

# ETHICAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR GENERATIVE AI (GAI) ADOPTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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## **Abstract:**

This article explores the sudden shift in higher education that was brought about by the generative artificial intelligence (GAI), a technology that is reshaping pedagogical, evaluating, research and administrative spheres. While GAI holds great promise with the benefits of personalized instruction, improved operational efficiency, expanded accessibility, and innovation, at the same time it creates deep ethical concerns that include issues related to academic integrity, systemic bias, lack of transparency, privacy breaches, accountability, and loss of trust and equity. Contemporary universities are therefore under increasing pressure to establish by far rigorous, principled governance systems that prudent directions for the responsible use and deployment of GAI technologies: Based on current scholarship, the forth study provides a critical examination of some of the key ethical dilemmas, institutional responses, and issues of governance paradigms that have transpired in the intersection of GAI integration ostracism in academic settings. Using the literature review methodology in the form of narrative, analysis can synthesize an existing scholarly discourse and identify key governors dimension(s) necessary for responsible implementation. The results suggest that ethical governance needs to move beyond ad hoc rules focused on academic malpractices and instead adopt a broad institutional model based on transparency, accountability, fairness, privacy, human oversight and constant refining of policies. In response to this, a pragmatic ethical governance structure organized around institutional leadership, policy formulation, conscientious procurement, stakeholder engagement, assessment reform, capacity development, monitoring mechanism, and iterative evaluation is proposed in the article. It concludes that the practice of proactive governance is essential in ensuring the alignment of technological innovativeness with the fundamental values of education as well as human dignity ensuring that GAI can help enhance the educational quality and at the same time protect the trust and inclusion while maintaining its integrity and institutional credibility.

**Keywords:** Generative artificial intelligence, higher education, ethical governance, academic integrity, institutional policy, responsible AI adoption.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

#### **1.1.1 The Emergence of Generative AI in Education**

Generative artificial intelligence has become one of the most influential technological developments affecting education in recent years. Unlike earlier digital tools that focused mainly on storage, communication, or automation, GAI systems can generate new content in the form of text, code, images, summaries, lesson plans, and feedback. This capability has created new possibilities for improving teaching and learning while also challenging the traditional assumptions that guide academic practice.

Batista et al. (2024) observed that GAI is increasingly being discussed not just as an instructional tool but as a transformative force capable of reshaping educational delivery, pedagogical design, and institutional operations.

In higher education, the rapid expansion of GAI tools has changed how students interact with knowledge, how instructors prepare teaching materials, and how institutions think about assessment, support services, and innovation. Chere and Wayi-Mgwebi (2024) noted that the integration of GAI in higher education is connected to broader pedagogical shifts that prioritize flexibility, personalization, and digital responsiveness. As these tools become more embedded in academic systems, universities are confronted with both their promise and their risks.

### **1.1.2 The Expanding Scope of Institutional Adoption**

GAI adoption in higher education is no longer limited to experimental use by individual instructors or students. It now affects multiple institutional functions. In teaching and learning, GAI is used for lesson preparation, tutoring, personalized feedback, translation, summarization, and writing support. In research, it is used for literature exploration, data organization, drafting, coding assistance, and conceptual brainstorming. In administrative contexts, it can support communication, student services, knowledge management, and planning processes (Jogezai et al., 2025).

This broad scope of adoption means that GAI is no longer a marginal educational issue. It has become an institutional concern that touches core university values, including fairness, trust, academic freedom, integrity, and public accountability. As GAI expands across university systems, the ethical questions surrounding its use become more urgent.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

### **1.2.1 Ethical Tensions in the Use of GAI**

Although GAI offers substantial educational benefits, it also introduces complex ethical tensions. Students may use it to support learning, but they may also use it in ways that undermine originality and independent thinking. Faculty may use it to increase productivity, but overreliance may reduce human judgment and weaken pedagogical authenticity. Institutions may adopt GAI systems to improve efficiency, yet such adoption can expose them to privacy violations, algorithmic bias, misinformation, or accountability failures (Olohunfunmi & Khairuddin, 2024).

