

POLICY BRIEF (ISSUE 7)

School-Age Children's AI Usage in Singapore

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Background

Children are increasingly encountering AI tools in their everyday lives. Emerging AI tools are freely available, making them easily accessible to children. However, little is known about when children use AI, who the users are, how they are using the AI. Current research on AI usage focuses largely on adolescents and adults and is often cross-sectional and based on random samples, likely due to the limited availability of longitudinal data on children.

A recent study by Chen and Yeung, presented at the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Population Association of Singapore, explores school-age children's use of AI in Singapore. The study is among the first to examine children's AI usage using large-scale, nationally representative longitudinal data from the Singapore Longitudinal Early Development Study (SG-LEADS).

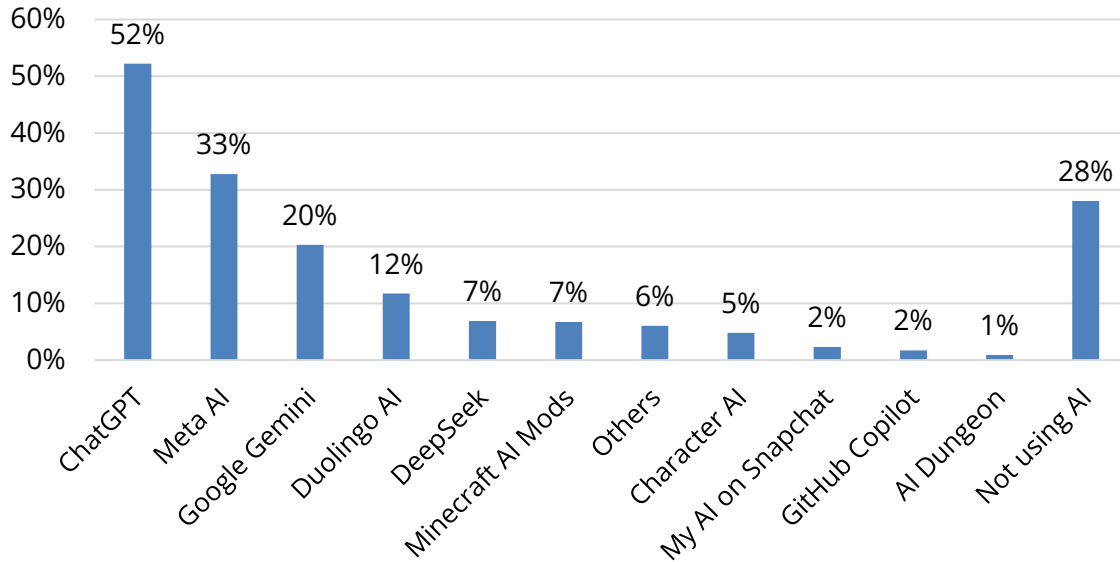
Data and Methods

The study extracts data from Wave 3 of SG-LEADS survey conducted in 2025. The analytic sample consists of 2,985 children aged 8–13, who reported their use of AI apps. The study describes the prevalence of AI usage by age, gender, and purpose. Sampling weights were applied in the analysis.

