

Leading Higher Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: Administrative Practices at University of Perpetual Help System JONELTA

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has transformed higher education administration, requiring institutions to strengthen leadership capacity, technological readiness, and responsible governance. This study aimed to examine the administrative practices of higher education institutions in the age of Artificial Intelligence at the University of Perpetual Help System JONELTA (UPHS JONELTA). It was anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to understand leadership practices, technology acceptance, and AI integration. The study employed a descriptive-quantitative research design involving 89 administrators from UPHS JONELTA campuses. Data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, simple linear regression, and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that administrators demonstrated a high level of AI readiness and usage, with strategic leadership obtaining the highest rating. AI readiness and usage were also perceived to have a high impact on administrative practices, particularly in decision-making efficiency, operational efficiency, communication and collaboration, and strategic planning. Results further showed that AI readiness and usage significantly predicted administrative practices, with strategic leadership and data-driven decision-making identified as significant predictors. The study concludes that strengthening administrators' AI competencies through continuous professional development, AI training, governance policies, and institutional capacity-building initiatives can enhance responsible AI adoption and administrative effectiveness. The study supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) by contributing to improved educational leadership and institutional capacity, and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) through its emphasis on responsible governance, ethical AI integration, and accountable decision-making. Its sustainability impact lies in promoting institutional and digital sustainability by strengthening leadership, policies, and practices needed for long-term AI-enabled transformation in higher education.

Keywords: Administrative Practices, Artificial Intelligence, Artificial Intelligence Readiness, Data-Driven Decision Making, Higher Education, Strategic Leadership, Technology Acceptance Model, Transformational Leadership, University Administration

1. Introduction

AI applications in higher education now support admissions, enrollment management, teaching, assessment, student services, scheduling, compliance monitoring, human resource management, resource allocation, and strategic planning. These functions have been widely identified as key areas where AI enhances academic and administrative efficiency in higher education institutions (Ahmad et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2021; Zhai et al., 2021; Ocen et al., 2025). These applications can improve institutional efficiency, personalize services, reduce repetitive administrative work, and strengthen the use of institutional data. Consequently, AI is increasingly viewed not merely as an emerging technology but as a strategic institutional capability. Contemporary studies emphasize that AI has become a strategic resource for innovation, organizational competitiveness, and institutional transformation (Khan & Yasir, 2024; Isaifan, 2026; Slimi, 2023). The benefits of AI depend on how institutions prepare for and govern its use. Administrators must manage technological change while addressing employee resistance, digital skill gaps, implementation costs, data privacy, algorithmic bias, academic integrity, transparency, and accountability. Effective integration therefore requires human oversight, continuous professional development, clear policies, and leadership capable of aligning AI initiatives with institutional priorities. UPHS-JONELTA has introduced AI-enabled technologies and digital platforms across academic and administrative functions. However, the institution continues to face concerns involving ethical use, technological adjustment, implementation capacity, and the readiness of administrators to use AI effectively. Examining these conditions is necessary to determine whether current AI readiness and usage support more responsive, efficient, and evidence-based administrative practices.

The literature presents AI as a major influence on academic, administrative, and governance practices in higher education. One central theme is operational value: AI can streamline admissions, enrollment, scheduling, compliance, student services, institutional data management, and strategic planning. It can also support teaching, research, personalized learning, assessment, and human resource management. A second theme is institutional readiness. Technology alone does not ensure successful implementation. Higher education institutions require suitable infrastructure, adequate funding, technical expertise, supportive organizational cultures, and personnel who can use AI responsibly. Industry reports indicate that higher education leaders increasingly recognize AI as a strategic priority for improving operational effectiveness, institutional competitiveness, and long-term digital transformation (Ellucian, 2024). Successful adoption depends on technological infrastructure, organizational readiness, leadership commitment, and workforce competencies (Ajani et al., 2024; Asio & Soriano, 2025; UNESCO, 2025; Mboneza, 2025; Almarinez, 2025). Continuous training is particularly important because administrators, faculty, and staff must understand both the practical uses and limitations of AI. Continuous professional development helps administrators and employees acquire the digital skills necessary for responsible AI implementation (Fitria, 2021; Funa & Gabay, 2026; Microsoft Philippines & LinkedIn, 2024). A third theme is responsible governance. The literature emphasizes the need for ethical policies, privacy protection, transparency, accountability, academic integrity, and sustained human judgment. Scholars have consistently highlighted governance frameworks, ethical safeguards, and institutional policies as essential mechanisms for mitigating AI-related risks such as bias, privacy concerns, and misuse (Chan, 2023; Varsha, 2023; UNESCO, 2023; Toquero, 2025). Strategic leadership is therefore essential in balancing innovation with institutional risk and ensuring that AI remains aligned with educational values and organizational goals. Effective leadership enables institutions to align AI initiatives with organizational goals while maintaining ethical and regulatory compliance (Hojeij, 2025; Khairullah et al., 2025; Zamir, 2025). Muñoz (2025) ARMS Framework identifies Accessibility, Resources, Mindset, and Skills as the four essential dimensions influencing successful AI integration. The framework indicates that infrastructure must be accompanied by adequate resources, positive attitudes toward innovation, and strengthened digital competencies. Overall, the literature shows that effective AI adoption depends on the interaction of technology, leadership, organizational readiness, capacity building, and governance.

