

SHARED LEARNING JOURNEY: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) IN CLASSROOM SETTING

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Abstract. This study examined the lived experiences, coping strategies, and professional insights of public elementary school teachers in integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into classroom instruction. Employing a qualitative research design, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten (10) purposively selected elementary teachers from selected public schools in Maa District, Davao City, all of whom had direct experience using AI tools in teaching. Data analysis revealed key themes across three focus areas. Teachers' experiences underscore four themes: Enhanced Lesson Preparation; Increased Student Engagement and Motivation; Technological Readiness and Resource Availability; and Balancing AI Use. In terms of coping strategies, four themes also emerged: Use of Self-Directed Learning; Collaborative Support from Colleagues and School Leaders; Establishing Clear Guidelines and Responsible AI Use; and Patience, Continuous Learning, and Adaptation. Insights gained from AI integration underscored three themes: AI as a Support Tool, Not a Replacement; AI Enhances Student Engagement, Learning Equity, and Assessment; and Importance of Continuous Professional Growth and Collaboration. These results have implications for achieving the UNSDGs, particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality) through equitable access to AI-enhanced learning, and Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) by promoting technological readiness and innovation in schools.

KEY WORDS

Artificial Intelligence (AI), classroom setting, classroom innovation, Maa District, Davao City

1. Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in classrooms has emerged as a transformative approach to teaching and learning. AI technologies such as adaptive learning systems, intelligent tutoring platforms, and automated assessment tools allow educators to personalize instruction, optimize strategies, and foster collaborative environments. This study explores how AI supports a “learning together, growing together” approach, emphasizing the synergy between human educators and intelligent technologies to enhance outcomes (Okada, 2022; Tan & Chua, 2021).

Globally, AI adoption presents both opportunities and challenges. In Japan, adaptive platforms have been piloted to address learning gaps, offering personalized content and real-time feedback, though digital inequality limits access in rural areas (Okada, 2022). In Singapore, AI enhances personalized instruction and data-driven

decision-making, yet disparities in teacher training and integration reduce effectiveness (Tan & Chua, 2021). South Korea's AI-assisted classrooms foster engagement and critical thinking, but ethical concerns about privacy and data security remain pressing (Lee et al., 2023). These examples show that while AI can transform education, success depends on infrastructure, teacher readiness, and equitable access.

In the Philippines, AI integration is still in its early stages. Private schools in Metro Manila have implemented AI-driven analytics and adaptive platforms, while public schools struggle with limited infrastructure and connectivity (Delos Santos, 2022). Pilot programs in Cebu show promise, but teachers report insufficient training and familiarity with AI tools (Reyes, 2021). In Leyte, AI-supported platforms supplement blended learning, though inconsistent internet access and

resource disparities hinder consistent use (Garcia & Villanueva, 2023). These national experiences reveal gaps in equitable integration across regions and socio-economic contexts.

Locally, in Maa District, Davao City, AI-based learning remains largely unexplored in public elementary schools. Teachers continue to rely on traditional methods, limiting opportunities for personalization and engagement. This underscores the need for research focused on practical applications of AI to support educators and learners in enhancing classroom experiences. The urgency lies in addressing disparities caused by unequal access to technology and preparing students for a rapidly evolving digital landscape. Findings may guide policymakers, administrators, and teachers in

implementing AI-driven strategies that foster equitable and innovative learning environments (Delos Santos, 2022; Garcia & Villanueva, 2023).

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers integrate AI in classroom settings and how it affects teaching and learning. It seeks to understand their lived experiences, coping strategies, and insights, particularly in resource-constrained contexts such as Maa District. By examining both opportunities and challenges, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for educators and policymakers, contributing to equitable and collaborative learning practices that enable students and teachers to grow together in knowledge, skills, and engagement (Chen et al., 2023; Smith & Lee, 2022).