Key Findings

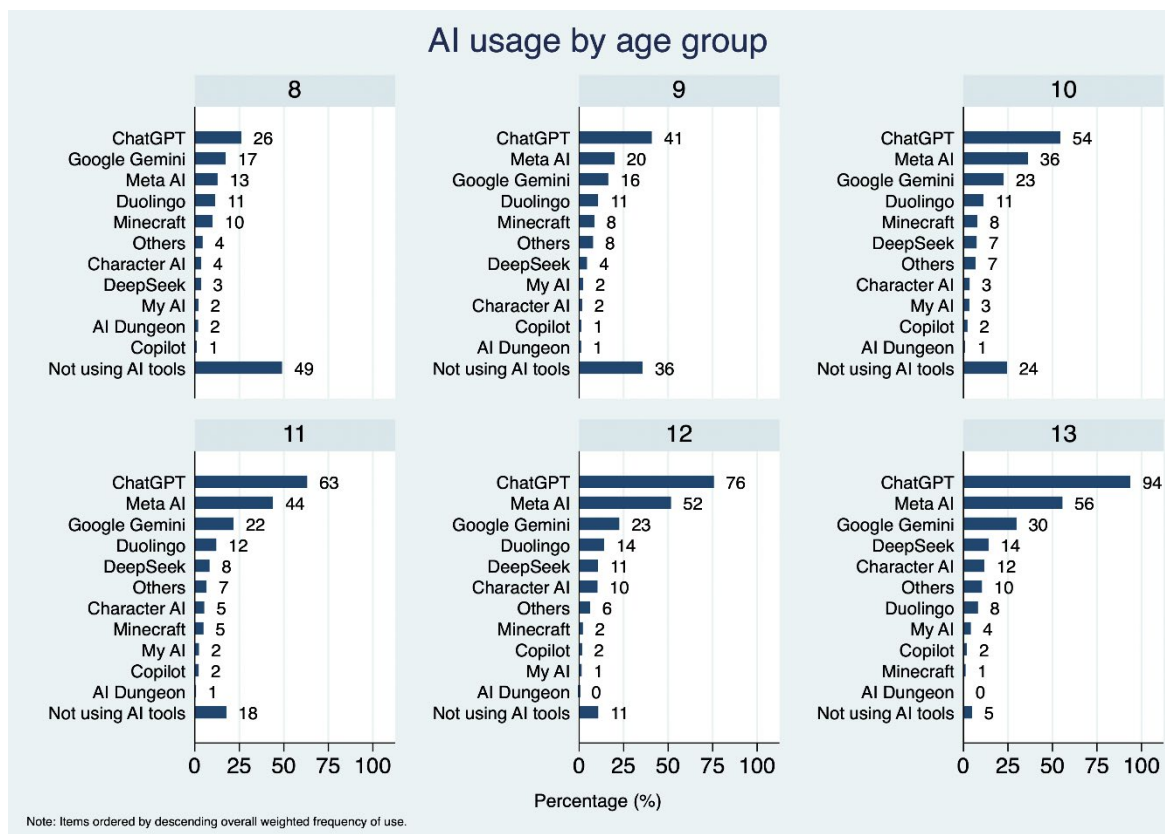
- 72% of children aged 8–13 had used AI apps by 2025.
- The most popular tools were ChatGPT (52%), Meta AI (33%), and Google Gemini (20%).

Figure 1. Children’s use of AI (2025, weighted)



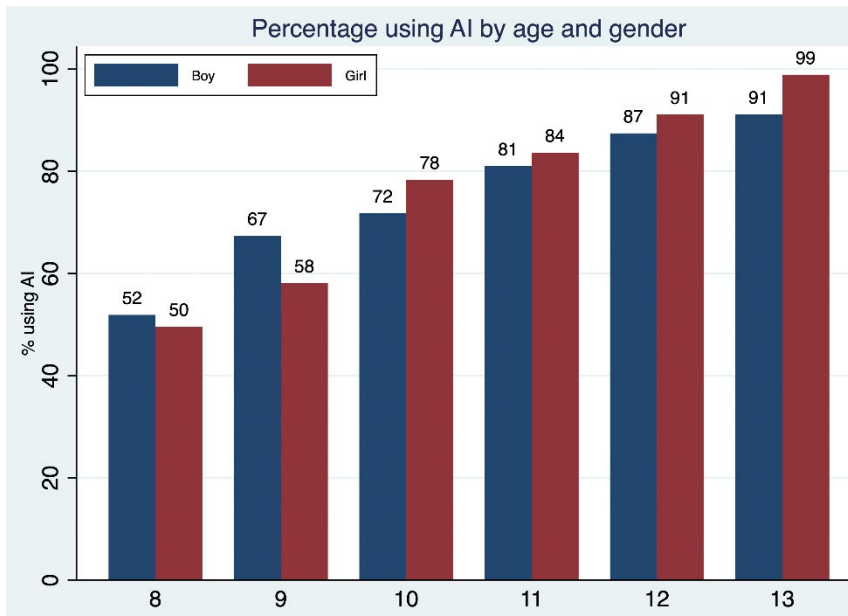
- AI adoption begins early and grows rapidly; 51% of 8-year-olds have used AI. This figure rises sharply to 76% at age 10 and 95% by age 13.

Figure 2. AI usage by age group (2025, weighted)



- No significant gender gap in AI adoption rates among school-age children.

