

UNDERSTANDING THE JOURNEY: NARRATIVES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ON TRANSITIONING TO AN AI-DRIVEN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

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This qualitative study explores school principals' perceptions of AI integration in secondary public schools in SDO Pangasinan II through five structured open-ended prompts (SOPs), yielding four recurrent themes across visionary ideals, hopes, observed experiences, challenges, and essential supports. Principals envision AI-driven schools as transformative environments enabling personalized learning, automated administration, data-informed leadership, and ethical human-centered education, while expressing hopes for efficiency, inclusivity, and innovation alongside fears of job displacement, dehumanization, data privacy breaches, and overreliance. Current experiences highlight enhanced teaching efficiency and student engagement tempered by concerns over academic integrity and adjustment anxieties, with major barriers including inadequate infrastructure, training gaps, ethical risks, budget limitations, and policy voids. Findings highlight a paradox in readiness regarding AI in education, where strong enthusiasm for its potential exists alongside significant infrastructural gaps and ethical concerns. These elements call for ongoing professional development, substantial technological upgrades, supportive Department of Education (DepEd) policy frameworks, and partnerships among various stakeholders to ensure equitable implementation. Insights derived from secondary school principals resonate with global trends, promoting a balanced and future-focused approach to AI, particularly in resource-limited settings. This aims to formulate strategic plans that tackle existing challenges and facilitate equitable and accessible AI integration in public secondary education.

Keyword: *AI integration, school principals' experiences, personalized learning, ethical AI, infrastructure barriers, professional development, DepEd policy, equitable adoption*

A. INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements have heightened global interconnectedness, creating a global village with intricate social, political, environmental, and cultural systems where people share a common destiny (Lim, 2008). Globalization is inevitable due to factors like migration, technological advancements, and shifting national borders, necessitating a reevaluation of citizenship from a cultural perspective (Kan, 2019a). In response, SDG 4.7 highlights the importance of education in promoting sustainable development and equipping learners with the knowledge to address global challenges. This goal emphasizes the need to incorporate

themes such as human rights, peace, and cultural diversity into curricula to empower learners as active global citizens. Consequently, the notion of Global Citizenship has surfaced, signifying a feeling of inclusion within a broader community (Oxfam, 2006a; UNESCO, 2014). The goal of global citizenship education (GCED) is to develop people with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to contribute positively to a sustainable world. Therefore, 21st-century education requires a new generation of people who are not only capable scholars but also responsible global citizens.

People's interest in emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), is growing due to their significant impact on modern life (Rotolo et al., 2015; Haenlein and Kaplan, 2019). The development of AI has advanced rapidly, influencing every aspect of human life, from personalized healthcare to security and education (Luckin et al., 2016). AI tools in education are primarily machines that simulate human cognitive functions like teaching and problem-solving (Russell & Norvig, 2009). The importance of AI in education became especially evident during the 2019 coronavirus pandemic when schools were forced to close (Darayseh, 2023). AI technologies, such as adaptive learning systems and data analytics, offer the potential to personalize student learning and automate administrative tasks (Microsoft Education, 2025; Panorama Education, 2025). AI tutoring systems can customize learning materials according to student-specific learning styles, while AI-assisted teaching can save facilitators time by handling repetitive questions (Hwang et al., 2020; Hebert et al., 2021). As a result, integrating AI into curriculum design and assessment procedures is imperative to achieve an effective level of scholarship (Eltabakh, 2019).

Despite the opportunities presented by AI, there is no guarantee that teachers will fully utilize it, and it does not automatically guarantee the caliber of instruction (Ayanwale et al., 2022). Technical troubles in schools, such as low connectivity and lack of support, remain significant obstacles that can discourage teachers from using technology (Ghavifekr, & Rosdy, 2015; Jamieson-Proctor et al., 2015). A teacher's self-efficacy, or their belief in their ability to influence student outcomes, is essential for their motivation and teaching methods. Research indicates that teachers' self-efficacy is positively influenced by access to technology resources and professional development opportunities (Pelaez et al., 2022; Mitchel, 2021). Furthermore, the successful adoption of technology in the classroom is often inhibited by factors such as lack of time, resources, training, and institutional support (Schindler, 2017). In the Philippine context, a significant technological gap exists, with many schools struggling with limited budgets for equipment and a lack of internet access (Garcia, 2016). This digital divide prevents

many young Filipinos from fully benefiting from digital progress and competing globally (Sagcal, 2018).

