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PAPER

Transforming University Education with AI: A Systematic Review of Technologies, Applications, and Implications

Dinara Kazimova[1], **Gulmira Tazhigulova**[1](✉), **Gulmira Shraimanova**[2], **Anatoly Zatyneyko**[1], **Adilzada Sharzadin**[1]

[1]Karaganda University of the name of academician E.A.Buketov, Karaganda, Kazakhstan

[2]Karaganda University of Kazpotrebsoyuz, Karaganda, Kazakhstan

tazhigulova_gulmira@buketov.edu.kz

ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review explores the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies such as intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), machine learning, natural language processing, and adaptive learning platforms in university education. Following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, we evaluated peer-reviewed articles, case studies, and government reports from 2015 onwards. The results demonstrate that AI technologies not only enhance personalized learning and educational outcomes but also streamline administrative functions, transforming educational practices. However, challenges such as ethical issues, data privacy, and algorithmic bias remain. The review underscores the importance of theoretical frameworks like constructivist learning theory and the TPACK framework for effective AI integration. Recommendations are provided for educators, administrators, and policymakers to ensure responsible AI use in university settings. This paper offers insights into the current capabilities and future prospects of AI in higher education, promoting ongoing research and strategic implementation.

KEYWORDS

machine learning, artificial intelligence (AI), natural language processing, intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), adaptive learning, educational outcomes, systematic review, Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guideline, theoretical framework

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into university education is no longer a futuristic dream but a reality gaining time in redefining higher education [1]. This reflects a broader global trend where, in recent years, universities

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have been using AI-based technologies in the domain of intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), learning algorithms, and natural language processing tools to make changes in the educational offerings and consequently, in the learning outcomes. ITS offer adaptive instruction and feedback in ways highly similar to human tutors [2]. For example, Carnegie Learning's MATHia software personalizes mathematics instruction for each student, such that each student is working at just the right level of challenge on each topic while ensuring that each subject is covered. Other AI technologies in this respect are Grammarly and WriteLab, which operate within the principles of natural language processing for students to perfect their writing skills with real-time advice on grammar, style, and coherence. In Kazakhstan, the rapid adoption of educational technologies is evident, with initiatives aimed at integrating these innovations into the educational system to improve learning outcomes and student engagement. The focus on using technology in education in Kazakhstan underscores a broader commitment to enhancing the quality of education through modern tools and platforms, reflecting global trends in educational innovation [3], [4], [5].

For instance, these are predictive analytics using machine learning algorithms to identify students on the verge of academic failure. For example, Georgia State University placed over 800 variables in a machine-learning-based predictive model for student educational outcomes, and the result has shown a tremendous improvement in retention and graduation rates [6]. However, implementing AI in university education raises a basket of challenges: from considerations of ethics and data privacy to probable biases in algorithms, it results in substantial infrastructure investments that mandate widespread adoption. This, in turn, means faculties and students alike will need to be readied to engage with AI technologies through a large-scale, widely implemented training and support system.

Therefore, the rationale for carrying out this systematic review is to describe the synthesis of works of research presented in technologies based on the implementation of AI in university education. The paper aims to identify and recognize the pool of AI applications that could bring about better educational outcomes and point out gaps that raise the need for further research. All of this shall hopefully provide essential insights to educators, administrators, and policymakers into how they can leverage AI to transform higher education through the analysis of papers in peer-reviewed literature, case studies, and government reports since 2015.

1.2 Definitions of key terms and concepts

Table 1 provides an overview of key AI technologies in education. It highlights how AI simulates human intelligence to personalize learning and automate tasks, while machine learning and natural language processing enable advanced data analysis and interaction. The table also addresses the benefits of ITS and personalized learning, along with concerns about data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the need for ethical considerations to ensure fairness and transparency in educational AI applications.

Table 1. Key term concepts

Key Terms	Concepts
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Simulation of human intelligence in machines, involving learning, reasoning, and self-correction. Personalizes education and automates administrative tasks [6].
Machine Learning (ML)	Algorithms and statistical models that enable tasks without explicit programming. Used in predictive analytics for student-at-risk prediction in universities [7].
Natural Language Processing (NLP)	Direct interaction of human languages with computers, enabling large-scale processing and analysis of natural language data. Includes automated essay scoring and translation [8].
Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS)	AI-based systems that adapt to individual learners' needs, mimicking one-on-one tutoring. Examples: Carnegie Learning's MATHia [9].
Personalized Learning	Tailored instruction matching students' needs, skills, and interests. Enabled by AI technologies through analytics and content sifting [10].
Predictive Analytics	Uses data to identify patterns and forecast outcomes. Helps identify at-risk students for timely intervention in universities [11].
Data Privacy	Protects personal information collected about students. AI raises concerns about data security and ethical use. Policies restrict access to prevent unauthorized breaches [12].
Algorithmic Bias	Occurs when AI algorithms generate biased models based on erroneous assumptions. Ensures fairness in educational contexts, avoiding bias based on race, gender, and socio-economic backgrounds [13].
Educational Outcomes	Quantifiable achievements such as academic performance and graduation rates. AI aims to improve these through enhanced instruction and support [14].
Ethical Considerations	Ensures fairness, transparency, accountability, and avoidance of bias or discrimination in AI applications in education. Critical for ethical decision-making processes [15].

