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FROM READINESS TO PRACTICE: EXPLORING GENAI AS AN ACADEMIC COUNSELING TOOL AMONG VOCATIONAL EFL TEACHERS

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ABSTRAK

Perkembangan pesat teknologi *Generative Artificial Intelligence* (GenAI) telah membawa perubahan signifikan dalam praktik pembelajaran dan layanan akademik di lingkungan pendidikan vokasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi fungsi penggunaan *Generative Artificial Intelligence* (GenAI) oleh guru bahasa Inggris di sekolah vokasi dalam mendukung praktik pembelajaran dan konseling akademik, khususnya praktik profesional yang melampaui indikator kesiapan yang tercantum dalam *Readiness for Artificial Intelligence Application Scale* (RAIS). Penelitian ini menggunakan desain mixed-method dengan pendekatan *sequential explanatory*, dengan kuesioner berbasis RAIS sebagai instrumen pengumpulan data kuantitatif dan wawancara semi-terstruktur sebagai instrumen pengumpulan data kualitatif. Data kuantitatif dianalisis secara deskriptif untuk menentukan tingkat kesiapan guru, sedangkan data kualitatif dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik untuk memperoleh pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai penggunaan GenAI dalam praktik profesional. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru termasuk dalam kategori "siap" dalam penggunaan GenAI, yang mencerminkan tingkat kompetensi yang memadai untuk mengintegrasikan GenAI ke dalam aspek praktis, pedagogis, dan etis dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, temuan tematik mengungkapkan bahwa GenAI tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai alat pendukung pembelajaran, tetapi juga sebagai alat pendukung akademik, yang berperan sebagai mitra reflektif, pendukung pengambilan keputusan, fasilitator perancangan asesmen, serta alat pengelolaan data pembelajaran. Temuan ini menegaskan peran GenAI yang semakin berkembang dalam mendukung praktik reflektif guru, pengambilan keputusan pedagogis, serta pengembangan profesional. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pentingnya pelatihan yang berorientasi pada praktik serta pengembangan kerangka kesiapan teknologi yang lebih komprehensif, yang mencakup praktik pembelajaran reflektif dan berbasis data.

Kata Kunci: *Konseling Akademik, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), Kesiapan Guru, Guru EFL Vokasi*.

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) technology has brought significant changes to instructional practices and academic services in vocational education settings. This study aims to explore the functions of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) utilized by English teachers in vocational schools in supporting instructional practices and academic counseling, particularly professional practices that go beyond the readiness indicators outlined in the Readiness for Artificial Intelligence Application Scale (RAIS). This study employed a mixed-method sequential explanatory design, using a RAIS-based questionnaire for quantitative data collection and semi-structured interviews for qualitative data collection. The quantitative data were analyzed descriptively to determine teachers' readiness levels, while

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the qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis to gain deeper insights into the use of GenAI in professional practice. The results indicate that teachers are categorized as "ready" for GenAI utilization, reflecting an adequate level of competence to integrate GenAI into practical, pedagogical, and ethical aspects of English language teaching. Furthermore, the thematic findings reveal that GenAI functions not only as an instructional support tool but also as an academic support tool, serving as a reflective partner, decision-making aid, assessment design facilitator, and learning data management tool. These findings highlight the evolving role of GenAI in supporting teachers' reflective practices, pedagogical decision-making, and professional development. This study suggests the importance of practice-oriented training and the development of more comprehensive technology readiness frameworks that incorporate reflective and data-informed teaching practices.

Keywords: *Academic Counseling, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI), Teacher Readiness, Vocational EFL Teachers*.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has significantly transformed various sectors, including English Language Teaching (ELT) (Dewi, 2025; Lee et al., 2025; Moorhouse, 2024b). GenAI is a branch of AI that can perform creative processes, such as writing text, organizing ideas, translating language, paraphrasing, generating images, and recognizing named entities in a text (Lim et al., 2023). This technology enables teachers to generate personalized learning materials, translate documents, brainstorm teaching ideas, develop adaptive teaching strategies, create lesson plans, cross check lesson content, design assessments, provide feedback, and support professional development (Chiu et al., 2023; Hong, 2023; Moorhouse, 2024a; Ozdemir & Mede, 2024; Sumakul et al., 2022). In recent years, the integration of GenAI in ELT has shown substantial growth, particularly in facilitating technology enhanced learning and pedagogical innovation (Tan et al., 2025). This enhancement is also found to support adaptive instruction and differentiated learning environments (Kristiawan et al., 2024). However, this potential will not be optimal if teachers are not ready to use GenAI, as high usage does not guarantee readiness (Kusumaningrum et al., 2023).

