

ChatGPT in High School Learning: Exploring Student Perceptions, Uses and Ethical Implications

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions, experiences, and ethical considerations of specific Grade 10 students regarding the use of ChatGPT in secondary education. The study employed a qualitative research design and the data are gathered through one-on-one interviews with 10 Grade-10 learners as participants in a public school. The data were analyzed using Creswell's Framework of Qualitative Data through thematic analysis. The research findings include ChatGPT as perceived positively in assisting students' learning in subjects, such as Science, Math, English, Filipino, and MAPEH. The learning tool specifically helps in summarizing, organizing, spelling, problem solving, academic writing, translating difficult words, building vocabulary, generating pictures, and managing time. The result was aligned to the Constructivist Learning Theory where students use higher order thinking skills, independent, and critical thinking when combining new information to existing knowledge and making connections in understanding the lesson. The study emphasized that students recognized the risks of over-reliance, laziness, academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and over-dependence on ChatGPT and the limits they encountered such as incorrect and misleading information, and inappropriateness of responses to students' level and age. Moreover, students considered ethical practices and were responsible by checking and verifying AI-generated information, creating new ideas, combining existing knowledge to new information, rewriting it in their own words, and limiting how they could use it and only in subject areas where they have difficulty learning. Students emphasized the use of ChatGPT as a learning support and not a replacement for learning.

KEYWORDS: ChatGPT, perceptions, ethical concerns, constructivist learning theory, learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer just a concept for the future; it is now a reality that is changing the way people learn and understand information. Russell and Norvig (2020) point out that AI systems are useful across many industries because they can think, learn, and make decisions in ways like humans, making them highly valuable in business. In the field of education, AI has an even greater impact, providing students with access to activities that would otherwise be unavailable and encouraging them to tackle subjects that are more challenging.

When it comes to artificial intelligence, the product known as ChatGPT, which was developed by OpenAI, is among the most important products that have been introduced over the course of the last few years. People are interested in thinking about how it can change the way that people learn and teach because it can offer answers that are reasonable and suitable for the situation. According to Caldarini et al. (2022), the development of conversational agents has made it feasible for users to take part in discussions that are more natural. This is a consequence of the fact that users are now able to participate in conversations. The use of ChatGPT is no longer restricted to the only purpose of automating operations; at this point, it also has the capability of functioning as a means of gathering fresh information. A substantial number of students use ChatGPT for the purpose of producing unique ideas, simplifying issues that are difficult to grasp, and improving their writing talents, according to the results of research carried out by Alzubi et al. (2025) and Skrabut (2023). These findings imply that a significant number of students utilize ChatGPT. It is now being implemented at a sizable number of secondary schools, in addition to colleges and other institutions located all around the country. It is possible to explain this occurrence by stating that students are gaining more information and becoming more proficient in the usage of various forms of technology. Sabzalieva and Valentini (2023) have noted that ChatGPT is able to aid persons in the process of acquiring information about a wide range of subjects and gathering feedback in a timely way.

On the other hand, the academic community continues to approach the situation with a cautious attitude. The authors Cotton et al. (2023) have proposed that generative artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to improve both the efficiency of operations and the capacity to provide individualized learning experiences. However, it also can simultaneously pose hazards, notably with respect to the integrity of the academic work and the dependence of the students of the institution. It was Cotton and his

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colleagues that were responsible for carrying out this study. People who are working in education are expected to show prudence with respect to the possible negatives, while at the same time exhibiting excitement for fresh ideas. This responsibility arises because of the contradiction that has been presented. The use of ChatGPT at educational institutions is a beneficial notion; nevertheless, putting this concept into action would not be a straightforward endeavor to do. The objective of this study is to analyze the perceptions and experiences of high school students in the Philippines in connection to their use of ChatGPT as educational support. The purpose of this research is to explore the academic activities that students use ChatGPT for, assess the advantages and problems that they experience, and analyze the way they respond to ethical issues such as academic dishonesty and excessive dependency on the platform. Both aspects will be investigated.

