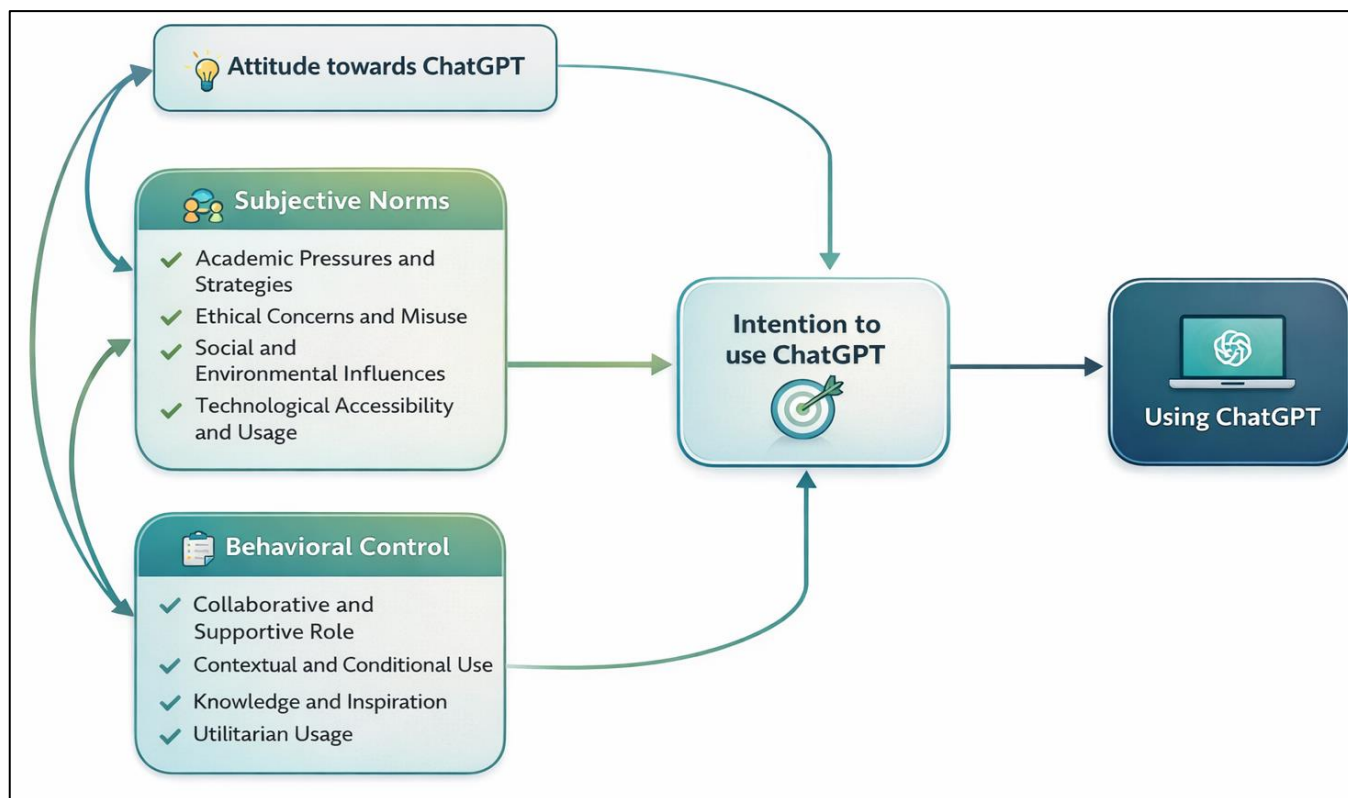


Figure 1. Application of the theory of planned behavior to explain students' use of ChatGPT.

