



Critical Thinking Skills, Learning Strategies, and Academic Resilience among Grade 10 Students

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ABSTRACT

In the context of modern secondary education, students are expected to develop strong critical thinking skills, apply effective learning strategies, and demonstrate resilience in navigating academic challenges. This descriptive-correlational study examined the relationship between critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience among Grade 10 students in selected secondary schools in

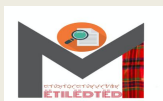
Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat. Data analysis revealed that students' critical thinking skills are oftentimes evident, with the highest proficiency in inference, indicating the ability to identify solutions, evaluate evidence, and apply logical reasoning. Learning strategies were also consistently applied, with cognitive and metacognitive techniques most utilized, while affective and social strategies showed room for improvement. Academic resilience was oftentimes evident, with aspirational goals scoring highest, reflecting strong motivation and clear planning, whereas self-awareness, problem-solving, social skills, and empathy displayed moderate levels. Correlation analysis indicated a moderate positive relationship between critical thinking and academic resilience, suggesting that higher cognitive reasoning is associated with greater perseverance and adaptability in learning contexts. Additionally, a weak but significant positive relationship was observed between learning strategies and academic resilience, with cognitive strategies contributing most to students' persistence and problem-solving abilities. These findings emphasized the interconnectedness of cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors in supporting students' overall academic development and underscore the importance of structured interventions to enhance both thinking skills and resilience.

Keywords: reasoning, study habits, perseverance, cognitive development

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Today, Grade 10 students are increasingly expected to demonstrate strong critical thinking skills, apply effective learning strategies, and sustain academic resilience amid heightened academic demands and diverse learning environments. However, many learners struggle to analyze



information deeply, select appropriate strategies for independent learning, and cope with academic pressures, such as low performance, workload stress, and disruptions. These challenges often lead to disengagement and hinder academic growth, emphasizing the need to examine how cognitive skills, strategic learning behaviors, and resilience interact during this crucial stage of secondary education.

International studies emphasize that critical thinking and learning strategies are essential competencies for 21st-century learners, particularly in science and secondary education. Inquiry-based and metacognitive instructional approaches have been shown to enhance students' ability to analyze problems, generate solutions, and regulate their own learning, while academic resilience enables learners to persist despite academic difficulties (Arifin, 2025; Talikan, 2024). Research further suggests that resilience strengthens the positive effects of cognitive and strategic skills on academic outcomes.

Despite strong evidence on individual constructs, limited studies integrate critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience within a single framework focused on Grade 10 learners in authentic classroom settings.

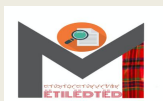
In the Philippines, studies reveal that students' critical thinking skills improve when exposed to learner-centered technology-assisted instruction, while effective learning strategies significantly contribute to academic engagement and performance (Nuezca, 2024). Post-pandemic research highlights academic resilience as a crucial factor in sustaining learning continuity among secondary students facing academic stress and instructional shifts (Talikan, 2024). Existing Philippine research often examines critical thinking, learning strategies, or resilience independently, leaving a lack of empirical

studies that explore the combined influence of these variables among junior high school students, particularly at the Grade 10 level.

Studies conducted in South Central Mindanao indicate that adolescents' academic resilience is closely linked to self-efficacy and psychosocial factors, which affect how students manage learning challenges and academic expectations (Dela Cruz, 2025). Regional findings suggest disparities in students' access to support systems, influencing how effectively they apply learning strategies and critical thinking skills. While resilience and motivational factors have been explored, there is insufficient regional research examining how learning strategies and critical thinking jointly relate to academic resilience among Grade 10 students.

Local studies in Sultan Kudarat highlight the role of teacher support and self-regulated learning in reducing academic stress and improving student outcomes, particularly among science-oriented learners (Division/RSIS Study, 2025). These findings suggest that strategic learning behaviors may serve as pathways for enhancing both cognitive skills and resilience. There remains a lack of localized, data-driven studies that holistically assess critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience among Grade 10 students, necessitating further investigation.