1.3 Significance and relevance

The implementation of AI-based technologies will be the giant leap in reimagining how educational institutions should provide instruction to students, interact with them, and perform all back-office operations [16], [17]. From ITS to adaptive learning platforms and predictive analytics, AI technologies are full of promise in changing educational outcomes for the positive. Personalized learning shall meet the unique needs and abilities of every individual student in a manner that increases engagement, improves understanding, and maintains retention [18]. A good example is how it adjusts the difficulty of content in adaptive learning platforms automatically according to student performance, ensuring that the content is level-appropriate yet challenging without overwhelming students with an overload of content. Predictive analytic algorithms by AI take regard to student performance, leading to a better understanding with timely interventions in relation to their students, thus able to support the retention of such at-risk students.

Besides improving learning outcomes, AI is helpful in realizing efficient administrative activities, allowing educators and administrators to free up their significant time for interaction with students and pedagogical development [19]. For instance, AI is applied to the control of grades, scheduling, and admission to cut the administrative load down on the same functions. For example, in automated essay scoring, instructors get immediate, easy-to-use feedback for personalized teaching. It also enables data-driven decision-making. The insights into the trends in educational data can be used to optimize curriculum development and resource allocation across academic institutions [19]. Therefore, it is through the generic model that the AI applications in education are supposed to raise the ethical questions on challenges such as data privacy and algorithmic bias that are addressed to ensure equity in the outcomes and trust in the applications of artificial intelligence.

1.4 Research aim and objectives

Research aim. The primary aim of this systematic literature review is to comprehensively show the application and impact of AI-based technologies in university education. This study seeks to understand how these technologies enhance educational processes, improve student outcomes, and streamline administrative functions within higher education institutions.

Research objectives

- To identify and show studies that discuss the application of AI-based technologies in university education.
- To recognize the various AI technologies used to enhance educational processes and outcomes.
- To list the benefits and challenges associated with the implementation of AI in higher education.
- To highlight gaps in the literature where further research or technological advancements are needed.

1.5 Theoretical frameworks

At the base of the theoretical underpinnings, constructivist learning theory assumes that learners construct their understanding and knowledge from experiences and reflections. Learning is an entirely active, contextual process that takes place while building prior knowledge based on the interface with the environment and peers [19]. AI technologies, such as ITS and adaptive learning platforms, are inherently aligned with constructivist learning principles in the customized and adaptive provision of learning experiences [20]. They make those activities or exercises richer so that the students interact with the materials in ways that enable them to understand and build knowledge. For example, ITS might adapt to the speed at which the student is learning and give feedback geared toward getting the learner to fill in the holes in their knowledge structure and build new concepts on the old stuff.

This, therefore, means that the theory of cognitive load is concerned with ways of designing instruction in the optimum way possible to lower the cognitive load on the working memory to the possible minimum, therefore saving it from the likely possibility of mental overload, which may inhibit learning [21]. The mental load theory consists of three load types: 1) intrinsic, 2) extraneous, and 3) germane. Cognitive load can be managed through the personalization of information presentation and the pacing of instruction, handled through real-time analysis of student performances. Very much like that, many of the new adaptive learning platforms can reset the level of task difficulty on the fly and give feedback just in time to balance cognitive loads and make the process of learning somewhat more efficient and effective at a level of retention [22]. The present direct targeting does not swamp the student with the highest level of complex information and ensures cognitive engagement is done correctly regarding attentional resources.

Self-determination theory focuses on intrinsic motivators for studying and self-development, which are summed up through three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. AI-based educational tools would help support these needs based on personalized learning paths and immediate constructive feedback that render competent and autonomous students even more empowered in the studies at hand [23]. These would be conducive to a sense of relatedness and competence when dealing with studies. For example, the adaptive technologies might give the student their paces and pathways, hence making them feel in control [24]. AI-supported collaborative tools might be imagined to foster conditions that afford the student the possibility of social interactions and cooperation in such a manner that satisfies their relatedness and hence raises interest and motivation.

The area of the TPACK framework relates to knowing how best to introduce technologies that are practical to use in the practice of teaching. TPACK represents a framework that identifies the knowledge teachers need to teach effectively with technology, emphasizing the intersection of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge [25]. AI technologies assist in supporting the TPACK framework through advanced data analytics, which provide the instructors with insights into patterns and needs of student learning toward making more informed instructional decisions [26]. For instance, AI analytics can pinpoint learning weak points so that a teacher can plan and instruct correspondingly. This would advance technological capacity in designing and delivering much more effective, certainly much more engaging, but most importantly, pedagogy- and content-driven learning experiences.