The Constructivist Learning Theory

The Constructivist Learning Theory, which was first developed by Piaget (1952) and subsequently built upon by Vygotsky (1978), serves as the basis. Taking into consideration this idea, which acts as the background, this investigation is organized around it. Students actively generate their own knowledge, according to the constructivist framework, which is a framework for the study of education. According to Piaget, the process of acquiring new knowledge and adjusting to it is the primary factor that contributes to the development of cognitive capacities. He places a considerable lot of attention on the process that is being described. In contrast, Vygotsky placed a significant amount of emphasis on the significance of social interaction, language, and scaffolding in the process of assisting students in achieving higher levels of learning. He believed that these three factors were essential to the success of the learning process. He believed these three aspects made a significant contribution to the achievement of the pupils. It is consistent with Vygotsky's idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) that ChatGPT has the potential to be employed as a scaffolding tool from the very beginning of the learning process. ChatGPT can aid students by acting as a "more knowledgeable other" and guiding them through the process of explaining difficult ideas, offering examples, and directing them until they are ready to study on their own, as stated by Popenici and Kerr (2017). ChatGPT can provide help to students. To prepare the kids for the first time that they would be able to study alone, this is done.

Contrarily, the constructivist viewpoint focuses an emphasis on the relevance of actively engaging in the process of knowledge development. This is because constructivism views knowledge as something that is constructed. Not only do students can acquire new information via the process of interacting with ChatGPT, but they are also required to assess, analyze, and apply the answers to the academic issues that they come across. In accordance with Piaget's theory, education is an active adaptation that takes place via the processes of absorption and accommodation (Piaget, 1952). The process of learning is something that occurs. Using this method, Piaget's perspective on learning is shown in this manner, which is exemplified by the approach.

Within the third domain, constructivism places an emphasis on the relevance of students participating in critical thinking and analysis of a broad variety of different subject matter. This is done to make the most of the educational experience. The students have been given the responsibility of determining whether the replies collected via the usage of ChatGPT platforms are reliable and to what extent they are beneficial. This occurs because the responses do not always give information that is correct. To successfully navigate learning environments that are enhanced by artificial intelligence, it is essential to possess both metacognitive awareness and ethical responsibility (Selwyn, 2022). The completion of this activity contributes to the development of both characteristics, which are essential for being able to traverse the surroundings that are being discussed.

Within the framework of the learner and the flexibility that they possess, constructive ism puts learning in the context of the learner. This is the last factor that must be considered about the situation. Using ChatGPT, students in high school in the Philippines can engage in independent study as well as personalized research. The fact that there are restrictions regarding accessibility and technical abilities does not change the reality that this is the case.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the last few years, there has been a growing interest among educators and academics in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in educational settings. This attention has been focused on the usage of AI in educational settings. The fact that ChatGPT has the capacity to make high school education more accessible to a wider number of folks has resulted in a substantial amount of attention being focused on the platform.

A. The Conception of AI

In the field of computer science, the field known as artificial intelligence (AI) focuses on the development of computers that can do tasks that would ordinarily need the intelligence of a human person. The concept of artificial intelligence (AI) can be traced back to the 1950s, when educators such as John McCarthy and Alan Turing began investigating the possibility of computers exhibiting human-like behaviors and reasoning (McCarthy, 2007; Turing, 1950). This was the beginning of the field of artificial intelligence. At this point in time, the concept of artificial intelligence was first imagined. Some of these subfields include robotics, computer vision, machine learning, and natural language processing, amongst others. The process of designing computer programs that can learn, reason, and respond in a way that is intelligent is referred to as artificial intelligence (AI). The limitations of what robots can do in circumstances that are both straightforward and complex are pushed to their limits because of this.

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Worldwide research on higher education concluded that the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) has made it feasible to construct language models that are more sophisticated and adaptable (Zhai, 2023). This was the result reached by the study. Among the findings of the research, this was one of the conclusions. According to Goodfellow et al. (2016), generative artificial intelligence is a sort of artificial intelligence that creates new material by learning from data that has been obtained in the past. This type of AI is characterized as a type of AI that generates new content. The ability to generate outputs in a wide range of domains, such as text, photos, music, and other objects that fall under the category of outputs, is possessed by these models.

B. ChatGPT as a Learning Tool

OpenAI is the organization that is responsible for the invention of ChatGPT, which is one of the most well-known instances of developing artificial intelligence (GenAI). ChatGPT was developed by OpenAI. A growing number of academics are becoming aware of how useful it may be, especially for the goal of aiding students who attend a variety of educational institutions, as stated by Hsu (2024), Maurya (2024), and Nugroho et al. (2023). This is particularly true for the purpose of assisting students who attend diverse educational institutions.

