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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a crucial element in teaching methodologies, significantly impacting student engagement, problem-solving skills, real-world application of concepts, and bridging educational gaps. The integration of AI into mathematics education presents a novel pathway to enhance learning outcomes, personalize student learning experiences, and streamline instructional methodologies. AI-driven tools and solutions need to be scalable not only in terms of technology but also in terms of educational impact across diverse educational settings and student populations. This paper explores the impact of AI on mathematics education in Nigeria, which has promising prospects for the nation's advancement in science and technology. Through a meticulous examination of current trends, challenges, and opportunities, it becomes apparent that strategic implementation of AI could metamorphose the educational setting, equipping Nigerian students with the competencies requisite for success in the 21st century.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Mathematics Education, student's engagement and educational impact

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving technological world, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and education is fundamentally reshaping learning methodologies across diverse domains (Adebowale, 2019). Specifically, in Nigeria, this integration, particularly in mathematics education, is perceived as a crucial stride towards advancing science and technology (Okeke, 2021). As the exigencies of the contemporary workforce undergo evolution, Nigerian educators are diligently endeavouring to equip students with the requisite proficiencies to excel in an increasingly technology-driven environment, with mathematics standing as a cornerstone for scientific and technological innovation (Chukwuemeka, Onyema, & Ndife, 2020).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) embodies the development of computer systems or algorithms adept at executing tasks conventionally associated with human intelligence. AI endeavours to mimic human cognitive processes and behaviours, enabling machines to emulate intelligence and perform tasks typically necessitating human intervention (Ndubueze, Odiboh, Nwosu & Olabanjo, 2019). This encompasses learning from experiences, adapting to novel circumstances, problem-solving, decision-making, and comprehending natural language—core attributes of human intelligence. Through the cultivation of AI technologies capable of replicating these competencies, researchers and STEM advocates aspire to create machines and systems capable of assisting, augmenting, or even surpassing human capabilities across diverse domains and applications.

Mathematics education encompasses the pedagogy and acquisition of mathematical concepts, principles, and skills across various educational tiers, from early childhood to adulthood. It entails not only the acquisition of mathematical knowledge but also the

cultivation of mathematical reasoning, problem-solving prowess, and critical thinking skills (Njoku, 2019). Mathematical literacy transcends mere computation and formula memorization; it entails the ability to reason quantitatively, interpret data, and communicate mathematical ideas effectively. By nurturing mathematical literacy, mathematics education equips students with the competencies essential to navigate modern challenges and make informed decisions in everyday life.

In the 21st century, mathematics education in Nigeria is undergoing a transformation fueled by technological advancements and evolving pedagogical approaches. The increasing integration of digital tools and educational technologies, including AI and interactive multimedia resources, presents educators with novel opportunities to enrich teaching and learning experiences (Eze, 2018). These technologies facilitate personalized learning, collaborative problem-solving, and real-time feedback, aligning with the exigencies of a swiftly changing world. Additionally, the cultivation of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy assumes mounting significance in mathematics education, reflecting the imperative to prepare students for the exigencies and prospects of the modern era. Thus, within the context of the 21st century, mathematics education in Nigeria is adapting to meet the evolving needs of students and society, furnishing them with the competencies imperative to thrive in a globalized, technology-driven milieu.

The significance of this evolution cannot be overstated. The adoption of AI in educational contexts in Nigeria holds substantial promise in propelling the nation towards its objectives of scientific and technological independence. However, challenges such as data privacy concerns, the digital divide, and the imperative for substantial infrastructural investments must be addressed to fully harness AI's potential (Ibrahim, 2017). Additionally, comprehensive training programs for educators are imperative to effectively integrate AI tools into teaching practices. As this paper explores, the impact of AI on mathematics education in Nigeria harbours promising prospects for the nation's advancement in science and technology. Through a meticulous examination of current trends, challenges, and opportunities, it becomes apparent that strategic implementation of AI could metamorphose the educational landscape, equipping Nigerian students with the competencies requisite for success in the 21st century.