This study was aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by promoting inclusive and equitable quality education through the development of higher-order thinking, effective learning strategies, and academic resilience among secondary students (United Nations, 2024). It also supported SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by addressing resilience as a protective factor against academic stress and learning-related anxiety among adolescents.



The study aimed to examine the relationships among critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience among Grade 10 students, and to determine how critical thinking and learning strategies predict academic resilience. Findings were expected to provide evidence-based inputs for instructional planning and student-support programs that foster cognitive growth, strategic learning, and resilience in secondary education (Arifin, 2025; Nuezca, 2024).

Theoretical Frameworks

Critical Thinking Theory (Facione)

The study was anchored in **Facione's Critical Thinking Theory**, which conceptualizes critical thinking as a purposeful, self-regulatory process involving interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and reflection.

This theory emphasizes learners' ability to think logically and make reasoned judgments when faced with academic tasks and challenges. For Grade 10 students, critical thinking skills are essential for understanding complex subject matter, solving problems, and making informed decisions in academic settings.

This theory was relevant to the study as critical thinking skills are assumed to influence how students select and apply learning strategies and how effectively they respond to academic difficulties. Students with stronger critical thinking abilities are more likely to adopt strategic learning approaches and demonstrate resilience when encountering setbacks, thereby supporting sustained academic engagement and performance (Facione, 2020).

Self-Regulated Learning Theory (Zimmerman)

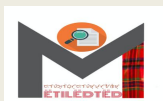
Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)

Theory by Zimmerman explains how learners actively control their cognitive, motivational, and behavioral processes during learning. According to this theory, effective learners plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning using strategies such as goal setting, time management, self-monitoring, and reflection. These learning strategies enable students to take ownership of their learning and adapt to academic demands. This theory is highly relevant to the present study as learning strategies are a core variable. Grade 10 students who demonstrate strong self-regulation skills are more likely to persist in the face of academic challenges, linking learning strategies directly to academic resilience. SRL theory supports the assumption that students' strategic learning behaviors serve as a mechanism through which critical thinking skills contribute to resilience and academic success (Zimmerman, 2019).

Resilience Theory (Masten)

The study was further grounded in **Resilience Theory**, particularly Masten's conceptualization of academic resilience as the capacity of students to adapt positively despite adversity, stress, or academic pressure.

Academic resilience was shaped by both internal factors (e.g., cognitive skills, motivation, coping strategies) and external supports (e.g., teachers, learning environments). This theory is relevant because it frames academic resilience not as a fixed trait but as a dynamic process influenced by students' critical thinking skills and learning strategies. Grade 10 students who can think critically and employ effective learning strategies are better equipped to overcome academic challenges, recover from failure, and maintain positive academic outcomes. Thus, Resilience Theory provides a strong lens for understanding how cognitive and strategic factors interact to foster perseverance and



adaptability in school contexts (Masten, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study explains how selected learner-related factors influence students' academic resilience, with emphasis on the specific indicators of each variable and their relationships.

The first independent variable is Critical Thinking Skills, adapted from Marnı et al. (2020). Critical thinking skills refer to students' capacity to process information logically and make informed academic judgments.

This variable was measured through four indicators: interpretation, which involved understanding and clarifying the meaning of information or academic content; analysis, which referred to examining ideas and identifying relationships among concepts; inference, or the ability to draw reasonable conclusions based on available evidence; and evaluation, which focused on assessing the credibility, relevance, and quality of information and arguments. These indicators enabled students to approach academic tasks thoughtfully and respond effectively to learning challenges.

The second independent variable is Learning Strategies, adapted from Enciso et al. (2025). Learning strategies are deliberate actions and techniques of students to enhance learning and academic performance.

