Comprehensive Journal of Science
Volume (11), Issue (42), (Sapt, 2026)
ISSN: 3104-6266

مجلة العلوم الشاملة
المجلد (11) العدد 42 سبتمبر 2026
ردمد: 3104-6266

Teachers' and Students' Perspectives on the Use of ChatGPT in the Research Methods Course: A Study at Abu-Issa College of Education, University of Zawia, Libya

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Received: 12/9/2026 Revised: 15/9/2026 Accepted: 31/10/2026 Publication: 18/11/2026

Abstract

This study investigated teachers' and students' perspectives on the use of ChatGPT in the Research Methods course at Abu-Issa College of Education, University of Zawia. It aimed to explore students' perceptions of ChatGPT, examine teachers' views, identify its perceived benefits and challenges, and consider ways of promoting its responsible use in research-related learning. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire administered to 30 seventh-semester students from the English Language Department, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with five teachers who had taught the Research Methods course. The questionnaire data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores, whereas the interview responses were examined thematically. The findings revealed that students generally held positive perceptions of ChatGPT and considered it a useful supplementary learning tool. Almost all students (96.7%) reported having used ChatGPT, while 90% indicated that they had used it for course-related purposes. Students particularly valued its ability to generate research ideas, develop research questions, explain difficult concepts, organise information, and improve academic writing. However, the findings also highlighted concerns regarding inaccurate information, unreliable references, excessive dependence on AI-generated responses, and potential negative effects on critical thinking and independent learning. Teachers similarly acknowledged its educational potential but emphasised the risks of copying generated content without sufficient understanding or critical evaluation. Furthermore, 73.3% of students reported receiving no formal guidance or training on responsible ChatGPT use. The study concludes that ChatGPT can support teaching and learning in Research Methods when accompanied by appropriate guidance, critical evaluation, academic integrity, and independent thinking. It recommends providing students with practical training and establishing clear institutional guidelines for its responsible integration into higher education.

Keywords*: ChatGPT, Artificial Intelligence, Research Methods, Higher Education, Students' and Teachers' Perspectives.*

وجهات نظر المعلمين والطلاب حول استخدام ChatGPT في مقرر مناهج البحث العلمي: دراسة على طلبة الفصل الدراسي السابع، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية أبو عيسى، جامعة الزاوية

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الملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء وجهات نظر المعلمين والطلاب حول استخدام ChatGPT في مقرر مناهج البحث العلمي بكلية التربية، أبو عيسى، جامعة الزاوية. وسعت إلى التعرف على تصورات الطلاب تجاه ChatGPT ، واستكشاف آراء المعلمين بشأنه، وتحديد فوائده والتحديات المرتبطة باستخدامه، فضلًا عن بحث السبل الكفيلة بتعزيز توظيفه المسؤول في عملية التعلم المرتبطة بالبحث العلمي.

اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج المختلط، حيث جُمعت البيانات الكمية من خلال استبانة إلكترونية طُبقت على 30 طالبًا وطالبة من طلبة الفصل الدراسي السابع بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية، في حين جُمعت البيانات النوعية من خلال مقابلات شبه منظمة أُجريت مع خمسة معلمين سبق لهم تدريس مقرر مناهج البحث العلمي. وحُللت بيانات الاستبانة باستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي، بما في ذلك التكرارات والنسب المئوية والمتوسطات الحسابية، بينما خضعت إجابات المقابلات للتحليل الموضوعي.

أظهرت النتائج أن الطلاب لديهم تصورات إيجابية عمومًا تجاهChatGPT ، وينظرون إليه بوصفه أداة تعليمية مساندة ومفيدة. فقد أفاد جميع الطلاب تقريبًا (96.7%) بأنهم سبق لهم استخدامChatGPT ، بينما أشار 90% منهم إلى استخدامه لأغراض مرتبطة بالمقرر الدراسي. وتضمنت أبرز الفوائد التي أشار إليها الطلاب قدرته على توليد أفكار بحثية، وصياغة أسئلة البحث، وتوضيح المفاهيم الصعبة، وتنظيم المعلومات، وتحسين الكتابة الأكاديمية.

ومع ذلك، كشفت النتائج عن عدد من المخاوف، من بينها المعلومات غير الدقيقة، والمراجع غير الموثوقة، والاعتماد المفرط على الإجابات التي ينتجها الذكاء الاصطناعي، والآثار السلبية المحتملة لذلك على التفكير الناقد والتعلم المستقل. وبالمثل، أقرّ المعلمون بالإمكانات التعليمية لهذه الأداة، لكنهم أكدوا مخاطر نسخ المحتوى الذي تنتجه دون فهم كافٍ أو تقييم نقدي. علاوة على ذلك، أفاد 73.3% من الطلاب بأنهم لم يتلقوا أي توجيهات أو تدريب رسمي بشأن الاستخدام المسؤول لـ.ChatGPT.

وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن ChatGPT يمكن أن يسهم في دعم عمليتي التعليم والتعلم في مقرر مناهج البحث العلمي، شريطة أن يصاحب استخدامه توجيه مناسب، وتقييم نقدي للمعلومات، والتزام بالنزاهة الأكاديمية، وتعزيز التفكير المستقل. وأوصت الدراسة بتوفير تدريب عملي للطلاب، ووضع إرشادات مؤسسية واضحة تضمن دمج هذه الأداة بصورة مسؤولة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ChatGPT، الذكاء الاصطناعي، مناهج البحث العلمي، التعليم العالي، وجهات نظر المعلمين والطلاب.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has begun to reshape higher education. Among the most widely discussed applications is ChatGPT, which can respond to questions, explain concepts, summarize information, generate ideas, and assist with academic writing. These capabilities have attracted the attention of educators and researchers because they may support teaching and learning, while also raising questions about the appropriate role of AI in academic work (Tlili et al., 2023; Crawford et al., 2023). In English language education, AI tools can provide opportunities for language practice, writing support, vocabulary development, and immediate feedback. Recent research in Libya has also begun to examine these applications. Hmouma (2025), for example, explored Libyan EFL undergraduates' attitudes towards AI-driven English-learning applications and reported generally positive views, particularly regarding personalised learning and feedback. Msimeer (2024) investigated Libyan EFL students' use of ChatGPT for English language learning, while research at the University of Zawia examined the use of AI-generated contextual flashcards to support EFL learners' sentence-level fluency (Karrar et al., 2026). These studies indicate growing interest in AI-supported learning within Libyan higher education.

Beyond language learning, ChatGPT may support students' academic and research-related work. In a Research Methods course, students are expected to identify research problems, formulate questions and objectives, review relevant literature, understand research designs, select data-collection instruments, and develop research proposals. ChatGPT may assist with explaining research concepts, generating preliminary ideas, organising information, summarising studies, and improving academic expression. Abdelhalim (2024), for instance, examined EFL undergraduates' use of ChatGPT for developing research competency and found that students used it in different ways, including idea generation, obtaining supplementary information, and seeking guidance. Libyan research has likewise reported the use of ChatGPT for studying and research-related purposes (Abolkasim & Hasan, 2024; Hamed & Senussi, 2025).

Nevertheless, using ChatGPT in academic work also involves challenges, including inaccurate information, unreliable references, overdependence, and possible threats to academic integrity and independent thinking (Klella, 2024). Its educational value therefore depends on students' ability to evaluate AI-generated responses critically and use the tool responsibly, rather than treating it as a substitute for their own effort.

In this context, the present study focuses on the Research Methods course in the English Language Department at Abu-Issa College of Education, University of Zawia. It investigates both students' and teachers' perspectives on the use of ChatGPT, seeking to identify its perceived benefits, challenges, and role in supporting students' research-related competencies.

2. Statement of the Problem

ChatGPT became increasingly accessible to university students and was used informally for academic purposes. However, its use in Research Methods courses presented both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, ChatGPT could help students understand research concepts, generate ideas, formulate research questions, improve academic language, summarize information, and develop research-related writing. On the other hand, students could become completely dependent on AI-generated content, use inaccurate information, fail to evaluate sources critically, or use ChatGPT in ways that conflicted with academic integrity.

Within the English Language Department at Abu-Issa College of Education, there was a need to understand how teachers and seventh-semester students perceived the use of ChatGPT specifically in the Research Methods course. There was also a need to determine which research-related tasks students believed ChatGPT could support and what concerns teachers and students had regarding its use. Therefore, the problem addressed by this study was therefore the limited understanding of teachers' and undergraduate students' perspectives regarding the appropriate, beneficial, and responsible use of ChatGPT in the Research Methods course.

3. Research Questions

This study seeks to investigate the following questions:

1. What were seventh-semester students' perspectives on the use of ChatGPT in the Research Methods course?
2. What were teachers' perspectives on the use of ChatGPT in the Research Methods course?

3. What benefits did students and teachers perceive in using ChatGPT for developing research skills?
4. What challenges and concerns did students and teachers identify regarding the use of ChatGPT?
5. How could ChatGPT be used responsibly and effectively in the Research Methods course?

4. Research Objectives

The present study aimed to address the following research objectives:

1. To investigate students' perspectives on using ChatGPT in the Research Methods course.
2. To examine teachers' perspectives on ChatGPT use in the course.
3. To identify perceived benefits of ChatGPT for developing students' research skills.
4. To identify technological, academic, ethical, and pedagogical concerns associated with its use.
5. To explore recommendations for responsible integration of ChatGPT into Research Methods teaching.

5. Significance of the Study

The study contributed to research on generative AI in higher education by focusing specifically on a Research Methods course within an English Language Department. For students, the study helped identify appropriate ways of using ChatGPT as a learning-support tool while maintaining independent thinking and academic responsibility. For teachers, the findings provided insight into students' perceptions and needs and assisted in establishing appropriate classroom guidelines. For the department and college, the findings contributed to future policies concerning responsible AI use in academic courses. For future researchers, the study provided a foundation for further research on generative AI, research skills, EFL education, and higher education in Libya.

6. Literature Review

6.1 The Use of Artificial Intelligence in English Language Learning in Libyan Higher Education

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into higher education has created new opportunities for teaching and learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. AI-powered applications can support students in developing their language skills by providing personalised learning experiences, immediate feedback, language practice, and access to educational resources. In Libyan higher education, the use of AI applications has become an emerging area of interest, particularly among university students studying English.

Several Libyan studies have investigated students' use of AI applications in English language learning. Hmouma (2025), in the study "Exploring Libyan EFL Undergraduates' Attitudes Towards AI-Driven English Learning Applications," examined the attitudes of 47 Libyan EFL students from Al-Rifaq University and the University of Tripoli Al-ahlia. The findings indicated that most participants had positive attitudes towards AI-supported language learning. Students particularly appreciated personalised learning and immediate feedback, and many believed that AI applications could help improve their English-speaking skills (Abrahem, et al., 2026; Klella, 2026). However, some participants

expressed concerns about the possibility of AI replacing teachers in the future. These findings suggest that AI applications may provide valuable support for English language learning, although they should complement rather than replace teachers.

