

The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Higher Education in England

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Abstract

In the ever-evolving landscape of technology, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged to challenge traditional paradigms and revolutionise various sectors including higher education. It is now necessary to investigate how AI integration in higher education institutions in England may affect instructional strategies, operational procedures, and student experiences. This article explores the implications of AI into English higher education sector, highlighting the benefits, challenges, and future prospects. Moreover, it discusses the potential of AI to improve student experiences, streamline administrative tasks, and transform teaching and learning methods. It emphasizes the benefits of automated assessments, virtual classrooms, and personalised learning. Nevertheless, it is important to consider privacy and ethical concerns, as well as the future role of educators. Therefore, it recognises the necessity of precise regulations and policies to ensure the ethical and responsible application of AI in higher education. By embracing AI while addressing its challenges, England's higher education institutions can deliver a more inclusive, efficient, and effective learning experience for all. In this way, recommendations are provided for stakeholders to navigate the transformative impact of AI on higher education in England.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence, Intelligent Environments, Digital Language, Information and Communications Technologies

1. Introduction

This Artificial intelligence, or AI, is revolutionising many industries and our daily lives, workplaces, and educational systems. AI has the potential to revolutionise conventional methods of teaching and learning, streamline administra-

tive tasks, and enhance the quality of student experiences in higher education (Smith et al., 2020). The educational landscape in England is always changing, so it is important to understand how introducing AI into higher education would affect things. This article seeks to investigate the benefits, challenges, and potential effects of artificial intelligence on higher education in England. With its creative solutions that meet the many needs of both educators and students, artificial intelligence (AI) has already started to permeate higher education. Automated assessments, virtual classrooms, and personalised learning are just a few AI applications that have become popular in English universities (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). These developments can completely change the way that classrooms are set up, as well as improve accessibility, foster student engagement, and accommodate different learning preferences.

There are a range of benefits of using AI in higher education. AI-powered platforms can analyse large-scale of student data to provide personalised recommendations and actions that improve retention rates and student outcomes (Smith et al., 2020). AI can also help with administrative tasks like scheduling, grading, and admissions, giving teachers and staff more time to concentrate on more important facets of their jobs. Moreover, AI-driven analytics can facilitate evidence-based decision-making, enabling organisations to pinpoint problem areas and allocate resources as efficiently as possible (Domingos, 2018).

However, there are certain concern and challenges with using AI in higher education. Concerns about privacy and data security arise when organisations handle sensitive student data. Ethical considerations surrounding AI algorithms and potential biases must be addressed to ensure fairness and equity in educational practices (Selwyn, 2019). Moreover, the impact of AI on employment for educators raises questions about the future role of teachers in a technologically advanced educational landscape (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). To navigate these complexities, policymakers and institutions need to establish clear guidelines and regulations to ensure responsible and ethical use of AI technologies in higher education. Transparency, accountability, and ongoing research are crucial to fostering trust and addressing concerns associated with AI (Jobin, Ienca, & Vayena, 2019). By embracing AI while addressing its challenges, higher education in England can harness the full potential of this transformative technology to deliver a more inclusive, efficient, and effective learning experience for all.

In the coming paragraphs, we delve deeper into the specific applications, benefits, challenges, policy considerations, and future implications of AI in English higher education. By looking at these aspects, we hope to clarify the complex effects of AI on the educational landscape and provide recommendations for stakeholders on how to handle this revolutionary path.

2. Benefits of AI in Higher Education

AI has the potential to completely transform higher education by enhancing various aspects of the learning experience. This section explores some of the

main benefits that AI can bring to higher education institutions:

2.1. Revolutionising Teaching and Learning Methods

In the area of higher education teaching and learning, AI-powered tools provide personalised learning experiences by adjusting resources and information to meet the needs of each learner (Smith et al., 2020). By utilising AI algorithms, adaptive learning platforms analyse student performance and deliver personalised feedback to increase engagement and information retention. AI can also help students with impairments by offering adaptive learning resources and support, encouraging diversity and accessibility (Altbach & De Wit, 2019). These developments have the potential to enhance educational results and meet the different requirements of students. However, educators have difficulties when incorporating AI into classroom procedures. Pedagogical adaptation is a major challenge as educators must learn to use AI tools in their instructional practices (Davies et al., 2020). To ensure that teachers are able to fully utilise AI in the classroom, professional development programmes and training are required. To leverage the benefits of AI integration in teaching and learning, these issues must be resolved.

