

The role of artificial intelligence in contemporary literary practice: Perceptions and implications

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between literature and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the development of digital technology. While AI is increasingly shaping how writers work from generating ideas to editing, there is still a lack of empirical focus on how this affects authorial agency, especially in the Indonesian context. This study used a qualitative descriptive method, distributing an online questionnaire to 53 literary writers in Indonesia, including poetry, short story, novel, and drama writers. The results showed that 62% of respondents use AI as a tool to facilitate the writing process, while 22% view it as a potential threat to creativity. Most respondents (82%) believe that AI cannot replace writers because it lacks emotional experience and cultural understanding. Furthermore, 50% of respondents believe AI can improve the technical aspects of writing, although 22% stated that excessive use can diminish the originality of the work. These findings imply that the integration of AI requires writers to develop critical digital literacy, ensuring that technology serves as a collaborative partner rather than a replacement for human creative identity. Overall, this study concludes that AI plays a supporting role in the creative process but still requires the writer's supervision and control to maintain the quality and originality of literary works. Beyond individual practice, these results highlight the need for literary institutions to establish ethical guidelines that protect authorial voice in an increasingly automated environment.



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I. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology in the 21st century has had a significant impact on various areas of human life, including the literary aspect (Bajohr, 2022; Jannah et al., 2025; Manovich, 2001; Rokib, 2025). Technological advances have made Artificial Intelligence

increasingly used in writing activities and the creation of creative works. AI can help with composing texts, processing ideas, and adjusting language style to user needs (Amal et al., 2024). This shows that literature no longer depends solely on human abilities carried out manually but can also be developed with the help of technology (Williams, 2022). These changes are part of the digital cultural transformation that shapes how humans create and communicate. The relationship between literature and AI in this aspect can be seen as a form of human adaptation to the development of modern technology (Bewersdorff et al., 2023).

Literature is a human expression that depicts life experiences, values, and thoughts that develop in society (Burroway et al., 2019; Fitria, 2022; Pradopo, 2013; Setiawan, 2021). Literary works function not only as entertainment but also as a medium for reflection and character education (Aziz, 2021; Kartika & Suprpto, 2018; Kustinah et al., 2021; Nurgiyantoro, 2005; Safitri, 2020). The presence of AI technology expands writers' possibilities for experimenting with new forms and styles. AI can be used to process vocabulary, suggest sentence structures, and adjust language styles for greater effectiveness (Citrawati et al., 2025). With this technology, the writing process becomes more efficient without sacrificing creativity (Reza et al., 2025). Therefore, AI can be seen as one of the innovations that enrich literary practice in the digital era (Long & Magerko, 2020).

Several previous studies have presented different views regarding the use of AI in literary creation, creating a debate between efficiency and originality. On one hand, studies found that AI plays a crucial role in supporting writing skills by providing feedback and improving text structure (Ahmadi et al., 2024). Hapsari (2023) also emphasized that AI helps writers find ideas and develop skills more effectively. In contrast to these supportive views, Alharbi (2025) expresses a cautionary perspective, stating that AI risks reducing the originality of writing because the resulting texts tend to be similar. This study addresses this gap by examining how writers navigate these two opposing positions leveraging AI's convenience while trying to maintain their own creative voice.

The use of AI in literature is also developing globally (Ng et al., 2021). However, its impact is not the same in every context. Indonesia provides a unique and critical case study because its literary landscape is built on strong communal traditions and diverse local languages that prioritize human emotional depth. Unlike global trends that often focus on technical efficiency, Indonesian literature still values the "human touch" and local wisdom as the soul of a work. As Nurdiani et al. (2025) notes, while AI is entering academic and literary circles, its adoption is still influenced by local cultural attitudes that value the personal connection between the writer and the community. Therefore, Indonesia is not just a geographical focus, but a representative case of how a traditional literary culture negotiates and adapts to global technology. This makes Indonesia an important context for seeing how global technology is integrated into a literary scene that still values traditional and communal creative practices.

AI can provide numerous benefits to writers in the creative process. This technology can help speed up manuscript editing, improve grammar, and add variety to enrich the work's content (Floridi, 2025; Guo et al., 2025). For literary writers, this can broaden their perspective on the creative process, as AI enables exploration of language and forms that were previously difficult to access. Furthermore, AI also provides writers with new experiences in developing ideas and presenting them in more innovative ways (Amirjalili et al., 2024). Thus, this technology can be considered part of the development of the modern literary world.