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) is a theory designed to elaborate and describe factors that determine acceptance and usage of individual technology, such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions, especially when the context concerns AIe technologies in research to be done in university education. UTAUT will help identify enablers in the requirements for adopting AI tools by educators and students [27]. As such, the measure of performance expectancy should be based on whether improved performative expectations regarding the use of AI result in an improved educational outcome, and effort expectancy should be based on the ease of use of AI tools. Such a factor would likely influence adoption and strategies for enhancing acceptance [28]. On the other hand, social influence may be taken as an effect of others' opinions, while facilitating conditions may be marked as the availability of support and resources in solving problems related to implementing and using AI technologies in education.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Search strategy

An intensive search strategy will be developed, incorporating keywords derived from the theoretical frameworks such as "constructivist learning and AI," "cognitive load in digital environments," "self-determination in online learning," and "TPACK AI implementation." This strategy will ensure a comprehensive collection of studies that not only cover general AI applications but are also specifically aligned with the theoretical foundations laid out in the introduction. The search will span databases like PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar to include peer-reviewed articles, case studies, and reviews relevant to AI-based technologies in university education. The search would use keywords and phrases in "AI in education," "university education," "intelligent tutoring systems," "machine learning," and "personalized learning" to capture the broad scope presented by AI applications in higher learning. Use the Boolean operators such as AND or placed within keywords appropriately to narrow or widen the search results (See Figure 1 for the Prisma Chart).

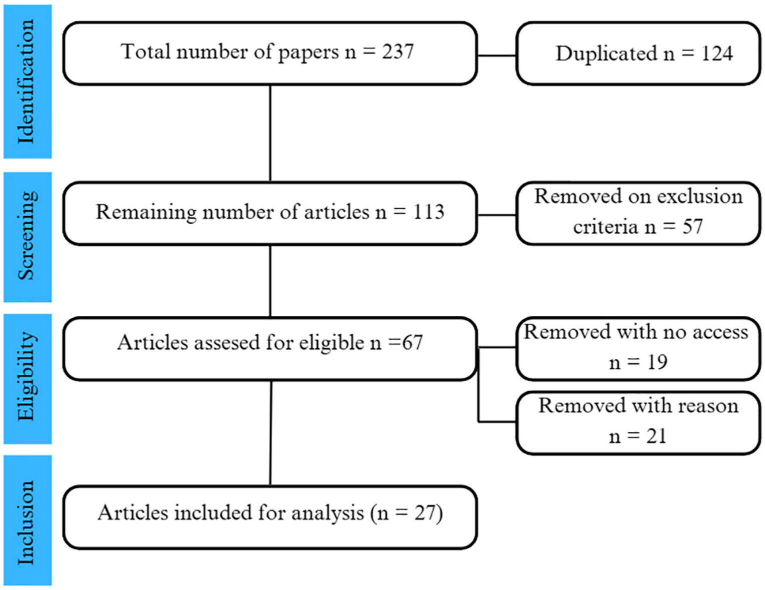

Fig. 1. Prisma flowchart

2.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The specific inclusion and exclusion criteria of this review relate to the relevance and quality of the studies to be reviewed. Inclusion criteria include articles in peer-reviewed journals, case studies, government reports, and reviews. It relates to articles published in the English language since 2015 about applications of AI in university education. 19 articles were excluded due to lack of access, while 20 were removed for reasons such as lack of relevance to the research objectives, methodological weaknesses, or misalignment with the theoretical frameworks guiding this study. Specifically, we excluded non-peer-reviewed articles, studies not explicitly relating to applications of AI in university education, and those not related to higher education.

2.3 Data extraction

The extraction of all relevant information from each paper to be finally incorporated into the review will be recorded systematically in one place using an extraction form. The fields for recording will include the authors, the year of publication of a study, the setting, specific AI technologies, the above effects on education, and the main conclusions.

2.4 Quality assessment

The quality assessment of the individual studies will be conducted through pretested standardized checklists adopted from the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. PRISMA is an evidence-based set of guidelines that helps ensure the transparent and complete reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analyses. By following these guidelines, researchers can provide clear documentation of the review process, including study selection, data extraction, and risk of bias assessment, thus enhancing the reliability and replicability of the findings. The use of PRISMA ensures that the methodology is not only robust but also consistent with best practices in systematic reviews, which is essential for producing authentic and credible results [29]. This will, hence, give the survey in question a relatively robust methodology that is valid and reliable, thereby ensuring that the review findings are authentic.

2.5 Data synthesis

Thematic analysis will be conducted by synthesizing the collected data to extract common themes and trends in the studies. During this process, the recurring topics through the data and patterns will be identified, similar themes and findings will be grouped, and the acceptance of specified themes over time will be evaluated. With an evidence-based approach toward determining whether AI technologies are effective for application in university education, this study aims to identify gaps in the existing research. In combination, therefore, this synthesis aims to provide depth and breadth as to how AI could enhance educational experiences and outcomes.

3 FINDINGS

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the selected studies focusing on the integration of AI in higher education. A total of 27 papers were meticulously analyzed, each shedding light on the pivotal role of AI across various educational subtopics.

3.1 Findings

Figure 2 visually represents the proportional breakdown of research focus areas within AI in education. The largest segment, comprising 42.9% of the studies, is dedicated to "AI Technologies in Education," indicating a significant general interest in exploring various AI applications across educational settings. The next largest segment, at 25%, focuses on "AI in Engineering Education," reflecting a substantial specific interest in applying AI in engineering disciplines. The remaining three segments—"AI and Sustainable Development in Education," "AI in Medical and Health Education," and "ChatGPT and Generative AI in Education"—each account for 10.7% of the studies. This uniform distribution suggests a balanced, albeit smaller, interest in exploring AI's role in sustainable education practices, medical and health education, and the emerging fields of generative AI models such as ChatGPT within educational contexts. The chart effectively illustrates a diverse but clearly skewed interest towards technology and engineering applications in AI research within education.