2.2. Personalised Learning

AI in higher education has the potential to drastically change how people teach and learn. Personalised learning experiences can be offered by AI-powered technology based on the requirements of each individual student (Davies et al., 2020). Adaptive learning technologies, which assess student data and provide customised content and feedback, enable students to progress at their own pace. Intelligent tutoring and virtual tutors can help in real time by answering questions and providing further information (Davies et al., 2020). These artificial intelligence technologies are capable to enhance learning outcomes by improving student motivation and engagement.

2.3. Intelligent Tutoring

AI-enabled intelligent tutoring programmes can provide students with immediate feedback and direction. These tools have the ability to analyse student responses, spot common misconceptions, and provide targeted explanations or additional learning resources (Smith et al., 2020). Furthermore, since every student has unique needs, knowledgeable tutors can modify their teaching strategies to make the learning process more effective and engaging. Through personalised coaching, AI tutoring systems can assist students to close any knowledge gaps and achieve academic success.

2.4. Streamlining Administrative Tasks

AI also has the ability to simplify administrative procedures within higher education institutions. For instance, AI-powered solutions can automate routine ad-

ministrative duties including enrolment, grading, and admissions, relieving staff workers of administrative workload (Altbach & De Wit, 2019). Institutions can improve productivity and resource allocation by automating these operations. However, when making AI-driven administrative decisions, ethical considerations, data privacy, security, and fairness become the top priorities (Selwyn, 2019; UNESCO, 2021). But, to successfully utilise the advantages of AI in administrative operations, higher education institutions must successfully negotiate these ethical hurdles.

2.5. Data-Driven Decision Making

AI can offer institutions of higher learning data-driven insights so they can make well-informed decisions. Artificial intelligence (AI) systems can analyse vast amounts of data to find patterns, trends, and correlations that human administrators might miss (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). By using this data analysis, educational institutions can identify areas that require improvement, have a better knowledge of student performance, and make well-informed decisions about curriculum development and resource allocation (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Also, by leveraging AI for data analysis, institutions can cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and raise the standard of instruction and overall quality of education.

2.6. Enhanced Accessibility and Inclusivity

Artificial intelligence systems have the potential to improve diversity and accessibility in higher education (Altbach & De Wit, 2019). With assistive technology, such as speech recognition or text-to-speech technologies, AI can make it simpler for students with impairments to access instructional materials (Altbach & De Wit, 2019). AI can also aid with language translation as well, enabling foreign students to overcome communication barriers and participate fully in the educational process. Hence, by utilising AI to address accessibility concerns, academic institutions can foster a more inclusive learning environment for all students.

2.7. Enhancing Student Experiences

AI has a wide range of effects on how students experience higher education. Some students welcome the advantages of AI integration, such as access to cutting-edge technologies and individualised learning experiences (Davies et al., 2020). However, there are also worries about possible job loss and a decline in human interaction. Students are concerned that the introduction of AI could eliminate positions currently filled by people, like administrative and teaching assistance. In addition, the social component of the learning environment may suffer because of the decrease in face-to-face contacts brought on by the implementation of AI. On the other hand, AI integration provides students with an opportunity to acquire skills pertinent to the digital age. Students are exposed to data analysis, critical thinking, and digital literacy skills through the usage of AI technol-

ogy in higher education (Smith et al., 2020). The need for these talents is rising in the job market, and integrating AI into the classroom can provide students the skills they will need to succeed in the future. Furthermore, AI systems can analyse vast amount of data to recommend related courses, extracurricular activities, and career trajectories based on individual interests and aspirations (European Commission, 2019). In this way, using AI in higher education institutions can offer tailored experiences that promote student performance and engagement.

