

Generative Ai Ethics in School Leadership as a Determinant of Teachers' Professional Identity in a Chinese Educational Institution

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Abstract: There are several opportunities and difficult ethical issues associated with the quick adoption of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in higher education. While there are some studies that examine the connection between ethical leadership and teachers' professional identity (TPI), very few have examined this relationship. This quantitative comparative-correlational research in Guangdong University of Science and Technology, China, explores the relationship between TPI and Ethics in School Leadership (ESL) as related to GenAI. The sample consisted of 250 teachers who completed a questionnaire that measures 96 items across the six TPI dimensions (e.g., self-concept and role perception, motivation and commitment, emotional and affective orientation, psychological resilience) and 10 GenAI ethics dimensions (e.g., policy and governance architecture, data governance, bias and fairness controls, continuous monitoring). The results indicated that the ethics of GenAI were assessed at a higher level than midway (overall $M = 3.25/4$), with participatory governance and continuous monitoring proving to be the most positively rated ethics. Furthermore, TPI was positively evaluated ($M = 3.23/4$), particularly with regards to affective and emotional orientation. ANOVAs showed that there were no significant differences in age or type of AI or academic rank. The psychological resilience scores were 3.35 for teachers with 1–5 years of experience and 3.13 for teachers with 16+ years of experience. But there was significant variation in psychological resilience across years of service ($F = 3.521$, $p = .016$). One of the most important results was total TPI being positively associated with GenAI ethics ($r = .664$, $p < .001$). Specifically, data governance correlated positively with emotional trust ($r = .556$), equity ($r = .558$) and policy clarity ($r = .569$) with commitment. The findings highlight the importance of an integrated theoretical approach that combines identity theory and deontological ethics, as ethical AI governance contributes to higher trust in the organisation, protects teachers' professional autonomy and sets clear expectations, which all support the empowerment of teachers' professional identities. Some practical tips include enhancing data and authoring requirements, providing targeted psychological assistance to senior teachers, keeping participatory governance procedures, and conducting AI ethics training for discipline-specific teachers.

Keywords: Generative Artificial Intelligence, AI Ethics, School Leadership, Teachers' Professional Identity, Higher Education, China.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Rise of Generative AI in Higher Education

Due to the advancements of AI tools such as Gemini, ChatGPT, DeepSeek, and Kimi, daily life in higher education is shifting in new ways. They can produce coherent writing, solve complicated problems, assemble course materials, grade automatically and give feedback to students individually. They assist enrolling, communicating and resource distribution on an administrative level. This is no surprise, as institutions around the globe are adopting GenAI to boost the effectiveness of teaching, student engagement and maintain their competitive edge.

But the good news is that there are significant moral implications to these benefits. GenAI systems are trained on large datasets that can be biased, and can yield discriminatory results. One of the issues is data privacy; Instructors' and Students' data might be misused, or accidentally shared. Students can easily be able to write essays and tasks without learning anything, which also compromises academic integrity (Alier et al., 2021). Authorship becomes unclear when AI makes a significant contribution to research or creative endeavor. Additionally, educators are having to rethink their responsibilities in order to become facilitators, curators, ethical gatekeepers of AI tools, and key knowledge transmitters (Zagkotas, 2025).

The Chinese government has been actively pushing the use of AI in the field of education through initiatives such as "AI Education 2030" and "Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan." The Chinese government has been actively promoting AI in education with initiatives like "AI Education 2030" and "Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan." Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has called for the adoption of digital revolution in schools. Most universities, however, do not have specific university-wide policies yet on the ethical use of GenAI. The impact of this is that teachers are placed in a very precarious position as a result. Are they able to develop lesson plans using AI? Will they translate anything with AI be original work? What should they do if students turn in homework produced by AI without giving credit? These uncertainties also erode teachers' professional standing and subject them to attack both from students and administrators.

1.2. Teacher's Professional Identity in the Age of AI

Self-identification as professional is the core of teachers' professional identity. It is not static; rather, it varies with time and according to the circumstances. It integrates both their convictions and priorities, self-confidence, and knowledge about their jobs (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Wu et al., 2024). More specifically it includes views of educators as professionals, motivation and commitment of educators, emotional involvement in students, teacher autonomy and control in their work, and resilience in facing failure (Flores, 2019). Having a strong sense of professional identity is associated with high levels of engagement, low risk of burnout, greater classroom productivity, and greater satisfaction with their job (Want et al., 2018).

