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Human vs. Machine Judgment: Ethical Dilemmas in the Use of Generative AI for Writing and Grading Essays*

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Abstract

Aim: This study explores the ethical dilemmas posed by the integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools—such as ChatGPT—into academic writing and essay grading, with a specific focus on the Philippine educational context. The research aims to examine educators' perceptions of how AI reshapes authorship, academic integrity, assessment fairness, and pedagogical standards. It further investigates whether differences in perception exist based on demographic profiles such as teaching level, years of experience, and AI familiarity.

Methodology: A quantitative research design was employed using a validated survey questionnaire administered to 120 educators across both basic and higher education institutions. Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA were utilized to analyze the data, with a 0.05 significance level.

Results: Findings reveal that educators strongly agree that AI-generated writing challenges authenticity and that over-reliance on such tools may hinder students' critical thinking and expression of personal voice. Similarly, there is concern that AI-based grading systems, while efficient, are limited in evaluating creativity, emotional nuance, and contextual relevance. Despite these concerns, respondents acknowledge AI's utility as a supplementary tool in both teaching and assessment. However, statistical tests showed no significant difference in perception across gender, teaching level, teaching experience, or AI familiarity.

Conclusion: The study concludes that while generative AI presents promising applications in education, it also raises significant ethical, pedagogical, and policy challenges. Educators remain cautious and call for a balanced, human-centered approach to AI integration.

Recommendations: It is recommended that institutions develop clear AI use policies, provide faculty training on ethical and pedagogical AI applications, and promote student transparency in AI-assisted work. These efforts are essential to uphold academic integrity while harnessing the benefits of educational technology.

Keywords: *Generative AI, Essay Writing, Automated Grading, Ethics in Education, Academic Integrity*

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INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools—particularly large language models (LLMs) like ChatGPT—has significantly disrupted traditional practices in academic writing and assessment. These systems are now widely accessible and capable of producing coherent, grammatically sound, and contextually relevant essays with minimal user input. In both developing and developed educational systems, this advancement has sparked debates around authenticity, authorship, and the integrity of academic processes. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into teaching, learning, and evaluation, it challenges the long-standing role of educators as the sole arbiters of intellectual and ethical standards (Koçdar et al., 2025).

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One pressing concern revolves around the authenticity of student submissions. When AI tools can generate full-length essays in seconds, distinguishing between student-generated work and machine-assisted output becomes complicated. Teachers in secondary and tertiary levels globally report uncertainty in discerning the "learner's voice," raising significant issues around academic integrity and educational fairness (Kemal & Liman-Kaban, 2025). In the Philippine context, where education policy often grapples with both global innovation and local realities, the risk of uncritical adoption of AI tools may exacerbate inequities in digital access and ethical training among both educators and students (Ndjama, 2025).

Another area of ethical tension is the increasing use of AI-based automated grading systems. These technologies promise efficiency and standardization, particularly in large-enrollment institutions. However, questions about fairness, bias, and reliability persist. Automated grading tools often struggle to evaluate creativity, emotion, and cultural context—elements that are deeply embedded in written human expression (Jubair, 2024). Moreover, reliance on algorithmic judgment may obscure accountability, especially when educators do not fully understand the internal workings of AI models used in assessment.

Recent studies have revealed growing resistance among educators to the over-delegation of evaluative authority to machines. For instance, Louçã (2025) warns that unchecked automation could dilute critical pedagogical relationships and undervalue the interpretative nuance involved in grading essays. Educators argue that the act of grading is not merely a technical task but a relational and interpretive process that requires awareness of student intent, context, and progression. The human capacity for empathy, reflection, and ethical discretion remains irreplaceable, particularly in subjects that explore identity, values, and personal growth.

To address these challenges, there is a need for robust ethical frameworks, institutional policies, and educator training programs that guide the responsible integration of generative AI in academic contexts. This research investigates how educators perceive the use of generative AI in both essay composition and grading, and what ethical boundaries must be reinforced to protect the integrity of academic work. It advocates for a balanced approach—one that leverages the affordances of automation while preserving the central role of human judgment in education.