Teacher readiness in using GenAI refers to the technological, pedagogical, and ethical knowledge required to integrate AI into classroom practices (Ghiasvand et al., 2024; Sumakul et al., 2022). As key agents of educational change, teachers need a strong understanding of GenAI and its applications to support meaningful transformation in digital learning environments (Ghiasvand et al., 2024). Teachers with low readiness may rely excessively on AI generated outputs without critical verification, which is associated with automation bias. In contrast, excessive reliance on AI may also lead to cognitive offloading, potentially reducing critical engagement and pedagogical judgment (Gerlich, 2025). Thus, readiness becomes an essential factor in determining the effective use of GenAI in teaching practices.

Moreover, examining teacher readiness is particularly important in vocational education, where learning is oriented toward practical competencies and work readiness. Vocational EFL teachers are educational practitioners who teach English in non native contexts (Brown, 2001) and are required to integrate language instruction with workplace relevant skills while responding to diverse student needs (Wedekind et al., 2025). Previous studies have reported generally positive attitudes toward AI integration in vocational contexts (Purba et al., 2024), indicating openness toward technological innovation. However, it remains necessary to examine whether these positive perceptions are accompanied by sufficient pedagogical, technical, and ethical readiness. Therefore, a deeper investigation is needed to understand how

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such readiness is reflected in teachers' actual professional practices when utilizing AI technologies.

The level of teachers' readiness is reflected not only in their technical competence but also in how GenAI is utilized in professional practice. Previous studies have predominantly examined GenAI as an instructional support tool in lesson planning, material development, assessment construction, and language skill improvement (Aryanti & Santosa, 2024; Aullia & Santosa, 2025; Chiu et al., 2023; Hong, 2023; Moorhouse, 2024a; Ozdemir & Mede, 2024; Sumakul et al., 2022). However, recent studies indicate that GenAI also functions beyond instructional support, particularly as a tool for reflection, decision making, and instructional planning (Mariani et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025; Tan et al., 2025). Hence, it is important to further examine these extended functions in professional practice.

GenAI as an academic counseling tool refers to its role in examining learning evidence, identifying instructional challenges, and exploring pedagogical responses through interactive dialogue and feedback mechanisms. This function is supported by AI's ability to provide data driven feedback, analyze learning patterns, assist in evaluating classroom situations, design assessments, and organize learning data (UNESCO, 2023). It also aligns with the concept of technology enhanced professional support, where digital tools act as partners in teachers' professional judgment and continuous improvement (Miao & Holmes, 2023). In this regard, GenAI has the potential to support teachers beyond instructional activities. Despite GenAI's growing adoption, studies focusing on its role as a reflective partner and decision support tool remain limited. Most existing research still emphasizes its function as an instructional aid, leaving a gap in understanding its role in supporting teachers' professional reflection and academic decision making (Mariani et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025). Accordingly, further investigation is needed to explore these underexamined roles. This gap highlights the importance of examining GenAI beyond its traditional instructional functions.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of GenAI as an academic counseling tool in vocational EFL teaching practices. By examining these professional functions, this study seeks to extend the understanding of GenAI utilization beyond its role as an instructional aid and provide insights into more reflective, adaptive, and data informed teaching practices. This study also contributes to the development of more comprehensive perspectives on AI integration in education. The findings are expected to support future research and practical implementation. Ultimately, this study aspires to inform the design of more effective strategies for integrating GenAI into vocational English language teaching.

METHOD

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-method design combining quantitative and qualitative data. The participants were 28 English teachers from public and private vocational high schools (SMK) in Buleleng District, Bali. The quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire based on the Readiness for Artificial Intelligence Application Scale (RAIS) developed by Ramazanoğlu and Akin (2024), which measures three dimensions: Technology Self-efficacy, Student Interaction, and Ethical Awareness. The data were analyzed descriptively using frequency distribution to determine teachers' readiness levels based on the readiness categorization by Shyh-mee et al. (2015). This quantitative phase provided an overall profile of teachers' readiness to integrate GenAI into their instructional practices.

The qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews to explore teachers' experiences and practices in using GenAI in English language teaching. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). The

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analysis involved coding interview transcripts, grouping similar responses, and identifying recurring themes related to the use of GenAI in teachers' professional practices, particularly in pedagogical reflection, decision making, assessment design, and learning data management. This qualitative phase enabled a deeper understanding of how GenAI is utilized in real classroom contexts and professional decision-making processes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

To provide an overview of teachers' readiness to integrate GenAI in English language teaching, the distribution of AI readiness levels among vocational EFL teachers in Buleleng District is illustrated in Figure 1.

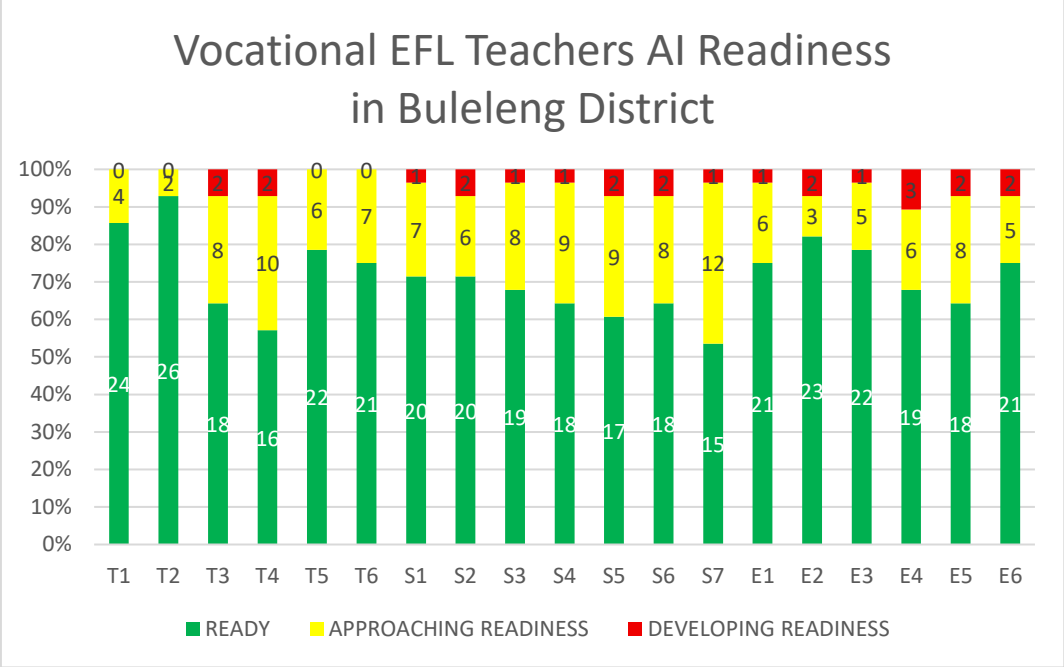

Figure 1. Vocational EFL Teachers AI Readiness Level

The quantitative data analysis result shown in Figure 1 indicates that vocational high school English teachers are generally categorized as "Ready" to use GenAI to support their English teaching practices. This result is drawn from the overall tendency of the data distribution presented in Figure 1, in which the proportion of teachers classified in the "Ready" category consistently exceeds the midpoint of the scale. Since readiness levels were measured using an ordinal scale, the interpretation of the data is more appropriately based on the median rather than the mean. The median point, represented by the 50% threshold, shows that the distribution of responses predominantly falls within the "Ready" category. To clarify the categorization of teachers' readiness levels, the definitions of each readiness category adopted from Shyh-mee et al. (2015) are illustrated in Figure 2.

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Figure 2. Definition of The Readiness Level (Shyh-mee et al., 2015)

As illustrated in Figure 2. Definition of The Readiness Level (Shyh-mee et al., 2015), the categorization of teachers' readiness provides a framework for interpreting their level of competence in using GenAI. "Ready" represents the highest level of readiness in which teachers demonstrate strong confidence and ability to use GenAI in their English instruction. The categorization level was adapted from a readiness framework by Shyh-mee et al. (2015), combined with the readiness definition applied in this study. This finding further indicates that teachers are able to utilize GenAI independently in classroom practices. However, the quantitative data alone fail to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the extent to which teachers use GenAI to support their teaching practices. Therefore, further analysis of the qualitative data was conducted and revealed that this level of readiness is reflected not only in teachers' ability to use GenAI as an instructional tool but also in its application to more complex professional practices. Several key themes emerged from the interview data that provide a deeper understanding of the extent of teachers' readiness to use GenAI, one of which is the role of GenAI as an academic counseling tool in supporting pedagogical reflection and academic decision-making. These thematic findings are further detailed in Table 1. Thematic Analysis Result.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis Result