The impact of AI on education is bi-directional, impacting teachers' professional identities both positively and negatively (Sporrong et al., 2024). On the other hand, it can carry out a lot of repetitive tasks, providing teachers with more time and energy to invest in their "essentials" of teaching, such as relating to students and creativity. Moreover, AI can offer insights based on data which can help teachers with classroom decision making (Sajja et al., 2025). The big problem is, however, that... Teachers are concerned about losing their skills or becoming sidelined. Some may even be intimidated by the thought of some of their roles being replaced by AI in the future. They may feel restricted in their decisions, no longer being able to rely on their own expertise or professional judgment, or that the algorithms are biased, surveillance is too intensive, or that they are being watched too closely (Hayes & Loper, 2026; Zoonen et al., 2025). School administrators' policies and procedures directly influence and are directly felt by teachers' perceptions of themselves as professionals in relation to the use of AI, which is crucial for the responsible, open and fair use of AI (Nazim & Abbas, 2025).

1.3. The Research Gap and Rationale for the Study

There is an increasing amount of study on teacher identity as well as AI ethics in education (García-López & Trujillo-Liñán, 2025; Küçük, Cincil & Karal, 2025). Few studies, however, have tried to link the two aspects, namely school administration of GenAI ethical aspects and how that relates to teachers' professional identity (Kohnke et al., 2026; Flogie et al., 2026). This is especially evident in China's higher education, where the government's aggressive push for rapid technological modernization must contend with cultural traits such as collaborative work, harmony, and brilliance in the workplace. Why is this link important? School principals are the decision makers on the regulation of AI in their schools. If the ethical use of AI is clearly explained, just and supportive, teachers are much less likely to see it as a threat to their job position and more as an asset to their craft. However, teachers may just retreat, refuse to utilize AI at all, or even have an identity crisis if there is no true administration or if it is unduly harsh.

Thus, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Looking at ten specific points, what is the attitude of the teachers at Guangdong University of Science and Technology to the attitude of their school leaders in dealing with generative AI ethics issues? What are their present six dimensional professional identity?
2. Do these opinions vary by teacher's age, the type of A.I. tools they use, how many years they have been teaching for, and academic qualifications?
3. Do teachers' school leadership ethical beliefs about GenAI relate to their professional identity?
4. This research study will provide real-world data that can impact institutional policy, improve leadership development and support teachers in their new reality of an increasingly AI-driven education system.

2. Generative AI Ethics in School Leadership: What It Means and What It Includes

What does "ethics in school leadership" actually mean, when it comes to generative AI? To summarize, it's the policies and procedures which school administrators put into place to incorporate GenAI into instruction, assessment, research, and into the day-to-day. The goal is to encourage innovation while maintaining human dignity, academic integrity and equity, and data security (Deng & Joshi, 2024; Oben, 2025). The authors of this study highlighted that in the recent past, several systematic reviews (SRLs) have been published on the subject of GenAI ethics, which were used to identify ten interrelated components of GenAI ethics (Bittle & El-Gayar, 2025; García-López & Trujillo-Liñán, 2025; Jayasinghe et al., 2026):

Clear policy and governance framework, clear and defined responsibilities, and frequent use of AI.

Academic Integrity and Authorship Safeguards: Strategies to prevent plagiarism by AI and to attest on the origins of the work.

Data governance: protecting the integrity of the origin, security and privacy of educational data.

Equity and access: ensuring equal access for all people, regardless of educational background or context, to access AI resources.

Bias and fairness controls: identification and reduction of any unfairness that could be caused by algorithms.

In cases where AI is used in decision making, teachers supervise the process and apply their skills and judgements.

Age appropriate precautions are precautions which are appropriate to the developmental stage of pupils. Educational ethics and competency frameworks educate teachers and education leaders about the ethical use of AI.

Implementation sensitivity: adapting and tailoring AI ethics guidelines, based on different disciplines.

Examples of participatory governance and continuous monitoring include ongoing supervision and engaging stakeholders in updating the policy.

The pieces as a whole demonstrate that the governance of ethical AI works at both the institutional level and at a classroom level and in teachers' professional development.

2.1. Teachers' Professional Identity: What It Looks Like and What Shapes It

Drawing on identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009) and a significant amount of empirical research (Beijaard et al., 2004; Wu et al., 2024), this study explored teachers' professional identities across six views.