Background of the Study

The integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) into educational contexts has transformed the way students compose and submit written assignments, as well as how teachers evaluate academic output. Tools such as ChatGPT and other large language models (LLMs) are now able to generate sophisticated essays, provide feedback, and mimic human-like argumentation. These developments offer opportunities for educational innovation, yet they also raise urgent concerns about authorship, integrity, and evaluative validity (Chanpradit, 2025). Across global and regional education systems, including the Philippines, institutions are struggling to keep pace with the ethical and pedagogical implications of these disruptive technologies.

In the Philippine higher education landscape, recent research shows that educators have begun to cautiously integrate AI for productivity while simultaneously raising red flags about ethical misuse and the erosion of academic integrity (Gustilo, Ong, & Lapinid, 2024; Carvajal, et al, 2025). These concerns are not limited to student plagiarism or cheating; rather, they extend to broader pedagogical challenges such as over-reliance on AI-generated writing and the inability of machines to grasp culturally embedded nuance, emotional tone, or individual learning trajectories (Funa & Gabay, 2025). AI tools can mimic competence, but this imitation often bypasses authentic learning and reflection—hallmarks of genuine academic development. Instructors, particularly in writing-intensive disciplines, now face unprecedented uncertainty in distinguishing genuine student voice from algorithmic fluency.

The automation of essay grading through AI presents a parallel dilemma. While AI-powered assessment tools offer scalability and consistency, they lack the capability to interpret context, creativity, and moral reasoning—qualities central to human communication. In response, Bernal et al. (2025) have called for rethinking how grading practices should evolve to preserve fairness and ensure that AI is used as a support rather than a substitute for educator judgment. In the Philippine context, where resource gaps and large classroom sizes often overwhelm faculty, automated grading might appear to be a solution. However, unchecked reliance on these systems could inadvertently compromise academic standards, especially in writing that requires critical thinking and personal reflection (Muñoz, 2025).

Although there is an expanding body of global literature on AI in education, most studies have concentrated on the technical performance of generative AI rather than its ethical, cultural, and evaluative dimensions. Even fewer have centered their focus on Southeast Asian or Philippine-specific contexts. Recent studies by Garcia (2025) and

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Rodrigo et al. (2024) emphasize the urgent need for local empirical research that foregrounds the lived experiences of Filipino educators dealing with AI-related academic dilemmas. Their findings suggest that while there is growing awareness of AI's role in education, institutional policies remain fragmented and educator training on ethical AI use is minimal.

This study addresses these gaps by focusing specifically on how Filipino educators perceive and respond to the ethical challenges posed by generative AI in both essay writing and grading. While international studies have offered broad recommendations, this research grounds its inquiry in the Philippine educational reality. By examining the lived classroom experiences, institutional responses, and ethical tensions reported by teachers, this work contributes to building a more context-sensitive and policy-informed discourse on AI integration. It also seeks to advance the ongoing conversation on balancing technological advancement with human-centered pedagogy.

Definition of Key Terms

To clarify the key constructs of this research, the following terms are defined both conceptually—based on established academic literature—and operationally, as they are applied within the context of this study.

1. Generative Artificial Intelligence (Generative AI)

Conceptually, generative AI refers to a class of machine learning models, particularly large language models (LLMs), that are capable of creating new content such as text, images, or code by learning patterns from vast datasets (Brown et al., 2020). These models simulate human-like outputs by predicting sequences of data based on prior inputs. ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, is a widely recognized example. Operationally, in this study, generative AI specifically refers to tools like ChatGPT and similar platforms used by students and teachers to either produce essays or assess written work. It encompasses both the generative (writing) and evaluative (grading or feedback) functions of such systems.

2. Academic Integrity

Academically, integrity in education pertains to adherence to ethical standards in learning, including honesty, responsibility, and the originality of student work (Bretag, 2016). It includes the avoidance of plagiarism, contract cheating, and any form of academic dishonesty. In this study, academic integrity is interpreted as the extent to which student-generated work remains authentic and unassisted by unauthorized AI tools. It also covers how the use of AI may compromise, uphold, or redefine notions of honest academic engagement.

3. Essay Writing

Conceptually, essay writing is a form of academic communication that requires students to articulate arguments, analyze information, and express critical thought in structured written form. It is a key metric of student learning and intellectual development, especially in humanities and social sciences. Operationally, the term refers to the student outputs—either fully written or partially assisted by generative AI—which serve as the primary content analyzed in this study. The term also extends to AI-generated drafts that are subsequently revised by students.