In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) has launched initiatives to promote ICT and AI adoption, emphasizing capacity building for educators and leaders (DepEd, 2025; Technology Inquirer, 2025). DepEd has introduced systems like the Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) to provide online teaching and learning resources (Garcia, 2016). However, the sheer size of DepEd presents logistical problems in increasing ICT capacity in schools (Philippine News Agency, 2018). For secondary schools, principals play a pivotal role in managing the transition to AI-driven environments by leading technological adoption and facilitating professional development (Döger & Göçen, 2025). School leaders must treat technology management not just as a supply issue, but as a global process that includes enhancing the technical skills of the staff (Balc, 2001 cited by Banoglu, 2017). They are tasked with navigating complexities such as the need for adequate infrastructure and addressing ethical considerations surrounding AI use (OpenLearning, 2024; UNESCO, 2025). Ultimately, the challenge calls on all administrators to implement changes with an open mind to keep pace with the rapid growth of technology.

Based on the literature, several gaps are evident, including the absence of laws in the Philippines encouraging AI use in education and a lack of local studies evaluating teachers' confidence in using AI for developing lessons and assessments. The integration of AI into education, particularly within the context of the MATATAG curriculum, has the potential to revolutionize teaching and learning in science education. However, transitioning to AI-enhanced education presents challenges, including professional development, infrastructure, and ethical issues (OpenLearning, 2024; UNESCO, 2025). Secondary school principals in divisions such as Pangasinan Division II are increasingly navigating this shift from traditional frameworks toward AI-enhanced systems. These principals are tasked with balancing innovation with practical realities on the ground (World Economic Forum, 2025). Understanding their lived experiences and narratives is crucial for informing policy and sustainable implementation strategies (Dogan, 2025; Almethen, 2024). Therefore, this study aims to explore the journey of secondary school principals in Pangasinan Division II as they transition to an AI-driven educational system, investigating how they perceive, enact, and manage this profound change within their schools.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative, narrative inquiry research design to explore the narratives of school heads regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the educational system. A narrative inquiry approach was particularly suitable as it allowed for an in-depth exploration of the school leaders' lived experiences, perceptions, and personal stories concerning the integration and impact of AI technologies within their respective schools. By focusing on their narratives, the design aimed to capture the rich, contextual, and subjective realities of how principals perceive, enact, and manage the transition toward AI-driven educational environments. This methodological choice was rooted in the understanding that the experiences of school leaders are multifaceted and best understood through their own storytelling. The design facilitated a deep dive into the complexities and nuances of leadership during a period of significant technological change. Ultimately, this approach provided a platform for the principals' voices to be heard and their experiences to be systematically analyzed.

Sources of Data

The sources of data for this study were carefully selected to ensure richness and depth of information, with the sample size justified through established qualitative research principles. Consistent with the findings of a fifteen-year systematic analysis by Vasileiou et al. (2018), the primary justification for the sample size was the concept of data saturation, which is achieved when no new themes emerge from in-depth interviews. Following the suggestion of Fugard and Potts (2015) that a sample of at least 12 participants is typically needed to reach saturation, this study targeted 15 school principals. The second justification for this number was pragmatic in nature, considering factors such as time constraints and resource manageability, as noted by Vasileiou et al. (2018). The participants were selected to be representative of the three congressional districts within the Schools Division Office of Pangasinan II, with five school principals chosen from the 4th, 5th, and 6th districts respectively, totaling 15 participants.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was an Interview Schedule meticulously designed to explore the lived experiences of the school principals regarding an AI-driven educational system. This schedule contained a series of open-ended questions aligned with the specific sub-questions of the study, covering topics such as their overall experiences, hopes and fears, narratives from teachers and students, anticipated challenges, and needed support