This variable was measured through cognitive strategies, which involved processing, organizing, and remembering information; metacognitive strategies, which included planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own learning; affective strategies, which helped manage emotions, motivation, and attitudes toward learning; and social strategies, which involved

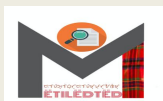
learning through interaction, collaboration, and communication with others. Together, these indicators supported students in managing academic demands and sustaining effective learning behaviors.

The dependent variable was Academic Resilience, adapted from Ramdani et al. (2021). Academic resilience referred to students' ability to adapt positively and remain academically engaged despite encountering difficulties or adversity. This variable was measured through the indicators: social skills, which enable effective interaction and support-seeking; empathy, or the ability to understand and relate to others' experiences; problem solving, which reflected students' capacity to address academic challenges constructively; self-efficacy, a belief in one's ability to succeed in a specific situation; self-awareness, which involves understanding one's strengths, weaknesses, and emotional responses; and aspirational goals, which referred to students' motivation and future-oriented academic aspirations. These indicators collectively reflected students' strengths in coping with academic pressure and maintaining perseverance.

Overall, the framework emphasized that strong critical thinking skills and effective learning strategies, as reflected in their respective indicators, significantly contribute to the development of academic resilience. By nurturing these competencies, educational institutions could better support students in overcoming challenges and achieving sustained academic success.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to examine the relationships among critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience among Grade 10 students, and to determine how critical thinking and learning strategies predict academic resilience among selected



secondary schools in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of critical thinking skills of students in terms of:
 - 1.1. interpretation,
 - 1.2. analysis,
 - 1.3. inference, and
 - 1.4. evaluation?
2. What is the level of learning strategies of students in terms of:
 - 2.1. cognitive strategies,
 - 2.2. metacognitive strategies,
 - 2.3. affective strategies, and
 - 2.4. social strategies?
3. What is the level of academic resilience of students in terms of:
 - 3.1. social skills,
 - 3.2. empathy,
 - 3.3. problem solving,
 - 3.4. self-efficacy,
 - 3.5. self-awareness, and
 - 3.6. aspirational goals?
4. Is there a significant relationship between critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationships among critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience among Grade 10 students, and to determine the extent to which critical thinking and learning strategies predicted academic resilience in selected secondary schools in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat.

In this study, a quantitative correlational design was particularly appropriate because it enabled the researcher to measure variables such as

critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience and examined the relationships among them. This approach allowed for the identification and assessment of correlations, providing insights into how students' thinking abilities and learning behaviors contributed to their resilience in academic settings. By quantifying these variables, the study supported an evidence-based understanding of factors that promoted students' capacity to cope with academic challenges.

Creswell and Creswell (2017) emphasized that a descriptive-correlational design was suitable for exploring the associations among variables within a specific population. Accordingly, this study investigated the relationship of critical thinking skills and learning strategies to the academic resilience of Grade Ten students. The correlational aspect of the design helped determine the strength and direction of these relationships without manipulating variables, aligning with both ethical standards and practical research considerations (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were Grade 10 students from the top five largest public secondary schools under the Schools Division Office of Tacurong City. The selection of these schools was based on factors such as student population size and overall school performance, ensuring that the study captured a variety of perspectives and experiences from learners with varying levels of critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience.

A total population of 1,160 Grade 10 students was identified across the participating schools. From this population, 116 students were selected as respondents using proportional sampling to ensure fair representation from each school. Specifically, Rajah Muda National High



School contributed 5 respondents from a population of 46 students, while Apolinario S. Bernardo Memorial National High School provided 11 respondents from 113 students. San Emmanuel National High School contributed 16 respondents from a population of 160 students, and Virginia F. Grino Memorial National High School accounted for 24 respondents from 241 students. The largest share of respondents came from Tacurong National High School, with 60 respondents drawn from 600 students. This proportional distribution strengthened the representativeness and reliability of the data gathered across the public secondary school context of Tacurong City.

Only Grade 10 students who were officially enrolled during the conduct of the study were included. Students who were irregular, newly transferred, or had incomplete attendance records were excluded to ensure that the collected data accurately reflected the experiences and competencies of learners who consistently engaged in the academic environment.

