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Adoption of ChatGPT in Saudi EFL Higher Education: Perceptions, Institutional Readiness, and Ethical Awareness Among University Professors

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Abstract
Rapid advances in generative artificial intelligence (AI) have transformed education, yet little is known about how English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, particularly in non-Western contexts, perceive and integrate tools such as ChatGPT. This study investigated Saudi university EFL teachers' perceptions, readiness, and behavioral intention regarding ChatGPT, as well as how they integrate it into higher education. Employing a convergent mixed-methods design, this study collected data from 69 teachers through a structured questionnaire comprising four validated scales—perceived pedagogical impact, readiness, behavioral intention, and integration—followed by open-ended questions. Quantitative analyses (descriptive statistics, t-tests, and analyses of variance) revealed generally positive attitudes toward ChatGPT's pedagogical value, with significant gender differences showing greater perceived impact, readiness, and integration among male participants. Age and teaching experience did not result in significant differences, whereas academic position showed significant effects, with associate professors reporting the highest readiness and integration scores. However, the qualitative findings showed that senior teachers emphasized ethical accountability and institutional policy needs, whereas younger teachers highlighted innovation and workload reduction. Thematic analysis identified three overarching themes: pedagogical enhancement, ethical caution, and institutional barriers. Overall, Saudi EFL teachers appear to be moving from experimentation to strategic, responsible integration of ChatGPT. The findings extend the technology acceptance model (TAM) and the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) by underscoring the importance of ethical reflection and institutional readiness as critical mediators of sustainable AI adoption in language education.
Keywords: artificial intelligence, behavioral intention, ChatGPT, English as a foreign language, integration, readiness, Saudi Arabia, technology acceptance

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are reshaping English as a foreign language (EFL) pedagogy, accelerating innovation in how language is taught, practiced, and evaluated. Among the emerging AI applications, ChatGPT—a large language model (LLM) developed by OpenAI—has become the most visible and transformative one. Its ability to generate contextually appropriate, human-like responses has attracted global attention toward its pedagogical potential. ChatGPT enables EFL educators to design dynamic lessons, automate feedback, and support AI-mediated communicative practice. These affordances extend beyond what was possible in traditional or digital classrooms. Research shows that teachers and learners view ChatGPT as a useful, engaging, and time-saving tool that enhances language learning and instructional efficiency. Han et al. (2023) note that "ChatGPT can generate natural and personalized responses, which make students' learning experience more interactive and engaging" (p. 417). Lo et al. (2024), in a systematic review of recent empirical studies, report that "the included studies collectively provide solid evidence regarding the affordances (e.g., increased learning opportunities, personalised learning, and teacher support) and potential drawbacks (e.g., incorrect information, privacy leakage, and academic dishonesty) of ChatGPT use in ESL/EFL education" (p. 2).

In English language teaching, ChatGPT is evolving from a digital assistant into a pedagogical partner. The role-based, engaging, contextualized, interactive, personalized, and ethical (RECIPE) framework proposed by Han et al. (2023) offers structured approaches for integrating ChatGPT into EFL writing classrooms through interactive task design, content generation, and iterative feedback. These affordances extend to other skills, such as reading, grammar, and oral fluency, for which teachers can use ChatGPT to personalize materials and model authentic discourse. However, recent research indicates that while ChatGPT performs well on surface-level linguistic issues, its feedback on global writing features—such as coherence, cohesion, and higher-order analytical development—often remains generic or insufficiently precise, underscoring the need for critical evaluation, pedagogical scaffolding, and ethical oversight in classroom implementation (Saricaoglu & Bilki, 2025).

Recent theoretical perspectives call for a systematic, data-driven inquiry into ChatGPT's role in second language acquisition. Han (2024) emphasized the importance of examining how teachers adopt and adapt ChatGPT across various contexts, considering not only the potential pedagogical gains but also the cognitive, social, and ethical dimensions of such use. Such a multidimensional perspective aligns with the broader consensus that educators' beliefs, readiness, and digital competence determine the sustainability of technology integration in language education. Therefore, understanding teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT is crucial for aligning innovation with pedagogy and informing professional development that aims to build AI literacy.

In Saudi Arabia, these dynamics intersect with the national priorities of Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasize digital transformation and educational modernization. Universities have invested heavily in AI-based tools and professional training initiatives to strengthen 21st-century teaching competencies (Khan et al., 2025). Saudi EFL teachers are increasingly experimenting with ChatGPT to improve students' prompt-generation skills, design assessments, and explain grammar; however, empirical evidence regarding their perceptions and practices remains scarce. Previous studies have explored general attitudes toward technology-enhanced learning (Al-Nofaie, 2020; Alotaibi & Alshehri, 2023), but research focused specifically on ChatGPT in EFL instruction remains limited.

However, recent studies have started to fill this gap. Mugableh (2024) found that using ChatGPT for vocabulary practice helped Saudi EFL learners expand their word knowledge. Alharthi (2024) demonstrated that Saudi students viewed ChatGPT as a motivating and user-friendly learning tool. Likewise, Pitychoutis (2024) reported that AI chatbots encouraged creativity and independent learning in essay writing. Together, these studies underscore the growing significance of AI in EFL classrooms throughout the Arab world.