3. Concerns and Challenges

Although the integration of AI in English higher education has the potential to transform teaching and learning methods, streamline administrative tasks, and improve the quality of student experiences. Through the utilisation of personalised learning, virtual classrooms, and automated assessments, educational institutions may offer more effective and inclusive learning opportunities. But we also need to talk about data privacy, ethical issues, and the future role of educators. Therefore, clear regulations and guidelines are necessary to ensure ethical and responsible application of AI in higher education.

3.1. Challenges of AI Implementation in Higher Education

One major challenge is the cost associated with acquiring and maintaining AI technologies (Domingos, 2018). For institutions to successfully incorporate AI into their educational systems, they may need to make large investments in software, infrastructure, and staff training. Moreover, there may be resistance from faculty and staff who may believe that AI will take over their jobs or diminish the value of human interaction in education (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). The possibility for prejudice in AI systems presents another challenge. Since AI systems are trained on existing data, which may contain inherent biases. If these biases are not recognised and handled, AI systems may perpetuate discrimination or unfairness in educational outcomes (Selwyn, 2019). Therefore, institutions must work proactively to ensure AI algorithms are transparent, accountable, and free from bias.

3.2. Future Considerations for AI in Higher Education

In order to fully harness the potential of AI in higher education, several things must be taken into account. First, institutions must invest in faculty and staff training to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to effectively integrate AI into their teaching practices (Davies et al., 2020). The focus of this training not only should be on the technical aspects of AI but also on the ethical implications and responsible use of AI in education.

Second, knowledge-sharing and collaboration among academic institutions are vital (Davies et al., 2020). Through sharing best practices and lessons learnt, institutions can accelerate the adoption of AI in higher education. Working to-

gether can also help address common challenges and develop standardised frameworks for the application and assessment of AI technologies.

Finally, to evaluate the effects of AI in higher education, more research and evaluation are needed (European Commission, 2019). The research can inform the development of evidence-based policies and guidelines for the ethical and responsible applications of AI in higher education. Additionally, continuous monitoring and evaluation can help identify areas where AI is most effective, as well as areas that require improvement (Jobin, Ienca & Vayena, 2019).

Consequently, while the integration of AI in higher education poses challenges for academic institutions, but investing in training, fostering collaboration, and conducting ongoing research, these institutions can navigate the challenges and realise the transformative potential of AI.

3.3. Educator Concerns about AI

More concerns about the potential effects on students have been voiced by educators, notably leaders and managers, as a result of the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education. Below are some concerns and alternative solutions educators might use to address their concerns as well as the factors that may have caused them to be concerned:

- **Threat to Critical Thinking abilities:** According to Kurzweil (2013), educators are concerned that the rising use of AI-powered tools in higher education may prevent students from developing critical thinking abilities. By automating processes like information retrieval and analysis, students may become less motivated to conduct their own investigation and evaluation, which will result in a more passive learning environment.
- **Ethical Questions and Algorithmic Bias:** The application of AI in higher education raises ethical concerns about algorithmic bias and fairness in decision-making processes. According to Jobin, Ienca, and Vayena (2019), educators are concerned that AI algorithms will exacerbate already-existing prejudices and inequities, thereby harming particular student populations. This issue emphasizes how crucial it is to provide transparency and remove potential biases in AI systems.
- **Job Displacement and the Effect on Educators' Roles:** The potential for AI to automate certain jobs, such as grading and administrative responsibilities, raises worries about the possibility of job displacement among educators (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). Educational leaders and managers are concerned that the adoption of AI could reduce the need for human interaction and knowledge, which would have an impact on the standard of education as a whole and on the function of educators as mentors and facilitators.

3.4. Actions to Address Concerns

- **Promoting Critical Thinking abilities:** Educational leaders and other educators can support activities that promote critical thinking, creativity, and pro-

blem-solving. Higher-order thinking-skills-demanding tasks and projects can lessen the potential detrimental effects of AI on students' capacity for independent learning (Kurzweil, 2013).

