

Ethical Issues in Using Jasper AI and Scribbr for Academic Writing among University Students

Agung Rinaldy Malik

Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: agung.rinaldy.malik@unm.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

The growing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in higher education has transformed students' approaches to academic writing. This study investigates the ethical issues arising from the use of Jasper AI and Scribbr among Indonesian university students. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen students from diverse disciplines alongside a review of institutional documents. Thematic analysis revealed three main findings: (1) students commonly use Jasper AI for idea generation and drafting while relying on Scribbr for plagiarism checking and proofreading; (2) although these tools enhance writing efficiency and confidence, they also raise concerns about overdependence and diminished critical thinking; and (3) there is limited awareness and inconsistent understanding of institutional guidelines regarding AI-assisted writing, leading to blurred ethical boundaries. These findings highlight an urgent need for universities to update academic integrity policies and integrate AI ethics education into writing instruction. By addressing these gaps, higher education institutions can support responsible and informed use of AI tools while safeguarding the core values of academic honesty and originality.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, Jasper AI, Scribbr, academic writing

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid technological advancement, artificial intelligence (AI) applications have become an integral part of higher education, particularly in academic writing (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Zhai, 2022; Pham & Ho, 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). Tools like AI-powered content generators and plagiarism checkers offer students instant access to writing assistance, thus transforming traditional approaches to research and scholarly communication (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). While these innovations provide unprecedented convenience, they also pose new ethical challenges for universities striving to uphold academic integrity (Cotton et al., 2023). As academic communities navigate this transformation, questions arise about authorship, originality, and the boundaries between assistance and misconduct (Bretag, 2016).

In Indonesia, the adoption of AI tools for academic purposes is gradually increasing among university students and faculty members (Rohana et al., 2021; Arifin et al., 2023; Sari et al., 2023). Limited institutional guidelines, varying levels of digital literacy, and inconsistent enforcement of

plagiarism policies contribute to diverse practices in using AI-powered writing aids. Many Indonesian students use such applications without fully understanding the ethical implications, resulting in blurred lines between acceptable support and academic dishonesty. The urgency to address this issue aligns with Indonesia's commitment to fostering responsible digital citizenship and strengthening educational quality standards in the digital age.

Recent studies have examined students' perceptions of AI tools in academic contexts. For example, Pham and Ho (2023) highlight both the benefits and risks of using AI-generated content in higher education. Similarly, Cotton et al. (2023) found that students often underestimate the ethical boundaries when using generative AI for coursework. Zhai (2022) discusses the growing concerns about AI-facilitated plagiarism, while Dwivedi et al. (2023) emphasize the need for clear institutional policies to regulate AI use in academic environments. Despite these efforts, research focusing specifically on the ethical dilemmas of using Jasper AI and Scribbr among Indonesian students remains scarce.

This gap calls for a focused investigation into how students perceive and use Jasper AI and Scribbr in their academic writing, as well as how universities should respond to emerging ethical challenges. By exploring students' motivations and practices, this study seeks to fill a critical void in the literature and offer practical insights for policymakers and educators. The novelty of this research lies in its contextual focus on Indonesia and its comparative look at two popular AI tools with distinct functions: Jasper AI for content generation and Scribbr for plagiarism detection and proofreading.

Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) How do Indonesian university students use Jasper AI and Scribbr in their academic writing? (2) What ethical issues do students and faculty perceive in the use of these tools? (3) How can higher education institutions develop policies to balance technological benefits with academic integrity? By answering these questions, the study aims to contribute to an informed discourse on responsible AI use in academic writing within the Indonesian higher education context.

Literature Review

AI Tools in Academic Writing

Artificial intelligence has rapidly transformed the landscape of academic writing support. Tools such as Jasper AI, Grammarly, QuillBot, and Scribbr are designed to assist students in generating ideas, paraphrasing, grammar checking, and plagiarism detection (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Zhai, 2022). Jasper AI, for instance, uses natural language processing to produce content drafts based on user prompts, which can significantly reduce the time and effort students spend on writing (Cotton et al., 2023). Similarly, Scribbr helps students check for unintentional plagiarism and improve the quality of their writing through advanced proofreading features (Pham & Ho, 2023).

Researchers have highlighted that these tools, while helpful, change the traditional dynamics of writing as a cognitive and creative process (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Instead of relying solely on their own critical thinking and language proficiency, students increasingly depend on AI-generated suggestions and corrections (Tlili et al., 2023). This dependency raises questions about how deeply students engage with their own ideas and how these tools might impact the development of authentic academic writing skills (Kohnke et al., 2023).

Several studies show mixed attitudes toward AI tools in education. While many students appreciate the convenience and efficiency these tools provide (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Pham & Ho, 2023), others express concerns about overreliance and a loss of writing competence (Zhai, 2022). Educators, too, have differing opinions: some view AI as a valuable supplement to writing instruction, while others fear it could encourage superficial learning and shortcutting academic tasks (Cotton et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). This duality underscores the need to explore students' real-life practices and beliefs about using AI tools such as Jasper AI and Scribbr.