4. Automated Essay Grading (AEG)

In theory, automated essay grading refers to the use of artificial intelligence algorithms to assess the quality, structure, grammar, and coherence of written texts without direct human intervention (Shermis & Burstein, 2013). It is meant to increase efficiency and reduce grading time for educators. For the purpose of this research, AEG refers to any system—whether standalone or integrated into AI platforms like ChatGPT—that is used by teachers to provide scores, feedback, or evaluations on student essays. The study investigates how teachers perceive the reliability, fairness, and ethical implications of such tools.

5. Human Judgment

Human judgment is defined conceptually as the cognitive and ethical process by which individuals make informed decisions based on experience, values, intuition, and context. In education, this includes the assessment of student work beyond objective correctness, incorporating understanding of context, intent, and learning progress (Sadler, 1989). Operationally, in this study, human judgment is applied to the teacher's capacity to assess student essays, interpret meaning, and provide feedback that reflects both academic standards and learner-specific contexts. It is juxtaposed with the perceived limitations of machine assessment.

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6. Ethical Dilemma

Conceptually, an ethical dilemma refers to a situation where one is confronted with two or more conflicting moral imperatives, where obeying one would result in transgressing another (Banks, 2006). In the AI context, dilemmas arise when efficiency, fairness, and technological progress conflict with human-centered values such as equity, empathy, and trust. This research operationalizes ethical dilemmas as the tensions experienced by educators when deciding whether to permit, restrict, or regulate the use of AI in student writing and grading. These include conflicts between institutional policy, teacher discretion, and student fairness.

Literature Review

The existing body of literature on generative AI in education reveals both a growing scholarly interest and a rapidly evolving discourse on its pedagogical, ethical, and institutional implications. While there is general consensus among scholars regarding the disruptive potential of AI in academic writing and grading, their perspectives diverge on how this disruption should be managed in real educational contexts—particularly in terms of authorship, academic integrity, and teacher agency.

On academic writing and authorship, scholars like Garcia (2025) and Chanpradit (2025) agree that generative AI tools such as ChatGPT have significantly blurred the line between student-authored work and machine-generated content. Garcia (2025) emphasizes that AI-assisted drafts often mimic student voice, making them difficult to distinguish from authentic submissions, while Chanpradit (2025) frames this as a broader transformation in how learners perceive and approach the writing process. The consensus between these works lies in their concern for the loss of student voice and critical thinking. However, Chanpradit's global review contrasts with Garcia's Philippines-based study by highlighting the need for localized, culturally sensitive evaluations of AI's impact—thus calling for more grounded research in underrepresented regions.

In terms of academic integrity, Gustilo, Ong, and Lapinid (2024) and Funa & Gabay (2025) both document a rising concern among educators about undetectable AI-generated outputs. While the former highlights teachers' on-the-ground struggles in identifying genuine work, the latter focuses on the institutional vacuum around ethical AI policies. Their studies complement one another by showing both the symptoms (ambiguity in teacher decision-making) and causes (lack of formal guidance), thus reinforcing the need for coherent policy responses. Funa & Gabay's meta-synthesis also adds a policy lens, which is absent in Gustilo et al.'s practitioner-focused analysis.

When examining AI-based grading systems, Bernal et al. (2025) and Louçã (2025) both warn of the potential dangers of automating assessment, particularly in disciplines where emotional depth, cultural nuance, and interpretive flexibility are essential. Bernal et al. focus on the technical limitations of AI grading tools, such as their inability to assess creativity or contextual relevance. Meanwhile, Louçã (2025) frames the issue as a philosophical and ethical dilemma—arguing that grading is a moral act that cannot be ethically outsourced to machines. The synthesis here reveals a critical convergence: while technological efficiency is acknowledged, both studies caution against reducing evaluation to algorithmic processes that exclude empathy and ethical nuance.