In literary education and learning, AI also plays a crucial role. AI can help students understand a work's structure, discover themes, and hone their creative writing skills (Amyatun & Kholis, 2023; Maulidina & Wibowo, 2022). Using this technology, the learning process becomes more interactive and efficient (Dergaa et al., 2023). The integration of literature and technology supports the development of critical thinking, collaborative, and communicative skills. This aligns with the demands of 21st-century education, which emphasizes mastery of digital literacy. Therefore, the use of AI can be part of a strategy to develop writing skills relevant to current needs (Pham, 2025).

This study sought to understand how Indonesian literary writers utilize AI in their writing process. The subjects were active writers who produced works in the form of poetry, short stories, novels, or drama scripts. Using a qualitative approach and an open-ended questionnaire, this study focused on writers' experiences, perspectives, and habits when using AI technology. A descriptive analysis was conducted to identify general patterns in the use of AI in the creative process. In this way, the research provided a clear picture of the relationship between humans and technology in the literary world.

Overall, this research is expected to contribute to the development of literary and technological discourse in Indonesia. The results are expected to enrich understanding of new ways of writing and appreciating literary works in the digital era. Furthermore, this research can serve as a foundation for developing digital literacy among writers and literary scholars. Through the wise use of technology, the literary world can continue to grow without losing its aesthetic and humanitarian values. Thus, literature and AI can coexist as two mutually supportive elements in creating meaningful works for modern society.

II. METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to explore literary writers' perceptions and experiences regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the creative writing process. Qualitative descriptive research is suitable for examining phenomena in natural settings and emphasizing meaning rather than statistical generalization (Sugiyono, 2019). In line with this view, Rukajat (2018) states that descriptive research aims to present a realistic and factual picture of events as they occur. Through this approach, the study seeks to examine how writers

understand AI, use it in practice, and position it either as a creative aid or as a potential challenge to originality in literary production (Begum, 2025).

Data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed through the Google Forms platform. The questionnaire consisted of closed and semi open questions designed to explore three main aspects: (1) writers' perceptions of AI as a tool in the creative process, (2) their direct experiences using AI to write or edit literary works, and (3) their views on originality and ethical concerns related to AI assisted writing. The closed questions employed a five point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," while the semi open questions invited participants to provide brief written explanations and examples of their experiences. Sample items included statements such as "AI helps improve my writing efficiency" and open prompts such as "Describe how you have used AI in your creative writing process." The online format allowed participants to respond reflectively and at their own pace. However, this method also has limitations, as participation depended on voluntary self-selection and access to digital platforms. Consequently, the responses may predominantly reflect the perspectives of writers who are already familiar with or interested in AI, while those with limited digital engagement may be less represented, which limits the generalizability of the findings beyond this specific group of writers.

The participants of this study were 53 individuals who were actively involved in literary writing, including poetry, short stories, novels, drama scripts, and literary essays. They consisted of young writers, literature students, and members of literacy communities who had published their work in either print or digital media. Participants were selected through purposive sampling in order to ensure their relevance to the research focus, especially with regard to their active engagement in writing and their basic familiarity with AI tools. Although the number of participants is considered adequate for a qualitative descriptive study, this study does not intend to represent Indonesian literary writers as a whole. Instead, the sample reflects a particular group of writers whose experiences provide an overview of current practices of AI use in literary writing, and the findings should therefore be interpreted within this limited context.

Data collection was conducted over a one-month period in October 2025 through social media platforms, literary community groups, and academic networks in the field of language and literature. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to questionnaire completion. All responses were anonymized to ensure confidentiality. In addition to the primary data, secondary sources in the form of journal articles and academic essays were also consulted to support and strengthen the theoretical discussion of AI and literary creativity.

The data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. Responses were read repeatedly to obtain an overall understanding before being examined line by line to identify meaningful units related to writers' experiences with AI. An inductive coding process

was applied, allowing categories and themes to emerge from the data rather than being predetermined (Sugiyono, 2019). This systematic approach followed the three stage coding process outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998): first, open coding to identify initial concepts; second, axial coding to relate categories to their subcategories; and finally, selective coding to integrate and refine the final themes. Similar codes were then grouped into broader themes and organized into thematic tables to facilitate comparison across participants' responses. The analysis was conducted manually, with careful attention to grounding interpretations in respondents' statements.

To enhance transparency, examples of coding decisions and representative excerpts were documented during the analysis process. Data collection and analysis continued until recurring patterns appeared across the data, indicating a basic level of thematic saturation. The final themes were synthesized to present both supportive and critical views of AI use in literary writing and to illustrate how writers negotiate the relationship between human creativity and technological assistance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Author's Perception of the Role of AI in the World of Literature

Based on the results shown in Table 1.62% of respondents described AI as a collaborator that supports different stages of the writing process. Writers in this group perceived AI as particularly helpful when they experienced difficulties generating ideas or organizing language effectively. Instead of producing meaning independently, AI was mainly used to suggest different word choices, possible storylines and stylistic options that could stimulate further thinking.