Similarly, Msimeer (2024), in "Exploring EFL Libyan Students' Use of AI ChatGPT in English Language Learning," investigated the use of ChatGPT among 71 Libyan university students majoring in English. Participants were undergraduate and postgraduate students from different educational institutions in Misurata. The findings revealed that students were already using ChatGPT to support their English language learning and complete academic tasks. The study highlighted the potential of ChatGPT as a useful educational tool for English language students.

Further evidence is provided by the uploaded Frontiers article (2026), "Automating Language Input: Investigating the Effect of AI-Generated Contextual Flashcards Delivered via Anki on EFL Learners' Sentence-Level Fluency." The study involved EFL learners from the University of Zawia and investigated the effectiveness of AI-generated contextual flashcards in improving sentence-level fluency. The study provides relevant evidence of the potential contribution of AI-supported learning to English language development in the Libyan university context.

Overall, these studies demonstrate growing interest in AI-supported English language learning in Libyan universities. They also indicate that students can benefit from AI applications in language practice, feedback, and academic tasks. Nevertheless, further investigation is needed to understand how students use these tools for specific university subjects, particularly courses that require academic reading, critical thinking, and research-related skills.

6.2 ChatGPT in Higher Education and Its Role in Developing Students' Academic and Research Competencies

ChatGPT has become an increasingly popular AI tool in higher education because of its ability to generate text, explain complex concepts, answer questions, and assist users with different academic tasks. For university students, it can serve as a supportive learning resource, particularly when they need clarification of unfamiliar concepts or guidance in completing academic assignments.

In research-related courses, ChatGPT may assist students in understanding research terminology, identifying research topics, developing research questions, organising ideas, summarising academic information, and improving the language of research proposals. It may also help students understand research approaches, methods of data collection, and the basic stages involved in conducting academic research. These functions are particularly relevant to students enrolled in Research Methods courses, where they are expected to develop the knowledge and practical skills necessary to prepare research proposals and conduct academic investigations.

Evidence from Libyan higher education supports the growing use of ChatGPT for academic purposes. Abolkasim and Hasan (2024), in their study "Integrating ChatGPT in Education and Learning: A Case Study on Libyan Universities," investigated the potential integration of ChatGPT into university education in Libya. Their research collected more than 1,000 responses from students and academic staff across Libyan universities. The findings indicated that scientific research was among the main purposes for which academic staff used ChatGPT, while students commonly used it for studying. The study also reported considerable support for integrating ChatGPT into university education.

However, the researchers highlighted concerns about overdependence on AI, academic integrity, and its possible effects on students' creativity.

Hamed and Senussi (2025), in "Investigating Students' Awareness, Usage, and Perceptions of ChatGPT in Libyan Higher Education: A Case Study at the University of Benghazi in 2024," examined the awareness and perceptions of 108 university students. Their findings showed that although many students were familiar with ChatGPT, its educational use was not always consistent. The researchers emphasised the importance of providing students and lecturers with appropriate guidance and training to encourage responsible and effective use of the application.

These findings demonstrate that ChatGPT has potential value in supporting students' academic and research competencies. However, its effectiveness depends on how students use and evaluate the information it provides. Students should not accept AI-generated information without checking its accuracy, particularly when using academic references, research findings, and theoretical explanations. Therefore, ChatGPT should be considered a supportive academic tool rather than a replacement for students' independent thinking, critical analysis, and research abilities.

6.3 Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT: Benefits, Challenges, and Ethical Considerations

Teachers' and students' perceptions are important factors in understanding the effectiveness and acceptance of ChatGPT in higher education. Although AI applications offer several educational advantages, their use also raises questions about academic responsibility, reliability, independent learning, and the role of teachers in the educational process.

From the students' perspective, ChatGPT may provide immediate explanations, simplify difficult academic concepts, suggest ideas, and support academic writing (Hmouma, 2014; Klella & Al Garaghoolee, 2026). It can also help students overcome language difficulties, particularly when preparing assignments and research proposals in English. For students studying English, these features may make academic tasks more accessible and encourage independent learning.

However, the use of ChatGPT also presents several challenges. Students may become overly dependent on generated answers, accept inaccurate information, or use AI-generated content without understanding it (Mrghem & Klella, 2026). Another important concern is the reliability of academic references produced by ChatGPT, as some references may be incomplete or inaccurate. Such practices may affect students' critical thinking, academic development, and ability to conduct independent research.

Teachers also play an essential role in guiding students towards responsible AI use. Their perceptions can influence how ChatGPT is introduced into university courses and how students are encouraged to use it appropriately (Klella & Mrghem, 2024). Rather than viewing ChatGPT as a replacement for teaching, educators can use it as an additional resource to support explanations, discussions, academic activities, and feedback. At the same time, teachers need to encourage students to verify information, acknowledge the use of AI when required, and maintain responsibility for their own academic work.

The findings of Abolkasim and Hasan (2024) demonstrated that both students and academic staff in Libyan universities showed interest in integrating ChatGPT into education. Nevertheless, concerns about overreliance, academic integrity, and creativity were also identified. Similarly, Hamed and Senussi (2025) highlighted the need for greater

awareness and guidance regarding the appropriate use of ChatGPT among university students.

In addition, Hmouma (2025) reported generally positive attitudes towards AI-supported English language learning among Libyan EFL students, while also identifying concerns about the possible replacement of teachers by technology. These findings indicate that positive attitudes towards AI do not necessarily mean that students and teachers are free from concerns about its educational implications.