Gallent Torres et al. (2023) emphasized that GAI creates significant pressure on academic integrity systems because traditional boundaries between assistance and authorship are becoming increasingly blurred. Similarly, Siroya et al. (2024) argued that governance, accountability, and transparency are now central to discussions about AI in higher education because the consequences of misuse or poorly governed deployment can affect institutional legitimacy.

### **1.2.2 Inadequacy of Existing Institutional Responses**

Many higher education institutions have responded to GAI through preliminary or fragmented policies. In some cases, institutional responses have focused mainly on plagiarism, assessment misconduct, or short-term guidance for classroom use. Dabis and Csáki (2024) found that early policy responses by universities often reflected uncertainty, inconsistency, and limited institutional preparedness. Rather than establishing comprehensive frameworks, many institutions adopted reactive measures that addressed symptoms without fully engaging the broader governance issues.

This creates a major institutional problem. If GAI is adopted without a clear ethical governance framework, institutions may unintentionally normalize harmful practices, widen educational inequalities, weaken trust in academic evaluation, and compromise students' rights and data security. Therefore, a more systematic and principled governance model is needed.



## 1.3 Purpose of the Study

### 1.3.1 Main Aim

The purpose of this article is to develop a structured ethical governance framework for generative AI adoption in higher education. The article seeks to examine the ethical issues associated with GAI, assess the state of institutional responses, and identify the major governance principles required for responsible implementation.

### 1.3.2 Specific Objectives

This article is guided by four specific objectives. First, it reviews the major ethical concerns surrounding GAI adoption in higher education. Second, it examines the current scholarly understanding of institutional governance responses to GAI. Third, it synthesizes major governance principles emerging from the literature. Fourth, it proposes a practical ethical governance framework suitable for higher education institutions.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

### 1.4.1 Relevance to Policy and Practice

The significance of this study lies in its focus on governance rather than isolated usage. Much of the existing discussion on GAI in education focuses on classroom implications, student misuse, or technological opportunities. While these are important, they do not adequately address the institutional structures required to govern GAI responsibly. Gomes et al. (2025) stressed that governance frameworks are necessary for aligning AI adoption with institutional values, operational standards, and accountability processes.

### 1.4.2 Contribution to Higher Education Discourse

This article contributes to current debates by arguing that responsible GAI adoption cannot depend solely on individual ethics or instructor discretion. It requires coordinated institutional policies, oversight mechanisms, stakeholder participation, and continuous review. In this sense, the study contributes to the emerging discourse on ethical governance in digital education and provides a basis for more policy-oriented thinking in higher education.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Conceptualizing Generative AI in Higher Education

#### 2.1.1 Defining Generative AI

Generative AI refers to systems that create original-seeming outputs based on patterns learned from large data sets. These outputs may include essays, images, reports, code, lesson materials, and responses to prompts. In educational settings, this means that students and instructors can use GAI not simply to retrieve information but to produce content that resembles human-generated academic work. Batista et al. (2024) described this characteristic as one of the main reasons GAI has become such a disruptive force in higher education.

#### 2.1.2 Educational Applications of GAI

The literature identifies a wide range of educational uses of GAI. Chere and Wayi-Mgwebi (2024) highlighted applications such as content generation, adaptive support, automated feedback, and personalized learning. Bashir and Lapshun (2025) showed that in management education, GAI has been integrated into curriculum delivery, brainstorming exercises, writing tasks, and decision-support simulations. Fang and Cai (2025) further argued that college students are increasingly using GAI for learning activities, including explanation of difficult concepts, summarization of materials, and support for academic writing.

These applications reveal that GAI is not a single-purpose technology. It is a flexible and evolving tool whose educational impact depends on how institutions regulate, interpret, and deploy it.