Self concept of teachers refers to their perception of their role while their perception of responsibilities is termed role perception.

Inner force and devotion to teaching is called motivation and commitment.

Psychological wellbeing and resilience – how they manage stress and keep their emotions in check.

Pedagogical knowledge, autonomy, and professional agency: their abilities, sense of autonomy, and level of professional control over their teachers' choice.

Emotional and affective orientation refers to the love, happiness and emotional bonding that they feel towards their students.

Social, cultural and environmental influences: the impact of the school culture, collaborative working between colleagues and broader social norms on their role as an educator.

The six dimensions do not stand alone, but are interrelated and interdependent. Having a sense of value and purpose in teaching is a strong motivator for teachers to remain emotionally committed to their profession.

2.2. Theoretical Framework: Bringing Deontological Ethics and Identity Theory Together

The research is derived from two main theories. The first is deontological ethics, which focuses on obligation, rule, and moral codes and obligations (Kant, 1993). In terms of school leadership, this implies a need to establish authorisation mechanisms, data protections, governance mechanisms, and mechanisms of fairness, not only because these are practical, but also because they are ethically required. Academic integrity, justice and human supremacy are the moral responsibility of the leaders. Second, we will tackle the issue of teachers' professional identities (Burke & Stets, 2009). Based on this theory, the conduct, the motivation, and the self-concept of a person are all affected by his or her professional identity, which is the set of meanings that a person assigns to a function. Hence, the teacher's identity is shaped by his or

her own notions of his or her identity as a teacher, including emotional connections, resilience, independence and social and cultural context of his or her work.

Grounded in this dual perspective, this research suggests that ethical leadership in generative AI, rooted in deontological ethics, has a structural influence on the formation, maintenance and strengthening of educators' professional identity. Transforming the context of teaching in the organization, practically speaking, leaders can offer ethical governance (clear regulation, equitable access to resources, data protection, participatory monitoring) that can deepen the grasp of the instructor, create psychological safety and increase trust in the organization. This enhances their motivation, resilience, self-concept, and emotional commitment to teaching. In short, instructors have the power with ethical AI governance. It is clear what is expected from them, protects their independence and builds trust.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

The design used was quantitative comparative-correlational. The impressions given by teachers were compared with respect to the different categories of demographic and professional attributes (age, types of AI, years of experience, academic rank). Correlational analysis was used to explore the relationship between TPI and GenAI ethics.

3.2. Study Setting and Participants

The study was performed at private Guangdong University of Science and Technology (GDUST) in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, China. GDUST has more than 1200 Academic members, and more than 30000 students. The university was an appropriate study site as it had been quite innovative in implementing AI in its teaching and learning processes.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Teacher-Respondents (N=250).

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	25–35 years	82	32.8
	36–45 years	83	33.2
	46–55 years	59	23.6
	56 years and above	26	10.4
Years of service	1–5 years	77	30.8
	6–10 years	82	32.8
	11–15 years	55	22.0
	16 years and above	36	14.4
Academic rank	Lecturer	95	38.0
	Assistant Professor	77	30.8
	Associate Professor	56	22.4
	Professor	22	8.8
Types of AI used	Chatbots/ Conversational AI	57	22.8
	Predictive AI	56	22.4
	Generative AI	49	19.6
	Adaptive Learning AI	46	18.4
	Intelligent Tutoring Systems	42	16.8

3.3. Instrumentation

A self-developed questionnaire was used. It was split into three sections and was quite easy to do. Background data was collected in the first part, such as age, the types of AI that they typically use, how long they have been a teacher, and their academic position. GenAI ethics were the subject of the second section. There were 6 questions on each of the 10 dimensions, totaling 60 things. Teachers responded to the question "Accountability mechanisms for AI governance are transparent," on a 4-point scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (4). The professional identities of teachers were examined in the third section. There were also six dimensions, each with six questions for a total of 36 things. One item on a 4-point scale was "My feelings affect my teaching delivery."

