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Exploring Teachers' Practices in Advocating Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

Background and Aim: The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education creates opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning. As AI tools become accessible, teachers are essential in guiding students toward responsible, ethical, and effective use. Yet, teacher practices supporting responsible AI use remain underexplored, particularly in the Philippine context. This case study examined how teachers advocate responsible AI use in their classrooms.

Materials and Methods: A qualitative case study design was used. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with fifteen school teachers at Tabina National High School, Tabina District, Division of Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines. Purposive criterion sampling selected participants who: (a) taught in basic education, (b) integrated AI tools or AI-related discussions into teaching, (c) demonstrated advocacy for responsible technology use, and (d) had at least three years of teaching experience. Interviews were conducted in Cebuano, transcribed verbatim, translated into English when necessary, and thematically analyzed following Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) case study procedures. Data were collected from January to June 2026.

Results: Four sequential themes emerged: (1) challenges involving student overreliance, absent institutional policies, limited teacher training, and academic integrity; (2) coping mechanisms involving emotional responses, professional collaboration, and information-seeking; (3) adaptive strategies involving curriculum integration, AI-resistant assessments, responsible-use modeling, and critical classroom discussions; and (4) outcomes involving greater student awareness, stronger critical thinking, persistent misuse, and emerging teacher advocacy communities.

Conclusion: Despite limited institutional support and training, teachers employ practices to promote responsible AI use. Comprehensive AI literacy frameworks, sustained professional development, and institutional policies are recommended.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Teacher Practices; Responsible AI Use; Digital Literacy; Academic Integrity; Philippine Education

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly transformed various sectors, with education emerging as a critical domain where AI's impact is increasingly pronounced (Garzón et al., 2025; Holmes et al.,

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2024). From personalized learning platforms and intelligent tutoring systems to automated content generation tools, AI offers unprecedented opportunities to enhance teaching and learning (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). However, this integration also raises significant concerns, including academic integrity, data privacy, algorithmic bias, and students' overreliance on AI at the expense of critical thinking (Akgun & Greenhow, 2022; Kuleto et al., 2021). As students gain access to increasingly sophisticated tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini, responsible AI use has become a pressing concern for educators worldwide, and teachers, as guides, role models, and gatekeepers, play a pivotal role in shaping how students engage with these technologies (Chan & Tsi, 2023). Despite this recognition, limited research has explored the specific practices teachers employ to advocate responsible AI use, particularly in contexts where institutional policies remain absent or evolving.

Educational institutions have responded to this shift in varied ways, from outright bans to embracing AI as a pedagogical opportunity (Sharples, 2025). A growing consensus favors the latter: rather than restricting access, educators are encouraged to teach students how to use AI responsibly (Selwyn, 2024), which requires teachers themselves to develop new AI-literate knowledge, skills, and practices. Yet many teachers report feeling unprepared for this role, citing limited training, inadequate resources, and unclear institutional guidelines (Celik et al., 2022; Hsu & Hu, 2025), a gap that is especially pronounced in the Philippines, where the Department of Education (DepEd) has affirmed the importance of digital literacy but has yet to issue specific policies on AI use in basic education (De Guzman et al., 2024; Villarino, 2025). Filipino teachers are therefore navigating AI integration largely on their own, developing practices through trial and error, professional networks, and personal initiative (Cacho, 2024; De Guzman et al., 2024).

This study examines that navigation process at Tabina National High School, a rural/semi-urban school in Zamboanga del Sur. Beyond filling a geographic gap in the literature, Tabina offers a theoretically useful case: because it operates with limited infrastructure, uneven technology access, and largely traditional pedagogical structures (Villarino, 2025), it represents a "low-resource, high-necessity" setting in which teacher agency, rather than institutional infrastructure, is the primary driver of responsible AI advocacy. Studying how teachers respond under these conditions offers insight that resource-rich, urban, or Global North contexts cannot provide: it isolates what teachers themselves contribute to responsible AI use when policy, training, and infrastructure support are minimal. This makes Tabina a theoretically generative site for understanding teacher agency under constraint, with relevance to similar under-resourced settings across the Global South.

To examine this process, the study draws on two complementary theoretical lenses. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping frames how teachers appraise AI-related challenges as threats or demands and mobilize emotional and problem-focused coping responses, providing a psychological account of the shift from Challenges to Coping Mechanisms. A Teacher Agency framework (drawing on Priestley et al.'s ecological conception of agency) complements this by explaining how teachers, as active professional agents, translate coping responses into deliberate, iterative Strategies, and how these strategies in turn reshape teachers' capacity to act, producing the Outcomes stage. Together, these lenses ground the study's four-stage sequential framework (Challenges → Coping Mechanisms → Strategies → Outcomes) not merely as a descriptive structure but as a theoretically motivated account of how teacher agency develops under institutional constraint (see Figure 1).

Previous studies have examined AI integration in education (Garzón et al., 2025; Crompton & Burke, 2023; Bond et al., 2024), AI literacy (Long & Magerko, 2024; Sperling et al., 2024), and academic integrity in the age of AI (Sharples, 2025). However, no study has examined the sequential process by which teachers develop and implement responsible AI advocacy practices, particularly in the Philippine context. Filling this gap matters beyond academic knowledge: understanding the full sequential experience can reveal specific points where institutional support, professional development, and policy interventions could strengthen teachers' capacity to guide responsible AI use.

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Objectives

This study generally aimed to explore the practices of teachers in advocating responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in their classrooms. The study answered the central question: "What are the practices of teachers in advocating responsible use of AI in Philippine educational contexts?"

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges do teachers face in advocating responsible use of AI in their classrooms?
2. What coping mechanisms do teachers employ in response to these challenges?
3. What strategies do teachers develop and implement to promote responsible AI use?
4. What outcomes emerge from their sequential experience of challenges, coping mechanisms, and strategies?

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the sequential process framework of this study, organized into four stages: Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, Strategies, and Outcomes. The framework illustrates the recursive journey of teachers who advocate responsible AI use in their classrooms.

First, teachers encounter Challenges stemming from students' overreliance on AI, lack of institutional policies, limited training on AI, and concerns about academic integrity. Consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, teachers cognitively appraise these challenges as threats to their professional effectiveness, which activates Coping Mechanisms, the immediate emotional and problem-focused responses teachers use to manage that appraisal, such as frustration, concern, professional collaboration, and information-seeking. These coping responses are not the endpoint; rather, they generate the emotional regulation and informal knowledge-building that make deliberate action possible.

From this coping base, and consistent with a Teacher Agency perspective, teachers exercise professional agency by developing and implementing Strategies- deliberate, planned actions taken to promote responsible AI use, including curriculum integration, assessment redesign, modeling ethical AI behavior, implementing academic integrity policies, and engaging students in critical discussions about AI ethics. Strategies differ from Coping Mechanisms in that coping is reactive and internally oriented (managing the teacher's own stress and uncertainty), while strategies are proactive and externally oriented (deliberately shaping students' behavior and the classroom environment). Strategies are likewise distinguished from Outcomes: a Strategy is something a teacher does, while an Outcome is a resulting state or condition that follows.

These strategies produce Outcomes, the resulting educational and professional states that emerge from the sequential experience, such as improved student awareness, enhanced critical thinking skills, continued challenges with AI misuse, and the emergence of teacher advocacy communities. Critically, this process is not linear but cyclical: because AI tools and their misuse evolve continuously, Outcomes such as continued AI misuse feed back into new or evolving Challenges, prompting a fresh cycle of coping, strategy adjustment, and renewed outcomes. This feedback loop, represented in Figure 1 by the arrow returning from Outcomes to Challenges, reflects teachers' accounts of AI advocacy as an ongoing, iterative process rather than a problem that is solved once and for all.