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Description
Technology Self-Efficacy	Teaching Assistant	The use of GenAI as a teaching assistant to help learning materials preparation, assignments creation, or learning activities development.
	Need for Guidance and Professional Training	Teachers' need for professional training and

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		mentoring in optimal use of GenAI in English language teaching and learning.
	Lack of Troubleshooting Skills	Limited technical capabilities of teachers in overcoming issues or problems in using GenAI.
Student Interaction	Students' Learning Support	The use of GenAI to assist students' learning process, including providing additional explanations, simplifying learning materials for better understanding, and facilitating learning interactions.
	Academic Counseling	The use of GenAI as a reflective partner and pedagogical decision-making support, including consultations related to classroom conditions, learning strategies, assessment design, and learning data management.
	Limited Use as Diagnostic Tool	The use of GenAI is still limited in diagnosing students' potential, learning needs or learning difficulties.
Ethical Awareness	Positive Ethical Orientation	Teacher awareness of the use of GenAI responsibly and in accordance with the principles of educational ethics.
	Ethical Violations Detection	Teachers' ability to identify potential ethical violations in the use of GenAI among teachers and students.
	Data Privacy and Security	Teachers' awareness and concerns about data security

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and privacy issues in the use of GenAI.

Table 1 presents the structure of themes and subthemes resulting from the thematic analysis of the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) by English teachers in vocational schools. The analysis results indicate that teachers' experiences and practices in using GenAI are organized into three main themes: Student Interaction, Technology Self-Efficacy, and Ethical Awareness. These three themes illustrate the main dimensions that shape the use of GenAI in teachers' professional practice, which include pedagogical aspects, technological competence, and ethical considerations in technology use. This thematic structure indicates that teachers' use of GenAI is not only limited to learning activities but also relates to technological readiness and ethical awareness in using the technology.

Although the thematic analysis identified several sub-themes describing teachers' use of GenAI, this research specifically focuses on the academic counseling sub-theme because this finding demonstrates usage practices beyond the readiness indicators included in the RAIS framework. The RAIS instrument generally assesses teachers' readiness in terms of the practical, pedagogical, and ethical use of technology, particularly in the context of utilizing GenAI as a learning support tool and classroom interaction. However, the findings regarding GenAI's role as an academic counseling tool indicate a more complex function, namely as a reflective partner in pedagogical decision-making, assessment design, and management of learning practices. This sub-theme is also visually represented in Figure 3. Thematic Analysis Map, which illustrates the relationship between the identified themes and sub-themes. Therefore, this sub-theme is considered to have higher analytical significance because it broadens the understanding of GenAI's role in teachers' professional practice, which is not fully accommodated in existing readiness indicators.

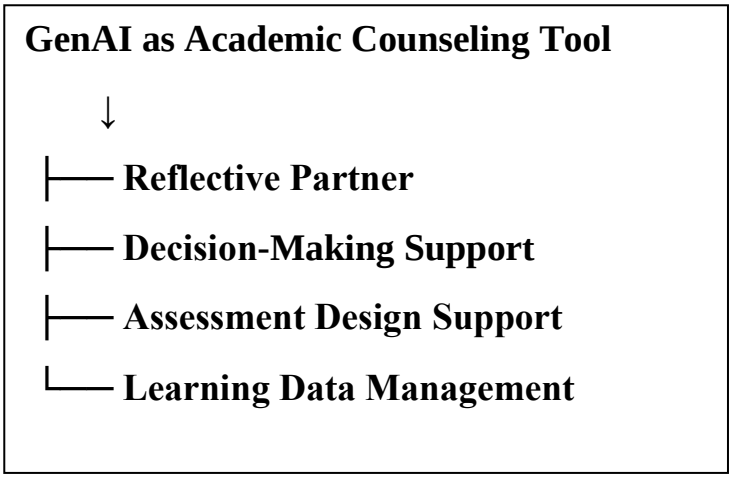

Figure 3. Thematic Analysis Map

Figure 3 presents a thematic map illustrating the main theme and subthemes discussed in this study, derived from the thematic analysis. The theme “Academic Counseling” illustrates how teachers utilize GenAI as a professional discussion partner in various learning situations. This utilization demonstrates that teachers use GenAI not only to generate learning materials but also to support the process of reflecting on teaching practices and planning more effective

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learning strategies. Based on thematic analysis, this theme encompasses several key functions, such as a *reflective partner*, *decision-making support*, *assessment design support*, *and learning data organization*. These four functions illustrate GenAI's role in helping teachers manage the complexity of the learning process more comprehensively and reflectively.