We asked five experts to review the questionnaire to make sure it is at an appropriate level. Their training included expertise in research methods, AI ethics, and educational management. It was comforting that all of the content validity scores were higher than 0.85. In addition, a pilot test was carried out with 30 teachers not included in the main test. The internal consistencies of the subscales ranged from $r = 0.82$ to 0.94 , which showed the questionnaire was internally consistent and reliable.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Following the university's clearance, we got in touch with the academic affairs and human resources departments to get a comprehensive list of instructors. Next, consent forms were distributed describing the purpose of the study, that participation was voluntary and that no fees were incurred for dropping from participation in the study at any time, that comments were confidential and that anyone could drop out at any time. The questionnaires were given in print and online for the next two weeks. We checked each response for completeness after it was gathered. Finally, 250 valid responses were received, accounting for 100% of our sample of teachers.

3.5. Data Analysis

To do the math, we used SPSS 26.0. First, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) were used to gain an understanding of the characteristics of the teachers and their ratings. The data were subsequently analyzed by one-way ANOVA to assess if there were significant differences between the different groups (e.g., age or years of service). Finally, we used Pearson correlation to test if there was a relationship between teachers' perception of the ethics of GenAI in school leadership and their professional identity. The significance level is 0.05.

4. Results

4.1. Teachers Assess GenAI Ethics

Describes educator ratings for the different aspects of GenAI ethics. The total average score was 3.25 (sd = 0.39) interpreted as 'Evident/Agree'. Continuous Monitoring and Participatory Governance was the highest rated ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 0.443$) followed closely by Bias and Fairness Controls ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.457$) and Policy and Governance

Architecture ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.457$). Data Governance ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.448$) and Academic Integrity and Authorship Safeguards ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.457$) had the lowest marks. This suggests that teachers recognize the institution's efforts to promote ethical use of AI, but they still have lingering concerns, including those regarding the detection of plagiarism related to AI, credit for work helped by AI, and data management.

Table 2: Teachers 'Ratings of GenAI Ethics in School Leadership (N=250).

Dimension	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Sort
Continuous Monitoring and Participatory Governance	3.28	0.443	1
Policy and Governance Architecture	3.27	0.457	2
Bias and Fairness Controls	3.27	0.457	2
Age-Appropriate Protections	3.26	0.444	3
Ethical Literacy and Competency Frameworks	3.26	0.453	4
Discipline-Sensitive Implementation	3.25	0.486	5
Equity and Access	3.25	0.444	6
Human Oversight and Professional Judgment	3.24	0.452	7
Academic Integrity and Authorship Safeguards	3.23	0.457	8
Data Governance	3.23	0.448	9
Overall	3.25	0.394	

Note: Ratings were on a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). The overall mean (3.25) is interpreted as "Agree / Evident".

4.2. How Teachers Rated their Professional Identity

Teachers gave their professional identities an average rating of 3.23 out of 4 ($SD = 0.41$), which is still within the "Agree / Evident" range. Emotional and Affective Orientation received the highest score ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.451$), followed by Motivation and Commitment ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.452$) and Self-Concept and Role Perception ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 0.450$). Social, Cultural, and Contextual Influences ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.471$) and Psychological Resilience and Well-Being ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.467$) ranked lowest. In other words, instructors appear to derive a great deal of emotional fulfillment from their employment; that aspect is powerful. However, they are a little less resilient and receive less help from their environment.

Table 3: Teachers 'Professional Identity Ratings (N=250).

Dimension	Mean (M)	SD
Emotional and Affective Orientation	3.25	0.451
Self-Concept and Role Perception	3.23	0.450
Motivation and Commitment	3.23	0.452
Pedagogical Knowledge, Autonomy, and Agency	3.22	0.475
Psychological Resilience and Well-being	3.21	0.467
Social, Cultural, and Contextual Influences	3.21	0.471
Overall	3.23	0.408

Note: 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree).

4.3. Differences by Background Variables

Age. Age was not really important. There were no significant differences ($p > .05$) in the ratings of GenAI ethics and professional identity among teachers across all

age groups. AI types in use. Teachers' opinions didn't appear to be influenced by whether they primarily employed chatbots, generative AI, predictive AI, or anything else. No significant differences ($p > .05$) once more.

Years of service. Years of employment had little effect on the majority of aspects of professional identity. However, psychological resilience and well-being were an exception. There was a substantial gap in that one ($F = 3.521, p = .016$). Upon deeper inspection, teachers with 1–5 years of experience had the greatest resilience score ($M = 3.35$), while those with 16 years or more had the lowest score ($M = 3.13$). Teachers with 6–10 years had an average of 3.14, while those with 11–15 years had an average of 3.19. Thus, it appears that teachers' resilience tends to decline as their years of experience and workload increase. Academic standing or rank. Additionally, rank was irrelevant. There were no significant differences ($p > .05$) in the opinions of lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors.