Globally, higher education institutions are expanding the use of AI in academic services, administrative processes, policy development, quality assurance, and institutional decision-making. International evidence shows increasing AI integration in governance, quality assurance, policy development, and institutional decision-making (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2024; Sposato, 2025; Selmi Arrooqi & Miqad Alruqi, 2025). This expansion has increased the demand for responsible leadership and governance because the benefits of automation must be weighed against risks involving bias, privacy, transparency, and overreliance on automated systems. In the Philippines, AI adoption in higher education is growing but remains uneven. Philippine studies report increasing adoption of AI technologies but also identify disparities in infrastructure, digital readiness, and institutional capacity (Co, 2025; Asio & Soriano, 2025; Estrellado, 2023). Differences in digital infrastructure, funding, technical expertise, and institutional readiness affect the capacity of institutions to implement AI consistently. National and sectoral initiatives, including PHL CHED Connect, the National AI Roadmap, and institutional investments in digital infrastructure, indicate progress toward wider and more responsible adoption. Government and higher education initiatives have supported digital transformation through AI governance programs, smart learning environments, and technology infrastructure investments (Commission on Higher Education, 2022; Philippine Information Agency, 2021; Philippine News Agency, 2021). Nevertheless, implementation gaps continue to require culturally responsive leadership, professional development, and stronger institutional policies. Emerging literature highlights the growing need for institutional AI governance policies, academic integrity safeguards, and responsible implementation practices in Philippine higher education institutions (Piedad et al., 2025; University of the Philippines, 2024; Dy-Zulueta, 2024; The Education Magazine, 2026). At the local institutional level, UPHS-JONELTA provides a relevant setting for examining these issues because AI-enabled technologies and digital platforms are already present in its academic and administrative operations. The University's continuing expansion of online and technology-enabled services reflects its ongoing efforts toward institutional digital transformation (University of Perpetual Help System-Laguna, 2026). The study therefore situates the institution within broader global and national developments while focusing on the specific readiness, usage, and administrative practices of its administrators.

This study is anchored on transformational leadership theory, developed by James MacGregor Burns and further expanded by Bernard M. Bass. The theory explains how leaders inspire, motivate, and transform followers to achieve high performance and innovation. It is relevant to higher education because administrators must guide personnel through rapid technological change and the integration of AI into academic and administrative practices (Reza, 2019). Transformational leadership consists of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. These leadership dimensions are increasingly recognized as important in guiding organizations through technological and digital transformation initiatives (Reza, 2019; Zamir, 2025). According to Campos (2020), leaders who demonstrate idealized influence serve as role models in adopting AI, while inspirational motivation helps communicate a clear institutional vision. Individualized consideration addresses the support and training needs of personnel, and intellectual stimulation encourages creativity and critical thinking in AI implementation. The study is also anchored on Fred Davis' Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains technology adoption through perceived usefulness and

perceived ease of use. These factors shape attitudes, behavioral intentions, and actual system use. According to Mugo et al. (2017), user acceptance of technology is crucial for its successful integration into the teaching and learning process. In this study, TAM explains how administrators' perceptions influence their readiness and actual use of AI in planning, policy implementation, resource management, communication, and decision-making. Technology acceptance remains a critical predictor of successful adoption and sustained utilization of AI systems in organizational and educational settings (Mugo et al., 2017; Raja & Nagasubramani, 2018). Together, transformational leadership theory and TAM provide a complementary basis for the study. Transformational leadership explains how administrators direct institutional change and support personnel, while TAM explains how perceived usefulness and ease of use influence individual acceptance and utilization of AI.