Moving on, the social and contextual forces that impact students' use of ChatGPT are referred to as subjective norms. These pressures are influenced by ambient variables, ethical issues, and academic demands. According to LaDuke (2013), technology tools are commonly used to ease academic stress and therefore, it can be argued that academic demands typically stimulate the usage of ChatGPT as a way to manage workloads. However, ethical considerations create internal debates regarding its suitability. According to Henning et al. (2013), even when students admit the value of these tools, they frequently feel guilty about using them. These dynamics are further complicated by social pressures, such as expectations from family members and peer pressure. For instance, Hua (2023) pointed out that whereas peers might normalise the use of AI, family pressures frequently place an emphasis on conventional ethical principles, which results in conflicting norms. Moreover, technology's accessibility also supports its incorporation into academic routines, even though it can decrease independence and promote dependency (Cotton et al., 2024).

Perceived behavioural control adds a second, decisive layer and reflects students’ sense of capability and restraint in managing AI use. This is consistent with research by Cheng et al. (2021), who found that more ethical use of academic tools is frequently correlated with a stronger sense of behavioural control. A lot of students view ChatGPT as a cooperative tool that helps them deal with stressful circumstances like meeting deadlines or taking

on challenging assignments. This observation is corroborated by Cotton et al. (2024), who point out that the selective and conditional use of AI tools frequently indicates an attempt to balance integrity and practicality. However, LaDuke (2013) cautions against the dangers of dependency as it can unintentionally undermine critical thinking and active learning.

All things considered, the TPB-based model explains that student behavior using ChatGPT is influenced by a dynamic interaction of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control, enhanced by ethical awareness and environmental forces, rather than just personal preference. These results imply that directing the proper and advantageous use of AI in education requires addressing contextual pressures, improving ethical education, and cultivating critical awareness.

5.1. Cross-Case Quantitization

As seen in Figures 2 and 3, cross-case quantitization further demonstrates the comparative nature of this case study. This method connects the qualitative themes derived from interview replies with the quantitative derivation of clusters.

Academic pressures and strategies are equally important in both clusters, as seen in Figure 2, with 38% of responders in each cluster citing this topic as a key motivator for ChatGPT use. Regardless of their unique traits, this alignment shows how outside academic demands, such as workload and time limits, influence behaviour in both groups.

