ChatGPT as a Cognitive Crutch — A Brazilian RCT Finds AI-Assisted Study Cuts 45-Day Knowledge Retention

AI in Education · Good practice · Brazil

Quality score: 33/100

Evidence strength: Cautionary / limited

Summary

RCT with 120 Brazilian business undergraduates: those who studied AI concepts with ChatGPT spent less time (3.2 vs 5.8 h) but scored 57.5% vs 68.5% on a surprise retention test 45 days later (d = 0.68). A cautionary case.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of learning impact	2/3
Equity & inclusion	0/3
Transparency, ethics & data protection	1/3
Teacher capability & pedagogy	1/3
Scalability & sustainability	1/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

C-NAPSE web research — accessed 2026-11-16

Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) — André Barcaui — accessed 2026-11-16

Social Sciences & Humanities Open — original article — accessed 2026-11-16

Computerworld coverage — accessed 2026-11-16

Stanford SCALE AI evidence repository entry — accessed 2026-11-16

PsyPost coverage (sample, attrition, study time) — accessed 2026-11-16

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