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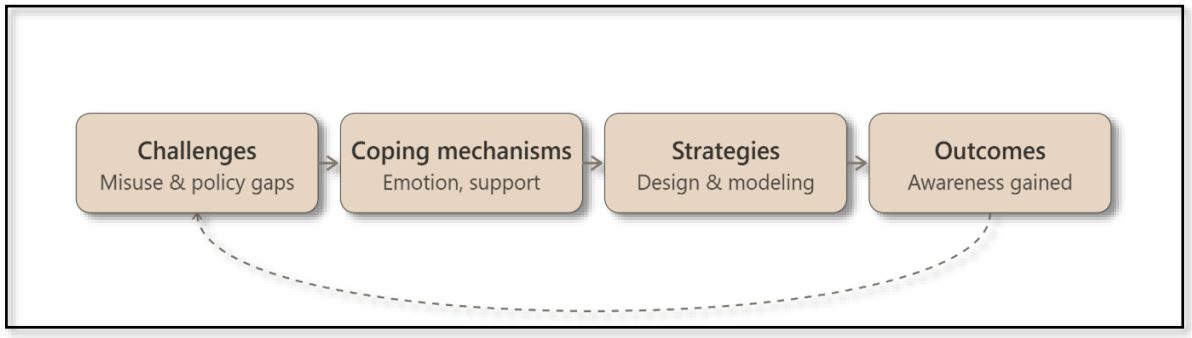


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Teachers' Practices in Advocating Responsible AI Use

Literature Review

AI in Education: Trends, Opportunities, and Challenges

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in education, with applications ranging from personalized learning platforms to automated assessment and content generation (Garzón et al., 2025; Holmes et al., 2024). Generative AI tools, particularly large language models such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini, have become increasingly accessible to students, raising important questions about how these tools should be integrated into teaching and learning (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). While AI offers significant potential to enhance learning, it also poses risks including academic dishonesty, overreliance, and the erosion of critical thinking skills (Akgun & Greenhow, 2022; Abimbola et al., 2024).

Current trends in AI integration cluster around personalized learning, intelligent tutoring, automated assessment, learning analytics, chatbots, and generative AI support rather than fully autonomous instruction (Zhai et al., 2021; Bond et al., 2024; Crompton & Burke, 2023; Lin & Chen, 2024). Research activity in this area accelerated sharply after ChatGPT and related generative AI tools became widely available (Garzón et al., 2025; Crompton & Burke, 2023). In higher education, common uses include assessment and evaluation, prediction of student outcomes, AI assistants, intelligent tutoring systems, and management of student learning (Crompton & Burke, 2023). In K-12 settings, reported applications include personalized platforms, automated assessment, and even facial-recognition-based learner monitoring, which broadens both functionality and ethical risk (Akgun & Greenhow, 2022; Filiz et al., 2025).

The opportunities presented by AI across both K-12 and higher education are substantial. AI appears to improve learning mainly by tailoring instruction, increasing feedback speed, supporting engagement, and automating routine work so teachers can focus more on higher-value support (Garzón et al., 2025; Abimbola et al., 2024; Ren & Wu, 2025). Higher education reviews also describe gains in student support, research efficiency, accessibility, and data-driven intervention, while professional programs report benefits from simulation-rich and interactive learning environments (Kuleto et al., 2021; Ocen et al., 2025; Khakpaki, 2025). Predictive analytics can flag at-risk students and support earlier intervention or better institutional decisions (Ren & Wu, 2025; Kuleto et al., 2021; Esakkiammal & Kasturi, 2024).

However, the main challenges are ethical use, privacy, bias, academic integrity, unequal access, and limited educator readiness rather than a lack of plausible use cases (Garzón et al., 2025; Abimbola et al., 2024; Ren & Wu, 2025; Khakpaki, 2025). Basic education raises strong concerns about exposing minors to opaque or surveillance-oriented systems, while higher education emphasizes plagiarism, misinformation, and the need to redesign assessment (Akgun & Greenhow, 2022; Preiksaitis & Rose, 2023). Evidence also shows practical constraints: weak infrastructure, high cost, generalized models that transfer poorly across contexts, and uneven staff training (Garzón et al., 2025; Rony et al., 2025; Esakkiammal & Kasturi, 2024; Filiz et al., 2025).

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Responsible AI Use and AI Literacy Frameworks

Responsible AI use in educational contexts is generally defined as critical and ethical engagement with AI systems, including understanding their capabilities and limits, evaluating outputs, and using them in ways that protect learners and preserve human judgment (Daher, 2025; Sperling et al., 2024; Al-Abdullatif, 2025). It also includes attention to privacy, bias, accountability, transparency, and academic integrity in teaching, assessment, and student work (Ayanwale et al., 2024; Haroud & Saqri, 2025; Ng et al., 2023; Hazari, 2024). Human oversight remains central, with AI framed as a collaborator or aid rather than a replacement for teachers' or students' intellectual work (Chan & Tsi, 2023; Haroud & Saqri, 2025). Several frameworks explicitly tie responsible use to social and ethical consequences, not just technical fluency or coding skill (Walter, 2024; Stolpe & Hallström, 2024; Domínguez Figaredo & Stoyanovich, 2023).

Most AI literacy frameworks converge on four recurring competency areas: foundational understanding, practical use, critical evaluation, and ethics (Velander et al., 2024; Al-Abdullatif, 2025; Bećirović et al., 2025). Broader models add collaboration with AI, self-reflection, confidence, and context-sensitive application, especially for nontechnical learners and teachers (Chiu et al., 2024; Annapureddy et al., 2024). For students, AI literacy is usually framed as understanding, using, evaluating, and sometimes creating AI, with ethics as a core dimension (Ayanwale et al., 2024). For teachers, the emphasis is broader: technical understanding plus pedagogical judgment, role-modeling responsible use, and designing learning environments that address equity, bias, and privacy (Daher, 2025; Al-Abdullatif, 2025; Velander et al., 2024).

Teacher Practices, Barriers, and Professional Development

Teachers promote responsible AI use through a combination of assessment redesign, explicit guidance, and AI-literacy pedagogy (Francis et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2024; Kong & Yang, 2024). Teachers frequently make AI use visible and harder to outsource by asking students to disclose whether, where, and why they used AI in assignments (Mulaudzi & Hamilton, 2025; Chan, 2023), and shift toward in-class, oral, and practical assessments to reduce hidden AI use (Mulaudzi & Hamilton, 2025; Cong-Lem et al., 2024; Chan, 2023). Core AI-literacy practices include critical checking, prompt literacy, ethical literacy, and teacher preparation through guides and workshops (Chan, 2023; Mollick & Mollick, 2023; Ayanwale et al., 2024; Chang et al., 2023; Qian, 2025; Yim & Su, 2025; Alzahrani, 2024; Okada et al., 2025; Daher, 2025; Kong & Yang, 2024; Ng et al., 2023).

Despite this, teachers face substantial training, policy, ethical, and workload barriers (Celik et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2024; Kim, 2024; Zhang & Zhang, 2024). Many lack the AI literacy and technical knowledge needed to teach responsible use confidently (Ng et al., 2023; Zhang & Zhang, 2024; Ahmed et al., 2025; Chan & Tsi, 2023), and existing teacher-education frameworks remain thin, leaving teachers without clear competency models (Ng et al., 2023; Daher, 2025; Akgun & Greenhow, 2022). Time and workload are a major barrier, since AI integration often requires more effort than traditional teaching, at least initially (Wardat et al., 2024; Alshorman, 2024; Delello et al., 2025). Institutional support is often fragmented, leaving teachers to improvise local rules and self-teach AI use, which makes responsible implementation uneven across classrooms (Delello et al., 2025; Ahmed et al., 2025).

In response, teachers cope through targeted learning, assessment redesign, and peer support, though effective advocacy still requires policy, infrastructure, and sustained professional development (Mouta et al., 2025; Zhai, 2025; Giannakos et al., 2025). Professional development needs are consistently practical, differentiated, and ongoing rather than one-off, covering AI literacy, pedagogical uses, ethics, and strategies for guiding or detecting AI-generated work (Chen et al., 2025; Mah & Groß, 2024; Cordero et al., 2024). One higher-education intervention reported a 30% increase in teacher confidence with generative AI tools after targeted workshops (Cordero et al., 2024).