Overview of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly advancing field of computer science that focuses on creating systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. From problem-solving to language understanding and decision-making, AI encompasses a wide range of capabilities aimed at stimulating human cognitive processes (Russell & Norvig, 2021). The development of AI technologies has led to significant advancements in various domains, including healthcare, finance, transportation, and education. In recent years, AI has gained prominence in education as a promising tool for enhancing teaching and learning experiences. AI-powered educational technologies offer personalized learning pathways, adaptive feedback, and real-time analytics, catering to individual student needs and preferences (Holstein & McLaren, 2019). For example, intelligent tutoring systems use AI

algorithms to provide personalized instruction and feedback, helping students master complex concepts at their own pace (VanLehn, 2019).

AI-driven educational tools facilitate the creation of immersive learning environments through virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies. These immersive experiences enable students to explore abstract concepts in subjects like mathematics and science through interactive simulations and visualizations (Merchant, Goetz, Cifuentes, Keeney-Kennicutt, & Davis, 2014). Additionally, natural language processing (NLP) algorithms empower AI chatbots and virtual assistants engage students in meaningful conversations, answering questions and providing learning support (Sutherland, Baddeley, & Parkin, 2019). Despite the potential benefits, the integration of AI in education also presents challenges and ethical considerations. Privacy concerns arise from the collection and analysis of student data, necessitating stringent data protection measures to safeguard sensitive information (OECD, 2019). Moreover, there are concerns about algorithmic bias and fairness, as AI systems may inadvertently perpetuate existing inequalities in educational outcomes (Diakopoulos & Friedler, 2019). AI holds immense promise for revolutionizing education by providing personalized learning experiences, adaptive feedback mechanisms, and immersive educational environments. However, careful consideration of ethical implications, data privacy, and algorithmic fairness is essential to ensure that AI technologies benefit all students equitably.

The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Mathematics Education

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into mathematics education is poised to dramatically reshape how students learn and understand mathematical concepts. AI technologies can cater to diverse learning needs, streamline instruction, and optimize learning outcomes, ultimately enhancing educational practices on multiple fronts. This section explores the multifaceted role of AI in mathematics education, focusing on enhancing the learning experience, providing personalized instruction, and utilizing intelligent tutoring systems.

1. Enhancing Learning Experience

AI can significantly enhance the learning experience in mathematics by introducing innovative and interactive educational tools. For instance, AI-driven simulations and visualizations help clarify complex mathematical theories and principles, making them more accessible and easier to understand. These tools can demonstrate abstract mathematical concepts using dynamic, visual environments that encourage students to engage deeply with the material. Additionally, game-based learning platforms powered by AI can transform traditional, often tedious, mathematical drills into stimulating and fun activities. This not only boosts engagement but also improves retention rates and motivates students to practice more diligently.

2. Personalized Instruction

One of the most impactful applications of AI in education is personalized instruction. AI algorithms analyze individual learning patterns, including the pace at which students absorb new information, their frequent mistakes, and their preferred learning modalities. This data enables AI systems to tailor instructional content to meet the unique needs of each student, adapting in real time to suit their evolving capabilities and knowledge levels. For example, if

a student excels in algebra but struggles with geometry, the AI system can adjust the curriculum to provide more intensive geometry exercises and additional resources, while progressing through algebra at a pace suited to the student's strengths. Personalized instruction not only makes learning more effective but also addresses the educational disparities within diverse classroom settings, ensuring that all students have the support they need to succeed.

3. Intelligent Tutoring Systems

Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) represent a revolutionary step in educational technology, especially in the field of mathematics. These systems are sophisticated AI applications that simulate one-on-one human tutoring experiences, providing personalized feedback and guidance to students without the need for constant teacher intervention. ITS can diagnose students' misconceptions in real time, offer hints, and walk them through problems step-by-step using methods that align with their learning style. For example, if a student is visual, the ITS might employ graphical representations of problems; if a student learns better through practice, the system could generate multiple practice problems to help reinforce concepts. Its capabilities extend beyond mere problem-solving, as they also include motivational messages and emotional support components, which are crucial for students who might feel discouraged by the challenges of learning mathematics.