Despite the global attention attracted by ChatGPT's usefulness in education, few empirical studies have examined how EFL teachers in Saudi higher education conceptualize its pedagogical value. Systematic reviews have highlighted that, although ChatGPT offers notable opportunities for personalization, creativity, and feedback, gaps persist in understanding teachers' adoption behaviors, ethical awareness, and institutional readiness (Munaye et al., 2025). To address this gap, the present study investigates Saudi university EFL teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT integration across four interrelated dimensions—perceived pedagogical impact, readiness, behavioral intention, and integration—using a mixed-methods design. Furthermore, it examines how these perceptions vary by demographic and experiential factors, incorporating qualitative observations to capture teachers' reflections on the benefits, challenges, and ethical concerns associated with the use of ChatGPT. By synthesizing quantitative and qualitative evidence, this study aims to advance the understanding of how Saudi EFL teachers conceptualize and integrate ChatGPT within the Saudi Vision 2030 educational reform agenda, thereby offering both empirical and pedagogical implications for AI-enhanced language education.

Accordingly, this study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do Saudi university EFL teachers view ChatGPT as a tool that enhances their pedagogical practices?
2. How ready are Saudi EFL teachers to integrate ChatGPT into their teaching, and what factors influence this readiness?
3. Do teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT differ significantly across demographic (gender, age, degree, academic position, teaching experience, and specialty) and experiential (frequency of ChatGPT use) variables?
4. What themes emerge from teachers' open-ended responses regarding the pedagogical benefits, challenges, and ethical concerns related to using ChatGPT in EFL instruction?

Literature Review

AI and ChatGPT in Language Education

The integration of AI into higher education has accelerated dramatically since the emergence of LLMs such as OpenAI's ChatGPT in late 2022. Initially an experimental tool, ChatGPT has evolved into a global education phenomenon, with its use extending from administrative automation to content creation, assessment design, personalized tutoring, and academic writing (Kasneci et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2024). As Kasneci et al. (2023) emphasize, "large language models, such as ChatGPT, have the potential to revolutionize teaching and assist in teaching processes" (p. 3). Although scholars recognize its potential to enhance productivity and expand access to knowledge, the implications of its use for assessment integrity and authorship continue to be debated (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023). Recent meta-reviews have emphasized a dual trajectory of innovation and regulation, urging institutions to pair technological enthusiasm with ethical governance frameworks (Bond et al., 2024).

Language education has become one of the most dynamic—and contested—arenas for AI adoption. ChatGPT's ability to generate coherent, contextually relevant discourse aligns with communicative and task-based learning approaches, facilitating authentic interaction and autonomous practice in the EFL context (Kohnke et al., 2023). Empirical evidence has shown improvements in learners' vocabulary, writing fluency, and grammatical awareness when ChatGPT is used to complement instruction (Lo et al., 2024). Studies have also shown gains in oral proficiency, as AI chatbots help create supportive and low-anxiety learning environments (Shikun et al., 2024). Furthermore, teachers have reported increased creativity and efficiency in lesson design, differentiation, and feedback (Han et al., 2023).

However, emerging research cautions against the uncritical use of ChatGPT. Kasneci et al. (2023) highlight the limitations of reasoning, factual inaccuracies, and ethical risks that require teacher mediation, while Memarian and Doleck (2023) report that the analytical depth remains superficial and domain-knowledge gaps persist in ChatGPT's responses. These critiques highlight the need for critical digital literacy, pedagogical scaffolding, and attention to linguistic or cultural bias in AI-generated content (Alsaawi, 2025). Thus, EFL teachers must balance ChatGPT's fluency affordances with the preservation of authenticity, originality, and intercultural sensitivity.

Faculty Adoption and the Saudi Higher Education Context

Technology adoption in education is often interpreted within two foundational frameworks: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM; Davis, 1989) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Both models link perceived usefulness and ease of use to behavioral intention, with social and contextual factors serving as moderators of this relationship. As Davis (1989) explains, "perceived usefulness is defined as the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" (p. 320). Meta-analytic studies have confirmed the cross-cultural validity of these frameworks (Scherer et al., 2019). However, generative AI introduces new complexities, involving ethical trust, data privacy, and institutional policy, that necessitate expanded models incorporating ethical reflection and organizational readiness (Bond et al., 2024; Kasneci et al., 2023). Furthermore, recent research has shown that teachers' pedagogical beliefs and disciplinary context have a significant influence on AI acceptance in education (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2024).

Saudi Arabia presents a unique context for AI adoption, shaped by the Saudi Vision 2030 reforms, which emphasize innovation and digital transformation in education. Strategic initiatives, ranging from smart-university platforms to AI curricula, have created fertile ground for experimentation (Al-Motrif, 2025). Earlier studies on learning management systems, such as Blackboard, have found that perceived usefulness and self-efficacy strongly predict satisfaction and continued use (Algraini, 2023; Al-Nofaie, 2020). However, with the emergence of ChatGPT, the focus has shifted from basic digital competence to readiness, ethical awareness, and pedagogical alignment, reflecting a more complex adoption model.