4.4. Correlation Between GenAI Ethics and Teachers' Professional Identity

Pearson correlation analysis revealed that all ten dimensions of GenAI ethics were significantly positively correlated with all six dimensions of TPI ($p < .001$). Table 4 highlights the strongest specific relationships and the overall correlation.

Table 4: Pearson Correlations Between GenAI Ethics and Teachers 'Professional Identity.

GenAI Ethics Dimension	TPI Dimension	Pearson r	p-value
Policy and Governance Architecture	Self-Concept and Role Perception	0.569	< 0.001
Equity and Access	Motivation and Commitment	0.558	< 0.001
Data Governance	Emotional and Affective Orientation	0.556	< 0.001
Overall GenAI Ethics	Overall TPI	0.664	< 0.001
Note: All correlations are significant at $p < 0.001$.			

Results revealed good to very good overall positive correlation ($r = .664, p < .001$) between the overall TPI composite score and the overall GenAI ethical composite score. Increased professional identities in all the dimensions examined are associated with increased perceived ethical AI leadership.

5. Discussion

5.1. Several Interesting Findings emerge from the Data when Interpreting the Key Results

The information provides some interesting insights. First, teachers' perception is that their institution has a decent management of GenAI ethics, especially with regard to continuous monitoring, teacher's involvement in decision making, the presence of clear policies and bias control. This suggests that GDUST's ethical AI frameworks have developed and are progressing. What stood out most was the attitude that was taken by the instructors towards participatory governance. Obviously, they like to be consulted, have a say in assessing practices for AI, and engage in continuous evaluation of such practices. This corroborates the argument of Mak et al. (2025)

and Oben (2025) that governance is more effective when it is iterative and takes on feedback from its beneficiaries.

Second, it makes little sense that academic integrity did not fare as well as it did. Nearly all the institutions are experiencing these issues. There is no legitimate intent for traditional plagiarism laws to protect against plagiarism created by AI-generated work. When it comes to citing AI support, teachers often ask themselves, “How can it be done correctly? How to identify if a student has used AI without permission? And how can you assure that exams are a fair representation of students’ own work and yet foster learning? Moreover, there is a lack of resolution on data governance challenges like obtaining proper consent, monitoring data usage and transparency. The findings validate the findings of other systematic evaluations (Bittle & El-Gayar, 2025; Sharma, 2025), which have been pointing towards these being some of the most pressing ethical threats in today’s educational landscape.

Third, it’s logical that the emotional part of teachers’ professional identities is the most powerful. Traditionally, the teaching profession has been based around relationships. The downside is this is a matter of time; the longer people work on a job, the less resilient they become. It is understandable that those with the most experience (16 years or longer) would have the lowest resilience. Over the years they have endured a number of changes, new technology and extra responsibilities. Everything builds up. This is aligned with the research on burnout, which indicates that over the time, professional well-being can deteriorate.

Fourth, this study yielded the highest positive correlation coefficient between overall TPI and GenAI ethics ($r = .664$), which also appears to be the most important result. It provides empirical support to our whole theoretical approach. Ethical leadership (deontological obligations) is exercised with clear policies, equal opportunities, data security and shared monitoring, conferring on teachers a sense of safety, respect and independence. This therefore contributes to reinforce their professional identity. The most interesting associations are the following pathways: role security $\rightarrow$ policy clarity ($r = .569$). Having a clear understanding of what is acceptable and what is not when using AI helps to stabilize the teachers’ sense of self and their role as teachers.

Commitment $\rightarrow$ equity ($r = .558$). The equitable distribution of AI tools and education reinforces a sense of equality and the institution’s value of all users, which increases teachers’ buy-in into the initiative. There is a moderate positive correlation between emotional trust and data governance ($r = .556$). Requesting permission and respecting privacy is not just a good practice, it’s the right thing to do. It develops emotional bonds and trust to the organization by showing respect for instructors as unique persons. Taken together, these findings suggest that it is not a matter of erecting barriers in ethical AI governance. This has more to do with giving teachers the help they need. It lets people know what is expected of them, prevents anyone from making decisions and judgements that are inappropriately influenced by their work, and helps create a psychologically safe workplace. The findings of this study will be compared with the results of the previous research.