## 2.2 Ethical Issues Associated With GAI Adoption

### 2.2.1 Academic Integrity and Authorship

Academic integrity is one of the most frequently discussed ethical concerns in the literature. GAI makes it easier for students to generate essays, solutions, or responses that appear original even when the actual intellectual effort is limited. Gallent Torres et al. (2023) argued that this challenges higher education institutions to rethink originality, plagiarism, and authorship in the age of machine-assisted content production.

Olohunfunmi and Khairuddin (2024) also found that students' use of AI generative tools creates dilemmas related to dependence, concealed assistance, and blurred ethical boundaries. The issue is not only whether GAI is used, but how it is used, disclosed, and integrated into learning processes. This has implications for both policy and pedagogy.

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### 2.3.2 Bias, Fairness, and Exclusion

Another major ethical issue is algorithmic bias. GAI systems are trained on large-scale datasets that may contain cultural, social, gendered, and linguistic biases. Mironova et al. (2024), in a cross-country study, found that ethical concerns about generative tools often include discrimination, exclusion, and misrepresentation. If GAI outputs reflect dominant cultural assumptions, students from marginalized or underrepresented backgrounds may be disadvantaged.

Fairness also extends to access. Some students may have premium access to advanced GAI tools, while others may rely on limited or free versions. This creates an uneven learning environment. Alfiras et al. (2025) argued that responsible adoption requires institutions to address both algorithmic fairness and socio-educational equity.

### 2.3.3 Transparency and Explainability

The literature also emphasizes the opacity of GAI systems. Siroya et al. (2024) noted that accountability and transparency are central governance concerns because many GAI systems do not clearly explain how outputs are generated. In higher education, such opacity is especially problematic because academic work relies on verifiability, traceability, and evidence-based reasoning.

Ofosu-Asare (2026) argued that an ethical framework for GAI in education must prioritize explainability and responsible disclosure. Without transparency, students may trust incorrect outputs, instructors may misjudge student performance, and institutions may adopt technologies whose internal processes remain inaccessible.

### **2.3.4 Privacy and Data Protection**

Privacy is another major issue in the literature. GAI systems often collect user prompts, uploaded files, interaction histories, and behavioral data. Alduais et al. (2025) argued that responsible use of GAI in higher education research requires strong policy controls to prevent misuse of confidential information and protect academic data. This concern extends beyond research to teaching, student records, internal communication, and institutional documents.

Gomes et al. (2025) emphasized that governance frameworks must address data stewardship, vendor obligations, and institutional approval processes before GAI tools are deployed. Privacy protection is therefore not merely a technical concern but a governance responsibility.

### **2.3.5 Trust and Human Dependence**

Trust is a recurring theme in recent literature on GAI in higher education. Ishan and Tan (2025) explored educators' perceptions of students' ethical use of GAI and found that trust in academic work is increasingly shaped by uncertainty over how and when AI has been used. Trust also relates to institutional confidence in digital systems and to public confidence in university standards.

Zhang (2026) further showed from a multi-stakeholder perspective that perceptions of AI adoption are shaped by usefulness, trust, and social context. If trust is weakened, the legitimacy of academic evaluation and institutional credibility may be compromised.

## **2.4 Institutional Policy and Governance Responses**

### **2.4.1 Early Policy Reactions by Universities**

Dabis and Csáki (2024) investigated initial policy responses to GAI in higher education and found that most institutions were still in the early stages of governance development. Many policies were narrow, reactive, and primarily concerned with academic dishonesty. They often lacked clarity regarding staff use, institutional procurement, or long-term implementation.

Jin et al. (2025) provided a global perspective on institutional adoption policies and guidelines, showing that responses vary considerably across institutions and regions. Some universities permit guided use, others impose restrictions, while many continue to revise their policies as GAI technologies evolve.

### **2.4.2 Emerging Governance Approaches**

Recent literature suggests that institutions are beginning to shift from isolated rules to broader governance thinking. Ferreira et al. (2025) proposed that higher education institutions need policies that combine innovation with ethical safeguards. Similarly, Gomes et al. (2025) identified governance frameworks that include policy alignment, ethical evaluation, training, risk management, and institutional monitoring.