Mah and Groß (2024) found that faculty use of AI in universities is shaped by self-efficacy, perceived usefulness, and institutional support, indicating that effective adoption depends on both individual readiness and organizational conditions. Similarly, Alsaawi (2025) found that Saudi EFL teachers viewed chatbots as applicable for fostering authentic communication but expressed concerns about authorship integrity and data-use ethics. Regional studies have confirmed that institutional readiness and professional development are essential prerequisites for the sustainable integration of AI (Al-Motrif, 2025; Alotaibi & Alshehri, 2023).

In addition, empirical research has also identified demographic variations in technology adoption: Male educators tend to exhibit higher confidence in digital technologies, whereas female educators place greater emphasis on pedagogical safety and ethical considerations (Møgelvang et al., 2024; Scherer et al., 2019). Furthermore, instructors in higher academic positions often demonstrate more strategic use of AI tools (Cabero-Almenara et al., 2024; Prasetya et al., 2024), while differences in experience and self-efficacy also shape patterns of exploratory versus structured use (Mah & Groß, 2024).

Despite these insights, empirical research specifically addressing Saudi teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT, as well as the moderating influence of demographics, remains scarce. Addressing this gap is vital for aligning Saudi Vision 2030 policy ambitions with classroom realities.

Key Constructs: Pedagogical Impact, Readiness, Behavioral Intention, and Integration

Four interrelated constructs recur across the literature as central to ChatGPT adoption in higher education: perceived pedagogical impact, readiness, behavioral intention, and integration. Perceived pedagogical impact reflects teachers' beliefs about ChatGPT's instructional value—that is, its ability to enhance engagement, differentiate materials, and improve learning outcomes. When educators perceive clear pedagogical benefits, they are more likely to incorporate ChatGPT creatively into lesson planning and assessment (Han et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2024). Saudi educators acknowledge ChatGPT's value for generating examples, simplifying texts, and providing individualized feedback, though they also emphasize the importance of accuracy and originality (Alsaawi, 2025).

Readiness encompasses self-efficacy, access to resources, and alignment between AI tools and curricular objectives (Scherer et al., 2019; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Institutional training, policy support, and infrastructure consistently predict adoption rates (Al-Motrif, 2025; Alotaibi & Alshehri, 2023). Without such support, even competent educators may hesitate to integrate AI tools.

Behavioral intention relates to motivational readiness to use ChatGPT, linking perceived usefulness to actual practice (Davis, 1989). Behavioral intentions increase when teachers view AI as reducing workloads, stimulating creativity, and improving outcomes (Lo et al., 2024). Gender- and position-based differences persist as discussed previously (Møgelvang et al., 2024; Scherer et al., 2019). Experience is another important factor. Prasetya et al. (2024) found that seasoned teachers held more positive views of AI integration, echoing global evidence that professional exposure rather than age predicts behavioral intention (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Similar variations linked to pedagogical beliefs and disciplinary domains were observed by Cabero-Almenara et al. (2024).

Integration represents the synthesis of pedagogical, motivational, and institutional factors shaping the sustained use of ChatGPT in instruction. It reflects the extent to which the tool has become integrated into teaching practices, such as lesson planning, interactive activities, and formative feedback (Lo et al., 2024). Empirical and review studies have found that successful integration requires ethical reflection, transparency, and contextual adaptation. As Bond et al. (2024) observe, "the uptake of these tools has given rise to a debate in education about readiness, ethics, trust, [and] impact" (p. 2). They further emphasize "the need for governance, regulation, research and training to cope with the speed and scale at which AI is transforming teaching and learning" (p. 2). When these conditions are met, educators often characterize ChatGPT as a

supportive "co-teacher" that enhances engagement, creativity, and instructional responsiveness, rather than replacing human agency.

Conceptual Framework and Research Gap

Drawing on the extended TAM and UTAUT frameworks (Davis, 1989; Scherer et al., 2019; Venkatesh et al., 2003), this study proposes an integrated model to explain ChatGPT adoption among Saudi university EFL teachers. The framework combines cognitive, motivational, and contextual dimensions through the four aforementioned constructs. It posits that perceived pedagogical impact and readiness have a positive influence on behavioral intention, which in turn facilitates integration, while ethical and institutional enablers mediate the sustainable use. As Kasneci et al. (2023) caution, "to unleash their full potential for education, it is crucial to approach the use of these models with caution and to critically evaluate their limitations and potential biases" (p. 8).

This conceptualization addresses two research gaps: the underrepresentation of faculty-level perspectives in Saudi EFL research and the limited empirical testing of models that integrate ethics and institutional readiness. Employing a convergent mixed-methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative evidence, this study offers novel insights into how Saudi university EFL teachers perceive ChatGPT and integrate it into their classes. The findings aim to advance technology-adoption theory and support Saudi Vision 2030's goal of cultivating digitally competent and ethically aware educators who are prepared to employ AI-enhanced pedagogy sustainably.