4. Engagement and Motivation:

AI-driven game-based learning platforms revolutionize traditional drills by creating interactive, stimulating activities. These platforms captivate students' interest, enhancing engagement and retention rates significantly. In the 21st century, mathematics education is evolving to incorporate AI-driven game-based learning platforms, which revolutionize traditional drills. These platforms offer interactive and stimulating activities, captivating students' interest and significantly enhancing engagement and retention rates. This innovative approach fosters a more dynamic and effective learning experience in mathematics.

5. Diagnosing Misconceptions:

Through real-time analysis, AI detects and corrects students' misunderstandings promptly. By providing tailored hints and step-by-step guidance, AI facilitates a deeper understanding of concepts and supports effective learning. In 21st-century mathematics education, AI plays a crucial role in diagnosing students' misconceptions. Through real-time analysis, AI swiftly identifies and corrects misunderstandings. By offering personalized hints and guidance, AI fosters a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts, supporting effective learning and addressing individual learning needs more efficiently than traditional methods.

6. Future Readiness:

AI empowers students with essential skills for success in a digital era. By integrating AI technologies into education, students develop competencies crucial for future academic and career endeavours, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. In 21st-century mathematics education, the integration of AI technologies ensures students are prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. AI empowers students with essential skills for success in a digital era, fostering competency 'development crucial for future academic and

career endeavours. By leveraging AI technologies, mathematics education equips students with the tools needed to thrive in an ever-evolving technological landscape.

The role of AI in mathematics education is transformative, providing tools and methodologies that enhance the learning experience, deliver personalized instruction, and deploy intelligent tutoring systems. These innovations not only improve mathematical proficiency and engagement among students but also equip them to meet the challenges of future academic and career pursuits in an increasingly digital world. As AI technology continues to evolve, its integration into educational settings promises even greater advances, making personalized, engaging, and effective education more accessible to all students.

Benefits of Artificial Intelligence in Mathematics Education

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into mathematics education offers profound benefits, enhancing not only how students learn but also the quality and accessibility of education. As technology evolves, AI has become a crucial element in teaching methodologies, significantly impacting student engagement, problem-solving skills, real-world application of concepts, and bridging educational gaps.

- ***Improved Student Engagement***

AI-powered tools have revolutionized student engagement by making learning more interactive and appealing. Through the use of gamified learning environments, virtual simulations, and interactive platforms, students find themselves more involved and interested in mathematical concepts. AI enhances the interactivity of lessons, making them more dynamic and less monotonous, which is particularly effective in keeping students motivated and attentive. For instance, when students use AI-driven apps that adapt to their learning pace and style, they are likely to engage more deeply because the content is directly relevant to their immediate educational needs and challenges.

- **Enhanced Problem-Solving Skills**

AI in mathematics education can greatly enhance problem-solving skills by offering students tailored challenges and step-by-step coaching. Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS), for example, use AI to provide immediate feedback to students, pointing out errors and offering hints at crucial moments of problem-solving. This immediate correction and guidance help students understand the logical process of solving mathematical problems, enhancing their analytical thinking skills. Moreover, AI systems can introduce complex, real-world problems that encourage students to apply multiple mathematical concepts and think critically, pushing their problem-solving skills to new levels.

- **Real-World Application of Mathematical Concepts**

One of the key advantages of AI in mathematics education is its ability to demonstrate the practical application of mathematical concepts through real-world simulations and scenarios. AI technologies enable students to see how mathematical theories apply in everyday situations, such as in economics, engineering, science, and technology. This not only makes learning more relevant but also helps students appreciate the value of mathematics in solving actual problems. For example, AI-driven programs can simulate budgeting scenarios,

architectural designs, or scientific experiments, allowing students to manipulate variables and see the outcomes, thereby understanding the practical impact of their mathematical decisions.

- **Bridging the Gap in Access to Quality Education**

AI technology plays a critical role in democratizing education by bridging the gap between different educational settings and resources. In areas where access to quality education or expert teachers is limited, AI can provide high-quality, standardized, and accessible educational content. Online platforms powered by AI can reach a vast number of students, offering consistent and up-to-date materials and personalized tutoring at a fraction of the cost of traditional education. This is especially important in underprivileged or remote areas, where AI tools can provide supplementary education resources that would otherwise be unavailable.