Despite these growing contributions, a notable gap remains in terms of localized, empirical studies that focus specifically on educators' ethical dilemmas regarding AI use in essay writing and grading—especially in the Southeast Asian and Philippine educational contexts. Although scholars such as Muñoz (2025) and Rodrigo et al. (2024) have begun to explore regulatory and institutional perspectives on AI adoption, there remains little qualitative inquiry into the lived experiences, moral conflicts, and decision-making processes of teachers who confront AI-generated work on a daily basis. Furthermore, the differential impact of AI across teachers' backgrounds—such as teaching experience, academic rank, or subject taught—has not been deeply explored in current literature.

Given this gap, the present study is both timely and necessary. It seeks to extend existing research by foregrounding the voices of Filipino educators and providing a nuanced account of how they interpret, negotiate, and respond to the challenges posed by generative AI in writing and assessment. In doing so, this research not only contributes to local educational policy development but also offers globally relevant insights into balancing automation with human-centered education. The study's findings can inform the creation of ethical guidelines, institutional training programs, and responsive AI policies that reflect the realities of teaching and learning in a post-AI academic world.

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Research Objectives

This study aims to explore and analyze the ethical dilemmas faced by educators in the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools for academic writing and essay grading. Specifically, it seeks to investigate how the emergence of technologies such as ChatGPT is reshaping pedagogical norms, assessment standards, and academic integrity in Philippine education.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To determine the profile of the respondents to understand how their background may influence their perceptions of AI in academic contexts.

2. To examine respondents' perceptions of the use of generative AI tools in student essay writing, particularly regarding issues of authorship, originality, and learner voice.

3. To analyze respondents' experiences and ethical considerations in using AI-based systems for grading essays, including concerns about bias, fairness, and evaluative reliability.

4. To identify the perceived benefits and risks of using generative AI tools in academic contexts from the perspective of educators across various educational levels.

5. To determine the significant difference in the respondents' perceptions of the use of generative AI tools in student essay writing across their profile

6. To provide practical recommendations for developing ethical guidelines, training programs, and academic policies that support the responsible use of AI in education.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design, specifically utilizing a descriptive-comparative survey approach. The purpose of the study was to analyze educators' perceptions of the ethical dilemmas in using generative AI for academic writing and essay grading, and to determine whether significant differences in perceptions existed across various respondent profiles. The study also aimed to quantify the perceived benefits, risks, and ethical considerations associated with AI-assisted academic tasks.

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of educators from both basic and higher education institutions in the Philippines. Participants included teachers from public and private schools, as well as faculty from colleges and universities that had encountered or engaged in discussions around generative AI in academic writing and assessment.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents. The criteria for inclusion were as follows: (1) currently teaching in the Philippines, (2) had at least one year of teaching experience, and (3) had knowledge of or experience with AI tools such as ChatGPT in the academic setting. A total of 120 respondents were selected from various regions, academic ranks, and subject specializations to ensure representation across educational levels.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers based on the review of literature and validated instruments from previous studies (e.g., Garcia, 2025; Gustilo et al., 2024). The survey consisted of five parts:

1. Demographic Profile (e.g., age, gender, teaching level, years of experience, AI usage experience)
2. Perceptions of AI in Essay Writing

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3. Perceptions of AI in Essay Grading
4. Perceived Benefits and Risks of AI Use
5. Ethical Considerations in AI Use

To ensure the instrument's validity, it underwent face and content validation by three experts in educational technology, ethics, and AI pedagogy. Based on their feedback, modifications were made to improve clarity and alignment with the study's objectives.

Reliability Testing

The internal consistency of the questionnaire was established through a pilot test involving 30 teachers from a nearby division who were not included in the main study. Using Cronbach's Alpha, the overall reliability coefficient of the instrument was found to be 0.92, indicating excellent reliability. The subscales also yielded the following Cronbach values:

1. Essay Writing and Authorship Subscale: α = 0.89
2. AI-Based Grading Subscale: α = 0.90
3. Ethical Concerns Subscale: α = 0.87
4. Perceived Benefits and Risks Subscale: α = 0.88

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission was obtained from institutional authorities and participants prior to survey administration. The questionnaire was distributed via email and Google Forms to reach geographically dispersed respondents. An informed consent form was included on the first page of the survey, ensuring ethical compliance and voluntary participation. Data collection was conducted over a 3-week period.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To describe the profile and responses of participants, descriptive statistics, specifically percentages and means, were computed. To examine whether significant differences existed in participants' perceptions based on selected demographic variables such as academic rank, years of teaching experience, and prior AI usage, both the Independent Samples t-Test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed. All inferential statistical tests were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance, which served as the basis for determining the statistical significance of the observed differences.

DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

The demographic and professional profile of 120 educator respondents reveals a predominantly young and digitally literate teaching population. The largest age group (38%) falls within 20–29 years, followed by 30–39 (28%) and 40–49 (26%), with only 8% aged 50 and above—an age distribution consistent with findings by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2020), who noted that younger educators are typically more adept and open to emerging technologies like generative AI. Gender representation was slightly female-dominant (56%), mirroring global education trends (OECD, 2021), while teaching levels were evenly distributed across elementary to higher education, ensuring balanced insights across instructional contexts. Nearly half (48%) of respondents had 1–5 years of teaching experience, and 35% had 6–10 years, suggesting a largely early-to-mid-career cohort that tends to be more explorative in technology integration (Garcia et al., 2025).

Subject specialization was diverse, with notable representation in Language/English (17%), Science (18%), Social Studies (20%), and Research/Thesis (19%)—fields most affected by GenAI's growing role in writing and assessment tasks (Chanpradit, 2025). Familiarity with AI tools was high, as 43% described themselves as "very familiar" and 32% as "somewhat familiar," reflecting the mainstreaming of GenAI in education (Louçã, 2025). This familiarity influences ethical perspectives, as teachers with greater exposure tend to balance enthusiasm with caution, recognizing both AI's pedagogical promise and its risks to integrity (Gustilo et al., 2024). Overall, the

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youthful, tech-aware, and discipline-diverse sample offers a strong basis for examining educators' ethical perceptions, highlighting the need for institutional policies and differentiated training programs that align with educators' AI literacy and disciplinary contexts.

Perceptions on the Use of Generative AI in Student Essay Writing

Educators' perceptions of the ethical and pedagogical implications of using generative AI tools like ChatGPT in student essay writing reveals strong agreement across all six statements (WM = 3.51–3.69). The highest concern centered on students' overreliance on AI (WM = 3.69), suggesting that excessive dependence diminishes independent thought and writing effort—an issue similarly raised by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2020) and Bernal et al. (2025), who warn that such reliance can lead to superficial learning and weakened authorship. Educators also agreed that AI-generated texts lack authentic student voice and emotional depth (WM = 3.68), echoing Louçã (2025), who argues that AI's linguistic accuracy cannot replicate the personal and affective dimensions of genuine writing. Additionally, respondents feared that the use of AI discourages critical thinking (WM = 3.66), aligning with Chanpradit (2025), who notes that treating AI as a shortcut may erode higher-order cognitive engagement.

Another key concern was the lack of institutional policies governing AI use in writing (WM = 3.65), highlighting the need for clear guidelines to prevent ethical ambiguity (Funa & Gabay, 2025). Finally, educators strongly agreed that AI-generated essays blur authorship and authenticity (WM = 3.51–3.52), consistent with Gustilo, Ong, and Lapinid (2024), who found that AI-written texts can bypass plagiarism detection. Collectively, these findings reveal a shared apprehension that GenAI threatens originality, integrity, and critical thinking in student writing. They underscore the urgency for educational institutions to establish clear ethical policies and cultivate pedagogical approaches that foster responsible and reflective AI use in academic settings.

Perceptions on the Use of Generative AI for Essay Grading

Educators' perceptions of the role and limitations of generative AI in essay grading shows unanimous strong agreement (WM = 3.42–3.65) that while AI can assist in efficiency, it cannot replace human evaluation. The highest-rated statement—"Teachers should not rely solely on AI for evaluating student essays" (WM = 3.65)—highlights educators' conviction that human discernment remains essential for fairness, empathy, and contextual understanding in assessment, echoing Louçã's (2025) warning against over-automation that neglects the "human act of discernment." Respondents also strongly agreed that AI grading may produce biased or unfair results (WM = 3.62), consistent with Sng (2024) and Bernal et al. (2025), who note that algorithmic bias and rigid rubrics can disadvantage linguistically or culturally diverse learners. Similarly, many affirmed that machines cannot effectively assess creativity, tone, or cultural context (WM = 3.57), aligning with Garcia (2025), who emphasized AI's limitations in capturing the qualitative essence of student writing.