Methodology

Research Design and Ethical Considerations

This study employed a convergent mixed-methods cross-sectional design to investigate Saudi university EFL teachers' perceptions, readiness, and behavioral intentions regarding ChatGPT, as well as their integration of it into higher education (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The quantitative phase addressed four validated constructs: perceived pedagogical impact, readiness, behavioral intention, and integration. Qualitative responses added contextual depth regarding experiences, challenges, and ethical reflections. All procedures complied with institutional ethical standards, and the Ethics Committee at Taif University granted formal approval. The participants provided informed consent digitally and were assured of confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Furthermore, no identifying data were collected.

Participants

A total of 69 Saudi university EFL teachers participated in this study, all of whom were teaching at four public universities in the western region of Saudi Arabia during the 2024–2025 academic year. The sample consisted of 36 female (52.2%) and 33 male (47.8%) teachers, representing a diverse range of academic and professional backgrounds. The participants' ages ranged from below 25 to 55 years, with 26% categorized as young (≤30 years), 45% as middle-aged (31–45 years), and 29% as older (≥46 years). The majority of participants held doctoral degrees (71%), while those with master's degrees comprised the second largest group (29%). Academic positions included lecturers or assistant teachers (26%), assistant professors (33%), associate professors (26%), and full professors (15%). Teaching experience ranged from under ten

years (23%) to over 15 years (39%). Instructional specializations comprised receptive or form-focused skills (35%), productive skills (22%), and integrated or all-skills courses (43%). Regarding the use of ChatGPT, 46% reported using it often or always, 33% reported using it sometimes, and 21% reported using it rarely or never. Overall, the participants represented a demographically diverse and pedagogically balanced sample, making them suitable for comparative analysis.

Instrumentation

The online questionnaire consisted of three sections, designed to ensure informed participation and comprehensive data collection. Section 1 presented an introductory statement outlining the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of participation, and assurances of confidentiality, followed by an electronic consent form to ensure ethical compliance. Section 2 included the quantitative component, which consisted of four validated Likert-type scales: perceived pedagogical impact (four items), readiness (six items), behavioral intention (eight items), and integration (five items). All items were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scales were adapted from those utilized by established technology-adoption frameworks (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003) and recent studies on AI integration in higher education (Bond et al., 2024; Kasneci et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2024). The instrument was translated into Arabic and reviewed by two bilingual experts to ensure conceptual and linguistic equivalence; minor revisions were made based on their feedback. Section 3 consisted of four open-ended questions that elicited the participants' reflections on the challenges, benefits, and ethical concerns associated with ChatGPT, as well as recommendations for improving the integration of ChatGPT.

A pilot study involving 12 Saudi EFL teachers confirmed item clarity and scale reliability ($\alpha > 0.80$). The final reliability analysis with the full sample yielded Cronbach's α values ranging from 0.83 to 0.91, indicating very good to excellent internal consistency. According to George and Mallery (2003), a Cronbach's α value above 0.70 is considered acceptable for social science research, suggesting that all four scales achieved satisfactory reliability (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Reliability coefficients for the four questionnaire scales*

Scale	Cronbach's α	No. of Items
Perceived Pedagogical Impact	0.83	4
Readiness	0.81	6
Behavioral Intention	0.91	8
Integration	0.84	5
Overall Scale Reliability	0.96	23

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The questionnaire link, created using Google Forms, was distributed via institutional email lists in four rounds over three months. A total of 500 invitations were sent to Saudi university EFL teachers using publicly available university email addresses, resulting in 69 valid responses after the exclusion of two incomplete submissions. The participants completed the survey voluntarily and at their convenience. Quantitative analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 31). Descriptive statistics summarized responses across the four validated scales of perceived pedagogical impact, readiness, behavioral intention, and integration. Pearson correlation

coefficients were used to examine the relationships among constructs, while independent-samples *t*-tests and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were employed to assess group differences by gender, academic position, and teaching experience. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

The qualitative responses were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Inductive coding identified three recurring themes: pedagogical enhancement, ethical caution, and institutional barriers. These themes were compared with the quantitative results to identify convergences and divergences, providing an integrated understanding of Saudi EFL teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT in higher education.

Results

Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables

Descriptive analyses were conducted to examine teachers' overall perceptions of ChatGPT and other LLMs across four measured constructs: perceived pedagogical impact, readiness, behavioral intention, and integration. As shown in Table 2, the mean scores for all scales were high, ranging from 3.96 to 4.16 on a five-point Likert scale, indicating generally favorable attitudes toward the pedagogical use of ChatGPT.