Table 1. Results of respondents' perceptions of AI in literature (n = 53)

No	Research Aspect	Answer Categories	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Perception of AI's Key Role in Literature	Collaborator	31	62
		Disrupting the role of the writer	11	22
		Neutral	8	16
2	AI Belief Can Replace Writers	Yes	9	18
		No	41	82
3	The Impact of AI on the Quality of Literary Works	Increase	25	50
		No Effect	14	28
		Decrease	11	22

However, this role as a collaborator often creates a complex contradiction. While AI helps with productivity, it also introduces a tension where the same tool that assists a writer can be seen as a disruptor of their original creative process. Beyond improving productivity, AI was

also considered useful in overcoming creative stagnation by accelerating the exploration of ideas. Nevertheless, respondents consistently emphasized that creative authority remains in human hands, as meaning, intention, and aesthetic judgment cannot be fully delegated to automated systems. This perspective indicates a flexible way of working with technology in which writers incorporate AI support without surrendering their creative identity.

This perception can be understood by referring to the idea of extended cognition introduced by Clark and Chalmers (1998). They argue that thinking does not always occur solely in the mind but can involve tools that assist cognitive activity. In this sense, AI is not viewed as an independent creative agent. Instead, writers tend to treat it as a practical support that helps them think through ideas, refine language, or explore alternative possibilities during the writing process. This shows a duality where AI is welcomed for its efficiency but simultaneously feared for its potential to flatten the unique emotional peaks of human storytelling. The findings indicate that AI is commonly regarded as a supplement to human creativity, while imagination, interpretation, and artistic intent remain grounded in the writer's own judgment.

In contrast, 22% of respondents viewed AI as potentially disrupting the role of human writers in the literary world. These concerns largely stem from AI's ability to generate text rapidly and reproduce linguistic patterns based on large scale data. Respondents expressed anxiety that such capabilities could blur the distinction between human authored and machine generated works, thereby challenging the cultural value traditionally attached to literary authorship. They also highlighted the risk of over reliance on AI, which was believed to encourage uniformity and weaken individual "voice". From this perspective, AI is seen not merely as a technical tool but as a force that may alter professional security and ethical norms within literary production.

These concerns resonate with discussions on authorial voice and creative agency in the age of generative AI. Alharbi (2025) argues that extensive reliance on AI assisted writing may lead to stylistic homogenization, potentially diminishing the distinctive qualities that define an author's voice. The respondents' apprehensions therefore reflect broader theoretical debates about originality, authorship, and control in digitally mediated creative practices.

Meanwhile, 16% of respondents viewed AI neutrally, as a technology that only functions when used, without any moral implications or impact on the writing process. In this group's view, the quality of literary works remains determined by the author's competence, preferences, and depth of reflection as a human being. They tend to view AI as a functional tool, like a computer or a text editor. They argued that the quality of literary work ultimately depends on the author's sensitivity, experience, and depth of reflection, rather than on the tools employed. AI was considered useful for accelerating technical aspects of writing, but not for shaping meaning or artistic intent. This position reflects a pragmatic orientation toward

technological development, where AI is treated as a supporting instrument rather than a creative partner or threat.

Overall, the findings show that writers respond to AI in varied and cautious ways. Most respondents are willing to utilize technology to increase efficiency and expand creative possibilities, while simultaneously maintaining clear boundaries to preserve human intentionality and emotional depth. This pattern illustrates how contemporary writers negotiate technological innovation while safeguarding core literary values. Hayles (2012) notes that creativity in the digital age often develops through interaction between humans, technological tools, and cultural contexts, rather than coming solely from the individual writer. From this perspective, AI does not replace writers. In this context, AI is treated as a supporting element rather than a substitute for the writer.

The Author's View on the Potential of AI Replacing Human Writers

The finding that 82% of respondents believe AI cannot replace human writers reflects a long-standing view of literature as a product of lived experience and cultural meaning. This perception aligns with literary theory that positions creative writing as an expressive act rooted in personal and social experience (Siswanto, 2008). Pradopo (2013) emphasizes that literary works emerge from an author's interaction with reality, emotion, and cultural values, rather than from formal structure alone. From this perspective, respondents' resistance to the idea of replacement suggests that AI generated texts, although technically well formed, are perceived as lacking experiential depth.