systems. The data collection procedure began with securing permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of Pangasinan II to conduct the study and obtain the names of eligible principals. Following this, formal letters of invitation were sent to the identified school heads, and upon receiving their consent, data collection commenced through asynchronous email interviews. To ensure content validity, the interview questions were pre-validated by a panel of experts, including the Research Adviser and several Education Program Supervisors, as well as by non-participant principals with similar characteristics, and their feedback was incorporated into the final questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was conducted using a systematic and rigorous approach to uncover the essential themes within the principals' narratives. Specifically, the seven steps of Colaizzi's Phenomenological Data Analysis, as outlined by Morrow et al. (2015), were employed to analyze the data. This process began with familiarization, where the researcher read through all participant accounts several times, and then moved to identifying significant statements directly relevant to the phenomenon. Subsequently, the researcher formulated meanings from these statements, reflexively bracketing presuppositions to stay true to the lived experiences. These meanings were then clustered into common themes across all accounts, leading to the development of an exhaustive description of the phenomenon, which was ultimately condensed into a fundamental structure statement. This fundamental structure was then returned to participants for verification to ensure it accurately captured their experiences, allowing for modifications based on their feedback.

Thematic Analysis and In-vivo Coding

Central to the thematic analysis was the employment of in-vivo coding, a technique that ensured the analysis remained firmly grounded in the participants' own perspectives and language. As explained by Saldaña (2021), in vivo coding involves assigning labels to specific words, phrases, or concepts taken directly from the raw data, such as interview transcripts. This approach was chosen because it is participant-centered, preserving the authenticity of the principals' expressions by using their verbatim language. By allowing codes to emerge organically from the data rather than imposing preconceived categories, in vivo coding facilitated a rich, contextual understanding of the school leaders' experiences. These verbatim codes served as the fundamental building blocks for developing broader themes, enabling the researcher to capture the nuanced essence of how principals navigate the integration of AI. This method ensured that the final thematic structure was a true reflection of the participants' lived

realities. Throughout this process, ethical considerations, including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality, were strictly observed to protect the rights and dignity of all participants.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis of the lived experiences, hopes, fears, and challenges of school principals in the Schools Division Office of Pangasinan II as they navigate the transition toward an AI-driven educational system. Through in-depth interviews, significant statements were extracted and clustered into themes and sub-themes following Colaizzi's phenomenological data analysis method. The findings are organized according to the specific questions posed in the study.

Experiences of the School Principals in an AI-driven Educational System

The first emerging theme relates to the school principals' experiences in an AI-driven educational system. From these portrayals, it gave rise to the unfolding of the following four (4) major themes: Transformative Digital Learning Environment; Empowered Teachers and Data-Guided Leadership; Ethical and Human-Centered Education; and Vision of Future-Ready Schools. Table 4 presents the extracted significant statements from the school principals and the emerged themes.

Table 1. Emerged Sub-Themes from the School Principals' Experiences Along AI-Driven Educational System

Theme	Sub-theme	Extracted significant statements/narrations
Theme 1: Transformative Digital Learning Environment	Sub-theme 1.1: Personalized learning through intelligent systems	"Para sa akin, ang AI-driven school ay yung may teknolohiya na tumutulong sa mga guro na i-customize ang lesson depende sa pangangailangan ng bawat mag-aaral. Parang may digital assistant ka na alam kung sino ang nangangailangan ng tulong at sino ang ready na mag-advance."- SP1
	Sub-theme 1.2: Automation of administrative tasks	"Malaki ang nababago ng AI sa school management. Ang mga reports ng students ay puwedeng ma-automate kaya mas nakakapag-focus kami sa pag-mentor ng teachers kaysa sa puro paperwork."- SP4
	Sub-theme 1.3: Data-informed decision-making	."It's a system that learns with us". – SP7

Theme	Sub-theme	Extracted significant statements/narrations
Theme 2: Empowered Teachers and Data-Guided Leadership	Sub-theme 2.1: Teacher support and capacity building	"AI will not replace teachers but will empower them. Nakakatulong ito para malaman kung anong teaching strategies ang pinaka-effective, kaya mas nagiging data-based ang mga training at interventions."SP-11
	Sub-theme 2.2: Evidence-based planning	"Bilang principal, iniisip ko na makakatulong ang AI sa pagbibigay ng insights"- SP5
	Sub-theme 2.3: Smart resource allocation	"Mas madali kaming makapagplano at makaresponde sa mga problema."- SP 13
Theme 3: Ethical and Human-Centered Education	Sub-theme 3.1: Balancing technology and human values	"While AI is powerful, we must ensure that human connection remains at the heart of learning. Machines can guide, but teachers inspire."-SP15
	Sub-theme 3.2: Digital ethics and data privacy	"Bilang mga school heads, dapat siguruhin namin na hindi nalalabag ang data privacy at ethical standards habang ginagamit ang AI."- SP6
	Sub-theme 3.3: Maintaining human connection	"Dapat responsable ang paggamit ng AI-suporta ito sa mga guro, hindi pamalit sa kanilang malasakit at human judgment." – SP9
Theme 4: Vision of Future-Ready Schools	Sub-theme 4.1: Technological adaptability	"It's a school that adapts to change, using technology to prepare students for digital citizenship."-SH10
	Sub-theme 4.2: Future skills development	"When I think of AI-driven education, I see innovation not just in teaching but in the entire school culture."-SH14
	Sub-theme 4.3: Institutional innovation	