The Philippine Context and Connections to the Global South

Philippine AI integration is early and uneven, with faster uptake in universities than clear policy or classroom-ready teacher support (Cacho, 2024; De Guzman et al., 2024; Villarino, 2025). Rural Philippine higher education shows strong student exposure to AI tools alongside urban-rural disparities

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in infrastructure and digital literacy; in one rural Cebu college, all surveyed students had used AI, and 78.54% used ChatGPT (Villarino, 2025), yet only 17.29% of students reported awareness of institutional AI rules (Villarino, 2025). One Philippine university case reported that, at the time of the study, only one state university had posted an official AI policy statement online (De Guzman et al., 2024).

In basic education, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas like Tabina District, teachers face compounded challenges including limited internet connectivity, lack of devices, and minimal exposure to AI tools (Villarino, 2025). Teachers in these settings often rely on personal initiative and peer support to learn about AI, as formal professional development opportunities are scarce (Cacho, 2024), and the absence of clear DepEd guidelines leaves teachers navigating this terrain without institutional backing (Cacho, 2024; De Guzman et al., 2024).

These conditions are not unique to the Philippines but reflect a broader pattern documented across the Global South: educators in low- and middle-income countries frequently must translate AI policy discourse generated in resource-rich, high-connectivity contexts into practice under infrastructure and funding constraints that those discourses rarely account for (Ryzheva et al., 2024; Esakkiammal & Kasturi, 2024). Just as Philippine teachers substitute peer networks and self-directed learning for absent formal training, similar improvisational, community-based responses to policy vacuums have been observed in other developing-nation education systems facing rapid technology adoption without commensurate institutional readiness (Rony et al., 2025). This positions the Tabina case not as a peripheral instance of a Western phenomenon, but as an illustrative case of how teacher agency operates as the primary mechanism of responsible AI advocacy precisely where formal institutional support is weakest, a dynamic with direct relevance to similarly under-resourced basic education systems throughout the Global South.

The literature as a whole reveals that AI is increasingly integrated into educational contexts, presenting both opportunities and challenges; that responsible AI use requires students to develop AI literacy competencies with teachers playing a critical role; that teachers face multiple challenges including limited training and unclear policies; that teachers employ diverse strategies ranging from curriculum integration to ethical modeling; and that outcomes are mixed, with both positive gains and continued challenges (Garzón et al., 2025; Crompton & Burke, 2023; Sperling et al., 2024; Al-Abdullatif, 2025; Celik et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2024; Francis et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2024; Kong & Yang, 2024; Mouta et al., 2025; Zhai, 2025). Notably, existing research has largely focused on higher education and Western or urban contexts, and limited studies have examined teachers' practices in advocating responsible AI use in Philippine basic education, particularly in rural and semi-urban settings (Cacho, 2024; De Guzman et al., 2024; Villarino, 2025). Table 2 summarizes how this gap positions the present study relative to prior literature.

Table 1 *Synthesis of Prior Literature and This Study's Contribution*

Theme	Prior Literature Focus	Gap Addressed by This Study
AI in education	Documents trends, opportunities, and risks broadly across sectors (Garzón et al., 2025; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019)	Situates these general risks within a specific, under-resourced basic education setting
Responsible AI use / AI literacy	Defines competency frameworks largely at a conceptual or policy level (Sperling et al., 2024; Al-Abdullatif, 2025)	Documents how teachers operationalize these frameworks informally, without institutional guidance
Teacher practices and barriers	Identifies barriers (training, workload, policy) mostly in higher education or Western K-12 contexts (Celik et al., 2022; Zhang & Zhang, 2024)	Provides direct qualitative evidence of teacher-developed practices in Philippine basic education
Philippine / Global South context	Establishes that Philippine AI policy is underdeveloped, mainly through survey data in higher education (De Guzman et al., 2024; Villarino, 2025)	Offers in-depth, qualitative, sequential-process evidence from rural/semi-urban basic education, extending relevance to Global South contexts generally

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Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the practices of teachers in advocating responsible use of AI in their classrooms. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a qualitative case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. In this study, the bounded system is defined by four criteria: (a) teachers currently practicing in basic education at Tabina National High School, (b) teachers who actively integrate AI tools or discussions about AI in their teaching practice, (c) teachers who demonstrate advocacy for responsible technology use, and (d) teachers with at least three years of teaching experience. This design is appropriate because it allows for a focused, context-rich investigation of how teachers develop and implement practices to promote responsible AI use within the specific local context of Tabina National High School, Tabina District, Division of Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines.

As a single-case design, this study is bound by the limitations inherent to case study research: findings reflect the specific institutional, cultural, and resource conditions of Tabina National High School and are not intended to be statistically generalizable to all Philippine basic education settings. Rather than seeking statistical generalization, this study pursues analytic and naturalistic generalization (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), whereby findings are presented with sufficient contextual detail (a "thick description") that readers in comparable settings, rural and semi-urban schools with limited institutional AI policy, constrained infrastructure, and predominantly traditional pedagogical structures, can judge for themselves the transferability of these findings to their own contexts. To support this transferability judgment, the Results section provides detailed contextual information about participants, setting, and the specific conditions under which practices emerged, allowing readers to assess the fit between this case and their own.

2. Research Participants

Table 2 *Demographic Profile of Participants*

Participant	Age	Gender	Years of Teaching	Subject Area	Grade Level Taught	Self-Reported AI Integration Level
Teacher 1	38	Female	12	English	7-10	Moderate
Teacher 2	42	Male	15	Mathematics	7-10	Low
Teacher 3	31	Female	7	Science	7-10	Moderate
Teacher 4	45	Male	18	Social Studies	7-10	Low
Teacher 5	29	Female	5	English	11-12	High
Teacher 6	36	Male	10	TLE/ICT	7-10	High
Teacher 7	34	Female	8	Filipino	7-10	Moderate
Teacher 8	41	Female	14	Science	11-12	Moderate
Teacher 9	28	Female	4	Mathematics	11-12	Low
Teacher 10	44	Male	17	MAPEH	7-10	Low
Teacher 11	33	Female	8	English	7-10	Moderate
Teacher 12	39	Male	13	Social Studies	11-12	Moderate
Teacher 13	30	Female	6	Filipino	11-12	Moderate
Teacher 14	46	Male	20	Science	7-10	Low
Teacher 15	35	Female	9	TLE/ICT	11-12	High

This study involved fifteen teachers from Tabina National High School, Tabina District, Division of Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines. Participants were selected through purposive criterion sampling based on four inclusion criteria: (a) currently teaching in basic education at Tabina National High School; (b) actively integrating AI tools or discussions about AI in their teaching practice, operationalized through a two-step screening process in which teachers were first identified via principal and department-head nomination based on visible AI-related engagement (e.g., professional development participation, peer-recognized use in lesson planning), then asked to describe a specific recent instance of AI use or discussion in their teaching, with those unable to provide a concrete example excluded at this stage; (c) demonstrating advocacy for responsible technology use through their teaching practices; and (d) at least three years of teaching experience. The sample size of fifteen is consistent

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with qualitative case study research, allowing for in-depth exploration while achieving data saturation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the fifteen participants.

3. Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide developed specifically for this study. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to elicit rich, detailed narratives of teachers' experiences advocating responsible AI use (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The guide was developed in English and translated into Cebuano, the primary language spoken by teachers in Tabina District, to ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness. The Cebuano version was reviewed by a panel of three experts: two in qualitative research methodology and one in educational technology. A pilot test was conducted with two teachers from Tabina National High School who met the inclusion criteria, resulting in minor revisions to improve question clarity and flow. The final version of the interview guide was used consistently across all fifteen participants.

4. Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the relevant research ethics committee. Participants were recruited through coordination with the school principal and department heads at Tabina National High School. Potential participants were identified based on their demonstrated interest in AI integration, as evidenced by their participation in technology-related professional development, online discussions, or innovative teaching practices. Once identified, the researchers contacted each teacher personally, explained the purpose of the study, and invited them to participate. For those who agreed, informed consent was obtained. One-on-one, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted at a location chosen by each participant, typically in their classroom or a private space within the school. Each interview lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. With permission from the participants, all interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim. To maintain conceptual equivalence rather than purely literal translation, a second, independent bilingual translator reviewed a random sample of the translated transcripts against the original Cebuano recordings, checking for accuracy of meaning rather than word-for-word correspondence; discrepancies were resolved through discussion between the researchers and the independent translator. Culturally specific or idiomatic expressions that carried meaning not easily rendered in English were retained in the original Cebuano within quotations, with an explanatory gloss provided in English. Participants were assigned pseudonyms (Teacher 1 to Teacher 15) to protect their identities. The interviewer maintained reflexive notes throughout.

5. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the qualitative case study procedures outlined by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim in Cebuano, then translated into English by the researcher. To maintain conceptual equivalence rather than purely literal translation, a second, independent bilingual translator reviewed a random sample of the translated transcripts against the original Cebuano recordings, checking for accuracy of meaning rather than word-for-word correspondence; discrepancies were resolved through discussion between the researcher and the independent translator. Culturally specific or idiomatic expressions that carried meaning not easily rendered in English were retained in the original Cebuano within quotations, with an explanatory gloss provided in English.

Each transcript was read multiple times to gain a holistic understanding of each teacher's experience. Significant statements relevant to the research questions were identified and coded using open coding. Codes were then grouped into categories, and categories were clustered into themes that emerged across the fifteen participants. Data collection and analysis proceeded iteratively rather than sequentially: transcripts from early interviews were coded while later interviews were still being conducted, allowing the research team to monitor emerging patterns in real time. Data saturation was determined to have been reached by the twelfth interview, at which point no new codes or categories emerged from subsequent transcripts; the final three interviews were retained and analyzed to confirm this saturation point and to strengthen the depth of within-case data rather than to expand the coding scheme. To ensure trustworthiness, the following strategies were employed: member checking, where five participants reviewed their transcripts and confirmed accuracy; peer debriefing, where two

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qualitative researchers reviewed the coding process and theme development; and an audit trail, where all analytical decisions were documented (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Reflexive journaling was maintained throughout the analysis to minimize researcher bias.

6. Reflexivity

Because most of the researchers are educators in the Philippine basic and higher education sectors, they approached this study as "insiders." This shared professional background granted them a deep understanding of the systemic challenges teachers experience. However, the team recognized that this insider status could bias participant responses, either by encouraging transparency through shared trust or by discouraging honesty if teachers feared professional judgment regarding their mistakes or struggles.

Several protocols were deployed to address these power dynamics and positionality effects. First, involvement was completely voluntary and carried no professional consequences. Second, participants selected the interview locations to ensure privacy, and researchers focused on building rapport before asking sensitive questions. Third, to preserve anonymity and ensure accuracy, the team used pseudonyms and conducted member-checking with selected transcripts. Lastly, the researchers kept reflexive journals throughout the process to track and mitigate the influence of their personal biases and career experiences on the data analysis.

7. Ethical Considerations

Before initiating data collection, formal ethical clearance was secured from the institutional research ethics committee. All prospective participants received a comprehensive explanation regarding the study's objectives, protocols, and their rights as research subjects. To guarantee full comprehension, written informed consent was executed using the Filipino language, explicitly highlighting that involvement was entirely optional and that participants could opt out at any point without penalty. Anonymity was strictly maintained by scrubbing all identifying details from the dataset and replacing them with generic descriptors (Teacher 1 through Teacher 15). Furthermore, digital assets, such as audio files and textual transcripts, were secured on a password-protected device restricted exclusively to the research team. Acknowledging that discussing institutional shortcomings, professional inadequacy, and classroom challenges could carry emotional weight for participants, the researcher closely monitored participants' emotional well-being throughout the interviews, incorporating pauses during periods of distress and reiterating their right to skip any uncomfortable questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Results

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Advocating Responsible AI Use

Teachers in this study faced multiple challenges in advocating responsible AI use in their classrooms. These challenges included students' overreliance on AI, lack of institutional policies, limited teacher training on AI, concerns about academic integrity, and the rapid evolution of AI technologies. The intersection of these challenges created a complex landscape where teachers recognized the need for action but often lacked the institutional support and personal preparation to address AI integration effectively.

Students' Overreliance on AI. Teachers consistently described students' tendency to overuse AI tools, often submitting AI-generated content without critical engagement or proper attribution. This overreliance manifested in various ways, from students using AI to complete assignments entirely to using AI as a crutch without developing their own understanding.

"I noticed that my students, instead of thinking for themselves, go directly to ChatGPT. The result is their essays have the same structure, the same ideas. It's like there's no original thinking" (Teacher 1).

"I have students who submit assignments that are obviously AI-generated. They can't explain their answers, they don't understand how they got that answer. The problem is, I can't prove it's AI" (Teacher 6).

"My students use AI to summarize readings and solve math problems. The sad part is they no longer read the original text or try the problem themselves. They're losing their critical thinking" (Teacher 4).

The overreliance on AI described by teachers reflects concerns identified in international literature (Akgun & Greenhow, 2022; Abimbola et al., 2024). This phenomenon is amplified in contexts where students face pressures to perform academically with limited resources. Teachers' observations

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of students' inability to explain or defend AI-generated content highlight the gap between using AI as a tool and using AI as a substitute for learning.

Lack of Institutional Policies and Guidelines. Teachers reported operating in a policy vacuum, with no clear institutional guidelines on AI use, academic integrity policies updated for the AI era, or standardized approaches to AI integration. This absence of policy left teachers to develop their own approaches, often without institutional backing or consistency.

"Our school has no official policy on AI. Teachers are confused about what is allowed and what isn't. Some teachers ban AI. I allow it, but with guidelines. It's not consistent" (Teacher 5).

"I asked the administration if they had a plan for AI integration. They said not yet, that we should wait for a memo from DepEd. But until now, there's still no memo" (Teacher 8).

"It's difficult because you have no guidance. You have to decide what to do on your own. But if a parent or student complains, you're the one who has to answer for it" (Teacher 12).

The absence of institutional policies reflects the broader Philippine basic education context, where DepEd has yet to issue comprehensive guidelines on AI use (De Guzman et al., 2024; Villarino, 2025). This policy gap leaves teachers in a state of uncertainty, forced to navigate AI integration without institutional support. The lack of consistency across teachers and classrooms also creates confusion for students, who may receive mixed messages about appropriate AI use.

Limited Teacher Training and Professional Development. Teachers reported having received little to no training on AI integration or responsible AI advocacy. Most had learned about AI through personal exploration, online resources, or professional networks rather than through formal professional development. This lack of training left teachers feeling unprepared and uncertain.

"Our school gave no training on AI. Everything I know is self-study. I watch YouTube, read articles, join Facebook groups. Fortunately, there are online communities that help each other" (Teacher 3).

"My only training was a webinar I attended during the pandemic. Only two hours. That's not enough for me to understand AI and how to integrate it into my teaching" (Teacher 9).

"I'm not confident teaching about AI because I don't fully understand it myself. How can I teach my students about responsible use if I'm not that much of an expert myself?" (Teacher 14).

The limited training reported by teachers is consistent with findings from international studies (Celik et al., 2022; Zhang & Zhang, 2024) and reflects the rapid pace of AI development relative to educational institutions' capacity to respond. Teachers' reliance on self-directed learning highlights both their resourcefulness and the systemic gap in professional development provision.