Therefore, investigating both teachers' and students' perceptions is important for understanding the benefits and challenges associated with ChatGPT in university education. Their perspectives can provide useful information about how the application is used, the difficulties encountered, and the guidance required to ensure its effective and responsible integration into academic courses.

6.4 Previous Studies on Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT in Libyan Higher Education

Research on Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT in Libyan higher education has begun to attract increasing attention. Several studies have explored students' awareness, attitudes, and experiences, as well as the potential contribution of AI applications to English language learning and university education.

Abolkasim and Hasan (2024) conducted a study entitled "Integrating ChatGPT in Education and Learning: A Case Study on Libyan Universities." The study examined the potential integration of ChatGPT into Libyan universities through an online questionnaire involving more than 1,000 students and academic staff. The findings revealed that ChatGPT was being used for studying and scientific research, and that participants generally supported its integration into education. However, concerns were raised about overreliance, academic integrity, and creativity.

Msimeer (2024) investigated how Libyan EFL university students used ChatGPT in English language learning. The study involved 71 undergraduate and postgraduate students from different educational institutions in Misurata. The findings showed that students used ChatGPT for English language learning and considered it a useful tool for completing different academic tasks related to their field of study.

Another relevant study was conducted by Hmouma (2025), who explored the attitudes of 47 Libyan EFL students towards AI-driven English learning applications. The findings indicated that students generally had positive attitudes towards AI-supported learning, particularly because of personalised learning opportunities and immediate feedback. Nevertheless, concerns about the possible replacement of teachers were also reported.

More recently, Hamed and Senussi (2025) examined students' awareness, use, and perceptions of ChatGPT at the University of Benghazi. Their study involved 108 students from different academic disciplines. The findings showed that students were familiar with ChatGPT but did not always use it consistently for educational purposes. The researchers recommended providing appropriate guidance and training to promote responsible use.

The Frontiers article (2026) also contributes to this growing body of Libyan research through its investigation of AI-generated contextual flashcards among EFL learners at the University of Zawia. Although the study focused on language development rather than research-related competencies, it provides further evidence of the educational potential of AI applications in the Libyan university context.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that AI and ChatGPT are increasingly relevant to teaching and learning in Libyan higher education. Previous research has mainly focused on students' awareness, general educational use, English language learning, and attitudes towards AI applications. However, there remains a need for further research examining the use of ChatGPT in specific university courses, particularly Research Methods courses.

The present study addresses this area by investigating both teachers' and students' perspectives on the use of ChatGPT in the Research Methods course among seventh-semester students at Abu-Issa College of Education, University of Zawia. By considering the perspectives of both groups, the study seeks to provide a clearer understanding of the perceived benefits, challenges, and educational implications of using ChatGPT in developing students' research-related competencies.

7. Methodology

7.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were collected through on-line students' questionnaire, while qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 5 teachers. Combining the two approaches allowed the study to identify general patterns in participants' perceptions while also exploring the reasons and experiences underlying those perceptions. According to Creswell (2014), a mixed-methods research approach involves "collecting quantitative and qualitative data" in order to provide a more comprehensive and complete understanding of the research problem rather than either approach alone. Therefore, employing a mixed-methods approach is valuable for balancing the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another.

7.2 Research Context

The study was conducted at Abu-Issa College of Education, University of Zawia, within the English Language Department. The study focused specifically on the Research Methods course and seventh-semester students enrolled in the department.

7.3 Participants

The participants consisted of 30 seventh-semester English Language students and 5 English Language Department teachers who teach the research method course. The total sample was therefore 35 participants. The students represented the target group that had direct experience with the Research Methods course. The teachers were selected from the same department because of their direct experience with teaching, supervising, or evaluating students' research-related work. By integrating the data collected from both groups, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding the principle of learner usage of ChatGPT, as well as the roles of both teachers and students in fostering it.

7.3.1 Sampling Technique

The study employed a non-probability sampling approach. The seventh-semester students were selected because they were enrolled in the Research Methods course and had direct experience with using ChatGPT for course-related learning activities. This approach can be considered convenience sampling, as the participants were selected based on their availability and accessibility to the researcher (Etikan et al., 2016). The teachers were selected through purposive sampling because they had taught or supervised students in the

Research Methods course and were therefore familiar with students' research-related activities. Purposive sampling is appropriate when participants are deliberately chosen because they possess relevant knowledge or experience related to the research topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Etikan et al., 2016). Participation was voluntary, and the participants were informed about the purpose of the study before completing the questionnaire or participating in the interviews. The final sample consisted of 30 students and five teachers.

7.4 Data Collection Instruments

To address the research questions stated in (see 1.4), the researcher employed two research tools: an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews for obtaining the required data. The following sections provide an overview of these instruments.

7.4.1 On-Line Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire serves as an instrument for collecting quantitative data. Brown (2001, p. 6) defined questionnaires as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting among existing answers.

The questionnaire was designed and developed by the researcher. The researcher categorized the questionnaire into distinct seven sections: background information and use (consisted of 6 items); perceived usefulness (consisted of 10 items); research-skill development (consisted of 10 items); accuracy, critical thinking, and limitations (consisted of 10 items); academic integrity and responsible use (consisted of 8 items); attitudes and future use (consisted of 5 items); and concluded by 3 open- ended questions.

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher utilizing insights from the literature review. The selected statements were utilized to formulate the items of the questionnaire, which focused on investigate seventh-semester students' perspectives on the use of ChatGPT in the Research Methods course. All items in the questionnaire were formatted for a Likert scale response, using a five-rating scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed manually and presented in a table and figures.