There have been a significant number of studies that have investigated the possibility that ChatGPT might assist students in addressing challenging problems and acquiring understanding of academic material (Nugroho et al., 2023; Wang & Fan, 2025). The likelihood that ChatGPT may be of assistance to pupils is something that these researchers have taken into consideration. This is a possibility that may be considered a possibility. Researchers from the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), as well as those working in the fields of language and writing education and training that focuses on skills, have conducted research to evaluate the potentially useful uses of ChatGPT in the educational setting. For helping in the process of problem-solving and teaching complicated concepts and principles, the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), which include subjects such as mathematics, science, and physics, have made use of ChatGPT (Sun et al., 2024).

C. Students' Perceptions of ChatGPT and Its usage

There is a broad variety of students that are of the view that ChatGPT is an effective teaching tool that can be used in a variety of different learning environments. The use of ChatGPT results in the generation of ideas, the summarization of texts, and the discovery of research papers. There are three functions that are regarded to be the most important. Only a very tiny fraction of people utilized it for writing that was either creative or accomplished for professional aims, according to the findings of the study that Ravselj D. and his colleagues carried out in the year 2025. It is vital to have laws in place that regulate artificial intelligence at all levels of education to avoid cheating, plagiarism, and dependency on technology. These policies should be developed and implemented. Students were under the impression that technology might improve their learning, but it is critical to have rules in place that regulate artificial intelligence. According to Ravselj D. et al. (2025), individuals were of the view that ChatGPT was beneficial for the aim of learning a more thorough knowledge of artificial intelligence (AI), digital communication, and the generation of content.

ChatGPT is a popular choice among students. According to Wulundari, Setiyono, and Ngafif (2025), the students chose ChatGPT as their platform of choice because it helped them acquire new terminology that they had not previously known. Even though the app is typically amusing and helps students in their educational endeavors, the findings of the research show that there are a few small technical flaws and uncertainties of a more minor kind. As a result of further study, it has been shown that the perspectives of students differ depending on the socio-demographic and geographical characteristics of the regions in which they are situated. As an additional point of interest, the meta-analysis that was carried out by Wang J. and Fan W. (2025) offers evidence that ChatGPT has a favorable influence on the learning performance, perceptions of learners, and higher-order thinking. These data from the research provide credence to this assertion. According to Wang J. and Fan W. 2025, the use of ChatGPT might also be utilized in STEM and other courses, as well as in training programs for language acquisition, academic writing, and the development of skills and competencies, with the intention of supporting students in acquiring more knowledge.

D. ChatGPT's Ethical Concerns or Issues

Students that utilize ChatGPT as a learning tool are placed in a situation where they are faced with a wide variety of ethical challenges and concerns. There are a lot of problems that are linked with artificial intelligence models such as ChatGPT, and one of the most essential characteristics of these models is the fact that they are associated with many dangers. The use of algorithms that are difficult to understand, such as "black box" algorithms, the possibility of discrimination and bias, the exposure to content that is not appropriate, violations of copyright, plagiarism, and the production of text and media that is false or misleading are some of the dangers that are associated with the use of these algorithms (Sloan et al., 2024). According to the findings of a study that was published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the most significant

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problems include threats to academic integrity, a lack of clear legal rules, risks to privacy, cognitive biases, problems with gender and diversity, restricted access, and the commercialization of artificial intelligence technologies. The impact that ChatGPT will have on the honesty of academic work is going to be one of the most significant problems that it will bring about in the sphere of higher education. When it comes to the chance that students may utilize ChatGPT to participate in dishonest activities such as plagiarism or cheating while they are taking exams or completing assignments, educators and educational institutions are becoming more worried about the possibilities.

Research was carried out by Dwivedi (2023) that brought to light the ease with which one might duplicate, the choking of originality, and the fading of unique variances among writers. The Italian authorities in charge of data protection have concluded that the collection and storage of personal data regarding the training of ChatGPT did not serve any legitimate purpose. This conclusion was reached after the authorities made their determination. Another reason that led to the emergence of ethical concerns about the program is the fact that the application is unable to verify the ages of the people who use it. According to this, it is possible that it will provide youngsters the chance to see stuff that is not suitable for them, which is a risk that has the potential to materialize.