Concerns About Academic Integrity. Teachers expressed significant concerns about academic integrity, including difficulty detecting AI-generated content, uncertainty about how to enforce academic integrity policies, and the potential for AI to undermine the value of education. These concerns were amplified by the limitations of AI detection tools.

"Detection tools say the student's submission is AI-generated, but the student denies it. I can't do anything because the tools aren't 100% accurate. How can I prove it?" (Teacher 10).

"I get stressed because there are so many cases of AI cheating. I don't know whether to ignore it or confront the students. If I confront them, how do I prove it? If I ignore it, what effect does that have on other students?" (Teacher 2).

"My biggest fear is that education might lose its value. If all assignments can be done by AI, what are students actually learning? Why would they even study?" (Teacher 13).

These concerns reflect broader academic integrity challenges in the age of AI (Chan, 2023; Filiz et al., 2025). Teachers' uncertainty about detection and enforcement highlights the limitations of reactive approaches and suggests the need for proactive strategies that emphasize understanding and responsible use rather than prohibition and punishment.

Rapid Evolution of AI Technologies. Teachers noted the challenge of keeping pace with AI's rapid evolution. Tools that were cutting-edge months ago had already been surpassed, and new capabilities emerged regularly. This pace made it difficult for teachers to develop stable practices.

"When I started with AI integration, ChatGPT was the main tool. Now there are so many options: Claude, Gemini, Perplexity. The change is so fast, you can't keep up" (Teacher 7).

"My students are more updated than I am on AI. They're the ones teaching me about new tools. It's a bit embarrassing, but I need to keep learning so I won't be left behind" (Teacher 11).

"It's hard to develop a consistent policy because the technology keeps changing. The guidelines I made in January are no longer applicable by June. You always have to adjust" (Teacher 15).

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The rapid evolution of AI presents a unique challenge for educators, as tools and their capabilities change faster than institutional policies or professional development can adapt (Garzón et al., 2025). Teachers' recognition that students are often more technologically adept highlights the need for collaborative learning approaches where teachers and students explore AI together.

Altogether, these five challenges cannot be fully understood in isolation from the specific conditions of Tabina National High School as a rural/semi-urban basic education setting. In well-resourced urban or higher-education contexts, teachers facing similar AI-related pressures typically have institutional AI task forces, dedicated ed-tech staff, or existing academic-integrity infrastructure to draw on; at Tabina, these challenges converge on individual teachers directly, with no intermediary institutional layer to absorb them. This helps explain why the policy vacuum (Teacher 12's observation that "you're the one who has to answer for it") and the training gap (Teacher 14's admission of not feeling expert enough herself) are experienced not as separate problems but as a single compounding condition: each teacher is simultaneously the policymaker, the enforcer, and the self-trainer for their own classroom. The rural setting also shapes the specific character of the overreliance and academic-integrity challenges: students' unequal access to devices and connectivity outside school (a condition documented in the Philippine literature; Villarino, 2025) means AI use is concentrated in the moments students do have access, making it both more visible when it happens and harder for teachers to establish steady, incremental norms around it. In this sense, the Challenges theme is less a list of discrete problems than a portrait of what AI integration looks like when it lands on individual teachers in a setting built for an earlier, non-AI mode of instruction.

Coping Mechanisms of Teachers

Teachers employed various coping mechanisms to address the challenges of advocating responsible AI use. These included emotional responses, professional collaboration, information-seeking, and the development of personal learning networks. These coping mechanisms enabled teachers to navigate uncertainty and develop their practices despite institutional limitations.

Emotional and Psychological Responses. Teachers experienced a range of emotions in response to AI-related challenges, including frustration, concern, determination, and anxiety. These emotions reflected the cognitive and emotional labor of navigating AI integration without institutional support.

"I was frustrated at first. It felt like I had no control. But I told myself I can't give up. I need to adjust because AI is here. It's not going away" (Teacher 2).

"I'm worried for my students. They don't realize they're fooling themselves. They think they're learning, but the truth is, they're not learning anything" (Teacher 6).

"I'm determined to learn even if it's difficult. We can't let AI defeat us. We need to use it for the benefit of our students" (Teacher 8).

These emotional responses reflect the psychological challenges of navigating educational change, particularly when teachers perceive themselves as lacking institutional support (Celik et al., 2022). Teachers' determination to persist despite challenges demonstrates their professional commitment and resilience.

Professional Collaboration and Networking. Teachers actively sought support from colleagues, participating in discussions within their school and through professional networks. These collaborations provided emotional support, practical strategies, and a sense of collective purpose.

"We formed a group of teachers interested in AI. We meet to share best practices. It helps because you're not alone; there are others facing the same difficulties" (Teacher 5).

"We have a Facebook group for teachers exploring AI. We ask questions, give tips, share experiences. I don't know what I would do without these groups" (Teacher 11).

"My colleagues in the department collaborate with me in creating AI guidelines. It's not just one person doing it; we combine our ideas to have better policies" (Teacher 3).

Professional collaboration has been identified as a crucial support mechanism for teachers navigating technology integration (Mouta et al., 2025). In the absence of institutional training, peer networks and online communities provide essential resources and validation.

Information Seeking Through Online Resources and Self-Study. Teachers engaged in extensive self-directed learning, using online resources to build their knowledge of AI and its

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educational applications. This information-seeking was driven by a recognition that formal training was insufficient.

"Every day I read articles about AI. I try to understand how it works and how it can be used in education. You can't afford not to be updated" (Teacher 4).

"I watch webinars and tutorials on YouTube. There are international experts teaching AI integration. They're free, so I take advantage of them" (Teacher 9).

"I experiment with AI tools myself. I try to see what they can do. This way, I better understand their limitations and how to explain them to my students" (Teacher 14).

The extensive self-directed learning described by teachers reflects both their resourcefulness and the limitations of institutional professional development (Zhang & Zhang, 2024). Teachers' willingness to engage in self-study demonstrates their commitment to professional growth and their recognition of AI's importance for their students' futures.

The specific shape of these coping mechanisms is best understood against the backdrop of Tabina's limited access to formal professional infrastructure. Where a well-resourced school might offer an in-house AI coordinator or a district-level helpdesk, Tabina teachers substitute peer networks and freely available online content, resources that are accessible precisely because they do not depend on institutional provisioning. This substitution carries a cost as well as a benefit: the self-taught, community-sourced knowledge base that emerges is resourceful but uneven, dependent on which webinars a given teacher happens to find, and vulnerable to gaps that a coordinated program would catch. The emotional register of coping (frustration coupled with determination, as in Teacher 2's account) also reads differently in a setting where teachers cannot simply escalate a problem to a specialist; the emotional labor of coping is, in effect, absorbing work that would otherwise be distributed across an institutional support structure that does not yet exist at Tabina.

Adaptive Strategies Implemented by Teachers

Despite the challenges, teachers developed and implemented diverse strategies to advocate responsible AI use. These strategies spanned curriculum integration, assessment redesign, modeling ethical behavior, policy development, and student engagement in critical discussions. These strategies represent teachers' proactive efforts to shape AI integration in ways that support student learning and academic integrity.

Integrating AI Literacy into Existing Curricula. Teachers incorporated AI literacy into their existing subjects, teaching students about AI's capabilities, limitations, ethical implications, and appropriate use. This integration was often contextualized within subject matter rather than taught as a separate topic.

"In my English classes, I teach students how to use AI for brainstorming and outlining, but I don't allow them to use it for the final draft. I teach them how to use AI as a tool, not as a substitute" (Teacher 1).

"In Social Studies, I use AI to generate different perspectives on an issue. Then we examine and critique the AI outputs together. Students learn that AI isn't always reliable" (Teacher 12).

"I teach my students how to create effective prompts, not just typing a question, but how to ask in a way that gets the right answer" (Teacher 6).

Integrating AI literacy into existing curricula reflects a pedagogical approach that sees AI not as a separate subject but as a component of digital literacy that should be embedded across disciplines (Sperling et al., 2024). Teachers' contextualization of AI literacy within subject matter enables students to understand AI's relevance to their learning.