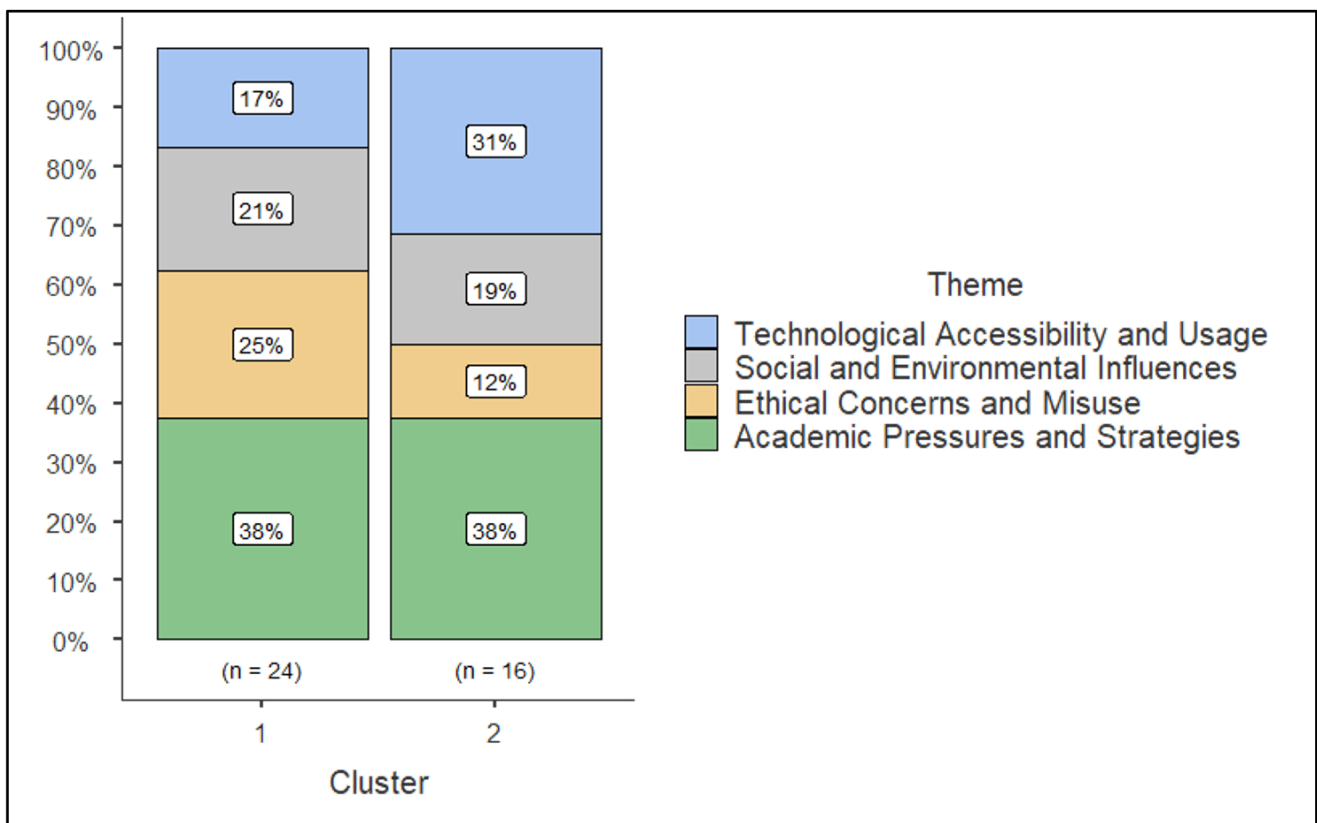


Figure 2. Cluster distribution of subjective norm themes in relation to ChatGPT use.

On some issues, though, the clusters differ greatly. With 31% of the responses emphasizing this issue, technological accessibility and usage are highly significant features for Cluster 2. This implies that the ease of use and accessibility of ChatGPT have a significant impact on students in Cluster 2, which is defined by positive attitudes and a greater tendency for academic dishonesty. Their utilitarian philosophy seems supported by access to AI technologies, as ChatGPT is frequently seen as a rapid way to fulfill academic requirements. On the other hand, this theme is given the least weight by Cluster 1, characterized by more mature epistemological views and moderate ChatGPT use, suggesting a more intentional and less reliant approach to technological use of AI tools.

It is interesting to note that Cluster 1 views Ethical Concerns and Misuse as a more important theme, accounting for 25% of responses, while Cluster 2 views it as the least important, at only 12%. This result aligns with Cluster 1's introspective character. It is noted that its members are more prone to struggle with moral dilemmas related to ChatGPT use.

Additionally, Figure 3's behavioral control themes show clear trends in how the two clusters manage their ChatGPT usage. With 50% of their responses, utilitarian usage stands out as the most common behavioral control for Cluster 2. This implies that students in this group use ChatGPT mainly as a practical tool to fulfill urgent academic needs like copying and paraphrasing information. The pragmatic attitudes seen in this cluster are consistent with their transactional character. Cluster 1, on the other hand, displays a more thoughtful and balanced pattern of behavioral management. Knowledge and Inspiration (37%) and Collaborative and Supportive Role (32%), the two most important themes for this group, suggest that students in Cluster 1 utilize ChatGPT as a tool for guided learning. In other words, these students see ChatGPT as an addition to their self-directed learning methods.

Lastly, with only 7% of responses, the Collaborative and Supportive Role is the least common theme for Cluster 2. This disparity demonstrates how students in Cluster 2 typically use ChatGPT alone. Conversely, Cluster 1's lower prevalence of utilitarian usage (21%) reflects their practice of considering efficiency, but not as the main motivator.