Despite these concerns, educators acknowledged AI's practical value in improving grading efficiency (WM = 3.51) and supporting, rather than replacing, human judgment (WM = 3.55), reflecting the "AI-augmented education" model proposed by Suryani and Ariffin (2023). However, a modest trust gap remains, as educators expressed less confidence in AI-generated feedback (WM = 3.42), citing its lack of empathy and contextual sensitivity—a sentiment echoed by Habib and Alexander (2022). Overall, the findings reveal cautious optimism: educators are open to using AI for logistical support but insist that human oversight and ethical standards remain central. Institutions are thus urged to develop policies and training programs that promote responsible, pedagogically grounded AI integration in assessment practices.

Perceived Benefits and Risks of AI Use in Academic Contexts

Educators' perceptions of the benefits and risks of generative AI in academic settings, with all items rated "Strongly Agree" (WM = 3.46–3.66), reflect a balanced view of both its promise and perils. The highest concern—"AI use may widen the learning gap among students with different tech access" (WM = 3.66)—underscores fears that unequal access to digital tools could exacerbate educational inequities, particularly in resource-limited contexts like the Philippines (Sng, 2024; Lo & Wen, 2023). At the same time, respondents recognized AI's value as a "helpful

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support tool if used responsibly" (WM = 3.62), echoing Garcia (2025) and Zawacki-Richter et al. (2020), who highlight AI's potential to enhance learning when guided by human supervision and critical thinking.

Educators also strongly agreed that AI integration must be balanced with ethical considerations (WM = 3.61), affirming the call by Funa and Gabay (2025) for institutional frameworks on authorship, transparency, and fairness. While many appreciated AI's efficiency in saving time for both teachers and students (WM = 3.59), they cautioned, following Bernal et al. (2025), that productivity gains should not compromise pedagogical depth. Finally, the belief that "AI promotes productivity but risks intellectual laziness" (WM = 3.46) reflects Louçã's (2025) warning against passive learning fostered by automation. Overall, educators exhibit cautious optimism—acknowledging AI's capacity to improve academic processes while advocating for ethical, equitable, and context-sensitive implementation guided by institutional policy and professional development.

Significant Difference in Perceptions based on Profile

Inferential statistical results examining whether educators' perceptions of generative AI use in student essay writing differed by gender, teaching level, years of experience, or AI familiarity. None of these variables showed statistically significant differences (all p-values > 0.05), indicating a broadly shared perspective across demographic groups. Gender differences were negligible ($p = 0.607$), supporting Zawacki-Richter et al. (2020), who found that both male and female educators express similar ethical and pedagogical concerns about AI tools. Likewise, no significant variation emerged across teaching levels ($p = 0.397$), aligning with Suryani and Ariffin (2023), who observed that educators' apprehensions about plagiarism and student dependence transcend educational tiers once they become aware of AI's capabilities.

Years of teaching experience ($p = 0.466$) also did not affect perceptions, suggesting that familiarity with AI, rather than tenure, shapes attitudes—a pattern consistent with Funa and Gabay (2025). Although AI familiarity ($p = 0.233$) approached significance, it mainly reflected nuanced awareness, where more experienced users exhibited balanced evaluations, as noted by Chanpradit (2025). Overall, these findings indicate a unified educator stance toward the ethical and practical implications of GenAI, regardless of demographic background. This reinforces the need for system-wide institutional policies and inclusive professional development programs to ensure all educators—novice or experienced—are equipped to engage responsibly with AI in teaching and assessment.

Ethical Considerations and Institutional Policy Needs

Educators' perceptions of ethical responsibilities and institutional readiness in integrating generative AI into academic settings, showing unanimous strong agreement (WM = 3.32–3.66) on the need for ethical guidance, formal training, and clear institutional policy. The highest-rated item—"Teachers need formal training to navigate AI-related ethical issues" (WM = 3.66)—underscores educators' awareness of AI's ethical complexities but highlights insufficient preparation, echoing Gustilo, Ong, and Lapinid (2024) and UNESCO's (2023) call for embedding AI ethics and digital literacy within teacher education. Similarly, respondents strongly supported the establishment of clear institutional guidelines (WM = 3.59), reflecting concerns over inconsistent policy enforcement that can blur boundaries between legitimate and unethical AI use (Funa & Gabay, 2025; Lo & Wen, 2023).