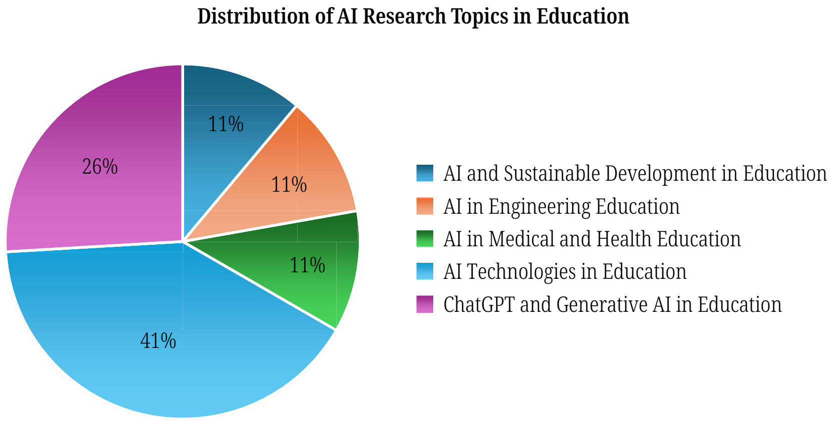

Fig. 2. Categories of articles

3.2 Geographical distribution

Figure 3 illustrates the geographical distribution of research publications related to AI in higher education across various countries. The United Kingdom (UK) leads significantly with eight publications, indicating a strong research interest and output in this area. The United States (USA) follows with five publications, showing substantial involvement in AI educational research. Switzerland and Australia each have four publications, reflecting moderate contributions to the field. Other countries, including Singapore, South Korea, France, China, Slovakia, and Turkey, have contributed one or two publications each. This distribution suggests that while there is a global interest in AI research within higher education, certain countries, particularly the UK, USA, and Switzerland, are more active in publishing studies on this topic. The chart highlights the regional disparities in research output, with some countries emerging as leaders in AI education research while others contribute to a lesser extent.

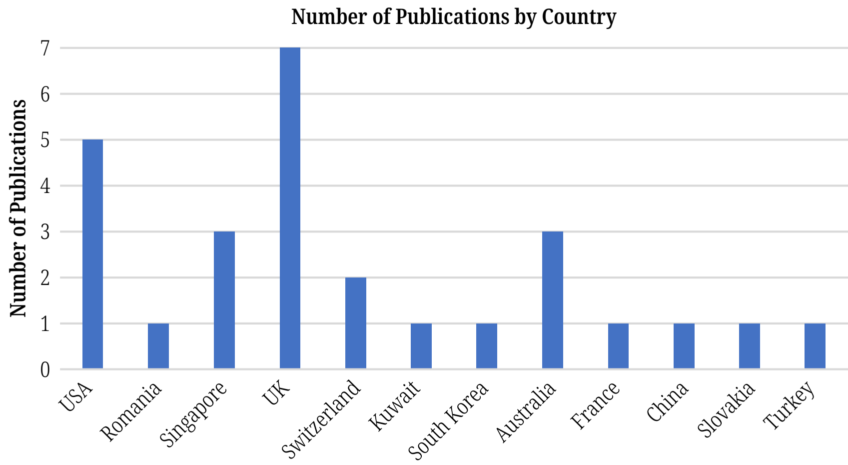

Fig. 3. Documents published country-wise from the selected literature

3.3 Temporal distribution

Figure 4 depicts the temporal distribution of research publications related to AI in higher education from 2018 to 2024. The chart highlights several key trends:

There is a noticeable increase in the number of publications from 2018 (two publications) to 2020 (two publications), indicating a growing interest in AI in higher education during these years. The peak in 2020 suggests a significant research focus, possibly driven by the initial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the adoption of digital learning technologies. After a slight decrease in 2021 (four publications), there is a dip in 2022 (one publication), followed by a sharp increase in 2023 (eight publications). This resurgence in 2023 could be attributed to ongoing developments and innovations in AI technologies, as well as a continued emphasis on digital transformation in education. The data for 2024 shows 2 publications so far, indicating a continuation of research interest into the current year. While it is early to draw conclusions for 2024, the initial data suggests that AI in higher education remains a relevant and active area of research. This temporal distribution underscores the evolving nature of AI research in education, with significant fluctuations likely influenced by external factors such as technological advancements and global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