7.4.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

As noted by Creswell and Creswell (2017), interviews help researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs, which may not be fully captured through surveys and observations. Interviews are classified into three primary types used in qualitative research: structured interview, semi structured interview, and unstructured interview (Patton, 2015). In this study, semi-structured interview was employed to collect data. Bryman (2016) pointed out that a semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of data collection that integrates a pre- determined set of open-ended questions with the flexibility for the researchers to explore additional topics based on participants' responses.

The researcher adopted this interview format in the study, as it allowed her to start with a predetermined set of questions and then explore further details. The interview schedule served as a framework to keep the discussion on track. The interview schedule primarily included five open ended questions. Semi-structured interview was conducted with 5 teachers who had taught the research method course. The questions addressed benefits,

concerns, effects on research skills, academic integrity, appropriate classroom use, and recommendations.

7.5 Data Collection Procedure

In this study, two instruments were employed to collect data. Initially, online questionnaire was sent to 30 English language students who were studying in the departments of English at Abu-Essa Colleges of Education at Zawia University. The online administration of the questionnaire was chosen due to the difficulty of in-person meetings.

In the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five EFL teachers from the departments of English at Abu-Essa Colleges of Education at Zawia University. The data collected from the questionnaire was utilized to formulate questions for the follow-up semi-structured interviews. Moreover, additional questions were asked during the interviews according to the adaptable nature of semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and were recorded and then transcribed.

7.6 Data Analysis

According to Creswell (2014) data analysis is "An investigation of participants' data, data arrangement, data formation, and data information as the classification of findings construe components of data analysis." Inthis study, Questionnaire data were analyzed using SPSS or an equivalent statistical package. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated. Where appropriate, responses from teachers and students were compared. Interview data were analyzed thematically. The analysis involved familiarisation with the data, initial coding, identification of recurring patterns, development and review of themes, and interpretation of the findings. Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during interpretation so that interview evidence could explain and deepen the patterns identified in the questionnaire data.

8. Results

8.1 Analysis of the online questionnaire responses (N = 30)

The uploaded Google Forms export contained 30 student responses and 54 columns, including the submission timestamp, closed-ended questions, Likert-scale statements, and three open-ended questions. Responses were submitted between 31 October and 10 November 2026.

The analysis uses descriptive statistics: frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for the five-point Likert items, together with a thematic summary of written responses. Likert responses were coded from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The export contained two slightly different response formats (numeric labels and verbal labels); these were standardized before analysis. All 30 cases had usable responses for the Likert statements.

Interpretation guide for means: 1.00–1.80 very low; 1.81–2.60 low; 2.61–3.40 moderate; 3.41–4.20 high; 4.21–5.00 very high. These bands are descriptive conventions, not inferential tests

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Question / response	Frequency	Percentage	Interpretation
Have used ChatGPT: Yes	29	96.7	Nearly all respondents had used ChatGPT.
Have used ChatGPT: No	1	3.3	Only one respondent had not used it.
Frequency: Very often	15	50.0	Half reported very frequent use.
Frequency: Often	6	20.0	One fifth reported often.
Frequency: Sometimes	8	26.7	Around one quarter reported sometimes.
Frequency: Rarely	1	3.3	Very few reported rare use.
Used ChatGPT for Research Methods: Yes	27	90.0	Most had used it for the course.
Used ChatGPT for Research Methods: No	3	10.0	A small minority had not used it for the course.
Confidence: Extremely	2	6.7	
Confidence: Very	7	23.3	
Confidence: Moderately	14	46.7	Moderate confidence was most common.
Confidence: Slightly	4	13.3	
Confidence: Not at all	3	10.0	
Received formal guidance/training: Yes	8	26.7	Fewer than one third had received formal guidance.
Received formal guidance/training: No	22	73.3	Most had not received formal guidance.

Table (1): Background information and ChatGPT use

Overall, ChatGPT use was widespread: 96.7% had used it, and 90.0% had used it for the Research Methods course. However, formal preparation lagged behind actual use: 73.3% reported receiving no formal guidance or training. This indicates a clear need for structured institutional support.

8.1.2 Likert-Scale Results

For each statement, the table reports the mean, standard deviation (SD), and the number and percentage of respondents selecting Agree or Strongly Agree (scores 4 or 5). N = 30 for every listed item.

Dimension	Mean	Agree/Strongly agree %	Level
Perceived learning usefulness (Items 1–10)	3.88	77.3%	High
Support for research skills (Items 17–26)	3.59	63.3%	High
Critical awareness and verification (Items 27–36)	4.12	81.3%	High
Ethical and institutional guidance (Items 37–43 and 45)	4.05	78.3%	High
Future attitudes and acceptance (Items 46–50)	3.85	72.0%	High

Table (2): Students' Responses across the Five Dimensions of ChatGPT Use

8.1.3 Item-by-Item Results

This section presents the descriptive statistics for each questionnaire statement. The results include the mean score, standard deviation (SD), and the number and percentage of students who selected *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* (responses 4 and 5 on the Likert scale). The analysis is based on 30 student responses (N = 30) for each item. The items are presented according to their respective questionnaire dimensions.