- **Engaging in Ethical AI Practices:** Educational leaders and managers should promote the creation and application of moral standards for the application of AI in higher education. This entails fostering diversity and justice, correcting biases, and ensuring transparency in algorithmic decision-making processes (Jobin, Ienca, & Vayena, 2019).
- **Emphasising the Value of Human Interaction:** Educators should emphasize the special contribution that human interaction makes to the learning process. They also need to provide professional development opportunities for teachers and encourage them to improve their pedagogical skills (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014).

4. Policy and Ethical Considerations

Implementing AI in higher education requires careful consideration of policy and ethical guidelines to ensure responsible and equitable use (European Commission, 2019). In the following paragraphs we explore some key aspects that institutions should address in their AI adoption strategies.

4.1. Data Privacy and Security

As AI systems rely on vast amounts of student data, it is crucial to have robust policies in place to protect privacy and ensure data security. Institutions should adhere to relevant data privacy regulations and establish strict protocols for data collection, storage, and usage (UNESCO, 2021). Clear consent mechanisms should be implemented, and students' rights regarding their data should be respected (UNESCO, 2021). Moreover, institutions should also spend money on cybersecurity measures to protect private data from potential breaches and unauthorised access.

4.2. Transparency

AI systems have the potential to be extremely sophisticated and data hungry. Ensuring transparency is essential, especially when AI systems are used to make decisions that have an impact on how students learn. Congruent with Jobin, Ienca, & Vayena (2019), institutions need to promote openness in the use of AI, provide explanations for how algorithms operate, and seek to prevent biases or discrimination in the AI systems. Building trust and addressing concerns about AI adoption can be achieved through open dialogue between staff and students.

4.3. Algorithmic Bias and Fairness

AI systems can inadvertently perpetuate biases present in the data they are trained on, leading to unfair outcomes. Institutions must be proactive in identifying and addressing algorithmic biases to ensure fairness and equity (Selwyn, 2019; Jobin,

Ienca, & Vayena, 2019). Regular audits of AI systems should be conducted to mitigate any bias in decision-making processes. Additionally, diverse and representative datasets should be used during the development and training of AI algorithms to minimise biases and ensure equal opportunities for all students.

4.4. Ethical AI Use

Higher education institutions should establish ethical guidelines for the use of AI in academic settings (European Commission, 2019; UNESCO, 2021). This includes ensuring that AI systems are deployed in ways that align with institutional values, respect human rights, and prioritise the wellbeing of students (European Commission, 2019; UNESCO, 2021). Institutions should consider the potential impact of AI on student-teacher relationships, intellectual property rights, and academic integrity. Ethical considerations should be an integral part of AI governance frameworks and decision-making processes within higher education institutions.

5. Recommendations

Based on the discussion, above, here are some future recommendations regarding the implications of AI on higher education in England:

- **Foster Collaboration and Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between higher education institutions, industry stakeholders, and government bodies to develop a shared understanding of AI's potential and challenges in higher education (Davies et al., 2020). Working together can make it easier to share best practices, resources, and information, which will ultimately result in the application of AI technologies more successfully.
- **Invest in AI Research and Development:** Allocate resources towards research and development projects that focus on the use of AI in higher education (European Commission, 2019). This investment can drive innovation, improve the understanding of AI's impact on teaching and learning, and assist in the creation of ground-breaking solutions that address specific challenges faced by the sector.
- **Improve Data Governance and Privacy:** Develop robust data governance frameworks to ensure student data is utilised in AI systems in an ethical and responsible manner (UNESCO, 2021). To comply with applicable data protection regulations, institutions should prioritise data privacy, security, and transparency. Additionally, regular audits and evaluations of AI systems should be conducted to identify and address any potential biases or discriminatory practices.
- **Support Continuous Professional Development:** Staff and faculty should have ongoing professional development opportunities so they can enhance their AI-related knowledge and skills (Davies et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2020). This can include workshops, conferences, and training courses on AI applications in teaching, research, and administration. Encourage staff to experiment with

AI tools and technologies to discover their potential benefits and limitations.