Furthermore, ChatGPT does not adhere to any moral standards and is not aware of the distinction between claims that are true and those that are not true. When the number of individuals who use artificial intelligence to process and analyze data continues to expand, there is a corresponding growth in the number of people who are worried about the privacy and security of their personal data. This is occurring because artificial intelligence is becoming more prevalent. The significance of keeping personal information in a secure manner has significantly increased, as stated by Sidiropoulos and Anagnostopoulos (2024). If we had to describe the problem in a more precise manner, we would say that ChatGPT has a detrimental effect on the dependability, clarity, and fairness of online examinations.

SUMMARY

Students who are interested in a wide array of academic subjects have proved that ChatGPT is able to respond to their requirements and give aid to them. When it comes to the educational system, the great majority of students agree that it is a beneficial tool for tasks such as the growth of ideas, the summarization of information, and the enhancement of writing. This is the consensus among the students. When using the instrument, however, the efficacy of the instrument is contingent upon several various factors, such as the backgrounds of the students and the strategy that is used when you are using the instrument. Although these are great qualities, there are still significant ethical considerations that need to be taken into mind. Finding a balance between being responsible and being imaginative is of the highest relevance for educators and educational institutions in the context of the use of artificial intelligence in the classroom. This is of the biggest importance. This is because ChatGPT has both positive and negative qualities, which account for this result. This is the consequence that arises because ChatGPT is connected to both good and negative connotations.

Statement of the problem

This study aimed to explore the experiences and perceptions of high school students regarding their use of ChatGPT as a learning tool. It specifically sought to identify the academic functions of ChatGPT as used by students, the benefits and challenges they encounter, and how they respond to ethical concerns such as academic dishonesty and overdependence.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do high school students perceive the role of ChatGPT in enhancing their learning experiences?
2. For which academic tasks do students perceive the role of ChatGPT in enhancing their learning experiences?
3. How do students address ethical issues such as academic integrity and over-reliance when using ChatGPT for schoolwork?

III. METHODOLOGY

In achieving the objectives of this research, participants were asked to provide their in-depth views, real-life experiences, and information on ChatGPT as a learning tool. The goal was not just to collect data, but to understand how students truly interact with and perceive ChatGPT in their everyday learning. The researchers carried out their investigation by using a qualitative descriptive technique, as stated by Creswell (2014). It was decided to use this design to gather data that is not only comprehensive but also reliable on the use of ChatGPT by students, their viewpoints on the benefits that it provides, and the ethical challenges that they have found. In addition, the researchers took the choice to conduct one-on-one interviews with the participants. They also used audio recording to ensure that the data they gathered for further analysis was correct and clear.

A. Participants

The participants of this study were ten Grade 10 students aged 15–16 years old from a school located in Janiway, Iloilo. Participants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) they belonged to the junior high school level, specifically Grade 10; (2) they were 15–16 years old, representing Filipino adolescents who are digitally literate and likely to experiment with emerging technologies; (3) some had access to quality mobile devices or computers with fast internet connectivity while others have

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outdated gadgets and limited internet connection; and (4) they demonstrated familiarity with using online resources particularly ChatGPT for academic purpose.

B. Selection Process

The participants were selected using the procedure of purposive sampling, since specifically intended to conduct an in-depth analysis of the experiences of Grade 10 students with ChatGPT. This group is at a time in their education when the tasks they bare needed to accomplish are growing increasingly challenging and a considerable percentage of them are starting to employ digital resources to study.

C. Data and Measures

The data were gathered through an interview. The researcher took an effort to get acquainted with the students and teachers, explained the goal of the study, and was successful in obtaining written and verbal permission from every participant. The participants were given the parental/guardian informed consent and child assent. During the meetings with the participants, the researcher made sure that all the replies were correct by taking notes and recording audio. The data and audio recordings were only maintained in a safe location for the purpose of conducting research. This was done to protect the privacy of persons.