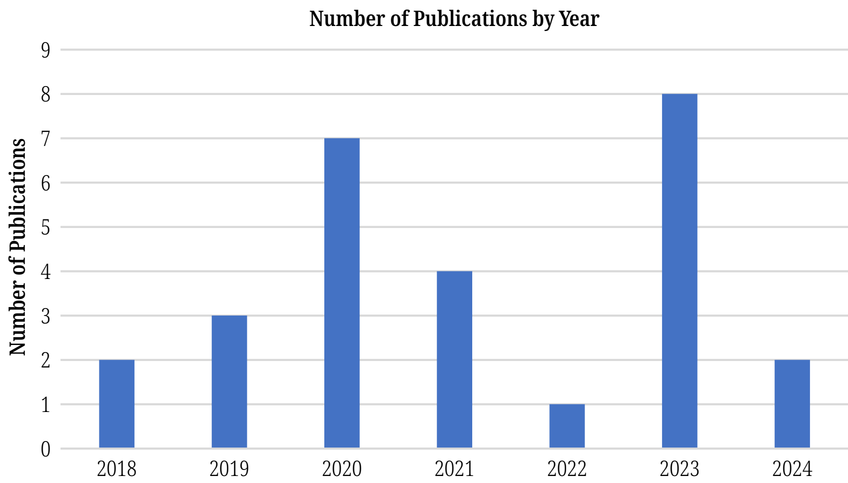

Fig. 4. Documents published year-wise from 2017 to 2023

3.4 Thematic overview

The thematic overview of the selected studies reveals several focal areas where AI technologies have been integrated into higher education, each with distinct key concepts and implications. AI and Sustainable Development in Education emphasizes the role of AI in driving educational reforms and adapting to the Fourth Industrial Revolution, highlighting personalized learning, curriculum updates, and addressing data privacy and ethical concerns to enhance educational outcomes and promote sustainable development. AI in engineering education focuses on ITS, personalized learning, and AI algorithms, emphasizing cognitive and affective impacts, innovations like hybrid learning, and the benefits and limitations of generative AI, including personalized learning and immediate feedback. AI in medical and health education explores AI's role in curriculum analysis, personalized learning, and assessment, addressing challenges like technical issues and acceptance, and advocating for a humanistic approach that integrates patient care, community engagement, and advanced technology, along with a proposed governance model for ethical and regulatory concerns. AI Technologies in education are transformative, enhancing personalized learning, gamification, and educational efficiency, supporting innovative teaching methods, real-time feedback, collaborative learning, and administrative improvements, while addressing ethical concerns, human interaction, data privacy, and bias. ChatGPT and Generative AI in Education revolutionize learning through personalized learning, intelligent tutoring, and automated grading, enhancing interaction and research support but also presenting challenges such as plagiarism, inequity, and academic integrity concerns, emphasizing the need for strategies to ensure proper use of AI tools and advocating for AI to complement rather than replace human teachers. Table 2 summarizes these themes, providing a clear and concise overview of the focus areas and key concepts derived from the selected studies.

Table 2. Thematic overview of the findings of the selected studies

Source	Focus	Key Concepts
[23], [30], [31]	AI and Sustainable Development in Education	AI and sustainable development in education emphasize the role of AI in driving educational reforms and adapting to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It highlights the importance of personalized learning, updating curricula, and addressing data privacy and ethical concerns. The focus is on enhancing educational outcomes and ensuring continuous adaptation to technological advancements for sustainable development.
[12], [32], [33]	AI in Engineering Education	AI in engineering education highlights its role in mathematics education through ITS, personalized learning, and AI algorithms, emphasizing cognitive and affective impacts and the need for further research. It redefines Education 4.0 with competencies, learning methods, ICTs, and infrastructure, showcasing innovations such as hybrid learning and challenge-based education to enhance competencies and engagement. Additionally, it explores generative AI's potential and limitations, focusing on benefits like personalized learning and immediate feedback, while addressing risks such as plagiarism and ethical concerns, recommending responsible AI use, teacher training, and balancing AI with traditional methods.
[24], [34], [35]	AI in Medical and Health Education	AI in medical and health education emphasizes its role in curriculum analysis, personalized learning, and assessment. It addresses challenges like technical issues, acceptance, and the need for skilled content specialists, recommending further research. Future trends focus on a humanistic approach, patient care integration, community engagement, diversity, and advanced technology, advocating for personalized learning and digital tools. Additionally, a proposed governance model for AI in healthcare tackles ethical and regulatory concerns, emphasizing fairness, transparency, trustworthiness, and accountability, providing a framework for the ethical deployment and ongoing evaluation of AI technologies in clinical settings.
[1], [2], [10], [14], [17], [20], [36], [37], [38], [39], [40]	AI Technologies in Education	AI technologies in education have a transformative impact by enhancing personalized learning, gamification, and educational efficiency. They support innovative teaching methods, real-time feedback, and collaborative learning, while also improving administrative tasks. AI applications such as deep learning and NLP are integrated for personalized education, and psychological strategies are used to optimize learning outcomes. Despite benefits, challenges such as ethical concerns, human interaction, data privacy, and bias need to be addressed. Continuous professional development, interdisciplinary collaboration, and responsible AI use are essential for effective AI integration in education.
[8], [27], [41], [42], [43], [44], [45]	ChatGPT and Generative AI in Education	ChatGPT and generative AI are revolutionizing education through personalized learning, intelligent tutoring, and automated grading, offering benefits such as enhanced interaction and research support. However, they also raise challenges such as plagiarism, inequity, and academic integrity concerns. Strategies are needed to prevent academic dishonesty and ensure the proper use of AI tools. The importance of privacy, fairness, and transparency is emphasized, advocating for AI to complement rather than replace human teachers. Clear policies, innovative assessment designs, and balanced regulations are essential for integrating AI responsibly while addressing ethical concerns and enhancing learning outcomes.