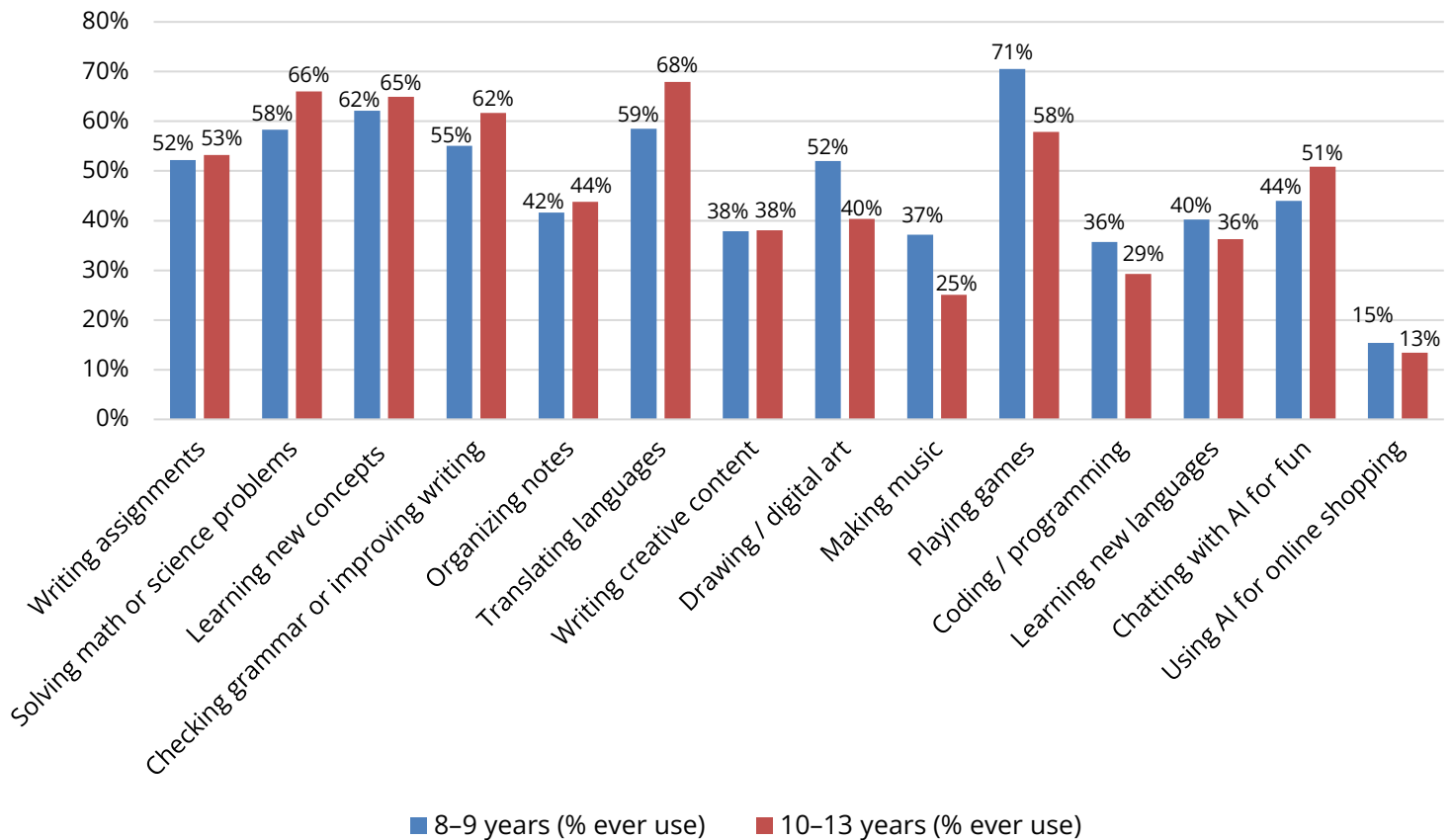
Figure 3. School-age children’s prevalence of using AI apps by age and gender (2025, weighted)



Note. the gender difference in each age group is not statistically significant

- For study purposes, children primarily use AI for: translating language (68% among 8- to 9-year-olds, 59% among 10- to 13-year-olds), solving math or science problems (58% among 8- to 9-year-olds, 66% among 10- to 13-year-olds), learning new concepts (62% among 8- to 9-year-olds, 65% among 10- to 13-year-olds).
- Popular leisure activities include: playing games (71% among 8- to 9-year-olds, 58% among 10- to 13-year-olds) and chatting with AI for fun (51% among 8- to 9-year-olds, 44% among 10- to 13-year-olds), and drawing and digital arts (52% among 8- to 9-year-olds, 40% among 10- to 13-year-olds).

Figure 4. Percentage ever use AI for different purposes among AI-users (2025, weighted)



Policy Recommendations

1. Introduce age-appropriate AI literacy guidelines for school education.

Since half of 8-year-olds already engage with AI, structured frameworks are essential to help children, particularly primary school children, navigate these tools safely and critically from an early age.

2. Launch AI literacy education for parents and educators.

Empower adults to mentor primary school students in the productive use of AI while implementing safeguards against potential risks.

3. Develop and deploy customized, child-safe AI platforms.

Policymakers should support the creation of AI tools specifically designed for primary school children, featuring age-restricted content filters.

4. Promote active parental engagement to ensure safe AI adoption

Our previous studies demonstrates a positive link between parental engagement in media consumption and children's prosocial behavior, yet over 40% of parents do not actively participate in their 7- to 9-year-olds' media use (read the [policy brief](#), [full paper](#)). We encourage active parental engagement to help children utilize AI safely.