The interviews were carried out in a classroom that was kept quiet to prevent persons from getting distracted, and the duration of each interview was around twenty to thirty minutes. The recordings were then transcribed word for word according to the participants' instructions. The objective of this method was to minimize the amount of bias that the researcher could have, while at the same time trying to record the full spectrum of specifics and subtleties that were included in the reports provided by the students.

D. Data Analysis

Creswell's Framework was used to conduct a thematic analysis on the material that was obtained from the responses of the participants. This analysis was modified to conform to the qualitative methodology that the researcher was using to guarantee that it was efficient, accurate, and appraised. The investigation started with a semi-structured interview and recording, which was followed by student responses that were securely stored in a closed folder and the researcher's audio recording application. This was done in order to ensure that the confidentiality and security of the information was maintained. Following that, the researchers anonymized the transcripts of the interviews, read each of them thoroughly and started the coding process which was based on the specific terms that were used by the participants, the prior information that the researchers had, and the literature that was previously known about the subject matter. The codes that were obtained were sorted into categories, which were then further classified into themes that appeared as the final findings of the study. Through the process of member checking, in which the participants examined and validated the results, the researchers were able to provide further evidence that the findings were trustworthy. To ensure that the students remained anonymous, pseudonyms were employed in place of their actual identities. This was done only for the purpose of protecting confidentiality. The iterative process of continually reviewing and improving the data resulted in a rise in the rigor of the study, an intensification of the analysis, and the culmination of the research in the form of general insights. This action was taken to get at the point when the levels of data saturation were attained.

IV. RESULTS

The findings presented in this section reflect the perceptions, experiences, and ethical considerations associated with ChatGPT as reported by participants during one-on-one interviews. To support these results, the researchers also included direct statements of the participants.

Like having a smart classmate who's always available

Students have made considerable use of ChatGPT, a digital tool, to enhance the overall quality of their educational experience. It has been perceived as a dependable companion that supports them in completing assignments, understanding difficult subject matter, and reducing the time required for tasks. Alex (Student 1) explained, "ChatGPT is helpful in answering assignments and other school needs," while Janelle (Student 2) stated, "For me, it's also helpful especially in Math sequences because I find it hard to understand the solving process." Noah (Student 6) affirmed, "ChatGPT also helps in Filipino, but the answers are not complete," and Rafael (Student 5) shared, "It really helps especially if I'm struggling with my lessons, especially in MAPEH. It's most helpful in our science subject in translating difficult words." Rico (Student 7) noted its role in time management: "I find ChatGPT helpful because it makes summarizing lessons easier, especially when deadlines are near." Maya (Student 8) added, "It helps me understand topics faster and manage my time better when I need quick answers or explanations." Students also appreciated its support across multiple subjects. Angela (Student 4) said, "I use ChatGPT to write my English essays and answer my assignment," and Noah (Student 6) stated, "Sometimes I ask it to check my spelling or help me organize my thoughts before I turn in my work."

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In addition, students' answers provide a more positive feedbacks of ChatGPT as a learning tool in various disciplines and activities. It is a helping hand that students can rely on when they face challenges in understanding the lesson and difficulty on how to approach tasks, and when no one's there whom they can ask for help.

It helps... but you shouldn't let it do all the work

Although students recognized its utility, they were also aware of the dangers of over-reliance. Paolo (Student 3) said, "The advantages are, it helps students in research, assists their needs in learning, such as asking questions which it provides direct answers." The disadvantages include overuse or over-reliance to ChatGPT as a learning tool, students don't study on their own and they don't put efforts on answering the questions to learn something." Angela (Student 4) similarly remarked, "It helps with research and gives quick answers to questions, which makes learning easier. But relying on it too much can make students lazy and stop them from studying on their own." Sofia (Student 9) admitted, "It's helpful to me, but I won't lie—it makes me lazy sometimes and I let it do the rest of my assignments," and Maya (Student 8) observed, "It can be a problem because it makes me rely too much on it, and I feel like it takes away from my real learning."

Students also emphasized strategies to avoid dependence. Elena (Student 10) said, "It gives me ideas and explanations quickly. But I try not to depend on it too much, because I know I need to learn on my own too." Alex (Student 1) recommended, "You can use ChatGPT to get ideas and study it. This would help you in constructing your own answers based from that idea you learned," while Janelle (Student 2) advised, "Also, you can add your own ideas into the searched responses."