Arista et al. (2024) and Arista et al. (2025) also emphasized the growing attention being given to ethical frameworks for GAI adoption, indicating that institutions are increasingly aware that ad hoc rules are not sufficient. The literature now supports a more structured governance model grounded in principles, processes, and institutional accountability.

## **2.5 Theoretical Basis for Ethical Governance**

### **2.5.1 Responsible AI Adoption**

Responsible AI adoption in education involves ensuring that technological use aligns with fairness, accountability, human rights, and educational values. Alfiras et al. (2025) noted that responsible adoption requires institutions to address governance at systemic levels rather than only through individual user ethics. This includes transparency, oversight, policy coherence, and ethical readiness.

### 2.5.2 Whole-Institution Governance

The literature increasingly favors a whole-institution approach. This means governance should include leadership structures, faculty guidance, student training, technical standards, procurement procedures, and evaluation mechanisms. Jomezai et al. (2025) argued that the future course of GAI in higher education must involve policy maturity and sustainable direction. Such maturity depends on governance structures that are proactive, inclusive, and adaptable.

**Table 1: Overview of Generative AI Adoption and Ethical Governance Concerns in Higher Education**

Area	Description	Relevance to Higher Education	Ethical Concern
Teaching and Learning	Generative AI supports lesson planning, tutoring, feedback generation, and content explanation	Helps instructors improve delivery and helps students access learning support more easily	Risk of overdependence, reduced critical thinking, and inaccurate content
Academic Writing	Students and researchers use GAI for drafting, editing, summarizing, and restructuring academic work	Increases writing efficiency and language support	Raises concerns about authorship, originality, and academic integrity
Assessment Practices	GAI can assist in completing assignments, take-home tasks, and reflective writing	Challenges traditional assessment models in universities	Difficulty in verifying authenticity of student work
Research Support	GAI assists with literature synthesis, coding, brainstorming, and report development	Can improve research productivity and idea generation	Risk of fabricated references, misinformation, and weak scholarly rigor
Administrative Functions	Institutions may use GAI for student support, email drafting, documentation, and automation	Improves institutional efficiency and communication processes	Privacy, accountability, and data protection issues
Equity and Access	GAI tools may provide support for students with different learning needs and language backgrounds	Can promote inclusion and accessibility in learning	Unequal access to premium tools may widen educational inequality
Governance and Policy	Institutions develop rules and frameworks for the responsible use of GAI	Ensures alignment with academic values and institutional standards	Lack of clear governance may lead to misuse, confusion, and ethical violations

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

#### 3.1.1 Narrative Literature Review Approach

This article adopts a narrative literature review methodology. The narrative review approach was chosen because the study aims to synthesize conceptual, ethical, and policy-related insights from recent literature rather than test a hypothesis through primary data collection. Narrative reviews are appropriate for emerging fields where concepts, debates, and frameworks are still evolving. Since GAI in higher education is a rapidly developing area, a review-based approach allows for flexible interpretation and thematic integration.

### **3.1.2 Justification for the Design**

A literature review method is especially suitable for this topic because the aim is to build a governance framework from existing scholarship. The design allows for the identification of recurring ethical concerns, governance principles, and institutional patterns across studies. It also allows the article to combine evidence from systematic reviews, conceptual papers, policy analyses, and empirical studies.

## **3.2 Data Sources**

### **3.2.1 Selection of Literature**

The study is based on the references provided for the topic, all of which focus on generative AI, ethics, governance, policy, accountability, integrity, and institutional adoption in higher education. The selected literature includes journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters, and review studies published between 2023 and 2026. These sources were appropriate because they reflect the most recent scholarly debate on GAI adoption in higher education.

### **3.2.2 Relevance of the Sources**

The selected studies were relevant because they addressed one or more of the following themes: educational integration of GAI, ethical concerns, institutional governance, policy frameworks, academic integrity, responsible use, and stakeholder trust. This made them suitable for developing a synthesized framework for ethical governance in higher education.