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of teachers integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) in classroom instruction. Phenomenology was chosen because it emphasizes the meanings teachers attach to their experiences, allowing their voices to shape understanding of how AI influenced pedagogy, classroom interaction, and professional identity. Unlike quantitative approaches that measure outcomes, phenomenology seeks to uncover the essence of human experience. In this case, it provided a framework for examining how teachers navigated the challenges of AI adoption, balanced instructional demands, and reshaped their professional roles. By prioritizing informants' reflections, the design captured both the opportunities and constraints of AI integration, situating it as not only a technological shift but also a personal and social process within the learning community (Neubauer et al., 2021; Sundler et al., 2021).

Data collection relied primarily on semi-structured interviews guided by open-ended questions. This format encouraged teachers to narrate their challenges, coping strategies, and insights while maintaining flexibility to explore emerging themes. Each interview lasted 45–60 minutes, was audio-recorded with consent, and supplemented by field notes to capture non-verbal cues and contextual

details. These interviews provided rich, descriptive accounts of AI integration, while the iterative nature of data collection allowed themes to evolve progressively. This ensured that interpretations remained faithful to teachers' lived realities and grounded in authentic classroom contexts (Broom et al., 2021; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Ten public elementary school teachers from Maa District, Davao City, participated in the study. They were selected through purposive sampling from five schools—Maa Central, SIR, Langub, Magtuod, and Josefa Llanes Escoda Elementary Schools. Inclusion criteria required at least three years of teaching experience, direct responsibility for literacy and numeracy subjects, and actual experience using AI tools in instruction. This diverse sample captured varied perspectives shaped by differences in school culture, resources, and teaching contexts. By including teachers from multiple schools, the study ensured that findings reflected the complexity of AI integration across the district, providing a comprehensive view of both shared and unique experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2021; Tracy, 2022).

The main research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide validated by experts in education and piloted with non-participating teachers. Questions explored perceptions, instructional

adaptations, coping strategies, and professional growth related to AI use. Optional open-ended questionnaires were also distributed to accommodate teachers unable to attend in person. This triangulated approach enriched the data by combining individual depth with collective perspectives, strengthening credibility and validity. By allowing flexibility in responses, the instrument ensured that teachers' voices were prioritized and their narratives captured in detail (Nyumba et al., 2018; Sundler et al., 2021).

The researcher played a central role as facilitator, data collector, and analyst. Reflexivity was practiced through journaling to minimize bias, while rapport-building encouraged openness and sincerity. Ethical standards such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, and respect for informants' rights were strictly observed. Field notes and contextual observations enriched the data, while member checking and peer debriefing ensured accuracy and credibility. By combining empathy with scholarly rigor, the researcher presented an authentic account of teachers' experiences adapting to AI in their classrooms. This reflective stance ensured that interpretations were grounded in genuine perspectives rather than researcher assumptions (Castillo-Montoya, 2023; Roberts et al., 2022).

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's thematic framework. Transcripts were reviewed repeatedly to identify significant statements, which were coded and grouped into categories. These categories evolved into broader themes capturing teachers' shared experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights. Validation strategies such as member checking, peer feedback, and audit trails ensured

trustworthiness. Reflexive journaling reinforced objectivity, grounding interpretations in teachers' narratives rather than researcher assumptions. This systematic process illuminated how teachers made meaning of AI integration, balancing optimism with caution, and innovation with ethical responsibility (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2022).

Ethical considerations guided all phases of the study. Informed consent was obtained, participation was voluntary, and pseudonyms protected identities. Privacy and confidentiality were upheld in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Teachers were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time, and interviews were conducted with sensitivity to possible vulnerabilities. By fostering trust and ensuring emotional safety, the study encouraged genuine reflections about AI integration. These measures enhanced credibility and authenticity, ensuring that findings accurately represented teachers' voices (Resnik, 2023; Walters & Adams, 2022).