Theme 1: Hope for Efficiency and Innovation in School Operations

School principals express strong hope for AI to enhance operational efficiency through streamlined administrative tasks, smart monitoring and reporting, and innovation in teaching practices. The participants envision AI as a workload reducer that transforms routine paperwork into automated processes, enabling data-driven insights for proactive management and allowing leaders to reallocate time from documentation to strategic leadership. This aspiration aligns with broader AI integration trends where automation addresses chronic administrative burdens, allowing focus on high-impact activities like decision-making and teaching enhancement. Smart monitoring supports evidence-based interventions, while innovation opportunities challenge traditional practices and promote adaptive pedagogies such as personalized instruction. These findings imply that schools should prioritize AI tools for administrative automation to boost principal efficacy and teacher support, potentially reducing burnout and improving outcomes. In the DepEd context, integrating AI into leadership frameworks could enhance monitoring compliance while innovating education delivery, a perspective supported by Adams (2025), who found principals using AI tools for decision-making and operations, and by Berkovich (2025), who documented empirical benefits in workload reduction and innovative practices through generative AI.

Theme 2: Hope for Personalized and Inclusive Learning

The participants express optimism about AI fostering personalized and inclusive learning by enabling individualized instruction that identifies remediation or enrichment needs, providing tutor-like personalized journeys for every learner, and ensuring equitable access to resources across backgrounds. This theme reveals a vision of adaptive systems that support diverse learners through real-time customization, reducing disparities in traditional one-size-fits-all models. The principals envision AI fostering adaptive learning paths tailored to student needs, enhancing engagement and outcomes while promoting inclusivity by providing underserved students access to quality resources, contingent on ethical implementation to prevent biases. This dynamic approach redefines principals as facilitators in equitable learning environments that prioritize learner agency, suggesting that schools should invest in AI tools for diagnostic assessments and adaptive platforms to operationalize personalized learning. Such investment could potentially improve retention and achievement for at-risk students, though it requires safeguards against biases to ensure equity is achieved. Vorobyeva (2025) analyzed AI-supported systems that focus on pedagogical approaches for individualized instruction and inclusivity, reinforcing the principals' vision that integrating AI can improve

educational outcomes when implemented with careful attention to equitable access and bias mitigation.

Table 2. Emerged Sub-Themes from the School Principals' Hopes and Fears of the School Principals on the Increasing Role of AI in School's Administration and Instruction

Theme	Sub-theme	Extracted significant statements/narrations
Theme 1: Hope for Efficiency and Innovation in School Operations	Sub-theme 1.1: Streamlined administrative tasks	"I hope AI can lessen our workload, especially in reports and documentation. Mas mapapadali sana ang mga forms at evaluation reports."- SH2
	Sub-theme 1.2: Smart monitoring and reporting	"It can help us become more efficient." -SH4
	Sub-theme 1.3: Innovation in teaching practices	"...malaking tulong ito sa decision-making." - SH9 "AI gives us the opportunity to innovate."-SH13
Theme 2: Hope for Personalized and Inclusive Learning	Sub-theme 2.1: Individualized instruction	. "I hope AI can help us understand our students better. Sana matukoy agad kung sino ang nangangailangan ng remediation o enrichment." -SH5
	Sub-theme 2.2: Learner support through adaptive systems	"With AI, every learner can have a personalized learning journey, parang may tutor ang bawat estudyante." - SH-9
	Sub-theme 2.3: Promoting equity in education	"If used properly, AI can promote inclusivity by giving equal access to learning resources regardless of background." - SH11
Theme 3: Fear of Job Displacement	Sub-theme 3.1: Replacement	. "Ang kinatatakutan ko, baka isipin ng iba na mapapalitan ng AI ang mga guro. -SH10