As a *reflective partner*, GenAI is utilized by teachers as a professional discussion partner to reflect on various conditions that occur during the classroom learning process. Teachers use GenAI to consult on class dynamics during teaching activities, such as student participation levels, learning difficulties experienced by students, and learning situations that are not going as expected. Through these interactions, teachers discuss possible causes of the conditions that occur, whether related to learning strategies, student characteristics, or specific learning situations, *"I usually recount classroom situations to AI to better understand learning conditions. The AI summarizes the information, which helps me evaluate classroom situations."* Furthermore, teachers also explore various alternative solutions that can be implemented to address these problems, *"...it helped me determine appropriate improvement strategies.*" The use of GenAI as a reflective partner demonstrates that technology functions not only as a support in providing information but also as a means for teachers to conduct pedagogical reflection more systematically.

In its *decision-making support* function, GenAI is utilized to help teachers in determining appropriate learning strategies for specific classroom situations or cases. Teachers utilize GenAI to discuss various alternative pedagogical actions based on the specific conditions they encounter during the learning process. These discussions include considerations regarding appropriate teaching approaches, adjustments to learning strategies, and the selection of methods that can increase student engagement and understanding,*"I usually ask AI to provide workplace scenarios related to students' fields, such as design or accounting, that require English use. Indirectly, AI helps me imagine students' needs so that my teaching becomes more relevant rather than simply delivering content."*

Through this process, GenAI serves as an additional source of consideration that assists teachers in making more informed decisions. These findings indicate that the use of GenAI has supported a more reflective and contextual pedagogical decision-making process.

In addition to reflective partner and decision-making support, GenAI is also utilized in lesson planning, particularly in *supporting the assessment design*. Teachers use GenAI to develop instructions for assignments or learning projects that are concise, clear, and easy to understand for students. This utilization aims to improve the clarity of instructional communication and ensure that the assignment demands are accurately understood by students. Teachers further use GenAI to improve the language structure and clarity of the wording of the instructions they created, *"I use AI to design task instructions because students often find my explanations confusing and AI helps create clearer instructions that are easier for students to understand."* Thus, the use of GenAI in assessment design helps teachers improve the effectiveness of instruction delivery and supports the achievement of learning objectives.

Moreover, in the *learning data organization* function, GenAI is utilized by teachers to support the management and organization of student learning data. Teachers use GenAI as a discussion partner to design a learning outcome data management system, such as developing a grade processing format using spreadsheet software or other number-organizing tools. The teachers mostly discussed how to organize assignment grades, final assessments, and mechanisms for categorizing student learning achievements more efficiently. This utilization helps teachers expedite the data processing process and facilitates the identification of whether students have achieved learning targets,*"I use AI to help manage assessment systems through*

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spreadsheets so that students' scores are more organized and easily accessible during report preparation. Since I often encounter difficulties using Excel, I consult AI to find technical solutions, resolve errors, and adjust grading formats according to my needs."

These findings indicate that GenAI's role goes beyond supporting pedagogical aspects and also contributes to efficiency in learning administration management (Tan et al., 2025; Ghiasvand & Seyri, 2025).

Discussions

Thoroughly, the research findings indicate that the level of readiness of vocational high school English teachers in using GenAI, which is in the "Ready" category, is not only reflected in the ability to use technology as an instructional tool, but also in its utilization in more reflective and complex professional practices, including as an academic counseling tool that functions as a reflective partner, a supporter of pedagogical decision-making, and a facilitator in managing the learning process. These findings broaden the understanding of GenAI's role in language education, which has often been positioned as a teaching aid for material creation or increasing student engagement. These research findings align with recent research suggesting that GenAI integration encourages teachers to reconstruct their pedagogical practices and professional identities through reflective interactions with technology, enabling AI to serve not only as a technical tool but also as a cognitive partner in teaching practice (Ghiasvand & Seyri, 2025). Thus, the use of GenAI as an academic counseling tool in this study demonstrates a shift towards a more strategic and reflective use of AI in teaching practice.