4 REVIEW OF AI TECHNOLOGIES IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

4.1 Intelligent tutoring systems

Overview and case studies. Intelligent tutoring systems represents personal guidance and feedback in a new generation of AI-driven educational systems.

Real-time adaptation of these systems to the individual and individualistic learning style of students categorizes ITS. Now, it is clear that it uses AI algorithms not to enhance the learning outcomes but to analyze how the students interact, find gaps in knowledge, and offer targeted support [46], [47]. A case in point is that of Carnegie Learning in the case of mathematics education. For instance, the personalization of mathematics instruction for every student through artificial intelligence, such as while designing the MATHia system, would be realized because it provides real-time feedback and adjusts the difficulty of the problems based on performance [48], [49]. For example, AutoTutor was designed for conversational learning as a tutor for a human conversational partner using natural language processing. In this way, it steers students through topics with conversational turns for better comprehension.

4.2 Impact on personalized learning and student outcomes

All these studies have shown that the use of ITS enhances personalized learning and, in effect, improves student outcomes. ITS readily provides personalized learning attuned to individual learners, which will address the learning gap, engage, and provide more profound understanding of the subject matter [50]. Indeed, it has been shown that students using ITS perform much better than children in traditional teaching environments do, with significant gains in retention and academic achievement [51]. For example, a study on a dialogue-based ITS for learning fractions demonstrated that students in the experimental group achieved higher post-test scores than those in a conventional classroom setting, particularly among lower-performing students [52]. Additionally, AutoTutor therein does more to facilitate the students than just understand and retain complex topics for more extended periods, score better in test measures, and gain satisfaction in learning.

4.3 Machine learning algorithms

Overview and case studies. Machine learning is AI-enabling computers using various statistical models and algorithms to help them learn from data in decision-making. In university education, machine learning is applied to predictive analytics, personalized learning, and automated grading [53], [54], [55]. One of the prominent examples of using predictive analytics in university education can be seen in a system that studies various student data points, such as academic performance and engagement, to predict final grades with high accuracy, significantly aiding in flagging potential academic failures and supporting timely interventions [56]. For example, in mass automated essay scoring, machine learning uses algorithms to rate student essays based on linguistic and structural features that manifest quality.

Role in predictive analytics and intervention strategies. In other words, it is machine learning embedded in predictive analytics through which universities can identify in advance those students who might need exceptional support. A machine learning model based on historical data predicts future outcomes, such as student attainment, retention, or graduation [56], [57]. This, therefore, ensures that institutions implement timely interventions, such as academic advising, tutorial services, and counseling, to support at-risk students. All in all, the predictive system at Georgia State University has been successful for the welfare of the students, and there is an increase in the rate of graduation at 22%, with a substantial drop in its rate of dropouts since 2019 [58]. This is where the power of machine learning lies: in surfacing student success through a strategy that is both informed by and, at the same time, data-driven.

4.4 Natural language processing tools

Overview and case studies. Natural language processing is a subpart of AI that operates within the interface of the computer and human language. The products that technologies in the NLP can make in the education sector help students improve their skills in writing, learning languages, and understanding different concepts [36]. Only two applications have been discussed: Grammarly and WriteLab. It provides instant recommendations regarding writing, presentation of pure interests, and many more, which enhances writing quality for a student. WriteLab has all of the same features; only here in the top corner it includes help in collaborative editing and feedback.

Applications in writing support and language learning. Natural language processing techniques have proved to be effective in providing students with quick formative feedback to support writing and language learning. Tools help the student to find errors and structure sentences in a much better and more meaningful manner, thereby refining them in their writing style [59]. Immediate feedback, hence continuously learning and improving writing proficiency among the students. NLP technologies also help develop automated language translation and tutoring systems for the development of language learning [32]. The applications of NLP to language learning give the scope for platforms such as Duolingo to establish interactive exercises in the language, offer corrections for language use, and offer personalized learning paths according to the student's capability. According to research, it has been indicated that students using Duo Lingo acquire language at a faster rate compared to those on the traditional process, and it leads to betterment in the language skills.

4.5 Adaptive learning platforms

Overview and case studies. Adaptive learning platforms employ AI to adapt the way educational material is being presented to the performance and needs of each student. All in all, the process is adaptive in the sense that it keeps track of the progress of the student and makes changes in the level of difficulty, pacing, and sequencing so that the learning outcomes are optimized [33]. One of the best examples of an adaptive learning platform would have to be Smart Sparrow; it provides adaptive learning experiences in many subjects. For instance, the app uses data analytics to help individuals get content most favorable to their learning style, thereby bolstering effective learning [60]. Take, for example, the Knewton platform, developed for delivering adaptive math and science learning; the problems students get are real-time and change with student performance.