Designing AI-Resistant Assessments. Teachers redesigned assessments to minimize the potential for AI misuse while encouraging higher-order thinking. These redesigns included emphasizing process over product, requiring oral explanations, designing authentic assessments, and using in-class assessments.

"I replaced take-home essays with in-class writing. Students can't use AI because time is monitored and there's no internet access. But to be fair, I give them time to prepare and research beforehand" (Teacher 3).

"My assignments now require an oral defense. They can't just submit a written output; they need to explain their ideas verbally. This way, I can tell if they actually understand what they did" (Teacher 7).

"I create authentic assessments. For example, instead of an essay, students create an infographic or a video presentation. These are harder for AI to generate" (Teacher 10).

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The design of AI-resistant assessments reflects teachers' efforts to maintain academic integrity while acknowledging AI's presence (Chan, 2023; Wang et al., 2024). These strategies emphasize the development of transferable skills and the demonstration of authentic understanding.

Modeling Responsible AI Use. Teachers modeled responsible AI use by demonstrating how they use AI in their own professional practice and openly discussing their decision-making processes with students. This modeling provided students with concrete examples of appropriate AI use.

"I show my students how I use AI to create lesson plans and teaching materials. I explain why I use AI and how I check its output before I use it" (Teacher 5).

"When I use AI-generated content in my teaching, I acknowledge it. I tell my students, 'This is from AI, but I checked it and made sure it's correct.' It gives them an example of proper attribution" (Teacher 13).

"I admit to my students that I don't know everything about AI. I teach them that it's okay not to know everything, as long as you're willing to learn. That's what I want them to learn most" (Teacher 8).

Modeling responsible AI use reflects teachers' role as guides in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors toward AI, as emphasized in the literature (Chan & Tsi, 2023). By demonstrating transparency, critical evaluation, and continuous learning, teachers provide students with practical examples of AI ethics in action.

Implementing Academic Integrity Policies. Teachers developed and implemented academic integrity policies specifically addressing AI use. These policies clarified expectations, outlined consequences for AI misuse, and provided guidelines for appropriate AI use.

"I created an AI policy for my class. It states when students can and cannot use AI. Students also need to acknowledge it if they used AI on an assignment" (Teacher 4).

"At the start of the semester, we discuss academic integrity and AI together. I clarify what counts as cheating and what counts as responsible AI use, so the class develops a shared understanding" (Teacher 9).

"It's not enough to just have a policy; you need to enforce it consistently. When there's a violation, there should be consequences, but it's also important to be fair and give students an opportunity to learn" (Teacher 15).

The development of academic integrity policies reflects teachers' efforts to establish clear expectations despite the absence of institutional guidelines (Chan, 2023). Teachers' emphasis on communication and consistency highlights the importance of creating a shared understanding of AI use in educational settings.

Engaging Students in Critical Discussions About AI. Teachers engaged students in discussions about AI's societal implications, ethical challenges, and appropriate use. These discussions encouraged students to think critically about AI rather than accept it uncritically.

"My classes aren't just about how to use AI. We also discuss ethical issues: privacy, bias, job displacement. I want my students to become critical thinkers, not just AI users" (Teacher 4).

"We have discussions where we examine AI outputs together and ask, 'Is this correct? Why or why not? Who has power over what AI produces?' These are important questions for them to sit with" (Teacher 11).

"I teach my students to ask questions rather than believe immediately. When there's an AI-generated answer, I ask them, 'Are you sure about that? How would you know it's correct?'" (Teacher 14).

Engaging students in critical discussions about AI reflects an approach that goes beyond skills training to foster AI literacy as a form of critical citizenship (Sperling et al., 2024). These discussions encourage students to understand AI's broader implications and to approach AI tools with informed skepticism.

These strategies read differently once situated in Tabina's specific infrastructural conditions. The in-class, offline writing assessments described by Teacher 3, for instance, are not simply a pedagogical preference for authenticity; they are made possible, and in a sense necessitated, by the same limited and inconsistent internet connectivity that elsewhere in this study appears as a challenge (Villarino, 2025). What functions as a constraint in the Challenges theme becomes, here, a resource teachers can deliberately design around, a rare case where the rural setting's infrastructural limitation actively supports rather than undermines a strategy for responsible AI use. Similarly, the oral-defense and authentic-assessment strategies (Teachers 7 and 10) substitute direct, face-to-face verification for the kind of AI-detection software that better-resourced institutions might purchase; the strategy compensates for a technological gap with a pedagogical one. Read this way, the Strategies theme demonstrates not simply what responsible AI advocacy looks like in the abstract, but how teacher

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agency operationalizes itself specifically through, and sometimes because of, the material constraints of a low-resource setting rather than in spite of them.

Outcomes of the Sequential Experience

The sequential experience of challenges, coping mechanisms, and strategies led to various outcomes for teachers and their students. These included improved student awareness, enhanced critical thinking skills, continued challenges with AI misuse, and the emergence of teacher advocacy communities. These outcomes reflected both the successes and ongoing challenges of advocating responsible AI use.

Improved Student Awareness and Understanding. Teachers observed that their efforts led to increased student awareness of AI's capabilities and limitations. Students became more discerning in their use of AI and more aware of the ethical implications of AI use.

"I've noticed that my students are now more careful when using AI. They don't easily trust AI-generated content anymore. They ask themselves whether an output is actually reliable" (Teacher 1).

"Some students now tell me, 'Ma'am, I used AI for this, but I checked it and made sure it was correct.' That tells me they understand their responsibility" (Teacher 6).

"What matters most to me is that my students understand why responsible AI use matters. They don't just know the rules; they understand the reasoning behind them" (Teacher 5).

Improved student awareness reflects the success of teachers' efforts to foster AI literacy (Sperling et al., 2024). Teachers' observations that students are becoming more critical and reflective in their AI use suggest that pedagogical interventions can shape student behavior positively.

Enhanced Critical Thinking Skills. Teachers observed that their AI advocacy efforts contributed to enhanced critical thinking skills among students. Students became more skeptical of AI-generated content and more capable of evaluating information critically.

"My students are more critical now. They don't just accept AI-generated answers at face value. They ask 'Why?' and 'How do you know?'" (Teacher 10).

"They're better now at analyzing information. They don't just look at the surface level anymore; they look at the source, the logic, the evidence" (Teacher 13).

"What I notice most is their growth as independent thinkers. They no longer rely on AI for every answer. They have their own opinions now and can justify them" (Teacher 3).

The development of critical thinking skills represents a positive outcome of teachers' efforts, suggesting that advocacy for responsible AI use can enhance rather than diminish students' cognitive development. Teachers' emphasis on questioning, analysis, and justification appears to be particularly effective.

Continued Challenges with AI Misuse. Despite teachers' efforts, challenges with AI misuse persisted. Some students continued to submit AI-generated work without proper attribution, and detection remained difficult. Teachers acknowledged that this was an ongoing challenge rather than a problem that could be fully resolved.

"There are still students who use AI irresponsibly, but there are fewer of them now. What matters is that there's progress" (Teacher 2).

"I haven't found the perfect solution. I'm always adjusting. But I've accepted that I can't fully solve the problem; what matters is that I'm doing what I can" (Teacher 7).

"The real challenge is the pace of change in the technology. Once you've solved one problem, a new one emerges. You have to stay flexible" (Teacher 12).

Teachers' recognition that challenges persist reflects the dynamic nature of AI integration. Rather than viewing continued challenges as failure, teachers demonstrated resilience and adaptability, adjusting their practices as technologies and contexts evolved.

Emergence of Teacher Advocacy Communities. Teachers' efforts led to the formation of advocacy communities where educators shared resources, supported each other, and advocated for institutional change. These communities provided professional support and amplified teachers' voices.

"Our group of teachers interested in AI has grown. It's evolved from informal sharing into more organized advocacy" (Teacher 5).