The highest mean was observed for behavioral intention ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.71$), followed by integration ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.69$), perceived pedagogical impact ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.83$), and readiness ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 0.71$). The relatively small standard deviations indicate consistent positive evaluations among participants.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics for the four scales*

Scale	*M*	*SD*
Perceived Pedagogical Impact	4.04	0.83
Readiness	3.96	0.71
Behavioral Intention	4.16	0.71
Integration	4.10	0.69

The participants' written reflections reinforced these quantitative patterns. Across gender and age groups, many described ChatGPT as a valuable "assistant" that simplified lesson planning and inspired new instructional strategies. The participants commonly reported using it to generate examples, quizzes, and reading texts for various proficiency levels, which aligned with their strong agreement on items measuring pedagogical impact and behavioral intention. Several noted that ChatGPT "saves time and effort in preparing materials" and "provides instant ideas when planning speaking activities," echoing the high mean scores for readiness and integration. In addition, some responses revealed a realistic awareness of limitations, acknowledging the need "to check accuracy before presenting materials" and "to guide students to use AI responsibly." Collectively, the descriptive results and qualitative insights portray a faculty community that is optimistic, reflective, and well-prepared to integrate ChatGPT into EFL instruction.

Differences by Gender

Independent-samples *t*-tests were used to examine gender differences in teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT. Statistically significant effects emerged across all four constructs, with male teachers reporting more favorable attitudes than female teachers. As shown in Table 3, male

teachers had higher mean scores for perceived pedagogical impact ($t(67) = 2.33$, $p = .023$, $d = 0.56$), readiness ($t(67) = 2.71$, $p = .009$, $d = 0.65$), behavioral intention ($t(67) = 3.09$, $p = .003$, $d = 0.74$), and integration ($t(67) = 2.52$, $p = .014$, $d = 0.61$). These moderate effect sizes indicate that male teachers viewed ChatGPT as more pedagogically beneficial and expressed stronger readiness and behavioral intention to integrate it into their teaching.

Table 3. *Independent-samples t-tests for gender differences across scales*

Scale	Male *M* (*SD*)	Female *M* (*SD*)	*t*(67)	*p*	*d*
Perceived Pedagogical Impact	4.28 (0.79)	3.83 (0.83)	2.33	.023	0.56
Readiness	4.19 (0.72)	3.75 (0.64)	2.71	.009	0.65
Behavioral Intention	4.42 (0.70)	3.92 (0.64)	3.09	.003	0.74
Integration	4.32 (0.64)	3.91 (0.69)	2.52	.014	0.61

The participants' qualitative responses mirrored these trends. Male teachers depicted ChatGPT as a "creative assistant" that gave "time-saving support" and generated "instant classroom ideas," emphasizing innovation and efficiency. Female teachers were similarly optimistic but more cautious, emphasizing "the need to verify AI-generated content," "concerns about accuracy and plagiarism," and the need for "institutional guidance before wide use." Their reflective stance corresponds to slightly lower mean scores, indicating evaluative caution rather than resistance. Overall, male teachers approached ChatGPT as a productivity enhancer, whereas female teachers framed it within a reflective, ethically guided pedagogy.

Differences by Academic Qualification

One-way ANOVA results showed no significant age differences across the four constructs ($F = 0.002–1.514$, $p > .227$), indicating that teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT were consistent across different age groups. These results suggest that positive attitudes toward AI integration transcend age boundaries.

Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to examine whether teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT differed according to academic qualification (master's vs. doctoral degrees). As shown in Table 4, significant differences emerged across all four constructs, with teachers holding doctoral degrees reporting higher mean scores than those with master's degrees. Specifically, doctorate holders scored higher on perceived pedagogical impact ($t(67) = 1.99$, $p = .025$, $d = 0.53$), readiness ($t(67) = 3.54$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.94$), behavioral intention ($t(67) = 3.53$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.93$), and integration ($t(67) = 1.91$, $p = .030$, $d = 0.51$).

These moderate to large effects, particularly the large effects observed for readiness and behavioral intention ($d \approx 0.9$), suggest that teachers with doctoral degrees exhibit substantially greater pedagogical confidence, readiness, and behavioral intention regarding the integration of ChatGPT into EFL teaching.

Table 4. *Independent-samples t-tests for academic qualification*

Scale	Master's *M* (*SD*)	Doctorate *M* (*SD*)	*t*(67)	*p*	*d*
Perceived Pedagogical Impact	3.74 (.76)	4.17 (.84)	1.99	.025	0.53
Readiness	3.53 (.54)	4.14 (.69)	3.54	<.001	0.94
Behavioral Intention	3.73 (.61)	4.33 (.76)	3.53	<.001	0.93

Scale	Master's *M* (*SD*)	Doctorate *M* (*SD*)	*t*(67)	*p*	*d*
Integration	3.86 (.73)	4.20 (.66)	1.91	.030	0.51

The participants' qualitative reflections supported these trends. Teachers with doctoral degrees often described ChatGPT as an "innovative academic tool" and a "methodological assistant" that aids in designing tasks that foster analytical thinking and in providing rubric-aligned feedback. Master's degree holders expressed cautious optimism, viewing ChatGPT as "useful for planning lessons" or "a helpful guide when time is limited." These responses parallel the quantitative differences, indicating that confidence and pedagogical sophistication in AI use increase with academic qualification.