Specifically, GenAI's role as a reflective partner in this research aligns with studies showing that AI technology can support the development of teachers' reflective thinking and strengthen pedagogical reflection processes. Research on the use of Generative AI in teacher education indicates that AI can provide scaffolding for professional reflection processes through dialogic interactions that help teachers analyze learning practices and develop improvement strategies (Wei et al., 2025). Furthermore, AI has also been reported to play a role in the reconstruction of teachers' professional identities through collaborative reflection processes between humans and technology (Ghiasvand & Seyri, 2025). In the context of this research, the use of GenAI to discuss classroom conditions, analyze the causes of student learning difficulties, and design solution strategies indicates that teachers utilize GenAI as a source of professional reflection that supports decision-making based on pedagogical analysis.

Furthermore, the functions of GenAI as a decision-making and assessment design support demonstrate its role in enhancing teachers' capacity in lesson planning and academic evaluation. This finding confirms recent literature that perceives GenAI integration into education enables teachers to gain support in assessment design, learning data analysis, and the development of more effective instructional strategies (Prilop et al., 2025; Tan et al., 2025). In this study, teachers used GenAI to formulate clear task instructions, determine appropriate learning strategies for classroom conditions, and organize student learning outcome data. This demonstrates that GenAI functions as a cognitive support tool that expands teachers' professional capacity in managing the complexity of the learning process, particularly in the context of vocational education, which demands a practical and competency-based orientation.

In addition, GenAI's role in organizing learning data further reflects AI's potential in supporting data-informed teaching practices. Systematic studies of AI in education show that AI technology can help teachers manage and analyze learning data more efficiently, enabling more informed pedagogical decisions that are responsive to student needs (Tan et al., 2025). In the context of this research, the use of GenAI to assist in the creation of a system for managing

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grades and categorizing student learning outcomes demonstrates that AI not only supports the teaching process but also plays a role in managing the administrative and evaluative aspects of learning.

Generally, the findings of this study indicate that teacher readiness to use GenAI is reflected not only in technical skills with technology but also in the ability to use AI as a professional partner in pedagogical reflection and academic decision-making, which is in line with the studies of Mariani et al. (2025) and Rahman et al. (2025). These findings expand the concept of technology readiness in education by emphasizing the cognitive and reflective dimensions of AI use and demonstrating that the integration of GenAI into teaching practices has the potential to support the transformation of teachers' roles toward more adaptive, reflective, and data-driven learning practices.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that English teachers in vocational high schools are not only ready to use Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) as a learning tool, but also utilize it as an academic counseling tool in their professional practice. The findings reveal that GenAI functions as a reflective partner, supporting pedagogical decision-making, assisting in assessment design, and facilitating the organization of student learning data. These results demonstrate that teachers' use of GenAI extends beyond its instructional function and reflects its role in supporting pedagogical reflection and academic practice. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting the transition from teachers' readiness to their actual pedagogical practices in utilizing GenAI.

Based on these findings, this study recommends a more systematic use of GenAI to support reflective and data-driven teaching practices. Teachers are encouraged to utilize GenAI not only as a technical tool but also as a professional partner in evaluating and improving instructional practices. Educational institutions are encouraged to provide professional training that emphasizes not only technical skills but also pedagogical reflection, assessment design, and learning management. In addition, policymakers are advised to integrate AI competencies into teacher professional development frameworks to support more adaptive and reflective learning environments.

This study also highlights the potential of GenAI to be developed as a structured academic counseling system that supports data-informed teaching, personalized learning strategies, and continuous professional reflection. The findings indicate that GenAI can play a broader role in assisting teachers in managing both instructional and administrative aspects of teaching. This potential suggests the need for more systematic integration of AI in educational practices to enhance teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, such integration may contribute to the development of more responsive and adaptive learning environments.

Future research is recommended to examine the implementation of GenAI in broader educational contexts and its impact on learning quality, student outcomes, and teachers' professional development. Further studies may explore the effectiveness of specific GenAI-based interventions or models that support reflective teaching practices. In addition, future research can investigate how GenAI can be integrated into different subject areas and educational levels. These efforts are important to strengthen the evidence base for the sustainable use of GenAI in education.

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