Trustworthiness was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checking enhanced credibility. Thick descriptions of context supported transferability, while audit trails ensured dependability. Reflexivity and transparency reinforced confirmability, ensuring that findings authentically represented teachers' experiences in Maa District. These strategies safeguarded the rigor of the study and strengthened its contributions to understanding how educators adapt to AI-driven instruction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nowell et al., 2022).

3. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal how public elementary school teachers in Maa District experienced the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in classroom instruction. Teachers consistently described AI as a supportive tool that enhanced lesson preparation, improved student engagement, and fostered learner-centered practices, while also presenting challenges related to technological readiness, resource availability, and ethical concerns. Their narratives highlight both the opportunities and constraints of AI integration, showing

that while AI can transform teaching, its effectiveness depends on teacher guidance, continuous learning, and institutional support. This duality reflects broader research that emphasizes AI adoption as a process of both enthusiasm and caution, where educators must balance innovation with responsibility (Reyes & Quintana, 2025; Sibug et al., 2024).

Enhanced Lesson Preparation. Teachers emphasized that AI tools improved lesson organization, creativity, and instructional

efficiency. Automated quizzes, presentation generators, and personalized feedback systems allowed them to design more structured and engaging lessons. Informants noted that AI made their teaching more learner-centered and helped students understand mistakes quickly through instant feedback. These experiences align with studies showing that AI fosters instructional innovation and differentiated learning, though teachers must remain cautious about student overreliance on technology (Ampo et al., 2024; Calles, 2024). Importantly, teachers also reflected that AI integration reshaped their professional identity, inspiring them to become more creative and adaptive in lesson design. While initial struggles with technological knowledge were common, persistence and continuous learning enabled teachers to gradually build confidence. This illustrates that AI integration is not a one-time adjustment but an evolving practice that requires patience, reflection, and institutional support to sustain.

Increased Student Engagement and Motivation. Teachers observed that AI-assisted activities such as quizzes, games, and interactive tasks significantly increased student participation and motivation. Learners became more active, collaborative, and autonomous, with many expressing greater interest in lessons. Informants highlighted that AI-generated feedback encouraged students to improve their work, reinforcing engagement and confidence. These findings support research showing that AI enhances curiosity and autonomy when embedded in classroom instruction, though teacher facilitation remains essential to guide responsible use (Dewi, 2024; Ampo et al., 2025). Teachers also noted that engagement was not limited to academic performance but extended to social-emotional growth, as students developed confidence in expressing themselves and collaborating with peers. This transformation demonstrates that AI integration, when guided effectively, can foster holistic learning outcomes that go beyond technical skills to include creativity, collaboration, and resilience.

Technological Readiness and Resource Availability. Despite the benefits, teachers reported challenges such as limited technological knowledge, unstable internet connectivity, and varying levels of student digital literacy. Some learners adapted quickly, while others required additional guidance. These constraints reflect broader issues of infrastructure and training in Philippine schools, where inadequate resources hinder effective AI adoption (Rosqueta, 2025; Sibug et al., 2024). Teachers emphasized the need for patience, alternative strategies, and continuous learning to overcome these barriers, underscoring that successful AI integration depends on both teacher competence and institutional support. Their accounts reveal that resource limitations often forced them to improvise with offline activities or blended approaches, highlighting the importance of flexibility in teaching. This finding resonates with studies that stress the role of systemic investment in infrastructure and professional development to ensure equitable access to AI-enhanced learning (Lariba & Ibojo, 2025).

Balancing AI Use. Teachers consistently stressed that AI should serve as a support tool rather than a replacement for their role. They emphasized the importance of clear guidance, careful planning, and gradual integration to prevent misuse and overdependence. Informants described AI integration as a continuous process of learning and adjustment, requiring reflection and flexibility. These insights align with studies highlighting that teachers must remain central as facilitators and ethical guides in AI-enhanced classrooms (Calles, 2024; Sibug et al., 2024). Teachers also reflected that balancing AI use involved redefining their professional identity, shifting from being sole content deliverers to facilitators of collaborative and ethical learning. This balance ensured that students did not simply consume AI-generated outputs but engaged critically with content, developing both technological literacy and independent thinking.