Educators also emphasized transparency, agreeing that students should disclose AI use in assignments (WM = 3.58), consistent with Garcia (2025), who found that disclosure fosters accountability and ethical reflection. However, confidence in institutional readiness remains mixed, as indicated by the lower mean for "My school has clear policies on AI use" (WM = 3.32), reinforcing Zawacki-Richter et al.'s (2020) observation that policy development lags behind technological adoption. Likewise, moderate confidence in individual ethical decision-making (WM = 3.45) suggests reliance on institutional support rather than personal judgment alone (Chanpradit, 2025). Overall, the findings highlight the urgent need for coordinated AI ethics training, disclosure frameworks, and comprehensive governance systems to ensure integrity, equity, and responsible AI adoption in education.

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Summary of Findings

1. **Profile of the respondents in terms of gender, age, teaching level, years of experience, subject taught, and AI familiarity**
   The respondents represented a diverse demographic and professional profile. A majority were female (56%), with a relatively young distribution—38% aged 20–29. Teaching assignments were evenly spread across Basic Education (Elementary, Junior, and Senior High) and Higher Education. Almost half (48%) had 1–5 years of teaching experience, and respondents came from various subject areas, including Social Studies, English, Science, and Research. Regarding AI familiarity, 43% reported being "very familiar" while only 7% were "not familiar at all," indicating broad exposure to generative AI tools such as ChatGPT across education levels.
2. **Perceptions of educators on the use of generative AI tools in student essay writing**
   Respondents strongly agreed that generative AI challenges traditional notions of authorship, originality, and learner voice. Statements such as *"Students rely too heavily on AI tools"* (WM = 3.69) and *"AI-generated texts lack emotional intent"* (WM = 3.68) reflect critical concern. Educators noted it is increasingly difficult to determine whether essays are genuinely student-authored. Furthermore, they expressed that AI might impede the development of essential skills like critical thinking. These concerns are supported in literature noting a global shift in educational integrity paradigms due to AI's capacity for text generation (Gustilo et al., 2024; Louçã, 2025).
3. **Perceptions of educators on the use of AI for grading student essays**
   Educators acknowledged the efficiency of AI-assisted grading (WM = 3.51) but strongly expressed that machines lack the human ability to evaluate creativity, emotional tone, and context (WM = 3.57). Most respondents (WM = 3.65) opposed relying solely on AI for grading and emphasized its use should be complementary to human judgment. This consensus aligns with recent studies noting that automated systems often overlook nuance and may produce biased or overly standardized evaluations (Chanpradit, 2025; Sng, 2024).
4. **Perceived benefits and risks of using generative AI tools in academic contexts**
   The study revealed a dual recognition: AI tools offer productivity and time-saving benefits (WM = 3.59), but also raise ethical and pedagogical risks. Teachers agreed that AI use may widen existing inequities due to differential access to technology (WM = 3.66). They also highlighted the risk of fostering intellectual laziness among students (WM = 3.46). These findings echo global discourse on the need for equitable digital policy in education (Lo & Wen, 2023; Bernal et al., 2025).
5. **Significant difference in educators' perceptions based on their demographic and professional profile**
   No statistically significant differences were found across gender ($p = 0.607$), teaching level ($p = 0.397$), years of experience ($p = 0.466$), or familiarity with AI ($p = 0.233$). This suggests a shared perception across diverse educator groups about the challenges and potential of generative AI in academic writing. As suggested by Zawacki-Richter et al. (2020), the convergence of concerns across profiles implies a universal need for ethical and pedagogical guidance regardless of background.

6. **Educators' perceptions regarding ethical guidelines and institutional policies on AI use**
   Educators overwhelmingly agreed on the need for **clear ethical guidelines** (WM = 3.59) and **formal training on AI ethics** (WM = 3.66). While many felt personally confident in navigating AI use (WM = 3.45), fewer agreed that their schools had clear existing policies (WM = 3.32), suggesting an institutional policy gap. The necessity for mandatory student disclosure of AI use (WM = 3.58) also emerged as a consistent theme, aligning with current proposals for transparency-based AI use models (Funa & Gabay, 2025; Garcia, 2025).