Real-time adjustment of learning materials and its effects. This, therefore, implies that the final educational output that will be achieved will be massively increased due to real-time adaptation of learning materials in use by the adaptive learning platforms [61]. Because the course is monitored regularly and the adjustment is in real-time, it keeps the student attentive and appropriately challenged to avoid tedium [62]. The personalized nature doesn't allow boredom and minimizes frustration, making the study more accessible and more enjoyable [63]. Research indicates that the use of Smart Sparrow with students makes a substantial difference in making students perform well and remember much more than they do in a traditional learning environment [64]. Similarly, engagement and understanding are seen to be enhanced by the students in the study with the use of Knewton, resulting in overall achievement by AI companies and the most ways these AI adaptive learning platforms can, in reality, change the face of education.

4.6 Integration challenges and ethical considerations

These technologies offer great potential in higher education, but with great integration come challenges. Most prominent are the ethical issues: privacy over data, algorithm bias, and the readiness of both faculty and students regarding the use of such technologies [65]. The privacy of data could also be a question because primarily collected data on the student individual are processed by AI systems [66]. However, the information should be secured and used ethically. Policies, as well as technologies that protect the student's data from unauthorized persons and loss through breaches, should be enforced. Institutions should implement robust data protection policies in line with global standards such as GDPR. Regular audits and encryption techniques should be employed to safeguard data. Additionally, students and faculty should be educated on data privacy practices to ensure compliance and awareness.

The second major challenge focuses on this: AI algorithms, if based on the wrong assumptions or wrong data sets, may generate biased and unfair results based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, or any other factor [67], [68], [69]. Ensuring that there is no bias in any of the algorithms requires that the design and testing of AI systems cause fairness and equity in educational outcomes. To mitigate algorithmic bias, AI systems should be trained on diverse datasets that reflect the student population's diversity. Regular bias testing and algorithm adjustments should be conducted. Institutions should collaborate with AI developers to ensure fairness and transparency in AI models.

However, the readiness of the instructors and students in that score was never uniform. This underpins a call for training and setting up support systems towards making the realization of AI and the application of AI tools feasible [70]. Therefore, instructors need some training so that they get the skills needed to be able to integrate AI tools into their teaching. On the other hand, learners also have to support their work in the realization of learning gains by the application of these tools. Comprehensive training programs should be developed for faculty and students to familiarize them with AI tools and their benefits. Institutions should provide continuous support and resources to facilitate the adoption of AI technologies. Peer mentoring and workshops can also help build confidence and competence in using AI.

The faculty and students further show wide variations in readiness toward embracing these technologies, giving the justification for putting proper, full-fledged training and support mechanisms in place [71]. The onus should now fall on the faculty to ensure they are fully trained in how to leverage AI tools in teaching so that they learn how best they can initiate the same tools for full benefit among the students, who also have to be well-supported accordingly. AI should be positioned as a tool to augment, not replace, human educators. Clear guidelines and ethical frameworks should be established to ensure accountability in AI applications. Institutions should promote the ethical use of AI through policies, training, and transparent practices.

5 DISCUSSION

This section integrates the findings of the systematic review with established theoretical frameworks and identifies implications for future research and practical application.

5.1 Theoretical implications

Constructivist Learning Theory: Many of the analyzed studies highlight the role of AI technologies, such as intelligent tutoring systems, in providing personalized and adaptive learning environments. This aligns with constructivist learning theory, which posits that learning is most effective when students can interact with the material in contextually relevant ways. The data shows that AI systems are facilitating environments where students build knowledge through tailored experiences, thus supporting the theoretical claims of constructivist learning. For example, ITS can adapt to a student's learning pace, provide real-time feedback, and offer additional resources, enabling students to construct knowledge more effectively [2].

Cognitive Load Theory: The findings also relate to cognitive load theory, particularly through studies that explore the use of AI in managing the informational content delivered to students. AI technologies are designed to optimize the presentation of information, reducing unnecessary cognitive load and allowing intrinsic and germane loads to be managed more effectively. This is evident in systems that adapt the difficulty level of tasks based on the learner's performance, directly influencing cognitive load and aligning with the theory's guidelines for educational design. For instance, adaptive learning platforms can personalize content delivery, ensuring that students are not overwhelmed with information, thereby enhancing learning efficiency [21].

Self-Determination Theory: According to self-determination theory, optimal learning occurs when the educational environment supports autonomy, competence, and relatedness. AI technologies, particularly those that offer personalized learning paths and adaptive feedback systems, enhance students' feelings of competence and autonomy. Several studies indicate that such systems increase student engagement and motivation by providing choices in learning paths and timely feedback, supporting the theory's emphasis on fulfilling basic psychological needs. For example, AI-driven platforms such as Duolingo allow students to learn at their own pace and receive instant feedback, fostering a sense of control and accomplishment [72].

TPACK Framework: The integration of AI technologies in various disciplines such as engineering and health education illustrates the application of the TPACK framework. AI tools are being used not only for content delivery but also for enhancing pedagogical strategies, which is consistent with TPACK's advocacy for the intersection of technology with pedagogy and content knowledge. AI tools can improve teaching performance by providing teachers with insights into student learning patterns, enabling them to tailor their instructional strategies more effectively. For instance, AI-driven analytics can identify areas where students struggle, allowing teachers to focus on these areas and improve overall instructional effectiveness. Additionally, AI tools can automate routine tasks such as grading, giving teachers more time to engage with students and develop innovative teaching methods [73].