Item	Statement	Mean	SD	Agree / strongly agree n (%)
1	I find ChatGPT useful for understanding concepts taught in Research Methods	3.87	1.22	23 (76.7%)
2	ChatGPT helps me generate ideas for a research topic.	4.20	1.00	25 (83.3%)
3	ChatGPT helps me develop or refine research questions.	4.07	0.45	28 (93.3%)
4	ChatGPT helps me formulate a research problem or problem statement.	3.57	1.01	20 (66.7%)
5	ChatGPT helps me understand research approaches and designs.	3.60	1.13	22 (73.3%)
6	ChatGPT helps me identify keywords for searching academic literature.	3.80	1.00	20 (66.7%)
7	ChatGPT helps me understand difficult academic texts or research articles.	3.87	1.17	22 (73.3%)
8	ChatGPT helps me organise ideas for research assignments.	3.97	0.93	24 (80.0%)
9	ChatGPT helps me improve the grammar and clarity of academic writing.	3.93	1.11	25 (83.3%)
10	Overall, ChatGPT is a useful supplementary tool for learning Research Methods.	3.90	1.21	23 (76.7%)
11	ChatGPT helps me understand the stages of the research process.	3.87	0.94	22 (73.3%)
12	ChatGPT helps me distinguish qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research.	3.47	1.01	19 (63.3%)
13	ChatGPT helps me understand sampling methods and participant selection.	3.67	0.76	19 (63.3%)
14	ChatGPT helps me understand questionnaires and interviews as data-collection instruments.	3.50	1.11	20 (66.7%)
15	ChatGPT helps me think of possible questionnaire or interview questions.	3.33	1.06	15 (50.0%)
16	ChatGPT helps me understand basic concepts related to data analysis.	3.63	1.00	23 (76.7%)
17	ChatGPT encourages me to consider different perspectives on a research problem.	3.43	0.94	17 (56.7%)
18	I check ChatGPT's suggestions against course materials or reliable academic sources.	3.57	0.86	16 (53.3%)
19	Using ChatGPT helps me learn to complete research tasks independently.	3.57	1.04	17 (56.7%)
20	ChatGPT helps me identify areas I need to study further.	3.87	0.90	22 (73.3%)
21	I know that ChatGPT can provide incorrect or misleading information.	4.40	0.72	26 (86.7%)
22	I have found information from ChatGPT that I needed to correct or verify.	4.07	0.87	25 (83.3%)
23	I find it difficult to determine whether some ChatGPT responses are accurate.	3.60	1.07	17 (56.7%)
24	ChatGPT may produce references or citations that do not exist or are inaccurate.	3.50	1.01	18 (60.0%)
25	I verify references and factual claims before using them in academic work.	4.13	0.86	26 (86.7%)
26	Using ChatGPT without careful evaluation may weaken students' critical thinking.	4.37	0.85	27 (90.0%)
27	Relying too heavily on ChatGPT may reduce students' ability to work independently.	4.37	0.93	26 (86.7%)

28	ChatGPT sometimes gives answers that are too general for my research needs.	4.00	0.87	23 (76.7%)
29	I understand that ChatGPT responses should not automatically be treated as academic evidence.	4.20	0.85	27 (90.0%)
30	ChatGPT can save time, but its responses still require careful checking.	4.53	0.68	29 (96.7%)
31	I understand the difference between using ChatGPT for support and submitting AI-generated work as my own.	4.00	0.79	21 (70.0%)
32	Students should disclose ChatGPT use when required by their teacher or college policy.	3.57	1.17	20 (66.7%)
33	Using ChatGPT to generate ideas can be acceptable if students evaluate and develop those ideas themselves.	4.20	0.89	26 (86.7%)
34	Submitting AI-generated text without appropriate acknowledgement may constitute academic misconduct.	4.07	1.01	25 (83.3%)
35	Students should use original scholarly sources to support claims in research assignments.	4.20	0.96	26 (86.7%)
36	Teachers should explain which uses of ChatGPT are permitted in this course.	4.00	1.08	21 (70.0%)
37	The department or college should provide clear guidance on responsible ChatGPT use.	4.40	0.72	26 (86.7%)
38	Students need training to evaluate AI-generated information and references.	4.00	1.20	23 (76.7%)
39	I would use ChatGPT again as a supplementary tool for Research Methods.	3.80	0.92	20 (66.7%)
40	I would recommend guided ChatGPT use to other Research Methods students.	3.63	0.81	21 (70.0%)
41	I prefer using ChatGPT alongside textbooks, lectures, and scholarly sources rather than on its own.	4.00	1.17	23 (76.7%)
42	I would participate in training on responsible ChatGPT use for academic research.	3.93	1.14	21 (70.0%)
43	The potential benefits of ChatGPT in Research Methods outweigh its limitations when used responsibly.	3.87	0.90	23 (76.7%)

Table (3): Item-by-Item Descriptive Statistics of Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT Use in the Research Methods Course

8.1.4 Interpretation of the Likert findings

1. Perceived learning usefulness. The overall mean was 3.88 (high). Students generally agreed that ChatGPT helped them generate research ideas (M = 4.20), develop or refine research questions (M = 4.07), organise ideas (M = 3.97), and improve academic grammar and clarity (M = 3.93). The comparatively lower mean for formulating a research problem statement (M = 3.57) suggests that students may need more guided support with this demanding research task.

2. Support for research skills. The dimension mean was 3.59 (high, but the lowest of the five dimensions). Students were positive about understanding research stages (M = 3.87) and identifying areas for further study (M = 3.87). Lower ratings appeared for generating questionnaire/interview questions (M = 3.33), distinguishing qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches (M = 3.47), and understanding questionnaires/interviews (M = 3.50). These are areas where course teaching and practical examples could complement AI support.