Theme	Sub-theme	Extracted significant statements/narrations
and Dehumanization of Education	of teachers and staff	Sub-theme 3.2: "Hindi dapat mawala ang human touch sa pagtuturo."-SH12 Loss of personal connection Sub-theme 3.3: "Sometimes, too much dependence on technology makes Overreliance students less engaged emotionally. We must balance the use on technology of AI." -SH15 . "My fear is that people will value machines more than teachers. Education must remain human-centered."- SH15
Theme 4: Fear of Data Privacy and Ethical Concerns	Sub-theme 4.1: Misuse of student data Sub-theme 4.2: Lack of digital ethics and safeguards Sub-theme 4.3: Vulnerability to cyber risks	"Nakakatakot din kasi baka ma-expose ang data ng mga bata at teachers."- SH3 "AI systems should have strict security protocols."- SH5 "My fear is data misuse"- SH8 "Ethics must come first. Dapat siguraduhin ng DepEd at ng schools na ligtas at tama ang paggamit ng AI sa classroom at administration."SH12

School principals express strong hope for AI to enhance operational efficiency through streamlined administrative tasks (SH2, SH4), smart monitoring and reporting (SH9), and innovation in teaching practices (SH13), envisioning AI as a workload reducer that transforms routine paperwork into automated processes and enables data-driven insights for proactive management. This aspiration focuses on reallocating time from documentation to strategic leadership, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and pedagogical creativity, aligning with broader AI integration trends where automation addresses chronic administrative burdens. Smart monitoring supports evidence-based interventions, while innovation opportunities challenge traditional practices and promote adaptive pedagogies such as

personalized instruction, implying that schools should prioritize AI tools for administrative automation to boost principal efficacy and teacher support. In the DepEd context, integrating AI into leadership frameworks could enhance monitoring compliance while innovating education delivery, as supported by Adams (2025), who found principals using AI tools for decision-making and operations, Panorama Education (2025), which reported gains in personalized support and interventions, and Berkovich (2025), who documented empirical benefits in workload reduction through generative AI. Similarly, participants express optimism about AI fostering personalized and inclusive learning by enabling individualized instruction that identifies remediation or enrichment needs (SH5), providing tutor-like personalized journeys for every learner (SH9), and ensuring equitable access to resources across backgrounds (SH11), revealing a vision of adaptive systems that support diverse learners through real-time customization. This approach redefines principals as facilitators in equitable learning environments that prioritize learner agency, suggesting that schools should invest in AI tools for diagnostic assessments and adaptive platforms to operationalize personalized learning, potentially improving retention and achievement for at-risk students, though Vorobyeva (2025) emphasizes that safeguards against biases are necessary to ensure equity is achieved.

Conversely, principals voice significant fears about AI-driven education centering on job displacement for teachers and staff (SH10), loss of human connection in teaching (SH12, SH15), and excessive technology reliance that diminishes emotional engagement (SH15), highlighting a tension between AI's efficiency and education's relational core. These concerns view AI as a disruptor of human-centered education, emphasizing the importance of "human touch" and emotional balance as critical strengths of educators, implying urgent needs for policies balancing AI adoption with teacher safeguards such as role redefinition toward mentorship and ethical training. Tyson and Sauers (2021) found school leaders perceive AI as supportive rather than replacement, while Chih-Ming et al. (2024) concluded generative AI assists but cannot replicate teachers' creativity and emotional intelligence, and EdTech Hub (2025) emphasized AI enhancing teacher roles through workload reduction while preserving human elements. Additionally, principals articulate deep apprehensions about data privacy breaches, ethical lapses, and cyber vulnerabilities, as evidenced by fears of student and teacher data exposure (SH3), demands for strict security protocols (SH5), concerns over misuse (SH8), and calls for DepEd oversight on ethical AI use (SH12), reflecting systemic gaps in policy and infrastructure. Ismail (2025) analyzed data privacy challenges in AI-driven education, highlighting excessive

surveillance and inadequate regulations that exacerbate inequalities, while Pikhart (2025) surveyed university teachers identifying data privacy, ethical misuse, and cybersecurity vulnerabilities as primary fears, mirroring school leaders' apprehensions about exposure and lack of safeguards.