"We've started advocating for AI policies at the school. We've spoken with the administration, and slowly, our voices are being heard" (Teacher 9).

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"What matters most is that we're no longer alone. We have a community that supports each other, and that gives us the strength to keep going" (Teacher 15).

The emergence of advocacy communities reflects the transformative potential of collective action. These communities not only provide professional support but also create opportunities for teachers to influence institutional policies and practices. Teachers' shift from individual coping to collective advocacy represents an important outcome of their sequential experience.

The Outcomes theme, read against the Tabina context, reveals a structural fragility beneath its genuinely positive results. Gains in student awareness and critical thinking (Teachers 1, 6, 10, 13) are real, but they are attributable almost entirely to individual teachers' improvised efforts rather than to any institutional scaffold that would make those gains durable or transferable to a new cohort of students, or to a classroom whose teacher has not personally undertaken the same self-directed learning. This is precisely why continued AI misuse (Teacher 12's "you have to stay flexible") persists alongside these gains rather than being resolved by them: without policy or infrastructure to consolidate what individual teachers have learned, each new challenge effectively restarts the cycle for teachers who have not yet built the same coping resources. The emergence of teacher advocacy communities is the clearest sign of this dynamic being recognized from within: teachers are, in effect, building the institutional layer themselves, informally, because no one has built it for them. This is the mechanism, grounded directly in the Tabina data, that motivates the feedback loop in this study's conceptual framework (Figure 1): unresolved outcomes do not simply sit alongside new challenges, they actively regenerate them, which is why sustained institutional support, not simply individual teacher resourcefulness, is the condition on which durable responsible AI advocacy ultimately depends.

Across all four themes, the fifteen teachers in this study describe a coherent, sequential experience: challenges rooted in policy and infrastructure gaps trigger emotional and collaborative coping, which in turn enables deliberate pedagogical strategies, producing outcomes that are meaningfully positive but institutionally fragile. What distinguishes this account from a simple list of findings is the recurring pattern, visible across every theme, of individual teachers absorbing responsibilities that would, in a better-resourced system, be distributed across institutional structures: policymaker, enforcer, self-trainer, and now community-builder. The following Discussion section considers what this pattern means for how responsible AI advocacy should be understood and supported, both within Tabina National High School and in comparable basic education settings elsewhere in the Philippines and the wider Global South.

Discussion

This case study revealed that teachers at Tabina National High School employ diverse practices to advocate responsible AI use, navigating a sequential process of Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, Strategies, and Outcomes. Beyond confirming that this process occurs, the findings offer grounds to reconsider how existing theoretical frameworks account for teacher behavior under conditions of institutional absence, rather than institutional constraint.

Challenges and the Limits of Deficit-Framing

The challenges teachers face, students' overreliance on AI, absent institutional policy, limited training, and academic integrity concerns, echo international findings (Garzón et al., 2025; Celik et al., 2022; Akgun & Greenhow, 2022; Abimbola et al., 2024). However, much of the existing literature frames these challenges through a deficit lens: teachers as under-trained, under-supported, and consequently under-performing relative to some institutional ideal (Celik et al., 2022; Zhang & Zhang, 2024). The Tabina data complicate this framing. Teachers here were not simply deficient relative to a standard; they were operating in the complete absence of the institutional apparatus that the deficit framing implicitly assumes exists elsewhere and is merely underdeveloped. Teacher 12's observation that "you're the one who has to answer for it" describes not a gap in an existing system but the absence of a system altogether. This suggests that AI-education literature's dominant challenge frameworks, largely developed from higher-education and Global North contexts where some institutional infrastructure is typically present even if inadequate, may require revision when applied to basic education contexts in low-resource, high-necessity settings: the relevant unit of analysis is not

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"underdeveloped institutional support" but "individual teachers substituting entirely for institutional support."

Coping Mechanisms: Extending the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

Teachers' coping mechanisms, emotional responses, professional collaboration, and self-directed learning, are consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which frames coping as emerging from a cognitive appraisal of a stressor. The Tabina data extend this model in one specific way: Lazarus and Folkman's original framework treats coping as primarily individual and often private (an internal emotion-regulation or problem-solving process). Here, however, problem-focused coping was rapidly externalized into collective infrastructure, teachers did not simply cope privately and then separately decide to collaborate; the coping process itself took the form of Facebook groups and peer networks (Teachers 5, 11, 3) that functioned simultaneously as emotional support and as an ad hoc knowledge-management system. This suggests that in settings where formal professional development is entirely absent rather than merely insufficient, coping and community-building are not sequential but the same act. This is a modest but genuine extension of the stress-and-coping model as typically applied in educational contexts (Mouta et al., 2025), and it may be a more general feature of low-resource settings worth testing in future research beyond this case.

Strategies: Why This Context Made Certain Strategies Necessary, Not Merely Preferred

Teachers' adaptive strategies, curriculum integration, AI-resistant assessment, modeling, policy development, and critical discussion, align in broad terms with existing recommendations (Chan, 2023; Wang et al., 2024). What the existing literature does not fully explain, however, is why certain strategies emerged as dominant in this specific setting rather than others also documented in the literature (such as AI-detection software adoption, which barely appears in the Tabina data). The answer lies in the socio-technical constraints particular to this rural/semi-urban context. In-class, offline writing assessments (Teacher 3) and oral defenses (Teacher 7) are typically framed in the international literature as pedagogically motivated choices, favored because they emphasize process and authentic understanding over product (Mulaudzi & Hamilton, 2025; Cong-Lem et al., 2024). At Tabina, they were also, and perhaps primarily, technologically motivated: unreliable internet connectivity made offline, in-class conditions a genuinely enforceable constraint on AI access in a way that a policy alone could not be, while limited access to commercial AI-detection tools made direct oral verification a practical substitute for technology Tabina's teachers simply could not acquire. This reframes what looks, in the broader literature, as best-practice pedagogy into something closer to constraint-driven necessity in this context, the same strategy, arrived at for a materially different reason. This does not diminish its pedagogical value, but it does suggest that assessment-redesign literature developed in well-resourced settings may understate how much such strategies depend on infrastructural conditions that cannot be assumed to hold in comparable rural or under-resourced contexts elsewhere in the Philippines or the Global South.

Outcomes: Refining the Relationship Between Individual Practice and Institutional Change

The outcomes of teachers' efforts, improved student awareness, enhanced critical thinking, persistent misuse, and the emergence of advocacy communities, were mixed but generally positive, consistent with findings that pedagogical intervention can shape student AI behavior (Sperling et al., 2024). However, the co-occurrence of genuine cognitive gains alongside persistent, unresolved misuse (Teacher 12: "you have to stay flexible") is worth taking seriously as a theoretical finding rather than a limitation to be noted and set aside. It suggests that teacher agency, exercised individually and without institutional scaffolding, can produce real but structurally fragile outcomes: gains that exist at the level of the individual classroom and are not self-sustaining beyond the specific teacher who produced them. This refines the Teacher Agency framework (Priestley et al.) as commonly applied in AI-education research: agency is not simply a variable that predicts whether responsible AI advocacy happens, but a variable whose successful exercise, absent institutional support, generates a feedback structure in which unresolved outcomes regenerate new challenges (see Figure 1's feedback loop) rather than accumulating into stable institutional change. In other words, individual teacher agency in this setting is necessary for responsible AI advocacy to occur at all, but appears theoretically insufficient, on its own, to make advocacy durable across time or transferable across classrooms.