Differences by Academic Position

One-way ANOVAs were used to examine differences in teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT across academic positions (lecturer or assistant teacher, assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor). As shown in Table 5, significant effects emerged for all four constructs, with effect sizes ranging from $\eta^2 = 0.14$ to $\eta^2 = 0.21$, indicating medium to large effect sizes. Associate professors reported the highest mean scores for perceived pedagogical impact ($F(3, 65) = 4.35$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = 0.17$), readiness ($F(3, 65) = 4.93$, $p = .004$, $\eta^2 = 0.19$), behavioral intention ($F(3, 65) = 5.89$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.21$), and integration ($F(3, 65) = 3.51$, $p = .020$, $\eta^2 = 0.14$).

These results suggest that higher academic-positioned faculty, particularly associate professors, demonstrated greater readiness, confidence, and behavioral intention regarding the integration of ChatGPT into instruction than their junior counterparts.

Table 5. *One-way ANOVA for academic position across scales*

Scale	Lecturer		Assistant Prof.		Associate Prof.		Full Prof.		*F*(3, 65)	*p*	η^2
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Perceived Pedagogical Impact	3.70	0.92	3.90	0.81	4.58	0.49	4.03	0.85	4.35	.007	0.17
Readiness	3.52	0.59	4.07	0.63	4.32	0.47	3.85	1.02	4.93	.004	0.19
Behavioral Intention	3.72	0.65	4.19	0.68	4.61	0.53	4.09	0.72	5.89	.001	0.21
Integration	3.88	0.77	3.97	0.63	4.52	0.41	4.08	0.80	3.51	.020	0.14

The qualitative findings complemented these quantitative patterns. Senior faculty, particularly associate professors and full professors, frequently described ChatGPT as "a pedagogical partner" and "a tool for enhancing instructional efficiency." They emphasized its strategic and reflective use, explaining that it "supports authentic material design," "improves test-item generation," and "frees time for student interaction." Assistant professors expressed similar enthusiasm but reflected an emerging, experimental stage of integration, often noting that ChatGPT "helps in lesson planning" and "offers creative examples for class tasks." In contrast, lecturers and assistant teachers expressed more uncertainty, highlighting "the need for institutional guidelines" and "training before adopting AI tools."

Collectively, these findings indicate that perceptions of ChatGPT's pedagogical usefulness increase with academic position, evolving from exploratory experimentation among

junior faculty to strategic and deliberate pedagogical integration among senior faculty. This progression suggests that professional experience, academic authority, and research engagement collectively engender greater confidence and purpose in applying ChatGPT in higher education contexts.

Differences by Teaching Experiences

A one-way ANOVA was used to investigate whether teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT varied by teaching experience (≤10 years, 11–15 years, >15 years). No statistically significant differences emerged for any construct (F (2, 66) = 0.20–1.17, p > .317, η^2 = 0.01–0.03). These negligible effects suggest that openness to ChatGPT and its perceived pedagogical value are consistent across experience levels, indicating that professional experience does not substantially influence teachers' readiness or intention to adopt AI tools.

The qualitative findings further supported this pattern of convergence. Early-career teachers described ChatGPT as "a supportive guide for lesson planning" and "a way to build classroom confidence." In contrast, mid-career teachers referred to it as "a productivity enhancer" that "saves preparation time" and "facilitates interactive task design." Veteran teachers recognized its usefulness but adopted a measured stance, referring to it as "a complementary innovation that must align with educational goals." Collectively, these accounts reinforce the idea that ChatGPT's pedagogical appeal transcends professional tenure.

Differences by Teaching Specialty

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT differed by teaching specialty. The participants' specializations spanned three domains: receptive and form-focused skills (grammar and reading), productive skills (speaking and writing), and integrated or theoretical courses (linguistics, teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), or literature). As shown in Table 6, significant effects emerged for all four constructs: perceived pedagogical impact (F(2, 66) = 8.05, p < .001, η^2 = 0.20), readiness (F(2, 66) = 4.58, p = .014, η^2 = 0.12), behavioral intention (F(2, 66) = 8.57, p < .001, η^2 = 0.21), and integration (F(2, 66) = 8.25, p < .001, η^2 = 0.20).

These medium to large effect sizes indicate that teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT's pedagogical usefulness varied meaningfully across instructional specializations. Teachers with skill-based specializations (both form-focused and productive) reported significantly higher levels of perceived pedagogical impact, readiness, behavioral intention, and integration than those teaching integrated or theoretical courses (linguistics, TESOL, or literature).