Sampling Technique

The population of this study consisted of all Grade 10 students officially enrolled in the top five largest public secondary schools under the Schools Division Office of Tacurong City. These students represented the target population whose critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience were examined. The population frame was obtained from the official enrollment records of each selected school, which provided a complete list of students per section and school.

From this population, respondents were selected to ensure proportional representation across the five schools. A stratified random sampling method was employed, stratifying by school and section

to capture diversity in academic engagement and learning experiences. The sample size was determined using both the general guidelines of Gay and Gayer (2003) and the Slovin formula to ensure statistical accuracy, confidence, and representativeness.

The inclusion criteria for participation were students who were officially enrolled in Grade 10 in the selected schools, had regular attendance, and were willing to participate in the study.

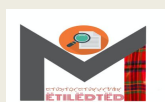
The exclusion criteria included students who were irregular, newly transferred, or had incomplete attendance records during the data collection. Additionally, the withdrawal criteria allowed any student to discontinue participation at any point without penalty, thereby ensuring voluntary involvement and adherence to ethical research standards.

Data Gathering Instrument

In this study, a survey questionnaire was employed, structured into three distinct sections. These sections covered critical thinking skills based on the study of Marni et al. (2020), learning strategies adapted from Enciso et al. (2025), and academic resilience based on Ramdani et al. (2021).

Critical Thinking Skills were measured using a 26-item survey questionnaire utilizing a 5-point Likert scale (5-Strongly Agree to 1-Strongly Disagree). This instrument demonstrated good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.70. The responses were interpreted using the following scale:

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Critical thinking skills are always evident.
3.40 –	High	Critical thinking skills



Mean Range	Description	Interpretation	Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4.19		are oftentimes evident.	4.19		is oftentimes evident.
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	Critical thinking skills are sometimes evident.	2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	Academic resilience is sometimes evident.
1.80 – 2.59	Low	Critical thinking skills are rarely evident.	1.80 – 2.59	Low	Academic resilience is rarely evident.
1.00 – 1.79	Very Low	Critical thinking skills are never evident.	1.00 – 1.79	Very Low	Academic resilience is never evident.

Learning Strategies were measured using a 54-item questionnaire on cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies, also employing a 5-point Likert scale (5-Strongly Agree to 1-Strongly Disagree). The instrument demonstrated acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alpha above 0.70. The interpretation scale was as follows:

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Learning strategies are always evident.
3.40 – 4.19	High	Learning strategies are oftentimes evident.
2.60 – 3.39	Moderate	Learning strategies are sometimes evident.
1.80 – 2.59	Low	Learning strategies are rarely evident.
1.00 – 1.79	Very Low	Learning strategies are never evident.

Academic Resilience was measured using a 26-item questionnaire covering social skills, empathy, problem-solving, self-efficacy, self-awareness, and aspirational goals. This instrument also used a 5-point Likert scale and has a Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.70. The interpretation of mean scores followed the same scale as the previous variables:

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
4.20 – 5.00	Very High	Academic resilience is always evident.
3.40 – 4.19	High	Academic resilience

Data Gathering Procedure

During the data collection phase, the researcher adhered to a structured process. First, a formal request was made to the Dean of the Graduate School to secure permission to conduct the study.

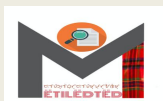
Upon approval, an endorsement letter from the Dean was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of Tacurong City and the respective School Heads to request authorization to administer the research.

After informed consent was secured from the selected respondents, the questionnaires were distributed. Respondents had one week to complete them. All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for research purposes.

Once gathered, the data were systematically organized and analyzed with the assistance of a statistician. The results were presented professionally while ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of all respondents.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study examined the relationship among students' critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience of students. Specifically, it covered the assessment of critical thinking



skills in terms of interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, and learning strategies in terms of cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. The dependent variable, academic resilience was examined in social skills, empathy, problem solving, self-efficacy, self-awareness, and aspirational goals. The study aimed to determine the significant relationship between independent variables and academic resilience.