## **3.3 Data Analysis Procedure**

### **3.3.1 Thematic Analysis**

The literature was analyzed using thematic synthesis. Key concepts, findings, and recommendations from the selected studies were grouped into broad categories. These categories included academic integrity, fairness, transparency, privacy, accountability, trust, policy response, and institutional governance. Through repeated comparison across sources, shared themes and governance dimensions were identified.

### **3.3.2 Framework Development Process**

The final governance framework proposed in this article was developed by organizing the identified themes into actionable institutional components. The framework was informed by recurring ideas in the literature, especially those related to responsible adoption, governance structures, training, assessment reform, policy review, and stakeholder participation.

### **3.3.3 Scope and Limitations**

## **3.4 Scope of the Review**

The review is limited to higher education contexts and does not attempt to cover governance issues in primary or secondary education. It focuses specifically on generative AI rather than broader forms of artificial intelligence. The emphasis is on ethical governance, not technical design.

## **3.5 Limitations**

One limitation of the study is that it relies on recently published literature in a fast-changing area. Since GAI tools evolve quickly, institutional practices may change rapidly after publication. Another limitation is that the study does not include field-based empirical data from a specific university. Nevertheless, the literature used is current and sufficiently rich to support a conceptual framework.

## **4.0 RESULT**

### **4.1 Major Themes Identified From the Literature**

- **Theme 1: GAI Adoption Is Expanding Faster Than Governance**

A major finding from the reviewed literature is that GAI adoption in higher education is expanding more rapidly than institutional governance structures. Batista et al. (2024) and Jomezai et al. (2025) showed

that universities are actively engaging with GAI because of its practical value for teaching, learning, and institutional efficiency. However, Dabis and Csáki (2024) found that policy responses remain underdeveloped and often reactive. This suggests a widening gap between technological integration and ethical preparedness.

- **Theme 2: Academic Integrity Is the Most Immediate Institutional Concern**

The literature consistently identifies academic integrity as the first and most visible institutional concern. Gallent Torres et al. (2023) and Olohunfunmi and Khairuddin (2024) both show that the ability of GAI to generate academic content has intensified concerns over plagiarism, undisclosed assistance, authorship ambiguity, and erosion of independent thinking. However, the findings also reveal that focusing only on misconduct is too narrow and insufficient for long-term governance.

- **Theme 3: Ethical Risk Extends Beyond Student Misuse**

Another important result is that ethical risk is broader than student cheating. The reviewed studies indicate concerns involving privacy, data handling, surveillance, bias, accountability, trust, and unequal access (Alduais et al., 2025; Mironova et al., 2024; Siroya et al., 2024). This means the governance challenge is institutional and systemic, not merely behavioral.

- **Theme 4: Institutions Need Principle-Based Policy Frameworks**

The literature shows growing support for ethical governance built on clear principles. Gomes et al. (2025), Alfiras et al. (2025), and Ofosu-Asare (2026) all emphasize the need for governance systems grounded in fairness, transparency, accountability, human oversight, and continuous review. The result of this synthesis is that governance should be principle-based, flexible, and institution-wide.

## 4.2 Core Governance Dimensions Emerging From the Review

### 4.2.1 Transparency

The review shows that transparency is a central governance requirement. Institutions need clear guidance on acceptable use, disclosure expectations, approved tools, and the limitations of GAI systems. Users should not be left to infer institutional expectations on their own.

### 4.2.2 Accountability

The literature strongly supports accountability as a core governance dimension. Responsibility for GAI adoption should not be vague. Institutions need designated oversight structures, reporting channels, and enforcement procedures (Siroya et al., 2024; Ferreira et al., 2025).

### 4.2.3 Fairness and Inclusion

The studies reveal that governance frameworks must address both algorithmic and social inequities. This includes addressing bias in AI outputs, ensuring equitable access, and considering diverse student needs in policy development (Mironova et al., 2024; Alfiras et al., 2025).