Table 6. *One-way ANOVA for teaching specialty across scales*

Scale	Form-Focused Skills		Productive Skills		Integrated Courses		F(2, 66)	p	η^2
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Perceived Pedagogical Impact	4.46	0.76	4.18	0.17	3.64	0.80	8.05	<.001	0.20
Readiness	4.2	0.56	4.13	0.67	3.68	0.75	4.58	.014	0.12
Behavioral Intention	4.4	0.68	4.51	0.56	3.8	0.64	8.57	<.001	0.21
Integration	4.43	0.63	4.28	0.53	3.75	0.67	8.25	<.001	0.20

The qualitative findings reinforced these quantitative distinctions. Teachers of receptive and form-focused skills highlighted ChatGPT's ability to "generate clear examples," "provide instant practice activities," and "simplify language explanations," describing it as "an efficient assistant for comprehension exercises." Teachers of productive skills emphasized creativity, describing ChatGPT as "useful for brainstorming writing ideas" and "creating speaking prompts." In contrast, teachers of integrated or theoretical subjects expressed more caution, noting that although ChatGPT "helps with summaries," it "lacks depth for analytical discussion." Collectively, these findings suggest that ChatGPT's pedagogical value is most evident in task-oriented, skill-based instruction and less pronounced in abstract or theory-driven disciplines.

Differences by Frequency of ChatGPT Use

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT differed based on the frequency of its use in teaching practice. The participants were categorized as low-frequency users (rarely or never), moderate-frequency users (sometimes), and high-frequency users (often or always). As shown in Table 7, significant effects emerged across all four constructs ($F(2, 66) = 14.08–22.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.30–0.40$). Post hoc Tukey HSD tests revealed that both moderate- and high-frequency users scored significantly higher than low-frequency users on all constructs ($\Delta M = 0.65–1.02$, $p < .001$), with no significant difference between moderate-and high-frequency users ($p > .05$). These findings suggest that regular engagement with ChatGPT, regardless of intensity, substantially enhances teachers' confidence, readiness, and perceived pedagogical benefit.

Table 7. *One-way ANOVA for frequency of ChatGPT use across scales*

Scale	Never		Sometimes		Always		$F(2, 66)$	p	η^2
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Perceived Pedagogical Impact	3.45	0.82	4.29	0.71	4.46	0.56	14.08	<.001	0.30
Readiness	3.42	0.57	4.06	0.54	4.44	0.57	20.39	<.001	0.38
Behavioral Intention	3.59	0.65	4.34	0.53	4.61	0.47	22.33	<.001	0.40
Integration	3.55	0.69	4.28	0.57	4.53	0.30	21.12	<.001	0.39

The participants' qualitative responses strongly reinforced these patterns. High-frequency users described ChatGPT as "an indispensable classroom companion" and "a transformative teaching partner" that "saves time, inspires new lesson ideas, and enhances creativity." Several noted that it "changed how I design and assess lessons" and "encouraged students to engage more interactively." Moderate-frequency users reported similar but more selective use, calling it "helpful for generating prompts and vocabulary lists." Low-frequency users, in contrast, voiced caution, citing concerns about "accuracy," "plagiarism risk," and the "need for official training or policy." Collectively, these results demonstrate that sustained exposure to ChatGPT fosters greater pedagogical confidence and integration across teaching contexts.

The convergence of qualitative insights and quantitative data in Table 7 underscores the pivotal role of experience in shaping perceptions of AI integration. Teachers who engage with ChatGPT more frequently tend to exhibit greater confidence, pedagogical creativity, and a readiness to incorporate it into their instruction. This pattern reflects a clear experiential pathway:

Sustained use leads to familiarity, which in turn strengthens perceived usefulness, readiness, and behavioral intention. Thus, regular engagement normalizes ChatGPT as part of everyday teaching practice, positioning it not as an external aid but as an embedded professional resource for EFL teaching.

Taken together, the findings present a coherent picture of teachers' perceptions of ChatGPT as both a pedagogical and professional tool. Quantitatively, the overall mean scores across the four constructs were consistently high, indicating strong confidence and behavioral intention regarding the integration of the technology. Significant differences emerged across gender, academic qualification, academic position, teaching specialty, and frequency of use, whereas age and teaching experience produced no meaningful variation. As summarized in Tables 3–8, male teachers reported higher readiness and confidence than female teachers; doctorate holders and senior faculty showed stronger behavioral intention and integration than less qualified or experienced faculty; and instructors in skill-based domains—particularly grammar, reading, and writing—perceived greater pedagogical benefit than those teaching theoretical subjects. Most notably, frequency of ChatGPT use was the strongest differentiator, with regular users demonstrating substantially higher perceived pedagogical impact and readiness. The qualitative narratives reinforced these quantitative trends, portraying ChatGPT as a creative, time-saving, and intellectually stimulating companion in EFL instruction. Overall, the results depict a technologically receptive and pedagogically innovative faculty community aligned with Saudi Vision 2030's drive for digital transformation and educational modernization.