Conclusions

1. Shared Awareness of AI's Ethical Challenges
   Educators across gender, teaching level, years of experience, and subject areas share a common understanding of the capabilities and risks of generative AI. Regardless of demographic background, they recognize that AI tools increasingly influence authorship, originality, and student voice. The widespread agreement on concerns

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such as verifying authorship and the erosion of critical thinking highlights the urgency of safeguarding academic integrity in an AI-enabled learning environment.

2. Human Judgment Remains Central to Assessment
While AI-assisted grading tools are valued for efficiency and scalability, educators strongly affirm that machines cannot replace human evaluators. They emphasize that AI lacks the capacity to assess creativity, emotional nuance, and contextual understanding. This reinforces the principle that AI should complement—not substitute—human judgment, particularly in tasks requiring interpretation and reflection.

3. AI as Both Beneficial and Risky
Educators view generative AI as a double-edged innovation: it enhances productivity and reduces workload but may also deepen digital inequality and encourage intellectual dependency. These findings underscore the need for a balanced, ethically guided approach to AI adoption—one that promotes innovation without compromising fairness, critical engagement, or learning development.

4. Unified Perceptions Across Demographics
The absence of statistically significant differences in perception based on gender, teaching level, experience, or AI familiarity indicates a shared ethical stance among educators. This homogeneity suggests that institutional strategies, such as policy reforms and training programs, should be comprehensive and inclusive rather than tailored only to specific subgroups.

5. Institutional Readiness and Policy Gaps
A critical gap exists in institutional preparedness for AI integration. Although educators strongly advocate for ethical guidelines and professional development, many report the absence of formal policies in their institutions. This lack of structure shifts ethical responsibility to individual teachers, creating inconsistencies and increasing the risk of AI misuse.

6. Call for a Collaborative and Ethical Framework
Overall, the study concludes that successful and ethical AI integration in education requires a collaborative framework that blends AI's analytical strengths with educators' moral and contextual discernment. Clear institutional policies, structured capacity-building programs, and accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that the use of generative AI remains equitable, transparent, and aligned with educational integrity.

Recommendations

1. Develop Clear Institutional AI Policies. Schools and universities must establish and regularly update clear, context-sensitive policies defining acceptable AI use, disclosure requirements, and sanctions for misuse. Such clarity ensures ethical consistency and relieves educators from navigating dilemmas independently.

2. Provide Mandatory AI Ethics and Pedagogy Training. All educators, regardless of discipline or tenure, should undergo structured training on the ethical and pedagogical implications of generative AI. Simulated grading exercises and case studies can help teachers apply AI tools responsibly while maintaining academic integrity.

3. Require Student Disclosure for Transparency. Institutions should implement policies mandating students to declare any use of AI tools in their academic work. Embedding this requirement in course syllabi and rubrics promotes honesty, accountability, and responsible digital citizenship.

4. Adopt Human–AI Hybrid Grading Systems. AI should assist, not replace, educators in assessment. Hybrid grading models—where AI provides preliminary feedback and teachers retain final authority—will enhance efficiency while safeguarding fairness and contextual understanding.

5. Ensure Digital Equity in AI Access. Policymakers must address the digital divide by improving access to devices, connectivity, and AI platforms, particularly in underserved areas. Equal access prevents AI integration from worsening educational inequality.

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6. Support Contextualized Research and Continuous Monitoring. Education agencies and research institutions should conduct ongoing, localized studies to assess AI's real-world impact on teaching and learning. Evidence-based monitoring allows for timely policy and practice adjustments.

7. Embed AI Ethics in Teacher Education Curricula. Teacher education programs should integrate modules on AI ethics, emerging technologies, and responsible authorship to prepare future educators for AI-driven classrooms.

8. Promote Cross-sector Collaboration. Institutions should foster partnerships among educators, technologists, policymakers, and ethicists through working groups or task forces. This collaboration ensures AI integration remains pedagogically sound, ethically grounded, and socially inclusive.

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