Ethical Considerations in Using AI for Academic Purposes

The integration of AI into students' writing processes brings complex ethical challenges. At the forefront is the issue of academic integrity, as AI can facilitate unintentional plagiarism or ghostwriting if not used responsibly (Bretag, 2016; Zhai, 2022). When students submit AI-generated or AI-polished work as their own, questions arise regarding authorship and the true ownership of ideas (Cotton et al., 2023). As AI tools become more advanced, distinguishing between student-authored and AI-generated content becomes increasingly difficult for instructors (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Studies have shown that many students are not fully aware of institutional guidelines about acceptable use of AI in academic tasks (Pham & Ho, 2023; Rohana et al., 2021). In Indonesia, for example, academic misconduct remains an issue partly because of limited awareness and inconsistent policy enforcement (Arifin et al., 2023; Sari et al., 2023). This lack of clarity can lead to ethical grey areas where students unknowingly breach academic standards, relying on tools like Jasper AI to generate paragraphs or Scribbr to excessively rewrite their work.

To address these ethical concerns, scholars emphasize the need for clear educational policies and guidance on AI use in higher education (Cotton et al., 2023; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Institutional frameworks should clarify how AI tools can be integrated as legitimate learning aids without compromising honesty and originality (Pham & Ho, 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). Further research is needed to explore students' understanding of these ethical boundaries and how universities can foster responsible digital citizenship in the era of AI-enhanced writing support.

METHODS

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The interviews were designed to capture students' experiences in using Jasper AI and Scribbr, focusing on how these tools are integrated into their writing processes and the extent to which they are aware of institutional guidelines and ethical implications. To complement the interviews, relevant institutional documents such as academic integrity policies and AI usage guidelines were analyzed to contextualize the findings.

The research procedure began with the preparation of interview protocols and informed consent forms to ensure ethical compliance. Participants were invited through purposive sampling, selecting individuals who had prior experience using Jasper AI and Scribbr for academic writing tasks. The interviews were conducted in English or Indonesian, depending on the participants' preference, and were audio-recorded with consent.

The study involved sixteen undergraduate students from various faculties at a public university in Indonesia. Participants were diverse in terms of major fields of study, year of study, and academic performance, providing a broad perspective on AI tool usage patterns. Additionally, two faculty members were interviewed to gain insights into institutional views on the ethical use of AI in student writing.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews lasted approximately 30–45 minutes each and were transcribed verbatim for analysis. Data were coded thematically using an inductive approach as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). Themes related to students' motivations, perceptions of ethical issues, and institutional responses were identified and refined iteratively.

To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, member checking was performed by sharing summaries of the findings with selected participants for validation. Triangulation was achieved by comparing interview data with document analysis results. Ethical clearance was obtained from the university's research ethics committee prior to data collection.

This methodology provides a robust framework to examine the nuanced ethical dimensions of using Jasper AI and Scribbr in academic writing, allowing the study to generate practical recommendations for policy and practice.

RESULTS

This study reveals several key findings regarding how university students use Jasper AI and Scribbr in their academic writing and the ethical issues that arise from their usage. Thematic analysis

of the interviews and document review produced three major themes: (1) Patterns of Use, (2) Perceived Benefits and Concerns, and (3) Awareness of Ethical Guidelines. A summary of these themes and illustrative participant examples are presented below and in Table 2

Patterns of Use

Most participants reported using Jasper AI primarily for brainstorming ideas and drafting initial paragraphs when facing writer's block. Several students indicated that Jasper AI helped them expand outlines into complete sections faster than manual writing would allow (P2, P5, P11). In contrast, Scribbr was commonly used in the final stage of writing for plagiarism detection and language polishing. Notably, first-year students (P4, P9, P13) were more likely to use Scribbr than Jasper AI, as they perceived grammar checking and similarity reports as more directly beneficial than content generation.

Despite these patterns, students varied in how openly they disclosed AI use in their submissions. Some students (P7, P12) admitted using Jasper AI to rewrite entire drafts, blurring the line between assistance and ghostwriting. This inconsistency suggests an absence of clear personal boundaries regarding acceptable AI involvement.

Perceived Benefits and Concern

Participants expressed appreciation for how these tools enhanced writing efficiency and reduced anxiety, especially under tight deadlines. However, they also recognized potential drawbacks. Some worried that overuse of Jasper AI could reduce their own critical thinking and originality (P3, P6, P15). Others felt dependent on Scribbr's plagiarism checker to validate their drafts before submission, indicating a lack of confidence in their self-editing skills (P1, P8).