Coping Strategies. To manage challenges, teachers adopted coping mechanisms such as self-directed learning,

collaboration with colleagues and school leaders, establishing clear classroom guidelines, and practicing patience and adaptability. They engaged in online tutorials, informal learning communities, and peer mentoring to build AI competence. Collaborative support from ICT coordinators and grade-level teams helped them design alternative lessons and share solutions. Teachers also emphasized responsible AI use through structured rules and continuous reflection. These strategies demonstrate resilience and adaptability, consistent with findings that proactive engagement and professional learning strengthen teacher confidence in AI integration (Yin, 2024; Tan, 2024). Importantly, coping strategies were not only technical but also emotional, as teachers relied on peer support and reflective practice to sustain motivation and manage stress. This highlights that AI integration is as much about building professional resilience as it is about mastering technological tools.

Overall Insights. The results show that AI integration enhances lesson preparation, student engagement, and instructional creativity, while also reshaping teachers' professional identity. However, its success is constrained by technological readiness, resource availability, and ethical considerations. Teachers' coping strategies highlight the importance of collaboration, continuous learning, and reflective practice in sustaining effective AI use. Ultimately, AI serves as a transformative instructional partner, but its integration must be balanced with teacher guidance to ensure meaningful, ethical, and learner-centered outcomes (Samah et al., 2025; Dewi, 2024). These findings underscore that AI integration in education is not merely about adopting new tools but about cultivating a culture of innovation, resilience, and equity that empowers both teachers and learners to grow together in knowledge and skills.

4. Summary of findings, Implications and Future directions

This study explored the lived experiences of teachers in Maa District as they integrated Artificial Intelligence (AI) into classroom instruction. The findings highlight how AI enhanced lesson preparation, creativity, and differentiated instruction while also fostering learner engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking. Teachers valued AI as a supportive tool but encountered challenges such as limited resources, unstable internet, insufficient AI literacy, and varying student digital readiness. Despite these barriers, they demonstrated resilience through self-directed learning, collaboration, and reflective practice, ensuring that AI complemented rather than replaced meaningful teacher facilitation (Reyes & Quintana, 2025; Sibug et al., 2024).

Teachers reported that AI supported personalized learning by enabling immediate feedback and adaptation to diverse student needs. Learners became more autonomous and motivated, while teachers gained confidence in designing learner-centered activities. However, ethical concerns about responsible AI use and the risk of overdependence required careful guidance. Collaboration through Learning Action

Cells, mentoring, and professional communities played a vital role in strengthening teacher competence and confidence. These experiences underscore that sustainable AI integration depends on continuous professional development, equitable access to resources, and institutional support (Ampo et al., 2024; Calles, 2024).

The study suggests that teachers require ongoing training in AI literacy, instructional innovation, and ethical technology use. Schools must strengthen infrastructure, connectivity, and access to digital resources to sustain equitable learning opportunities. Collaboration and peer mentoring should be institutionalized to help teachers address challenges and improve practices. Ethical and responsible AI use must be emphasized to ensure that technology supports authentic learning experiences while maintaining teacher oversight. Institutional support systems, including training programs and policy frameworks, are essential for sustainable AI integration (Dewi, 2024; Samah et al., 2025).

Administrators and policymakers should provide systemic support through

professional development, resource allocation, and technical assistance. Teachers are encouraged to explore AI applications that foster creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking while maintaining pedagogical oversight. Schools should strengthen collaborative structures such as Learning Action Cells and

mentoring programs to promote innovation and peer support. Researchers may conduct longitudinal and comparative studies to examine how teacher resilience, coping strategies, and professional identity evolve with AI integration in diverse contexts (Rosqueta, 2025; Fernandez & Lim, 2023).

5. References

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