3. Critical awareness and verification. This dimension had a mean of 4.12 (high). Students strongly recognised that ChatGPT can provide incorrect or misleading information (M = 4.40), and that excessive reliance may reduce independent work (M = 4.37) or weaken critical thinking (M = 4.37). The item on checking references and factual claims before use also scored highly (M = 4.13). However, self-reported awareness does not prove that students consistently verify information in practice.
4. Ethical and institutional guidance. The mean was 4.05 (high). Students supported clear institutional guidance (M = 4.40) and training to evaluate AI-generated information and references (M = 4.00). They also endorsed using original scholarly sources (M = 4.20) and disclosing AI use when required (M = 3.57). The lower disclosure score may indicate that expectations around acknowledgement need to be made clearer.
5. Future attitudes and acceptance. The dimension mean was 3.85 (high). Students generally preferred using ChatGPT alongside textbooks, lectures and scholarly sources (M = 4.00) and were willing to participate in training (M = 3.93). Willingness to recommend guided use (M = 3.63) and to use ChatGPT again (M = 3.80) was positive, though less strong than their recognition of the need for safeguards.

8.1.5 Multiple-response question: purposes of use

The purpose question allowed respondents to select more than one option. The spreadsheet export stored the selected options as combined text strings rather than separate fields, and the labels were not consistently formatted. Therefore, the exact option-by-option counts cannot be reliably reconstructed from this export without the original Google Forms question-level summary. The written comments nevertheless repeatedly mentioned understanding research concepts, generating and organising ideas, developing research questions, summarising readings, improving academic writing, and clarifying research methodology. Treat these as qualitative patterns, not precise multiple-choice frequencies.

Theme 1: Understanding difficult concepts and research methods
Students frequently described ChatGPT as useful for simplifying complex concepts, explaining research terminology, clarifying research methodology, and distinguishing research approaches.

Theme 2: Generating and organising research ideas
Responses referred to brainstorming research topics, refining titles and research questions, formulating research problems, structuring ideas, and planning assignments or research projects.

Theme 3: Academic writing and language support
Students mentioned grammar correction, academic vocabulary, paraphrasing, summarising, improving clarity, and organising literature-review content.

Theme 4: Practical support with research instruments and tasks
Some respondents valued suggestions for questionnaire and interview questions, research outlines, literature-search terms, and explanations of data-analysis concepts.

Theme 5: Inaccuracy, unreliable references, and general answers
The most frequently recurring concern was inaccurate information or fabricated/unreliable citations. Students also noted overly general, irrelevant, outdated, or insufficiently specific responses.

Theme 6: Over-reliance and academic integrity
Several respondents warned that excessive dependence on ChatGPT could weaken independent thinking and research skills or lead to plagiarism and inappropriate submission of AI-generated text.

Theme 7: Need for training and clear rules
Students recommended instruction on effective prompting, checking facts and references, using reliable academic databases, avoiding plagiarism, acknowledging AI assistance, and treating ChatGPT as support rather than an author or source of evidence.
The open-ended answers therefore reinforce the quantitative findings: students value ChatGPT mainly as an explanatory and organisational aid, but they are also aware of reliability and over-dependence risks. Their recommendations consistently call for practical training and clear course-level rules.

8.1.6 Main findings in relation to the study

- ChatGPT was already widely used by the respondents, including for the Research Methods course.
- Students perceived it as helpful for understanding concepts, generating ideas, organising research work, and improving academic writing.
- Support for specific methodological skills was positive but comparatively weaker, especially questionnaire/interview question development and understanding research instruments.
- Students demonstrated strong awareness of inaccurate information, unreliable references, and the risks of over-reliance.
- Formal guidance was limited: nearly three quarters reported no previous training, while respondents strongly supported institutional guidance and practical training.
- Students generally favoured guided use alongside conventional academic sources rather than replacing lectures, textbooks, scholarly literature, or their own thinking.

8.1.7 Ready-to-use academic summary

The analysis of the students' questionnaire (N = 30) revealed that ChatGPT was widely used in the Research Methods course. Almost all respondents (96.7%) reported having used ChatGPT, while 90.0% indicated that they had used it for course-related purposes. The findings showed generally positive perceptions of its usefulness, particularly in generating research ideas, developing research questions, organising ideas, clarifying difficult concepts, and improving academic writing. The mean scores across the five analytical dimensions ranged from 3.59 to 4.12, indicating generally high levels of agreement. The strongest dimension concerned critical awareness and verification (M = 4.12), reflecting students' recognition of inaccurate information, unreliable references, and the risks of excessive dependence. In contrast, support for specific research skills received the lowest

dimension mean (M = 3.59), with questionnaire/interview question development and understanding research instruments emerging as areas requiring further support. A notable finding was that 73.3% of respondents had not received formal guidance or training on responsible ChatGPT use, despite strong support for institutional guidance and practical training. The open-ended responses confirmed that students valued ChatGPT as a tool for explanation, brainstorming, organisation, and language support, but were concerned about inaccurate information, fabricated references, general answers, plagiarism, and over-reliance. Overall, the findings suggest that ChatGPT may serve as a useful supplementary learning tool in Research Methods when its use is accompanied by clear ethical guidance, source verification, and continued emphasis on students' independent thinking.

8.2 Analysis of Teachers' Interview Responses

The interviews with five teachers from the English Language Department explored their perspectives on students' use of ChatGPT in the Research Methods course. The analysis of their responses revealed the following main themes:

8.2.1 Students' Use of ChatGPT in Research Activities

The teachers reported that students used ChatGPT for different research-related tasks, including generating research ideas, writing literature reviews, preparing research instruments, summarising long texts, and understanding research concepts. However, some teachers observed that students tended to copy the generated information without sufficiently understanding or adapting it to their research topics.