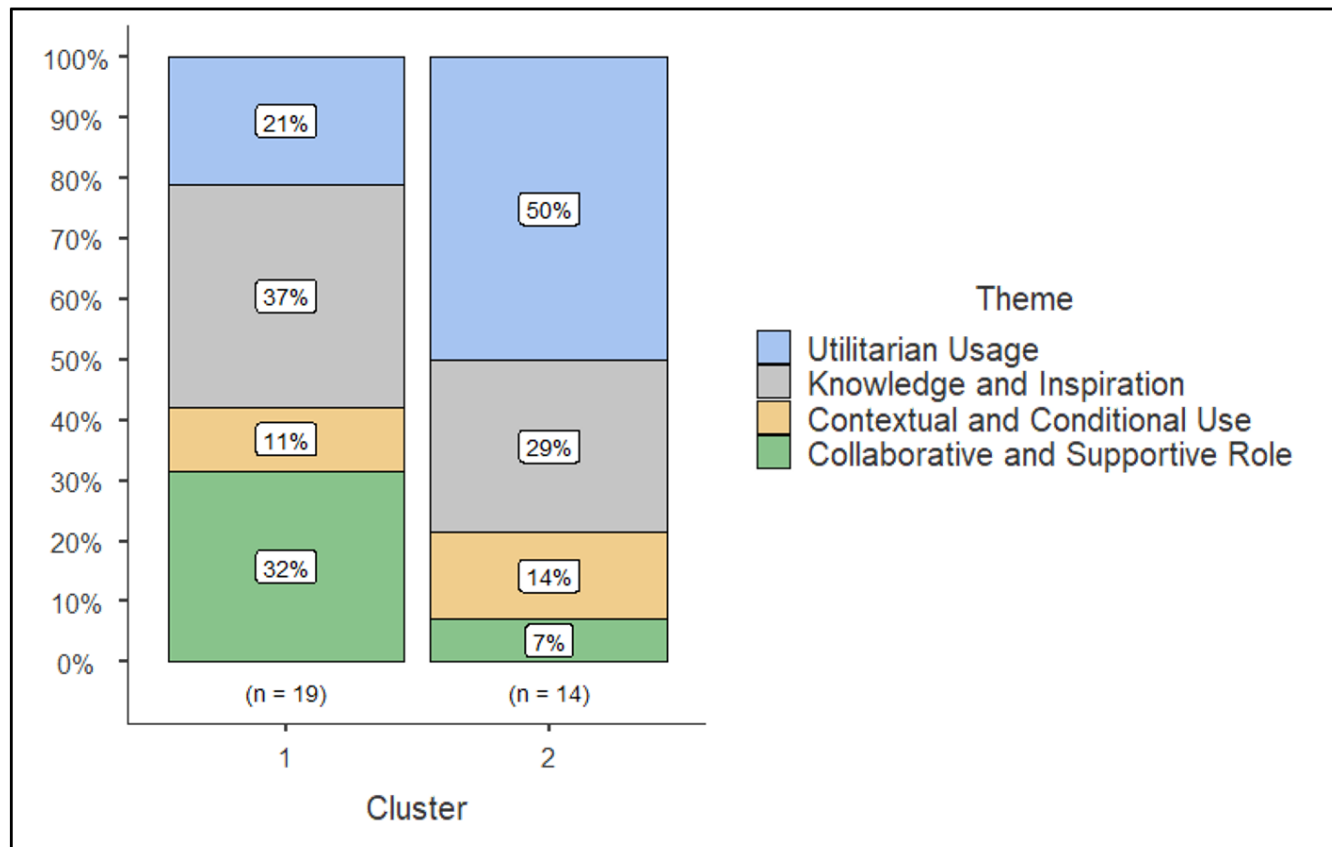


Figure 3. Cluster distribution of behavioral control themes in relation to ChatGPT use.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that the usage of ChatGPT in academic contexts is influenced by a complex interaction between individual attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms. Two clusters of students exhibit different behaviors in the use of ChatGPT. One is defined by transactional engagement and utilitarian views, while the other is defined by ethical and introspective considerations. Cluster 1 engages selectively to support creativity and guided learning within ethical bounds, whereas Cluster 2 uses it instrumentally to meet immediate demands over critical engagement and ethical reflection.

The study therefore recommends the use of instructional approaches that encourage critical thinking, introspective behaviors, and the ethical application of AI. This can be done by implementing an AI-use matrix for class tasks, redesigning assessments to grade both process and product, and running brief oral defenses or spot checks. Lastly, faculty members can also create paste-ready syllabus language and rubrics that reward justified, selective use and penalize copy-paste.

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