UTAUT: The acceptance and use of AI technologies, as evidenced in the geographical spread and depth of integration in different educational systems, can be analyzed through the lens of the UTAUT. Factors such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions that are documented in the studies suggest varying degrees of technology acceptance, aligning with UTAUT's propositions. Teachers who perceive AI tools as easy to use and beneficial for their instructional practices are more likely to adopt these technologies. Training and support mechanisms can further enhance their willingness to integrate AI into their teaching, ultimately leading to improved teaching performance [74].

5.2 Future directions and research gaps

- Technological advancements: There is a need for more sophisticated AI systems that are sensitive to the diverse needs of students. Research should focus on developing AI that can dynamically adjust to various learning styles and cultural backgrounds [75].
- Longitudinal studies: To better understand the long-term impacts of AI on education, longitudinal studies are required. These studies will provide deeper insights into how AI technologies influence learning outcomes over time [75].
- Emotional and social support: Future AI systems should extend beyond academic support to include emotional and social dimensions. Integrating AI with technologies such as VR and AR could create immersive learning experiences that support a broader range of student needs [36].
- Ethical considerations: As AI becomes more embedded in educational contexts, ongoing research into ethical concerns, such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and transparency, is essential. Developing robust frameworks for AI governance in education will be critical to ensuring that these technologies are used responsibly and equitably [76].

The integration of AI in education, as revealed through this systematic review, not only supports several theoretical educational frameworks but also opens new avenues for enriching and expanding the learning experience. As AI technologies evolve, so too must our strategies for their implementation, ensuring they align with both pedagogical principles and ethical standards. The potential of AI to revolutionize education is immense, but its realization will depend on our continued commitment to thoughtful, theory-informed practice and research.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The synthesis was current research in a systematic review of literature on AI-based technologies in university education, the possible range of AI applications in the educational sector, its effectiveness in resulting in educational outcomes, and the gaps identified in the literature. Such AI technologies as ITS, machine learning algorithms, NLP tools, and adaptive programs have been pointed to as major contributors to personalized learning, better student outcomes, and streamlining administrative processes. AI-driven platforms such as MATHia and Duolingo have demonstrated significant improvements in student proficiency and language acquisition, respectively. Adaptive learning tools such as Smart Sparrow have shown effectiveness in tailoring educational content to individual learning paces, leading to higher engagement and retention. There are, however, specific challenges in using AI for further application in higher education, including data privacy, algorithm bias, and infrastructural requirements. Addressing these challenges through robust policies, diverse datasets, and comprehensive training programs is essential for maximizing the benefits of AI in education.

6.1 Policy and practice recommendations

The following are some crucial recommendations generated from the findings of the Systematic Literature Review for the best implementation and usage of AI technologies in university education to educators, administrators, and policymakers. Firstly, investment in infrastructure and training should be prioritized. This will be through giving the required resources to construct the needed technological infrastructure and complete training programs for both teachers and learners so that implementation and use of AI tools do not go to waste. Providing continuous support and resources can help build confidence and competence among faculty and students in using AI technologies effectively.

Assurance of solid data privacy. Policies for the safeguarding of student data and effective enforcement have to be put in such a way that the AI systems in education have to go through rigid legal and ethical scenarios of data privacy. Institutions should implement robust data protection policies in line with global standards such as GDPR and conduct regular audits to ensure data security. However, one should also focus on algorithmic bias. In that sense, they show how to create guidelines and practices that tend to raise and reduce bias in AI systems so that all students are treated fairly and equally. Collaborating with AI developers to train systems on diverse datasets and conducting regular bias testing can help ensure fairness and equity in educational outcomes.

Collaboration with the developers of AI and institutions in the educational sector. These parties would give a starting point for the development of AI tools that will work in such a setting. This collaboration can foster the creation of AI systems that are tailored to the specific needs of the educational environment, enhancing their effectiveness and acceptance.

Finally, the promotion of continuous research and evaluation should be targeted towards best practices, long-term impacts of AI technologies, and opportunities for constant build-up. The effort in research will ensure that developed AI tools are robust, current, and suit the higher educational demands. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into the sustained impacts of AI on educational outcomes, guiding future developments and implementations.

With such recommendations, stakeholders will be able to revolutionize university education, considering student outcomes and administrative processes eased across AI. By addressing the identified gaps and challenges and by leveraging the strengths of AI technologies, higher education institutions can create more effective, engaging, and equitable learning environments.

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9 AUTHORS

Dinara Kazimova is with the Karaganda University of the name of academician E.A.Buketov, Karaganda, Kazakhstan.

Gulmira Tazhigulova is with the Karaganda University of the name of academician E.A.Buketov, Karaganda, Kazakhstan (E-mail: tazhigulova_gulmira@buketov.edu.kz).

Gulmira Shraimanova is with the Karaganda University of Kazpotrebsoyuz, Karaganda, Kazakhstan.

Anatoly Zatyneyko is with the Karaganda University of the name of academician E.A.Buketov, Karaganda, Kazakhstan.

Adilzada Sharzadin is with the Karaganda University of the name of academician E.A.Buketov, Karaganda, Kazakhstan.