Existing studies have concentrated largely on the effects of AI on teaching, learning, assessment, and student engagement. Existing literature has increasingly explored AI's role in instruction and learning environments, yet fewer studies have examined its implications for institutional leadership and administrative governance (Cain, 2023; Mallillin et al., 2025; Dampilag et al., 2025). Less attention has been given to the leadership and administrative dimensions of AI adoption, particularly the readiness of administrators, the governance conditions that support implementation, and the specific AI-readiness dimensions that predict effective administrative practices in Philippine higher education institutions. Although policy-oriented and leadership-focused investigations are emerging, significant gaps remain regarding administrators' readiness and governance practices in higher education institutions (Azevedo et al., 2025; Jiang et al., 2025; Raffi & Christa, 2025). This gap is relevant to UPHS-JONELTA because the presence of AI-enabled systems does not automatically establish that administrators are equally prepared to lead, regulate, and use them. A systematic assessment is needed to determine the level of AI readiness and usage, the perceived effects on administrative practices, possible differences across demographic groups, and the predictive influence of strategic leadership, technology integration, policy development, faculty support and training, and data-driven decision-making. The findings can provide an evidence base for an institutional action plan that strengthens responsible AI adoption and administrative effectiveness.

The study aligns with SDG 4–Quality Education because effective administration, staff development, and responsible digital leadership support the continuity and quality of higher education services. Strengthening administrators' AI readiness can help institutions manage academic and administrative systems more effectively while maintaining educational standards. It also aligns with SDG 9–Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure through its focus on AI-enabled systems, digital infrastructure, institutional innovation, and the competencies required to sustain technological transformation. The study examines the organizational conditions needed for innovation to produce practical and lasting institutional value. The study further relates to SDG 16–Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions because responsible AI adoption requires clear policies, ethical governance, privacy protection, transparency, accountability, and reliable monitoring. These elements strengthen institutional decision-making and reduce the risks associated with poorly governed technology.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by examining how administrative capacity can support stable and high-quality higher education services during rapid technological change. It contributes to technological and digital sustainability by identifying the leadership, skills, infrastructure, and acceptance conditions needed for AI systems to remain useful beyond initial implementation. It also contributes to institutional and governance sustainability by emphasizing policy development, ethical use, human oversight, data protection, monitoring, and accountability. These concerns connect educational leadership with information technology, organizational management, ethics, and public policy. In addition, the study supports socio-economic sustainability by considering how AI may improve operational efficiency, communication, resource management, and strategic planning without removing the need for professional judgment.

The study examines the administrative practices of UPHS-JONELTA in the age of AI. It describes administrators according to age, gender, educational attainment, years of administrative experience, and number of AI-related training courses attended. It assesses AI readiness and usage in terms of strategic leadership, technology integration, policy development, faculty support and training, and data-driven decision-making. The study also evaluates the perceived impact of AI readiness and usage on decision-making efficiency, operational efficiency, communication and collaboration, strategic planning and policy development, and monitoring and evaluation. It tests whether AI integration and its perceived impact differ according to demographic characteristics, determines whether overall AI readiness and usage predict administrative practices, and identifies which dimensions exert significant predictive influence.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive comparative research design to systematically collect and analyze data related to administrators' AI readiness, usage, and administrative practices. The design allowed the researchers to describe

respondents' demographic characteristics, determine the level of AI readiness and usage, assess the perceived impact of AI integration, compare responses across demographic groups, and examine the predictive relationship between AI readiness and administrative practices.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the University of Perpetual Help System JONELTA (UPHS JONELTA), involving its campuses located in Biñan City, Laguna; Malasiqui, Pangasinan; General Mariano Alvarez, Cavite; Cauayan City, Isabela; and Pueblo de Panay, Capiz. The research focused on the institution's administrative environment and its implementation of AI-enabled technologies and digital platforms across academic and administrative functions.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of administrators from UPHS JONELTA campuses. The study involved 89 administrators who participated in assessing AI readiness and usage and its perceived impact on administrative practices. The respondents were described according to age, gender, educational attainment, years of administrative experience, and number of AI-related training courses attended.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample was drawn from 116 administrators of UPHS JONELTA. The required sample size was determined using a Raosoft calculator with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The researchers applied purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to identify high-ranking officials who were members of the Management Committee (Mancom) in each campus, while convenience sampling was applied to include available and willing participants during the data collection period.