- **Emphasize Ethical AI Education:** Ensure that students have a thorough awareness of the ethical implications and challenges related to artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education by incorporating ethical AI education across the curriculum (European Commission, 2019; UNESCO, 2021). In order to prepare students for future employment, educators should encourage critical thinking, moral decision-making, and appropriate AI use.
- **Embrace AI as a Supportive Tool:** Urge higher education institutions to view artificial intelligence (AI) as a supplementary tool rather than as a substitute for human interaction and knowledge (Domingos, 2018). Stress the need of preserving a healthy balance between human-centred learning and AI-driven automation in order to develop meaningful relationships between educators and students.
- **Monitor and Adapt to Technological Advances:** Constantly monitor technological advancements in AI and adapt institutional strategies as needed (Jobin, Ienca, & Vayena, 2019). Regularly review and update policies, guidelines, and practices to keep pace with evolving AI technologies and their impact on higher education.

The above recommendations are meant to direct English higher education establishments toward efficiently utilising artificial intelligence (AI) while tackling associated challenges. Bearing in mind that it is crucial to customize these recommendations to the unique requirements and context of each institution and align them with the rapidly changing landscape of AI technologies and regulations.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems like the future implications of AI on higher education in England are both promising and complex. Although AI has the ability to completely transform education, learning, and administration, it also presents several issues that require early attention. Higher education institutions can use the above-mentioned recommendations as a guide to help them navigate this rapidly changing landscape and make sure AI is used in an ethical and responsible manner.

In order to build a common understanding of AI's potential and challenges, partnerships and collaboration across colleges, universities, industry stakeholders, and government bodies will be essential. This collaboration can effectively drive innovation and successfully integrate AI technology into higher education by combining their resources, knowledge, and skills. To fully utilise AI in the sector, academic institutions should make investments in AI research and development. This investment will enable the institutions to explore new avenues, develop cutting-edge solutions, and tackle particular challenges faced by the higher education community. By supporting AI-focused research, institutions can stay at the forefront of AI developments and contribute to the creation of best practices and guidelines.

Establishing comprehensive AI literacy programmes is necessary to ensure student and staff can effectively navigate the AI landscape. These programmes should not only address technical aspects but also data privacy and ethical considerations. By providing individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills, institutions can encourage ethical AI use and lower potential risks. In the increasingly AI-driven world of higher education, privacy and data governance will be essential. Institutions must set up robust frameworks to safeguard student data and ensure ethical and responsible use of AI. Also, regular audits and evaluations should be conducted to identify and address any biases or discriminatory practices that may arise from the use of AI algorithms.

Furthermore, it is essential to offer staff and academic members continual chances for professional development in order to enhance their proficiency and understanding of AI. By supporting their professional development, organisations can develop a workforce that is capable of utilising AI technologies effectively and ethically. Also, it is important to incorporate ethical AI education into the curriculum so that students understand the ethical implications of AI in addition to its technological applications. By fostering critical thinking and ethical decision-making, institutions can shape future professionals who will navigate the AI landscape responsibly. It is critical to perceive AI as an auxiliary tool rather than as a substitute for human knowledge and communication. Maintaining a balance between human-centred teaching and AI-driven automation is essential to preserve the quality of education and promote meaningful relationships between students and educators.

Lastly, organisations need to continuously monitor technological advancements in AI and adapt their strategies accordingly. Since the landscape of AI technologies and regulations is rapidly evolving, higher education institutions need to stay agile to effectively harness the potential of AI. In embracing these findings, higher education institutions in England can leverage the transformative power of AI while addressing its challenges. By doing so, they can ensure that AI enhances teaching, learning, and administration, ultimately preparing students for a future in which AI plays an increasingly significant role. With responsible and ethical use of AI, higher education can continue to be a driving force in shaping society and empowering individuals to thrive in the digital era.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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