Similarly, Nurgiyantoro (2005) argues that literary meaning is shaped by the author's sensitivity to social and emotional contexts, which cannot be separated from human consciousness. Respondents' views echo this position, particularly in their emphasis on personal meaning and cultural reflection as essential components of literature. AI, in this sense, is regarded as capable of assisting with surface level aspects of writing but not with the interpretive and emotional processes that give literary texts their artistic value.

Creative writing involves intuition, sensitivity, and sustained reflection, elements that develop through human experience rather than automated processes (Burroway et al., 2019; Zinsser, 2006). The respondents' views echo this position, especially in their concern that excessive reliance on AI could distance writers from the reflective aspects of writing that give literary works their distinctive voice.

However, the view held by 18% of respondents that AI may partially replace certain writing functions indicates a more flexible understanding of creativity in the digital era. This perspective resonates with discussions of posthuman creativity, in which creative processes are no longer seen as exclusively human. Hayles (2017) suggests that contemporary creativity often emerges through interaction between humans and technological systems, especially in

digital environments. Respondents who support a partial role for AI appear to accept this interaction, particularly in relation to technical, structural, or stylistic aspects of writing.

However, even within this group, AI was not viewed as an independent author. Respondents continued to emphasize that intention, interpretation, and aesthetic judgment remain human responsibilities. This position reflects Setiawan and Nurhidayah's (2022) view that technology in literary practice functions as a medium rather than a source of meaning. In this sense, AI may support the writing process, but it does not replace the author's role in shaping significance and artistic direction.

Taken together, these findings indicate that Indonesian literary writers tend to preserve a human centered view of authorship, while selectively engaging with technological support. Rather than framing AI as a replacement for writers, respondents largely understand it as a tool whose value depends on how it is used. This reflects an ongoing negotiation between tradition and innovation, where human creativity continues to define literary meaning even as technological tools become increasingly present in the writing process.

The Impact of AI Use on the Quality of Literary Works

The results show that 50% of the respondents considered AI to have a positive influence on the quality of literary works, particularly in relation to technical elements such as sentence organization, consistency of language, and word choice. From this perspective, AI is viewed as a practical tool that assists writers in managing procedural tasks, especially during the stages of editing and revision. By helping to minimize technical inaccuracies and handle repetitive corrections, AI enables writers to devote greater attention to developing ideas, shaping narratives, and engaging in imaginative experimentation. This understanding resonates with Hayles' (2017) argument on human machine collaboration, which highlights the role of computational tools in supporting creative activity without displacing human judgment and interpretation. In this sense, AI enhances literary quality not directly, but by creating more favorable conditions for the creative process to unfold.

Meanwhile, 28% of respondents believed that the use of AI does not significantly affect the quality of literary works. For this group, literary value is primarily shaped by the writer's ability to construct meaning, articulate experience, and engage readers through interpretation rather than technical precision. Although AI may improve surface level features of a text, it is not considered capable of influencing its symbolic depth or emotional resonance. Floridi (2018) emphasizes that digital technologies require ethical governance grounded in human responsibility, particularly in determining how and for what purposes such technologies are used. Applied to literary practice, this view suggests that the quality and authenticity of a literary work cannot be attributed to AI alone, but must be evaluated in relation to the writer's intentions, interpretive control, and ethical awareness.

In contrast, 22% of respondents expressed concern that excessive reliance on AI could reduce the quality of literary works. Their concern focuses on the tendency of AI systems to generate recommendations based on recurring data patterns, which may encourage stylistic uniformity and limit individual experimentation. When writers rely too heavily on such patterns, literary expression risks becoming predictable and detached from personal exploration. This concern can be understood in relation to discussions on algorithmic standardization in creative production. Scholars have noted that systems trained on large textual datasets tend to reproduce dominant patterns and stylistic conventions, which may limit formal experimentation when relied upon uncritically (Bender et al., 2021; Zhang, 2025). From this perspective, excessive dependence on automated suggestions risks producing texts that appear technically polished but stylistically uniform. For many writers, maintaining a critical distance from AI assistance becomes necessary to safeguard individual voice and preserve the exploratory nature of literary expression.

Overall, these findings suggest that the impact of AI on literary quality is shaped not by the technology itself but by the manner and intensity of its use. AI can enhance efficiency and technical clarity, yet its contribution remains secondary to human reflection, aesthetic judgment, and creative intention. When approached critically, AI functions as a supportive instrument within contemporary literary practice rather than as a force that determines artistic value. This balance reflects how writers today navigate technological innovation while sustaining the interpretive and imaginative foundations of literature.