2.5 Research Instrument

The researchers utilized a self-developed structured survey questionnaire designed to gather data relevant to the research objectives. The instrument was developed using insights from the review of literature and related studies to improve its relevance and validity. It measured administrators' AI readiness and usage in terms of strategic leadership, technology integration, policy development, faculty support and training, and data-driven decision-making. It also assessed the perceived impact of AI on administrative practices, including decision-making efficiency, operational efficiency, communication and collaboration, strategic planning and policy development, and monitoring and evaluation.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers obtained approval from the Corporate Human Resource Office of the University of Perpetual Help System JONELTA before conducting data collection. The survey questionnaire was administered through Google Forms. Respondents were informed about the purpose and nature of the study before participation. Confidentiality and privacy protocols were observed to protect the identities and information of the participants.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were organized and processed using Microsoft Excel. Frequency count and percentage distribution were used to describe respondents' demographic profiles, while weighted mean and Likert scale interpretation were applied to determine the level of AI readiness and usage and its perceived impact on administrative practices. Independent samples t-test was used to identify differences between groups based on dichotomous demographic variables, while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine differences across multiple demographic groups. Simple linear regression was applied to examine the relationship between AI readiness and administrative practices, and multiple regression analysis was used to identify which dimensions of AI readiness and usage significantly predicted administrative practices.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study observed ethical research practices by securing institutional approval, informing respondents about the study's purpose, ensuring voluntary participation, and maintaining confidentiality throughout the data collection and analysis processes. All collected information was handled according to privacy standards to protect participants' identities and responses.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Main Findings on AI Readiness, Usage, and Administrative Practices

3.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondents were primarily composed of administrators aged 41–50 years old, followed by those aged 51–60 years old. Male and female administrators were equally represented. Most respondents had attained a master's degree, followed by doctorate degree holders. A majority had more than ten years of administrative experience and had attended one to five AI-related training programs. The demographic profile indicates that most administrators possess substantial academic qualifications, professional experience, and initial exposure to AI-related training. The presence of experienced administrators with advanced educational backgrounds may provide institutional support for AI adoption, as leadership experience can influence technology acceptance, strategic planning, and organizational transformation. The findings highlight the importance of continuous professional development to further strengthen AI competencies among administrators.

3.1.2 Level of Artificial Intelligence Readiness and Usage Among Administrators

The results showed that UPHS JONELTA administrators demonstrated a high level of AI readiness and usage, with an overall mean score of 4.13. Strategic leadership obtained the highest rating with a mean of 4.31 and was interpreted as very high. Policy development, technology integration, faculty support and training, and data-driven decision-making were also rated high, with mean scores ranging from 3.98 to 4.16. The findings indicate that administrators have developed a positive orientation toward AI integration and demonstrate institutional readiness for expanding AI applications in administrative functions. The strong rating in strategic leadership suggests that administrators recognize the importance of leadership direction in managing technological transformation. This supports the view that successful AI implementation requires more than technological infrastructure; it also depends on organizational readiness, leadership capacity, and responsible governance. The result is consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of strategic leadership, professional development, and institutional support in achieving effective AI integration. The findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that effective AI implementation is strongly associated with leadership commitment, strategic planning, organizational readiness, and institutional support mechanisms (Khairullah et al., 2025; Mboneza, 2025; Hojeij, 2025).

3.1.3 Perceived Impact of AI Readiness and Usage on Administrative Practices

The findings revealed that AI readiness and usage had a high perceived impact on the administrative practices of UPHS JONELTA administrators, with an overall mean score of 3.85. Decision-making efficiency received the highest rating, followed by communication and collaboration, operational efficiency, strategic planning and policy development, and monitoring and evaluation. All dimensions were interpreted as high. The results suggest that administrators perceive AI as a valuable tool for improving institutional operations, particularly in supporting data-informed decisions, improving communication, streamlining administrative processes, and strengthening planning activities. AI integration appears to contribute to more organized and responsive administrative practices. These findings support previous discussions on AI as a strategic resource that enhances institutional efficiency, decision-making, and administrative effectiveness when implemented with proper leadership and governance. Similar findings have been reported in studies showing that AI contributes to improved efficiency, enhanced decision-making, streamlined workflows, and better organizational performance in higher education settings (Ahmad et al., 2023; Slimi, 2023; Isaifan, 2026).