Discussion

This study examined how Saudi university EFL teachers perceive, prepare for, and intend to use ChatGPT, as well as how they integrate it into their teaching practices. The findings reveal a nuanced landscape of enthusiastic yet ethically grounded engagement: while teachers broadly recognize ChatGPT's pedagogical promise, its adoption is tempered by reflection on accuracy, academic integrity, and institutional support. Quantitatively, all four constructs—perceived pedagogical impact, readiness, behavioral intention, and integration—showed high mean scores (M = 3.96–4.16 on a five-point scale), indicating strong alignment with ChatGPT as a user-friendly and pedagogically supportive tool (Table 2). The qualitative responses reinforced this optimistic stance, with the participants describing ChatGPT as a "time-saving assistant," a "source of creative classroom ideas," and a "valuable supplement for writing feedback." These views echo global findings that ChatGPT enhances task design, personalizes instruction, and streamlines assessment in EFL contexts (Han et al., 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, this receptivity is tempered by critical awareness. Several teachers expressed concerns about the factual reliability, student overreliance, and the lack of clear institutional policies. Comments such as "AI output must be verified before classroom use" and "students may lose critical thinking if they depend on ChatGPT" highlight a prevailing ethos of responsible innovation—consistent with calls for ethical guardrails in AI integration (Bond et al., 2024; Kasneci et al., 2023). Within the context of Saudi Vision 2030, such caution reflects a culturally grounded model in which innovation proceeds within ethical and pedagogical boundaries.

A gendered dimension also emerged, with male teachers reporting significantly higher scores across all constructs than female teachers, consistent with prior findings that men often rate higher on perceived usefulness and self-efficacy (Scherer et al., 2019; Venkatesh et al., 2003). However, the qualitative data revealed that female teachers approached ChatGPT through a

pedagogical and ethical lens, seeking training on content verification and institutional guidelines. This orientation emphasizes accountability rather than resistance, aligning with evidence that women prioritize ethical and critical thinking when evaluating generative AI (Møgelvang et al., 2024).

Neither age nor teaching experience had a significant effect on adoption attitudes. Younger teachers expressed slightly greater readiness, whereas senior faculty applied ChatGPT more strategically, such as for exam design or writing scaffolding (Table 3). Academic positions exhibited a similar trend, with associate professors and full professors scoring higher than junior faculty, reflecting the influence of leadership and institutional vision (Al-Motrif, 2025).

In addition, discipline-specific variation emerged. Grammar and reading instructors utilized ChatGPT for simplification and practice generation, while writing and speaking instructors employed it for brainstorming and simulated conversational interactions that mirror real-world communicative contexts. In contrast, literature and linguistics faculty questioned its analytical depth, reflecting broader critiques in recent research about LLMs' limited reasoning and superficial analytical capacity (Kasneci et al., 2023; Memarian & Doleck, 2023). Collectively, these disciplinary patterns illustrate a shift from experimental curiosity to purposeful integration, with ChatGPT functioning as a pedagogical complement rather than a substitute for instruction.

Theoretically, the findings reaffirm the core TAM and UTAUT propositions (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003), which suggest that perceived usefulness and facilitating conditions underpin behavioral intention and use. The findings extend these models by identifying ethical awareness and institutional readiness as key moderators. Adoption thus emerges as a socio-ethical negotiation shaped by national values, professional identity, and policy expectations, supporting the view that sustainable AI integration requires both usability and moral legitimacy.

In practice, universities should implement professional development programs that combine technical and ethical literacy, as well as draft flexible AI-use policies that distinguish between permissible support and restricted automation. Furthermore, gender-responsive mentorship and ethics-focused workshops could ensure equitable participation.

These results also align with recent studies conducted in Arab EFL contexts, which highlight ChatGPT's pedagogical benefits for creativity, engagement, and learner autonomy (Alharthi, 2024; Mugableh, 2024; Pitychoutis, 2024; Shikun et al., 2024). Similar to the present findings, these studies reported that AI tools can enhance vocabulary development, motivation, and oral fluency when integrated under teacher guidance and ethical oversight. Collectively, this growing regional evidence reinforces the view that sustainable adoption of AI in EFL education depends on both pedagogical innovation and responsible implementation.

This study has certain limitations, including a modest sample size, a cross-sectional design, and reliance on self-reporting. Future research should employ longitudinal or comparative designs across the Gulf Arab states, incorporating classroom observations and student perspectives to track the evolution of behaviors.

In conclusion, Saudi university EFL teachers are navigating ChatGPT as reflective innovators who strike a balance between progress and responsibility. Their engagement exemplifies Saudi Vision 2030's dual mandate—technological advancement coupled with educational integrity—demonstrating that human-centered pedagogy remains central to the sustainable integration of AI.

Conclusion

Integrating quantitative evidence with qualitative insights, this study demonstrates that Saudi university EFL teachers generally perceive ChatGPT as a pedagogically beneficial yet ethically sensitive innovation. Their readiness and behavioral intention are driven by strong perceptions of usefulness but tempered by a commitment to responsible application. These findings extend the TAM and the UTAUT by underscoring the centrality of ethical reflection and institutional readiness in contemporary AI adoption. As Saudi Vision 2030 continues to transform the country's higher education, responsible and pedagogically grounded integration of ChatGPT will be pivotal to achieving sustainable, high-quality innovation in EFL teaching and learning.

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