Implications of AI Use in Contemporary Literary Practice

The development of artificial intelligence has brought significant shifts in how writers engage with the creative process. Many writers view AI as a useful tool that enhances productivity by assisting with idea generation, sentence organization, and diction selection. In this sense, AI operates mainly at a technical and procedural level, helping writers manage repetitive tasks and explore alternative linguistic possibilities. This perspective aligns with Hayles' (2021) argument that collaboration with computational systems can enhance creative work without replacing human interpretive authority. In literary practice, AI is therefore regarded less as a source of meaning and more as a means to enable experimentation with form and expression, while decisions regarding significance and intent remain firmly under the author's control.

Writers also remain attentive to the need to preserve originality and personal identity in their work. While AI can accelerate writing and editing, respondents emphasize that literary value emerges from personal experience, reflection, and emotional engagement. This distinction reflects a foundational principle in literary studies that separates technical proficiency from artistic depth. As Wiyatmi (2009) argues, the quality of literary works depends on the author's ability to construct meaning through subjective experience and cultural sensitivity dimensions that cannot be fully replicated by automated systems. Consequently,

writers tend to use AI selectively, treating it as a supportive instrument while maintaining creative autonomy to avoid stylistic homogenization.

Ethical considerations are increasingly prominent in writers' engagement with AI assisted literary creation. As technological tools become deeply embedded in the creative process, questions of authorship, responsibility, and originality gain importance (Hasanah et al., 2025). Beyond theoretical debate, writers face practical ethical dilemmas such as the risk of unintentional plagiarism and the lack of clear rules regarding disclosure. There is a growing concern about whether an author is morally obligated to inform the audience when a work is partially generated by AI. Coeckelbergh (2021) emphasizes that AI should be understood as a relational technology, whose effects depend on how humans integrate it into social and cultural practices. In the Indonesian context, where literary value is tied to personal trust and communal identity, the failure to disclose AI use could be seen as a threat to the authenticity of the work. This perspective suggests that AI generated outputs require human judgment, interpretation, and accountability rather than being treated as autonomous creative acts.

Another implication concerns the evolving competencies required of contemporary writers. Beyond traditional writing skills, writers are expected to possess digital literacy that enables critical engagement with algorithmic tools. Vallor (2016) argues that ethical and creative practices in digital culture demand reflective judgment and practical wisdom when interacting with intelligent technologies. In literary contexts, this implies that writers must consciously negotiate the balance between efficiency and imagination, ensuring that technological assistance does not override reflective depth or narrative intentionality. When approached thoughtfully, AI can support experimental literary forms while remaining subordinate to human creative vision.

Overall, these implications indicate that the relationship between AI and literary creation is fundamentally complementary rather than competitive. AI enhances efficiency and technical execution, while humans remain central to interpretation, aesthetic judgment, and meaning making. The integration of AI reflects an evolving literary landscape in which creativity emerges through interaction, negotiation, and conscious restraint. Contemporary literature can therefore continue to develop alongside technological change while maintaining its human centered values.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in contemporary literary practice, focusing on the perceptions of 53 Indonesian writers. The results show that most respondents see AI primarily as a collaborative tool rather than a competitor. They value AI for assisting with practical aspects of writing, such as idea generation, sentence organization, and diction refinement, which allows them to concentrate on developing narratives, experimenting with style, and exploring themes. At the same time, writers emphasized that human judgment,

cultural understanding, and aesthetic decisions remain central. They approach AI cautiously, aware of potential risks such as homogenized style, reduced originality, or diminished personal voice, and therefore use it selectively to maintain a balance between efficiency, creative freedom, and ethical responsibility.

The implications of these findings suggest that the integration of AI in literary practice is best understood as complementary rather than competitive. Technology can enhance technical and procedural aspects of writing, while human authors retain control over meaning, interpretation, and artistic quality. This collaboration opens opportunities for experimental and digitally informed literary works. Practically, writers are encouraged to develop critical awareness in using AI, particularly in maintaining authorial voice and avoiding excessive dependence on automated suggestions. For educators, these findings indicate the importance of integrating digital literacy and ethical reflection into creative writing instruction, so that emerging writers are equipped to engage with AI responsibly. Literary institutions and professional communities may also consider formulating basic guidelines on transparency, authorship, and responsible AI use in order to preserve trust and authenticity in literary production.

Future research could extend this study in several directions. Longitudinal studies may examine how writers' perceptions and practices evolve over time as AI technologies become more embedded in creative workflows. Genre specific analyses could explore whether the role of AI differs across poetry, fiction, drama, or other literary forms. In addition, comparative studies on different types of AI tools beyond generic large language models may provide a more detailed understanding of how particular technologies shape creative processes and stylistic outcomes. Overall, the study shows that thoughtful and reflective use of AI can expand creative possibilities while safeguarding the human centered values at the heart of literary practice.

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