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Contribution

These findings extend existing literature in three ways. First, the sequential process framework, grounded in both stress-and-coping and teacher-agency theory, offers a structured account of how teachers navigate AI advocacy specifically in conditions of institutional absence rather than institutional inadequacy, a distinction the existing literature has not clearly drawn. Second, the study documents how specific socio-technical constraints in a rural/semi-urban Philippine setting shape not just whether teachers adopt particular strategies, but why those particular strategies rather than others become viable, contributing context-specific evidence to a literature that has been largely generated in better-resourced settings. Third, by revealing the fragility of individually-produced outcomes, the study suggests institutional support functions theoretically not merely as a helpful addition to teacher agency, but as the necessary condition for converting individually agentic practice into durable, transferable institutional change, a refinement with direct relevance to similarly under-resourced basic education systems across the Global South.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that teachers at Tabina National High School employ diverse practices to advocate responsible AI use, navigating a sequential process of challenges, coping mechanisms, strategies, and outcomes. These teachers face multiple challenges including students' overreliance on AI, lack of institutional policies, limited training, concerns about academic integrity, and the rapid evolution of AI technologies. In response, they employ coping mechanisms such as emotional resilience, professional collaboration, and self-directed learning. Within their professional capacity, they develop and implement adaptive strategies including integrating AI literacy into curricula, designing AI-resistant assessments, modeling ethical AI use, implementing academic integrity policies, and engaging students in critical discussions about AI. Despite the challenges, teachers observe positive outcomes including improved student awareness, enhanced critical thinking skills, and the emergence of teacher advocacy communities. However, continued challenges with AI misuse persist, reflecting the dynamic nature of technology and the need for sustained institutional support.

As a single-case study situated in one rural/semi-urban school, these findings are not intended to be statistically generalizable; rather, they offer an analytically transferable account of how teachers in similarly resource-constrained, policy-absent settings might navigate AI advocacy. Teachers' resourcefulness and commitment demonstrate their dedication to preparing students for an AI-integrated future, but institutional support is essential for sustainable and effective AI advocacy. Beyond documenting local practice, the sequential process framework itself offers a transferable lens for understanding how teacher agency develops incrementally, under constraint, and in the absence of top-down policy, a dynamic that existing AI-in-education literature has yet to fully capture.

Knowledge Contribution

Figure 2 presents the sequential model of teachers' practices in advocating responsible AI use. The model illustrates that teachers first face challenges including student overreliance on AI, institutional policy gaps, and limited training, which trigger coping mechanisms such as professional collaboration, emotional responses, and self-directed learning. These lead to strategies including curriculum integration, assessment redesign, modeling, policy implementation, and critical discussions, which ultimately produce outcomes such as improved student awareness, enhanced critical thinking, continued challenges, and teacher advocacy communities. The central contribution of this model is the identification of institutional support as a critical factor that enables teachers to move from individual coping to sustainable advocacy practices.

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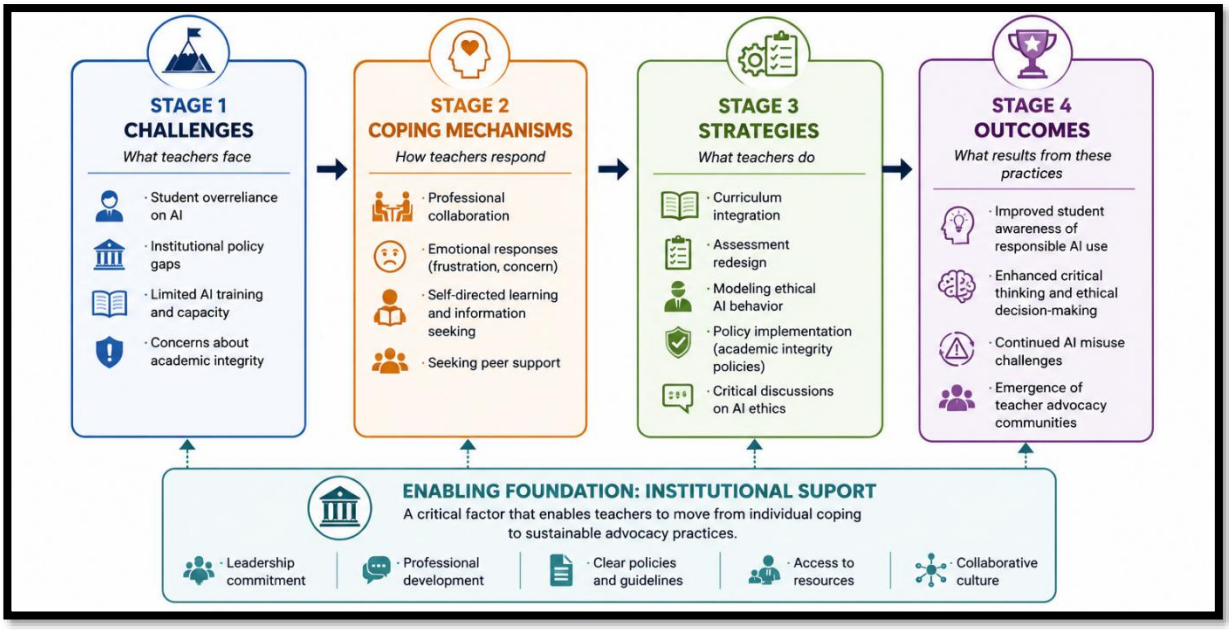


Figure 2. Knowledge Contribution of the Study

Recommendation

1. Establish Teacher Support Networks and Communities. Schools should formally recognize and support the informal teacher networks and communities of practice that already emerge around AI integration, such as subject-department groups and peer-sharing communities. Providing dedicated time, meeting space, or light institutional coordination for these networks can help consolidate the peer-driven knowledge-sharing that teachers currently sustain on their own initiative.
2. Integrate AI Literacy Across the Curriculum. Teachers should continue to embed AI literacy within existing subject areas rather than treating it as a separate topic, ensuring students develop understanding of AI's capabilities, limitations, ethical implications, and appropriate use as a component of digital literacy and critical citizenship.
3. Promote AI-Resistant Assessment Practices Suited to Local Conditions. Teachers should continue to design assessments, such as in-class writing, oral defenses, and authentic, process-oriented tasks, that emphasize critical thinking and genuine understanding. In settings with limited or unreliable internet access, teachers should be encouraged to treat offline, in-class conditions as a deliberate design resource for assessment integrity rather than only a constraint to work around.
4. Develop Comprehensive AI Policies and Guidelines. The Department of Education (DepEd) should issue national guidelines on AI integration and responsible AI use in basic education. Schools such as Tabina National High School should develop corresponding institutional policies that provide clear expectations for teachers and students, including guidelines for appropriate AI use, academic integrity standards, and procedures for addressing AI misuse, so that individual teachers are no longer solely responsible for policymaking, enforcement, and self-training within their own classrooms.
5. Invest in Structured Teacher Professional Development on AI. DepEd and school divisions should invest in sustained, differentiated professional development programs that build teachers' AI literacy, pedagogical skills for AI integration, and strategies for advocating responsible AI use, covering both technical understanding of AI tools and pedagogical approaches for fostering critical thinking, academic integrity, and ethical awareness among students.
6. Address Technological Infrastructure and Connectivity Limitations. DepEd and school administrators should prioritize investment in reliable internet connectivity and adequate devices for teachers and students in rural and semi-urban schools. Because the findings show that infrastructure limitations directly shaped which pedagogical strategies were viable at Tabina National High School, closing this infrastructure gap is a precondition for expanding the range of responsible-AI-use practices available to teachers, rather than a separate or lower-priority concern.

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7. Conduct Ongoing Research on AI Integration in Philippine Basic Education. Further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of different strategies for advocating responsible AI use, the development of AI literacy among Filipino students, and the impact of institutional policies on AI integration practices. Longitudinal studies can track how the challenge–coping–strategy–outcome cycle evolves once institutional support is introduced, testing whether such support converts the fragile, individually-produced gains observed in this study into durable, transferable change.

8. Test the Extended Theoretical Framework in Other Low-Resource Settings. Future research should examine whether the theoretical patterns identified here, the compression of coping and community-building into a single act, and the dependence of strategy choice on local socio-technical constraints, hold in other rural, semi-urban, or otherwise under-resourced basic education contexts across the Philippines and the wider Global South.

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