8.2.2 Support for Understanding Research Concepts

The teachers recognised that ChatGPT could help students understand research topics by providing brief explanations, suggestions, and guidance on conducting research. Nevertheless, they emphasised that students needed to develop the ability to connect the information provided by ChatGPT with their own research objectives.

8.2.3 Accuracy and Reliability of Information

A major concern raised by the teachers was the accuracy of information and the reliability of references generated by ChatGPT. One teacher specifically highlighted that inaccurate references could lead to false information and misleading research conclusions. Other teachers also expressed concerns about students accepting AI-generated information without sufficient verification.

8.2.4 Critical Thinking and Independent Learning

The teachers expressed concerns about students' excessive dependence on ChatGPT. They believed that relying too heavily on AI-generated answers could weaken students' critical thinking, creativity, and ability to work independently. One teacher described this dependence as potentially causing intellectual laziness and reduced mental engagement.

8.2.5 Recommendations for Responsible Use

Despite these concerns, the teachers acknowledged the educational value of ChatGPT when used appropriately. They recommended that students use it as a supportive tool for understanding research topics, developing ideas, and locating relevant academic references. They also emphasised the importance of checking information against reliable academic sources and maintaining independent thinking throughout the research process.

8.2.6 Overall Conclusion of the Teachers' Interviews

Overall, the four teachers' responses indicated that ChatGPT could provide valuable support for students undertaking research activities, particularly in understanding concepts, generating ideas, preparing research instruments, and organising academic information. However, the interviews also revealed concerns about overdependence, inaccurate references, copying generated answers, and the possible weakening of critical thinking and independent learning. The teachers generally agreed that ChatGPT should be used as a supplementary academic tool rather than a replacement for students' own efforts and intellectual abilities. Therefore, appropriate guidance, critical evaluation, and responsible use of AI were considered essential for making ChatGPT beneficial in the Research Methods course.

9. Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that ChatGPT was widely used by seventh-semester students at Abu-Issa College of Education and was generally viewed as a useful supplementary tool in the Research Methods course. Almost all students (96.7%) had used ChatGPT, and 90% had used it for course-related tasks. Students particularly valued its support in generating research ideas, developing research questions, organising information, clarifying difficult concepts, and improving academic writing. The overall mean scores across the five questionnaire dimensions were high, ranging from 3.59 to 4.12. These results indicate positive perceptions of ChatGPT's potential, rather than evidence that it directly improved students' research performance.

The positive perceptions broadly correspond with previous studies in the Libyan higher-education context. Msimeer (2024) reported that Libyan EFL students used ChatGPT for language learning and academic tasks, while Hmouma (2025) found generally positive attitudes towards AI-supported learning, particularly its immediate feedback and personalised support. Abolkasim and Hasan (2024) also identified academic and research-related uses of ChatGPT in Libyan universities. In addition, Mohd Mohd Nor and Aziz (2026) reported that students in a Research Methodology course used ChatGPT for activities such as generating literature-review ideas, summarising information, developing research questions, and paraphrasing. The present findings therefore support the view that ChatGPT can assist students with several stages of academic and research work.

However, the findings also revealed important limitations. Support for specific methodological skills was the lowest-rated dimension (M = 3.59), particularly the development of questionnaire and interview questions. This suggests that students may find ChatGPT more helpful for general explanation and idea generation than for applying research methods to practical tasks. The five interviewed teachers reinforced this concern: they observed that some students copied AI-generated responses without understanding or

adapting them to their research objectives. They also expressed concern about students' limited critical evaluation and independent thinking. This difference between students' generally positive ratings and teachers' concerns highlights the distinction between perceiving ChatGPT as useful and using it effectively.

A further important finding was the gap between frequent use and formal preparation. Although 73.3% of students reported receiving no formal guidance or training, they showed strong awareness of possible inaccuracies, unreliable references, and overdependence. For example, the mean scores for recognising that ChatGPT may provide misleading information and that excessive reliance may weaken independent thinking were 4.40 and 4.37, respectively. Students also strongly supported institutional guidance (M = 4.40). This is consistent with Hamed and Senussi (2025), who emphasised the need for guidance and training to encourage responsible use of ChatGPT in Libyan higher education.

The study by Karrar et al. (2026), which investigated AI-generated contextual flashcards for EFL learners at the University of Zawia, provides related local evidence of the growing role of AI-supported learning. Although it focused on sentence-level fluency rather than research competencies, it reinforces the relevance of examining how AI tools can support learning in the same university context. Taken together, the present findings indicate that ChatGPT should be integrated into the Research Methods course as a guided supplementary resource, not as a substitute for teaching, scholarly sources, or students' own reasoning. Practical training should therefore address effective prompting, checking references against original sources, ethical acknowledgement, and the independent development of research ideas. Since the questionnaire involved 30 students and the interviews involved five teachers, the findings should be interpreted within the limits of this sample and should not be generalized to all Libyan university students.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study revealed that ChatGPT was widely used and generally perceived positively by seventh-semester students in the Research Methods course at Abu-Issa College of Education. Students recognised its usefulness in generating research ideas, understanding difficult concepts, organising information, and improving academic writing. However, the teachers' interviews highlighted concerns about students' overdependence on ChatGPT, copying AI-generated answers, and limited critical thinking and independent learning. The findings also revealed a need for more practical guidance and training to help students use this technology effectively and responsibly. These results are generally consistent with previous studies conducted in Libyan higher education, which emphasised both the educational potential of AI tools and the importance of appropriate guidance. Therefore, the study concludes that ChatGPT can be a valuable supplementary tool in the Research Methods course, provided that its use is accompanied by critical evaluation, academic responsibility, and independent thinking rather than replacing students' own efforts and research abilities.

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