Table 3. Emerged Sub-Themes from the School Principals' Narratives or Stories They Have Heard from their Teachers and Students About the Impact of AI on Their Daily Work and Learning

Theme	Sub-theme	Extracted significant statements/narrations
Theme 1: Enhanced Teaching Efficiency and Support	Sub-theme 1.1: Lesson preparation assistance	"Teachers shared that AI tools like chatbots and grammar checkers help them prepare lessons faster. Sabi nila, 'Sir, parang may assistant na kami sa paggawa ng lesson plan.'" -SH2
	Sub-theme 1.2: Automated grading and feedback	"Some teachers use AI to check essays and generate quiz items. Nakakatipid daw sila ng oras sa checking." - SH4
	Sub-theme 1.3: Access to instructional resources	."AI helps them organize learning materials, mas madali nang maghanap ng visuals and examples online." - SH11
Theme 2: Empowered and Engaged Learners	Sub-theme 2.1: Independent learning habits	"Students told me they enjoy exploring AI apps for learning - 'Ma'am, natututo po kami mag-summarize at mag-research nang mas madali.'" -SH8
	Sub-theme 2.2: Curiosity-driven exploration	. "AI motivates them to study on their own. Sabi ng isa, 'Sir, parang tutor ko po yung AI kasi tinuturuan ako step-by-step.'" -SH10
	Sub-theme 2.3: Student creativity and confidence	"I've seen students become more confident presenting ideas, especially when they use AI tools to visualize their reports." -SH11
Theme 3: Concerns About Overdependence	Sub-theme 3.1: Reliance on AI- generated outputs	"Teachers worry that some students rely too much on AI. Sinasabi nila, 'Ma'am, parang hindi na nag-iisip yung iba, kinokopya lang galing sa ChatGPT.'" - SH7

Theme	Sub-theme	Extracted significant statements/narrations
and Academic Integrity	Sub-theme 3.2: Decline in critical thinking	"There are cases when AI-generated essays were submitted without proper citation. So, integrity becomes a real concern."SH-10
	Sub-theme 3.3: Issues of plagiarism and originality	"Some teachers feel conflicted - AI helps, but it also tempts students to take shortcuts in their learning."SH-14
Theme 4: Mixed Feelings of Excitement and Uncertainty Toward AI Integration	Sub-theme 4.1: Enthusiasm for innovation	"Teachers are excited but also hesitant. Sabi nila, 'Sir, gusto naming matuto, pero baka hindi namin kayanin ang new system.'"SH5
	Sub-theme 4.2: Anxiety about change	Students feel amazed by AI features but unsure if it's allowed in all tasks—'Ma'am, bawal po ba gamitin si AI sa project namin?'"SH6
	Sub-theme 4.3: Adjustment to new digital norms	

D. CONCLUSION

This study explored the lived experiences of secondary school principals in Pangasinan Division II during SY 2025-2026 as they transition to AI-driven education, examining their visions of AI systems, hopes for efficiency and personalization, fears of job displacement and privacy risks, narratives from teachers and students, anticipated challenges, and essential needs. The findings revealed that principals envision AI as a transformative force enabling personalized learning, automating administrative tasks, and empowering teachers through data-guided leadership, while emphasizing the importance of ethical, human-centered education for future-ready schools. However, their hopes for streamlined operations and inclusive learning are tempered by persistent fears of job displacement, data privacy breaches,

and infrastructure deficits, with teachers reporting both benefits like faster lesson preparation and concerns over student overdependence and academic integrity.

The study concludes that successful AI integration in public schools requires balancing technological promise with human values, addressing major barriers including limited infrastructure, teacher training gaps, ethical concerns, and budget constraints amid policy uncertainty. Principals strongly recommend ongoing professional development, robust infrastructure upgrades with dedicated IT support, clear DepEd policies on data privacy and ethical AI use, and collaborative partnerships with LGUs and private sector for sustainable funding. These findings necessitate a comprehensive strategic plan that prioritizes continuous capacity building, equitable resource allocation, and ethical governance frameworks to transform principals' mixed perspectives into a roadmap for sustainable, inclusive educational innovation that prepares Filipino learners for a digitally-driven future.

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