The scope of the study was limited to Grade Ten students enrolled in the selected secondary school. Data were gathered during the School Year 2025–2026, approved by the school administration. The study employed quantitative research design, utilizing survey questionnaires to measure critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience.

The study excluded students from other grade levels, schools, and educational contexts; hence, the findings may not be generalized beyond the selected respondents and venue.

The study did not include other variables that may influence academic resilience such as socio-economic status, family background, learning styles, teacher effectiveness, school facilities, or mental health conditions. Moreover, data on independent and dependent variables relied primarily on self-reported questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias.

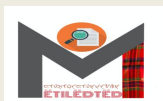
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Today, students are increasingly expected to demonstrate strong critical thinking skills, apply effective learning strategies, and sustain academic resilience amid heightened academic demands and diverse learning environments. This study was quantitative, specifically descriptive-correlation to examine the relationships among critical thinking skills, learning

strategies, and academic resilience among Grade 10 students, and to determine how critical thinking and learning strategies predict academic resilience among selected secondary schools in Tacurong City, Sultan Kudarat. The results indicate that the critical thinking skills of students across all four dimensions—interpretation, analysis, inference, and evaluation—were generally “oftentimes evident.” Students demonstrated a consistent ability to understand information, distinguish between facts and opinions, assess consequences, and make reasoned judgments.

Among the dimensions, inference showed the highest overall mean, suggesting that students are particularly adept at identifying solutions, seeking evidence, and applying logical reasoning to problems. Interpretation, analysis, and evaluation also reflected moderate proficiency, indicating that students could comprehend, analyze, and assess information effectively, there was still room to strengthen skills such as articulating opinions, synthesizing ideas, and prioritizing key issues. Overall, the findings revealed a positive trend in students’ critical thinking capabilities, highlighting both their strengths and areas for further development.

Also, the results indicated that students’ application of learning strategies was consistently “oftentimes evident” across all dimensions. Cognitive strategies showed moderate to high usage in note-taking, summarizing, and organizing information, while metacognitive strategies reflect students’ active planning, monitoring, and adapting of study techniques. Affective strategies were applied moderately, highlighting emotional awareness, stress management, and self-motivation, though some areas such as sharing feelings or journaling were less frequently practiced. Social strategies were also moderately evident, with students collaborating, seeking peer support, and participating in study



groups, though active discussion of challenges shows room for growth. Overall, students demonstrate a balanced but improvable use of strategies that support learning, comprehension, and academic performance.

Moreover, it was shown that students' academic resilience was oftentimes evident across all assessed dimensions. Among these, aspirational goals scored the highest, indicating strong motivation and clear future planning, while self-awareness, problem-solving, social skills, and empathy showed moderate resilience, reflecting that student could generally cope with challenges, manage emotions, and navigate learning difficulties but may need further development in interpersonal understanding and adaptive problem-solving. Overall, students demonstrated a capacity to persist in academic pursuits, maintain hope, and pursue personal and educational objectives despite obstacles.

Furthermore, the analysis revealed a moderate positive correlation between students' critical thinking skills and their academic resilience, indicating that higher levels of critical thinking are associated with greater resilience in academic settings. The relationship was statistically significant, confirming that students who effectively interpret, analyze, infer, and evaluate information are more likely to adapt, persevere, and maintain motivation when faced with learning challenges.

Finally, the study revealed a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between students' learning strategies and their academic resilience. This indicates that while the overall effect is modest, students who actively apply cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies tend to demonstrate higher levels of resilience in coping with academic challenges.

Among the strategies, cognitive techniques showed the strongest association with resilience, suggesting that structured study methods and problem-solving play a key role in supporting students' perseverance.