- **Extensive and Transformative Benefits**

Integration of AI in math education revolutionizes engagement, problem-solving, and access by providing extensive and transformative benefits such as personalized learning experiences, real-time feedback, and enhanced accessibility for diverse learners.

The benefits of integrating AI into mathematics education are extensive and transformative. Improved engagement, enhanced problem-solving skills, real-world application of mathematical concepts, and the democratization of education are just the beginning. As AI technology continues to advance, its potential to further enhance and revolutionize mathematics education is immense. By embracing AI, educational institutions can provide students with a more effective, engaging, and inclusive educational experience, preparing them for a world where technology and mathematics continually intersect and evolve.

Challenges in Artificial Intelligence in Mathematics Education

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into mathematics education presents a novel pathway to enhance learning outcomes, personalize student learning experiences, and streamline instructional methodologies. However, this integration is not devoid of significant challenges and critical considerations that must be addressed to optimize its effectiveness and ensure it serves as a beneficial tool rather than a disruptive force. This essay discusses three primary concerns: ethical implications, teacher training and support, and infrastructure and technology requirements.

1. Ethical Implications

This explains the moral considerations and potential problems that can arise when using AI (artificial intelligence) in teaching mathematics. AI systems deal with a lot of data, including personal information. For example, the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) implemented by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) imposes obligations on organizations handling personal data to ensure its protection and lawful processing. Under the NDPR, educational institutions collecting and using student data must comply with principles such as transparency, purpose limitation, data minimization, and security safeguards. Additionally, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and other relevant regulatory bodies may issue guidelines or directives to ensure the

ethical and responsible use of AI in education, including the protection of student data. These guidelines may outline best practices for data handling, consent requirements, and mechanisms for addressing data breaches or privacy violations. Furthermore, educational institutions in Nigeria may adopt internal policies and procedures to reinforce data protection practices and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. This includes implementing technical and organizational measures to secure data storage, transmission, and processing, as well as providing training and awareness programs for staff and students on data privacy and security.

2. Teacher Training and Support

Readiness of teachers to effectively utilize AI technologies in the classroom. While AI offers innovative tools for personalized instruction and real-time feedback, teachers require adequate training to integrate these technologies into their pedagogical practices (Molnar, 2019). This necessitates comprehensive professional development programs that encompass both technical proficiency and pedagogical adaptation to ensure teachers can leverage AI to enhance student learning outcomes effectively. The successful implementation of AI in mathematics education significantly hinges on teacher readiness and their ability to integrate these technologies into their pedagogical practices. Teacher training thus becomes a critical area of focus. Educators not only need to be technically proficient to operate AI tools but also pedagogically adept to integrate these tools effectively into their teaching strategies. Training programs must be developed to encompass both the operation of AI technologies and the interpretation of AI-generated insights. Teachers will need to understand how to use AI data to inform instruction, personalize student learning plans, and identify potential areas for intervention. Additionally, ongoing support is crucial, as the field of AI is rapidly evolving. This means continuous professional development must be part of the educational landscape to ensure teachers keep up-to-date with the latest technologies and methodologies.

3. Infrastructure and Technology Requirements

The infrastructure and technology requirements for AI implementation present a significant hurdle, particularly in regions with limited resources. In many areas, schools lack the necessary technological infrastructure, including hardware, software, and reliable internet connectivity, to support AI-driven educational tools (Pruett & Kelly, 2021). Bridging this digital divide requires substantial investment in upgrading infrastructure and ensuring equitable access to AI technologies across educational institutions. Implementing AI in mathematics education is not merely a pedagogical shift but also a substantial infrastructural challenge. Schools must have the necessary technological infrastructure to support AI applications, which includes not only physical hardware but also software, data storage and processing capabilities, and robust internet connectivity. In many regions, particularly in less developed or rural areas, this infrastructure may be inadequate or absent, posing significant limitations to the accessibility and effectiveness of AI-driven educational tools. The costs associated with upgrading infrastructure can be prohibitive for many educational institutions, leading to inequalities in access to the latest educational technologies. Ensuring equitable access to AI tools across different schools and districts is therefore a significant challenge

that needs addressing at the policy level, possibly requiring government intervention and support.