3.2 Differences in AI Integration and Perceived Impact Across Demographic Groups

3.2.1 Differences in AI Readiness and Usage According to Demographic Profile

The analysis showed that there were no significant differences in AI readiness and usage when administrators were grouped according to gender, age, educational attainment, years of administrative experience, and number of AI-related trainings attended. The independent samples t-test for gender produced a p-value of 0.929, while the one-way ANOVA results for age, educational attainment, administrative experience, and AI-related training exposure all exceeded the 0.05 significance level. The findings indicate that administrators demonstrate comparable levels of AI readiness and usage regardless of their demographic characteristics. This suggests that AI adoption within UPHS JONELTA is not strongly influenced by personal background variables but may instead reflect shared institutional exposure and organizational readiness. The result highlights the role of institutional initiatives, accessibility of AI tools, and common professional development opportunities in promoting consistent AI integration among administrators.

3.2.2 Differences in Perceived Impact of AI Integration According to Demographic Profile

The results indicated that there were no significant differences in the perceived impact of AI integration on administrative practices when respondents were grouped according to gender, age, educational attainment, years of administrative experience, and AI-related training attended. The t-test for gender produced a p-value of 0.206, while the ANOVA results for the other demographic variables showed p-values greater than the 0.05 level of significance. These findings suggest that administrators share similar perceptions regarding the benefits of AI integration regardless of their demographic and professional characteristics. The consistency of responses indicates that AI is generally viewed as beneficial across

administrative groups. This supports the importance of creating inclusive AI initiatives where administrators with different levels of experience and educational backgrounds can participate in institutional digital transformation.

3.3 Predictive Influence of AI Readiness and Usage on Administrative Practices

3.3.1 Overall Predictive Effect of AI Readiness and Usage

The simple linear regression analysis revealed that AI readiness and usage significantly predicted administrative practices. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 87) = 44.246$, $p < .001$, and explained approximately 33.7% of the variance in administrative practices ($R^2 = 0.337$). The regression coefficient showed that a one-unit increase in AI readiness and usage corresponded to a 0.716-unit increase in administrative practices. The findings demonstrate that stronger AI readiness and usage contribute to improved administrative effectiveness among UPHS JONELTA administrators. This indicates that AI competency and acceptance are important factors in strengthening decision-making, operational efficiency, communication, and strategic management. The result reinforces the importance of developing administrators' technological capabilities alongside institutional AI initiatives.

3.3.2 Significant Dimensions Influencing Administrative Practices

The multiple regression analysis showed that the overall model was statistically significant, $F(5, 83) = 9.926$, $p < .001$, explaining 37.4% of the variance in administrative practices ($R^2 = 0.374$). Among the five dimensions of AI readiness and usage, Strategic Leadership ($B = 0.473$, $p = 0.049$) and Data-Driven Decision Making ($B = 0.340$, $p = 0.021$) emerged as significant predictors. Technology Integration, Policy Development, and Faculty Support and Training did not significantly predict administrative practices when analyzed together with the other variables. The findings indicate that leadership capacity and effective use of AI-generated information are the strongest contributors to improved administrative practices. Administrators who actively guide AI initiatives and apply data-driven approaches are more likely to demonstrate effective management practices. This emphasizes that AI transformation is not solely dependent on technology adoption but also on leadership capability, strategic direction, and the ability to use information effectively for institutional decisions. Overall, the results demonstrate that UPHS JONELTA administrators possess a high level of AI readiness and usage and recognize AI's positive contribution to administrative practices. The findings emphasize the importance of strengthening leadership development, AI-related training, governance frameworks, and institutional support mechanisms to sustain effective AI integration in higher education.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that UPHS JONELTA administrators demonstrate a high level of Artificial Intelligence (AI) readiness and usage, reflecting the institution's capacity to integrate AI into administrative functions. AI readiness significantly contributes to improving administrative effectiveness, particularly in decision-making efficiency, communication, operational efficiency, and strategic planning. Strategic leadership, technology integration, and data-driven decision-making emerged as important predictors of successful AI implementation. The findings further emphasize the importance of continuous professional development, AI governance, and institutional investment in AI technologies and infrastructure to sustain digital transformation and strengthen responsible AI adoption within the University.

It is recommended that UPHS JONELTA continue strengthening administrators' AI competencies through continuous professional development, regular AI-related training, formal AI governance policies, and institutional capacity-building initiatives. These efforts may further enhance administrative effectiveness and support responsible and effective AI integration across the University.

Compliance with ethical standards

The authors declare no conflict of interest. This study complied with recognized ethical standards for human-participant research by ensuring voluntary participation with informed consent, the right to withdraw without penalty, and strict confidentiality through anonymous, secure, and aggregated data handling. Given the focus on psychological well-being, procedures were non-invasive, and safeguards were observed to minimize discomfort, with guidance to appropriate support services when needed, and required institutional permissions were secured for instrument use and access to academic records.

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