### 4.2.4 Privacy and Data Stewardship

Privacy protection emerged as a central dimension in the literature. Institutions must regulate how students and staff interact with third-party GAI platforms, particularly when sensitive documents or personal data are involved (Alduais et al., 2025).

### 4.2.5 Human Oversight

Human oversight is consistently emphasized as essential for maintaining educational quality and ethical responsibility. The literature suggests that GAI should support human decision-making rather than replace it, especially in assessment, research judgment, and institutional decision processes.

**Table2: Major Findings From the Review on Ethical Governance of Generative AI in Higher Education**

Theme	Key Finding	Implication for Higher Education Institutions
Rapid GAI Adoption	Generative AI is being adopted across teaching, learning, research, and administration at a pace faster than institutional regulation	Universities need proactive governance frameworks rather than delayed policy responses
Academic Integrity Challenges	GAI increases concerns about plagiarism, authorship ambiguity, and undisclosed assistance in student work	Institutions must redesign assessment practices and provide clear guidance on acceptable AI use
Bias and Fairness Risks	AI-generated outputs may reproduce cultural, social, and linguistic biases	Higher education institutions need fairness checks and inclusive policies to protect diverse learners
Transparency Problems	Many GAI tools operate with limited explainability regarding how outputs are produced	Institutions should promote disclosure, output verification, and transparent guidelines for use
Privacy and Data Protection Concerns	Use of third-party GAI tools may expose student data, institutional information, and research materials to privacy risks	Universities need data governance policies and approved-tool systems before adoption
Weak Institutional Preparedness	Many institutional responses remain fragmented, reactive, and narrowly focused on misconduct	A whole-institution ethical governance approach is needed for sustainable adoption
Need for Human Oversight	GAI cannot independently guarantee ethical judgment, accuracy, or contextual understanding	Human review should remain central in teaching, assessment, and decision-making processes
Importance of AI Literacy	Effective governance depends on whether students, faculty, and staff understand the ethical and practical limits of GAI	Institutions should invest in training and responsible AI literacy programs
Need for Continuous Review	Because GAI evolves rapidly, policies can become outdated quickly	Governance frameworks should include regular monitoring, review, and revision mechanisms

### 4.3 Proposed Ethical Governance Framework

- **Pillar 1: Institutional Leadership and Oversight**

The first pillar of the proposed framework is leadership-driven oversight. Institutions should create an AI governance committee or equivalent body responsible for policy development, ethical review, tool approval, and periodic evaluation. This committee should include academic leaders, faculty, students, IT specialists, ethics experts, and legal representatives.

- **Pillar 2: Clear and Contextual Policy Design**

The second pillar is policy design. Institutions should create clear policies that define permitted, restricted, and prohibited uses of GAI. These policies should be contextualized for different academic disciplines and user groups rather than being overly generic.

- **Pillar 3: Ethical Procurement and Approval of Tools**

The third pillar is procurement. Institutions should evaluate GAI tools before institutional adoption. Evaluation criteria should include transparency, accessibility, bias risk, privacy compliance, vendor accountability, and educational suitability.

- **Pillar 4: Capacity Building and AI Literacy**

The fourth pillar is education and training. Students, faculty, and administrators require structured orientation on ethical use, disclosure, verification of outputs, data protection, and critical engagement with GAI.

- **Pillar 5: Assessment and Pedagogical Redesign**

The fifth pillar is pedagogical reform. Assessment methods should be redesigned to reduce overreliance on unsupervised content generation and to emphasize process, reflection, oral explanation, and authentic application.