4. Scalability

The scalability of AI-driven solutions presents a logistical challenge. While AI tools may demonstrate efficacy in controlled settings, scaling them to accommodate diverse educational environments and student populations without sacrificing performance quality poses a considerable challenge (Blikstein & Wilensky, 2018). Additionally, integrating AI seamlessly into existing curricula requires careful planning and coordination to ensure alignment with educational standards and objectives (Basu et al., 2020). AI-driven tools and solutions need to be scalable not only in terms of technology but also in educational impact across diverse educational settings and student populations. As AI technologies evolve, they must be capable of adjusting to larger numbers of users and diverse educational environments without losing performance quality or requiring excessive additional costs. This includes the ability to handle varying class sizes, multiple schools within a district, and even cross-district implementations, all while maintaining data privacy and security standards.

5. Integration with Existing Curricula

AI tools must seamlessly integrate into existing educational frameworks and curricula. For AI in mathematics education to be effective, it must not stand apart from but rather enhance traditional teaching methodologies. This means that AI applications should complement existing lessons and be flexible enough to adapt to different teaching styles and curriculum requirements. The challenge here lies in designing AI tools that are not overly rigid but are adaptable to a range of pedagogical approaches and can be customized by educators to meet the specific needs of their classrooms. Curriculum designers and educational policy makers play a significant role in this integration process. They must ensure that AI tools align with educational standards and objectives and that they can be effectively used to achieve desired learning outcomes without disrupting the Broader educational goals.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the effective implementation of AI in mathematics education, robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms must be established. It is essential to continuously assess the impact of AI tools on student learning outcomes, teacher effectiveness, and overall educational quality. This involves setting up systematic feedback loops and data analytics frameworks to measure performance and identify areas for improvement. The evaluation process itself must evolve as AI technologies and educational practices develop. What metrics and benchmarks are used to measure success in an AI-enhanced classroom might look very different from those in a traditional setting. Educational researchers and technologists need to work together to define these parameters and ensure they are relevant and meaningful.

7. Professional Development and Ethical Training

Beyond initial training, on-going professional development is crucial for educators to remain effective in an AI-enhanced educational environment. This includes not just training on new tools and technologies but also ethical training to ensure educators are aware of the

implications of using AI in their classrooms. Teachers need to understand issues such as algorithmic bias, the importance of data privacy, and how to maintain a student-centred approach in an increasingly digitized classroom.

Conclusion

The successful integration of artificial intelligence into mathematics education hinges on meticulous planning and strategic implementation. Key actions include establishing robust privacy and ethical standards, enhancing teacher training, upgrading infrastructure, seamlessly integrating AI with existing curricula, setting up effective evaluation mechanisms, and fostering collaborative partnerships. These steps are crucial for leveraging AI's potential to enrich and transform educational practices, ensuring that technology augments rather than replaces the irreplaceable human element in education. By embracing these recommendations, educational institutions can navigate the complexities of AI implementation, promoting equitable and effective learning environments. Ultimately, the thoughtful integration of AI can lead to significant advancements in educational outcomes, preparing students better for an increasingly digital world while upholding the values of equity and quality in education.

Suggestions

1. Institutions should establish robust data protection frameworks that safeguard sensitive student information, complying with both local and international regulations.
2. Ethical guidelines specific to AI usage in education should be implemented, emphasizing consent, transparency, and the right to opt-out, thus respecting individual privacy and autonomy.
3. Education systems should invest in ongoing professional development programs that not only help educators become proficient in using AI tools but also understand the broader implications of AI in education;
4. Fostering a community of practice among educators can facilitate the sharing of insights, experiences, and best practices, thereby enriching the collective proficiency in utilizing AI in educational settings.
5. Upgrading and standardizing technological infrastructure across educational institutions is essential for the successful adoption of AI and standardizing AI platforms and tools can help streamline training, maintenance, and data analysis, which in turn reduces costs and complexity.
6. AI should be seamlessly integrated with existing curricula to enhance educational outcomes without disrupting current teaching methods.

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