Indeed, this proves students still want to learn on their own and the consensus of their responses showed that ChatGPT must be used appropriately to prevent over-reliance and over-dependence. Students expressed that it is better to complete the said activities on their own rather than depending on Chatgpt. For them, it is a different level of self-fulfillment and accomplishment.

Where I go first when I'm stuck

ChatGPT often served as a first step for students when they were unsure how to approach tasks. Sofia (Student 9) shared, "ChatGPT helps me a lot, especially when I don't know where to start and what to do with lots of my activities and assigned task," and Rico (Student 7) noted, "I use it to get ideas or even pictures to print for my schoolwork." Janelle (Student 2) explained, "I use it mostly in Science. If we don't understand the questions, we search it in ChatGPT. I use it mainly to get answers."

However, students were mindful of its limitations. Alex (Student 1) said, "We verify the information through searching it on Google," while Elena (Student 10) mentioned, "I double-check ChatGPT's answers in Google and in my notes." Others assessed usefulness personally: Student 6 commented, "Try to understand the answer first. If it makes sense and helps me learn or solve something, then I know it's useful." Janelle (Student 2) also added, "It helps but sometimes I found the wordings and ideas provided not on my level because they are so deep and like use by professionals."

Paolo (Student 3) noted, "It helps students do research and gives them direct answers. But the bad thing is that they depend on it too much." These reflections demonstrate that students are learning to critically and responsibly use technology while maintaining independence in learning.

The student talked about how to not rely too much on others. Janelle (Student 2) said, "I come up with new ideas, but I always rewrite and rephrase what it says to make sure I understand it." Rico (Student 7) mentioned, "I don't copy answers directly because I know it could hurt my learning in the long run." Elena (Student 10) stated, "It helps, but you shouldn't let it do all the work because learning is still your job."

These responses clearly state that students do not rely on ChatGPT too much since there are misleading and inappropriate information. They still do understand the lesson and verify the reliability of the information before making constructs of their own. Depending on it will lead to students not doing their part in a real learning process. Learning will be more meaningful when done appropriately.

It's a guide, not a cheat sheet

Students emphasized that ChatGPT should support learning rather than replace it. Rafael (Student 5) said, "It gives me ideas for my essays, and then I add my own." Sofia (Student 9) noted, "I use it as a basis, but I still need to add my own ideas." Elena (Student 10) commented, "It helps, but you shouldn't let it do all the work because learning is still your job." Students also described how they maintain ethical and responsible use. Paolo (Student 3) explained, "I don't use ChatGPT during tests or exams because I know that I should be the one to answer the problems, it will not be helpful since cheating is not allowed especially when getting entrance exams in college" Alex (Student 1) emphasized checking AI outputs: "We use Google to find out what ChatGPT says."

It proves that students still find ChatGPT as a support and a guide, not a tool that do all the work. They used it to make rich ideas and add more color by adding their own ideas. It is commonly used in tasks that require them to do some research like assignments and activities. However, students restricted themselves from using ChatGPT in answering exams. Not all the information found on it, is reliable, thus it is important to check on other online sources and websites to verify the information's accuracy and prevent confusions. Double checking is a way better than copy pasting.

V. DISCUSSION

The research aligns with constructivist principles, demonstrating that students actively construct knowledge through the use of ChatGPT, integrating its guidance with their existing knowledge, and critically evaluating the outcomes (Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978; Creswell, 2014). The ChatGPT tool was not a replacement for teachers or traditional resources; instead, it served as a framework that promotes higher-order thinking, independent inquiry, and self-directed learning. ChatGPT is most effective when treated as a guide rather than a substitute for learning.