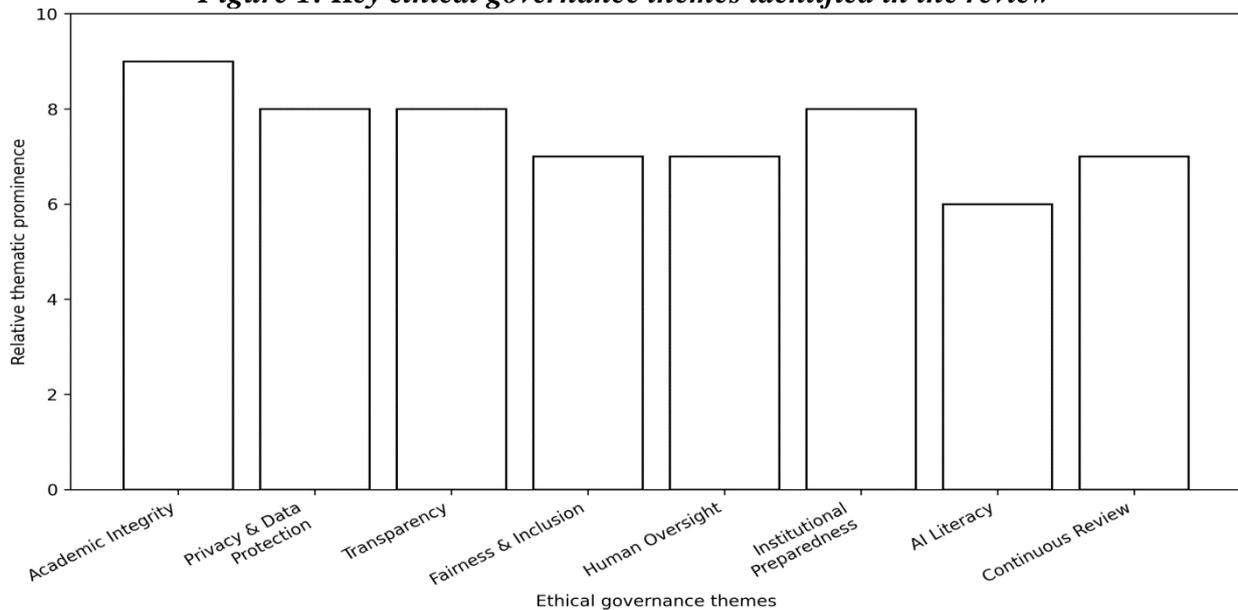
- **Pillar 6: Monitoring, Reporting, and Redress**

The sixth pillar is monitoring and response. Institutions should establish fair mechanisms for reporting concerns, reviewing violations, and addressing harms. Such mechanisms should be transparent and should protect due process.

- **Pillar 7: Continuous Review and Adaptation**

The seventh pillar is continuous policy review. Since GAI evolves rapidly, governance should be revisited regularly through feedback, evidence, and institutional learning.

*Figure 1: Key ethical governance themes identified in the review*



## 5.0 DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Governance Must Move Beyond Restriction

The results show clearly that ethical governance cannot be reduced to banning misuse or detecting plagiarism. While academic integrity remains an important concern, the literature indicates that GAI governance must address a much wider range of institutional responsibilities. The findings support the argument that higher education institutions need a holistic and proactive governance model rather than narrow disciplinary control.

This interpretation is consistent with Ferreira et al. (2025), who argued that ethical and innovative integration requires institutional policy, not just reactive rules. It is also aligned with Gomes et al. (2025), whose scoping review highlighted governance as a broad framework involving standards, structures, and implementation processes.

### 5.2 Ethical Governance Is a Shared Institutional Responsibility

Another important implication is that responsibility for ethical adoption is collective. Students are not the only actors who shape the ethical use of GAI. Faculty choices, institutional procurement, leadership

priorities, technical infrastructure, and policy communication all matter. This finding challenges narratives that frame GAI primarily as a student misconduct issue. Instead, it supports a governance perspective in which responsibility is distributed across the institution.

## 5.3 Implications for Higher Education Institutions

### 5.3.1 Policy Implications

Higher education institutions should revise their current GAI guidelines to reflect broader governance priorities. Policies should not only state whether students may use AI tools. They should explain when use is acceptable, how it should be disclosed, how different disciplines may vary, what tools are approved, what data may not be uploaded, and how concerns will be addressed.