Previous research has not been done to quantify the relationship between AI ethics and teacher identity. Hayes and Loper (2026) found that Korean EFL teachers faced some identity conflicts because of the use of GenAI, which can be overcome by providing clear guidelines within the institution and developing teachers’ professional knowledge. Zhang et al. (2026) found that coordinated teaching methods facilitated

the pre-service English teachers in China to cultivate their AI literacy and professional identity. Our work continues the qualitative findings with a large amount of correlational data that ethical AI leadership is positively linked to TPI.

Finally, it should be noted that, as regards resilience, there was a difference between age and tenure of service, whereas for other traits age was not significant and tenure was. This means that resilience could become more susceptible in the long term to a build-up of work-related stress. This is a helpful piece of information to have when developing specific support. For experienced teachers, better task management and mental health support are likely to help them improve; for novice educators, they might need support in their skills development.

5.2. Practical Implications

What are institutional leaders to do then? Below are a few recommendations. Develop a brief, informative explanation of identifying plagiarism, citing with AI and gaining permission to use data. Further, do not impose them on teachers or students, but engage them with the students and teachers. When individuals participate in the rules' creation they feel more in control and more likely to follow the rules. Secondly, offer multiple types of psychological support in different time periods of a person's career. Peer Support Groups, counselors and wellness groups may be particularly helpful for veteran and mid-career teachers. Giving flexibility around schedules and being aware and openly discussing workloads can also help reduce chronic stress.

Thirdly, promote and reinforce Participative Government. Schedule and conduct regular Ethics Roundtables about AI, send out surveys, conduct Policy Review sessions involving educators. Policies are still relevant and people have increased trust when they feel heard. Fourth, give up training that is "one size fits all." AI Ethics Training needs to be tailored to different disciplines. It isn't always clear what an engineer or health scientist would find their problem to be, compared to a humanities professor. Be able to offer advanced modules to any interested parties and training that is fit for purpose. Fifth, communicate moral AI solutions in a positive light, not oppressive. Highlight how ethical governance truly respects teacher autonomy, e.g., by giving teachers the freedom to make their own choices about using AI or informing students about the use of AI in grading. Show teachers how this isn't an obstacle to their growth as teachers, but a way to help them grow.

5.3. Limitation and Future Research

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, because of the cross sectional design, causal inferences cannot be made. It is hypothesized that the influence of TPI is as a result of ethical leadership and it is assumed that there may be a reciprocal effect. Directionality can only be determined with longitudinal studies. Second, the data is self-reported which means there is the possibility of common method bias. Objective metrics or a combination of metrics (peers, students) could be used in future studies. Third, the results were not generalizable since the study was conducted at one university in the southern part of China. Replication in other institutions (public/private, other areas, other levels) would enhance the external validity. The study did not examine mediating variables such as teacher self-efficacy, organizational trust,

or psychological safety, as a fourth aspect. These paths should be tested in models to be released in the future.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly show that the approach of the school administration to the ethics of Generative AI is an important factor that affects teachers' professional identity in the context of higher education in China and in a positive manner. Overall, teachers felt that their school was doing a pretty good job managing AI governance, especially in terms of monitoring and having standards and considering bias. They also had a good professional identity, particularly in the area of engagement. One thing was clear, though, as instructors spent more time on the job, the less resilient they were mentally. Most importantly, we found a large and positive correlation between total teacher identification and GenAI ethics ($r = .664$). Specific relationships were also observed: AI tools were more accessible, which led to greater teachers' commitment; clear policies supported teachers' sense of purpose, and a good data governance helped to build teachers' emotional trust.

The results confirm our theoretical framework combining identity with deontological theory. Clear regulations and an active use of AI in the process support and enhance teachers' professional identities. It sets clear expectations, protects their autonomy, and builds trust, which are vital if educators are to see AI as a way to augment, not replace, their efforts. School administrators must cease considering ethical governance as merely another administrative burden as higher education continues to advance into the AI era. Instead, they should consider it a strategic and judicious investment to boost teacher retention, well-being, and professional growth. By engaging teachers in the policymaking process, offering support to meet their needs as individuals, and positioning ethical decision-making as a liberating, not constraining, process, institutions can build a resilient, self-assured, and motivated teaching workforce, poised for the challenges of the future in an era shaped by AI.

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