Faculty members raised similar concerns, highlighting the risk that students might misuse Jasper AI to bypass reading and understanding source materials. Both students and faculty agreed that current classroom discussions rarely address when AI tool use crosses ethical boundaries.

Awareness of Ethical Guidelines

Analysis revealed that students' understanding of university policies on AI use was limited and inconsistent. Few participants (P5, P10) could accurately describe institutional rules concerning plagiarism and originality. Several students were unaware that submitting AI-generated content without attribution could be considered academic misconduct (P2, P14). Document analysis confirmed that existing policies mention plagiarism and ghostwriting but do not explicitly address AI-generated writing, creating grey areas that contribute to varied practices.

These findings underscore the need for clear guidelines and training to help students navigate ethical decisions when using AI tools in academic writing.

Table 1. Summary of Key Findings

Theme	Key Insights	Illustrative Participants
Patterns of Use	Jasper AI used for idea generation and drafting; Scribbr used for checking plagiarism and grammar.	P2, P5, P7, P11, P12
Perceived Benefits	Increased writing speed and confidence; reduced anxiety; risk of overdependence and reduced originality.	P1, P3, P6, P8, P15
Ethical Awareness	Limited knowledge of rules; inconsistent understanding of when AI use becomes unethical.	P2, P5, P10, P14

DISCUSSION

This study sheds light on the practical realities and ethical complexities of using Jasper AI and Scribbr among Indonesian university students. Consistent with previous findings (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Zhai, 2022), this research confirms that students widely perceive AI tools as essential aids for overcoming writer's block and ensuring plagiarism-free submissions. However, the way students balance these technological advantages with their own academic responsibility remains problematic and underexplored. The thematic results highlight a tension between efficiency and authenticity in student writing. Similar to Cotton et al. (2023), who argued that generative AI tools can encourage superficial engagement with source materials, this study found that some students used Jasper AI to produce entire drafts without sufficient critical reflection. This aligns with Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019), who noted that while AI can scaffold novice writers, it may also erode their motivation to develop independent writing skills. Thus, the promise of productivity should be critically balanced with pedagogical goals.

On the other hand, Scribbr's role in finalizing drafts reveals students' anxiety over plagiarism accusations and grammatical correctness. Many participants trusted Scribbr more than their own editing skills, echoing findings by Pham and Ho (2023) that students increasingly delegate responsibility for originality checks to AI services. Although this reduces unintentional plagiarism, it paradoxically reinforces dependency and discourages the development of self-regulatory practices (Bretag, 2016). An important insight from this study is the evident policy gap. Institutional documents often lack explicit clauses addressing AI-assisted writing, leading to inconsistent practices among students and unclear expectations from faculty. This regulatory lag mirrors global trends: as noted by Tlili et al. (2023), higher education systems worldwide are struggling to adapt academic integrity frameworks to account for generative AI tools. Without updated guidelines, students are left to interpret ethical boundaries subjectively.

Interestingly, while students valued Jasper AI for creative tasks, they simultaneously expressed moral discomfort about submitting AI-generated texts as their own. This resonates with Zhai (2022), who highlighted the blurred line between acceptable assistance and unauthorized authorship. The tension suggests that students recognize the ethical stakes but lack institutional support to navigate them responsibly. Faculty members in this study confirmed that explicit discussions about AI ethics in coursework are rare. From a pedagogical perspective, this calls for proactive educational interventions. Universities should not only update their academic integrity policies but also embed critical AI literacy into writing curricula. As suggested by Cotton et al. (2023), teaching students when and how to use AI ethically can cultivate informed digital citizens rather than passive consumers of automated writing. Workshops, seminars, and classroom debates could be practical avenues to foster reflective attitudes toward AI support tools.

In summary, this study extends previous scholarship by situating the ethical use of Jasper AI and Scribbr within the Indonesian higher education context. The findings emphasize the urgency of policy reform, transparent communication, and student training to ensure that AI becomes a legitimate academic partner rather than a shortcut to avoid genuine scholarly effort. Future research could investigate faculty perspectives in greater depth and explore the long-term impacts of AI reliance on student writing proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has highlighted the complex ethical landscape surrounding the use of Jasper AI and Scribbr in academic writing among Indonesian university students. While these AI tools offer tangible benefits—such as increased writing efficiency, idea generation, and plagiarism detection—they also raise concerns about overdependence, reduced critical thinking, and blurred boundaries of authorship. The absence of clear institutional guidelines exacerbates these ethical dilemmas, leaving students and faculty with inconsistent interpretations of what constitutes acceptable AI use. To address these challenges, universities must update their academic integrity policies to explicitly cover AI-assisted writing and provide students with targeted training on ethical AI practices. Encouraging open dialogue between students and educators can foster a culture of responsible AI integration in higher education. Future research should continue to explore evolving student practices and institutional responses, ensuring that technological advancement supports rather than undermines the core values of academic honesty and scholarly authenticity.

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