A major implication here is that policy clarity influences trust and compliance. Ambiguous policies create confusion, inconsistency, and resentment. Institutions therefore need clear, practical, and educationally grounded rules.

### 5.3.2 Pedagogical Implications

The findings also have implications for teaching and assessment. If GAI is now part of students' learning environment, then educators need to design tasks that evaluate understanding, reasoning, and reflection rather than simple content production. This does not mean eliminating writing assignments. It means redesigning them in ways that make learning processes visible.

Fang and Cai (2025) emphasized that ethical adoption among college students depends not only on rules but also on educational guidance. This means instructors need institutional support for redesigning assessment, discussing ethical use with students, and integrating AI literacy into teaching.

### 5.3.3 Administrative and Strategic Implications

At the administrative level, GAI governance should be integrated into institutional strategy. Universities that treat GAI as a temporary trend may fail to build adequate oversight. Those that integrate governance into long-term planning will be better prepared to manage risk and innovation simultaneously. Leadership commitment is therefore essential.

## 5.4 Implications for Stakeholders

- **Students:** For students, the framework implies that responsible use of GAI should be supported through clear expectations and ethical training rather than fear alone. Students need to understand not only the risks of misuse but also the value of transparency, originality, and critical verification.
- **Faculty:** For faculty, the framework implies a need for professional development. Educators must understand both the opportunities and risks of GAI in their disciplines. They also need support in translating institutional policy into fair classroom practices.
- **Institutions and Regulators:** For institutions and education regulators, the findings suggest that ethical governance should be recognized as a quality assurance issue. The integrity of higher education depends on whether institutions can govern powerful technologies without sacrificing trust, inclusion, and academic standards.

## 5.5 Proposed Framework in Practice

### 5.5.1 How the Framework Can Be Applied

The framework proposed in this article can be applied in stages. First, institutions should establish an oversight body. Second, they should develop or revise policies using principle-based guidance. Third, they should identify approved tools and create procurement standards. Fourth, they should provide training for all stakeholders. Fifth, they should redesign assessments and feedback systems. Sixth, they should monitor implementation and review outcomes.

### 5.5.2 Why Adaptability Matters

The discussion also shows that governance must remain adaptable. A rigid policy may become outdated quickly in a changing AI environment. Therefore, institutions should combine stable ethical principles

with flexible operational rules. This allows them to respond to new tools and emerging risks without abandoning core values.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Restatement of the Central Argument**

This article examined the need for an ethical governance framework for generative AI adoption in higher education. The review showed that while GAI offers substantial opportunities for innovation, personalization, and efficiency, it also introduces serious ethical concerns involving academic integrity, fairness, privacy, transparency, accountability, trust, and unequal access. These concerns make it necessary for higher education institutions to govern GAI adoption through structured and principled institutional frameworks.

### **6.2 Summary of Major Findings**

The literature reviewed in this article shows that GAI adoption is advancing more quickly than institutional governance. It also shows that current institutional responses are often fragmented and overly focused on student misconduct. In response, this article proposed a framework based on seven pillars: institutional leadership and oversight, contextual policy design, ethical procurement, capacity building, assessment redesign, monitoring and redress, and continuous review.

### **6.3 The Need for Proactive Ethical Governance**

The future of GAI in higher education will depend not simply on technological progress but on institutional wisdom. Universities must decide whether GAI will be governed through fear, confusion, and fragmented reactions, or through principled systems that align innovation with educational values. Ethical governance offers the stronger path because it protects human dignity while still allowing responsible experimentation and growth.

### **6.4 Concluding Position**

GAI is likely to remain a permanent feature of higher education. For this reason, institutions cannot afford to respond passively. They must build governance structures that are inclusive, transparent, accountable, and educationally grounded. An ethical governance framework is therefore not merely desirable; it is essential for ensuring that GAI strengthens rather than weakens the mission of higher education.

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