Conclusion

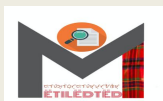
The following conclusions were made in light of this study's findings:

The study concluded that cultivating an environment that encourages active reasoning, questioning, and reflective thinking. While students were generally capable of applying critical thinking in various contexts, continuous practice, guided discussions, and structured problem-solving activities were essential to deepen their analytical, evaluative, and inferential skills.

Also, while students were generally capable of employing diverse strategies to enhance learning, there was potential to cultivate emotional and collaborative skills. Strengthening these areas through structured guidance, peer interaction, and reflective practices could not only improve academic outcomes but also foster resilience, self-regulation, and cooperative competencies necessary for lifelong learning.

It also highlights the importance of fostering both personal and social competencies alongside goal-oriented behaviors to strengthen resilience. Encouraging students to develop self-awareness, empathy, and collaborative skills, while maintaining clear aspirations, could enhance their ability to overcome academic challenges and sustain long-term engagement and motivation in learning.

The study even concluded that integrating critical thinking development into educational programs not only strengthened cognitive abilities but also



enhanced students' capacity to cope with difficulties, build persistence, and sustain engagement in their academic journey.

Finally, it was concluded that the deliberate use of learning strategies could empower students to navigate difficulties more, reinforcing the value of teaching and encouraging effective study habits. It suggested that fostering both individual and collaborative strategies may enhance students' adaptability, motivation, and overall academic growth.

Recommendations

Considering the findings of the study, the following were recommended:

1. **DepEd** may develop programs and initiatives that actively integrate critical thinking and learning strategy workshops into the curriculum. Encourage schools to provide resources and training that strengthen students' ability to articulate opinions, synthesize ideas, and practice adaptive learning strategies, while also promoting emotional awareness and collaboration skills.

2. **School Administrators** may create supportive learning environments by incorporating structured opportunities for students to practice discussion, problem-solving, and reflective activities. Facilitate mentorship programs or peer-support systems that allow students to share challenges, receive guidance, and develop interpersonal and social skills that reinforce resilience.

3. **Curriculum Planners** may design lesson plans that explicitly embed critical thinking exercises alongside practical learning strategies. Include tasks that promote inference, evaluation, and problem-solving, while also integrating affective and social skills activities, such as journaling, group projects, and scenario-based learning, to balance cognitive development with emotional and social growth.

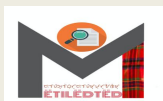
4. **Teachers** may actively model and reinforce critical thinking, strategy use, and resilience in the classroom. Encourage students to verbalize their reasoning, plan and monitor study approaches, reflect on learning progress, and manage emotions during academic tasks. Offer constructive feedback and create safe spaces where students feel comfortable discussing challenges and asking for help.

5. **Future Researchers** may investigate interventions that target the weaker areas identified, such as affective and social strategies, as well as interpretation, analysis, and evaluation skills. Explore longitudinal or experimental studies that measure how specific strategy training or resilience-building programs can enhance both critical thinking and academic perseverance over time.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical standards and institutional protocols, with all plans and procedures presented to East-West Mindanao Colleges, Inc. prior to implementation. Ethical considerations included obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality through the use of codes or pseudonyms, and securely protecting all collected data. The researcher took measures to avoid any potential harm, maintained a professional and respectful relationship with participants, and remained vigilant against personal biases to ensure objectivity and transparency throughout the study. Institutional approval and ethical clearance were secured before data collection, while honesty and integrity were upheld in the reporting of findings.

The study also emphasized beneficence by considering its potential contributions to educational practice and policy, demonstrated cultural sensitivity by



respecting local beliefs and customs, and promoted inclusion and diversity by ensuring broad representation of perspectives regarding critical thinking skills, learning strategies, and academic resilience among Grade 10 students. Overall, these ethical principles safeguarded participants' rights, dignity, and well-being while ensuring the credibility and integrity of the research process.

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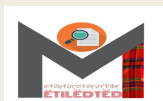
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AI Tools Declaration

I do hereby declare the use AI tools, such as Chat GPT and Grammarly for grammar checking and sentence organization purposes only.

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