Students in the study perceived ChatGPT as a helpful tool in completing assignments and activities in subjects like English, such as spelling, summarizing lessons, and writing essays (Wang J. and Fan. W 2025); Math, such as problem-solving sequences, and Science activities (Sun et al., 2024). It is also helpful in other subjects such as MAPEH, while some students considered the app helpful in Filipino as it can generate responses in Tagalog, although sometimes could not capture all answers that students expect to. Other students use it for translation of difficult words to understand science lessons and build vocabulary. Students chose ChatGPT as their platform of choice as it helped them acquire new terminology that they were not familiar with (Wulundari, Setiyono, and Ngafif, 2025). Further, ChatGPT provides direct and quick answers that assists students' learning needs, making learning easier through simplifying difficult questions to aid students' comprehension especially in Math and Science problems (Sun et al., 2024). This proves that the possibility that ChatGPT might assist students in addressing challenging problems and acquiring understanding of academic material (Nugroho et al., 2023; Wang & Fan, 2025) actually exist. However, students provided disadvantages of over-reliance, laziness, and dependent learning that hinder the meaningful process of learning, which builds from existing knowledge, understanding concepts, and independent thinking. It can be harder to stay on track and learn actively if you use the application too much (AlAfnan et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2024). To address these issues of over-using ChatGPT, students emphasized strategies, which is to obtain, study, and understand ideas from generated responses to constructing own answers while adding unique ideas into it. It is when independent and critical thinking, forming connections, and combining existing knowledge play a crucial role. This reflects constructivist theory, which posits that learners achieve greater success when assisted in ways that build on existing knowledge while fostering independent thinking (Vygotsky, 1978; Creswell, 2014).

Additionally, ChatGPT assists students in reducing the required time for each task and meeting deadlines, while others use it in getting pictures or images to print for their school work served as an output (Goodfellow et al. 2016). Alternatively, ChatGPT possessed some limitations, students found out that other information are not correct and provides data that is different from what their teachers taught and the learning material they have. The generated responses sometimes do not align with students' level, they encountered words and phrases that are inappropriate to their age (Dwivedi, 2023). In response to this, students verify the correctness of information in other online and available resources such as Google, chrome, textbook, and notes from the teacher's discussion. Other students assessed its usefulness personally by understanding the generated answers first and checking its reliability when they actually get something valuable from it, the process of metacognition. Students also considered rewriting or paraphrasing of the generated answers to come up with new ideas and understand concepts. To successfully navigate learning environments that are enhanced by artificial intelligence, it is essential to possess both metacognitive awareness and ethical responsibility (Selwyn, 2022).

Moreover, students highlighted the prevention of using ChatGPT during examinations as it will lead to cheating and academic dishonesty. These are one of the concerns in the findings published by UNESCO that ChatGPT threatened academic integrity, cognitive biases, ownership, and academic honesty when students choose to participate in plagiarism and cheating during exams. This is actually alarming to educational institutions and educators, however, students considered ethical practices in utilizing ChatGPT. They set rules within themselves to prevent plagiarism and copy-pasting since they are aware of its consequences and understand that learning on their own is a responsibility they should do. These reflections demonstrate that students are learning to critically and responsibly use technology while maintaining independence in learning. These practices reflect sophisticated digital literacy and adherence to ethical norms while fostering critical thinking and self-directed learning (AlAfnan et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2024; Monib et al., 2024; Firaina & Sulisworo, 2025; Piaget, 1952; Vygotsky, 1978; Creswell, 2014).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the perceptions, experiences, and ethical considerations of specific Grade 10 students regarding the use of ChatGPT in secondary education. The study's findings showed that students perceive ChatGPT as a useful and easily accessible learning tool—a reliable companion that enhances their understanding of lessons and fosters critical thinking, and creativity. Additionally, they reported that it makes tasks such as writing, problem solving, and approaching difficult topics more manageable, especially in subjects like Science, Math, English, and Filipino, while also offering support in various other academic areas like MAPEH. Participants described ChatGPT as a reliable guide that explains the concept step -by- step and helps in summarizing, organizing, spelling, problem solving, academic writing, translating difficult words, building vocabulary, generating pictures, and managing time. Students use higher order thinking skills, independent, and critical thinking when combining new information to existing knowledge and making connections in understanding the lesson which is aligned with the constructivist

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view. Furthermore, students recognized the risks of over-reliance, laziness, academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and over-dependence on ChatGPT and the limits they encountered such as incorrect and misleading information, and inappropriateness of responses to students' level. Many acknowledged that depending too much on it could reduce their own effort, limit critical thinking, and hinder independent learning. To address these concerns, many students considered ethical practices and were responsible by checking and verifying AI-generated information, creating new ideas, combining existing knowledge to the new information, rewriting it in their own words, and limiting how they could use it and only in areas where they have difficulty with. Students emphasized the use of ChatGPT as a learning support and not a replacement for learning.

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