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Exploring School Psychologists' Views on AI in Education: A Qualitative Study

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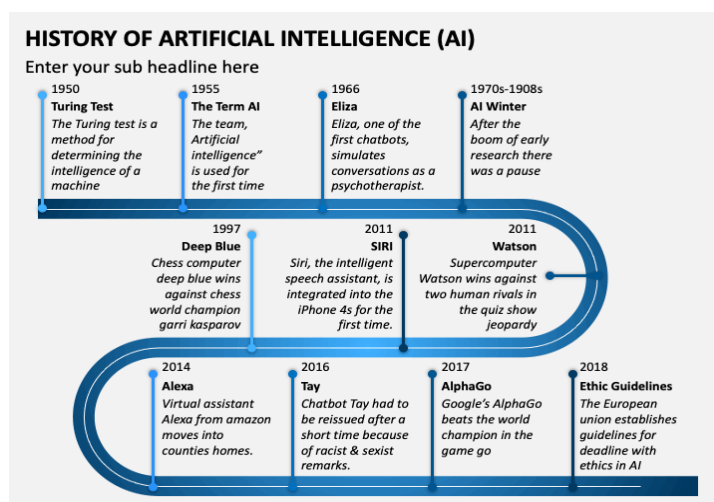
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ABSTRACT: Artificial Intelligence (AI) encompasses various techniques and methods that enable computers to mimic human cognitive functions to address specific problems. The incorporation of artificial intelligence technology in multiple fields is now experiencing significant interest, particularly in education. This study examined 20 school psychologist and their beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the status of AI (Artificial intelligence). A qualitative examination of interview methods on school psychologists' responses provided an understanding of the current state of opportunities and challenges in AI integration in school education and students' holistic development. The analysis of the interview data was conducted using a thematic analysis method, allowing for the identification of prevailing themes. In this study, twenty school psychologists across Mumbai city were interviewed regarding their views and experiences relating to AI and NEP. Results highlighted: 1) Identified common challenges (e.g., privacy, training, infrastructure). 2) Evaluated opportunities (e.g., mental health support, personalized learning).

INTRODUCTION

The era we are all living in, the way we live, work, communicate, and exchange information, is called the digital age. In everyday life, we use mobile phones and excessively use the internet for academic-related work and office-related work. Every industry nowadays uses technology. In the healthcare sector, there is a drastic change. Artificial intelligence (AI) changes human life significantly. After the development of AI was implemented in India, we can see many changes related to information and technology in the education field. It has been noticed that technology plays a vital role in the school setting. Currently, a new era of technology and training of vocational programs has been established through the Education Policy. How digital technology impacts the field of education because it is key to success. As we all know, we are implementing the National Education Policy in India; this policy has a dynamic approach to the Indian education system. Policy related to education helps us understand how we can build a strong nation in terms of education in this new era introduced by “Artificial Intelligence.” AI has a long history. With the times, AI has changed in many ways, and we are trying to incorporate AI in school settings for educational purposes. Moreover, it will help to build connectivity, learn new things, and expand knowledge.

Educational psychology refers to the science of studying various psychological and behavioral laws in educational practice in a broad sense. It can reveal the nature of learning outcomes, explain the learning process, and clarify the conditions and principles of effective learning. (Xin Wei 2021). In addition, an important role of educational psychology is to track students' mastery of knowledge. Bloom's model describes the process of students mastering knowledge in detail with six levels, including three low levels (knowledge, comprehension, and application) and three high levels (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). Teachers need to focus on incorporating the higher-order cognitive process into teaching and learning assessment, thereby ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary problem-solving and critical-thinking skills (Swart, 2009).



Theoretical background of the based on the artificial intelligence is the trending technology nowadays, but it is not a new technology. It was started in 1943 by Warren McCulloch and Walter Pitts. After that, Donald Hebb, in 1949, discovered a formula to strengthen the connection between artificial neurons called Hebbian learning. Then Alan Turing's 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence' was published. Here, it is seen that a machine can perform the tasks of intelligence on par with humans. Then Allen Newell and Herbert A. Simon developed the first artificial intelligence program in 1955, named 'Logic Theorist'.

Artificial intelligence in education has remarkable changes for India to become the global leader for education. The policy focuses on many areas such as online teaching and learning tools, virtual laboratories, infrastructure for the digital age, and dedicated digital education units. Infrastructure for the Digital Age- The educational policy proposes the establishment of a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to facilitate the exchange of ideas in education. The policy related to AI in education proposes the establishment of a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices for applying technology in education. It also calls for creating digital infrastructure in schools, including broadband internet connectivity, to ensure access to digital resources, which will entail investing in developing digital infrastructure accessible to the public across various platforms. The educational institute proposes the establishment of a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices for applying technology in education. It also calls for creating digital infrastructure in schools and colleges, including broadband internet connectivity, to ensure access to digital resources, which will entail investing (Navshad & Husain, 2024). In the India school education policy talks about virtual laboratories, online assessment, and evaluation, and establishes a dedicated digital education unit.

AI in education mentioned that the teacher training program and the motto behind it enhanced digital literacy and competency among teachers by integrating digital tools. The most important thing, after understanding the dynamic nature of AI in education and also the importance of teacher training programs, we need to give importance to the school psychologists who are also part of the school setting and make valuable contributions to the students' well-being. This study aims to highlight the challenges, opportunities, and their subjective views on AI in education for school psychologists.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the study are given below:

1. To explore the subjective views of the school psychologist on AI in the school setting.

2. To explore school psychologists' attitudes, perceptions, and awareness of AI in the school setting.

Inclusion Criteria:

The inclusion criteria for the study are given below:

1. The participants are from the metropolitan city of India.
2. School psychologists are from a private school in India.
3. The age range of the participants is 24 to 35 years old

METHOD:

This study used snowball sampling to select the 20 participants who met the inclusion criteria of the study. These individuals were school psychologists from urban areas with expertise in working in the school counseling setting and using AI in the school setting. The participants in the study were between 24 to 35 years old. The study used semi-structured interviews to collect the data from the informants. Interviews were conducted individually, virtually, and lasted approximately 30- 40 minutes. During the data collection process, the interview sessions were audio-recorded to capture participants' responses and insights accurately. These recordings were later transcribed verbatim, allowing a comprehensive analysis of the data collected.

Data analysis:

A systematic analysis approach was used to ensure reliability and validity. Data were coded using a combination of inductive and deductive methods. First, an open coding process was conducted in which researchers generated initial codes by closely examining the data and labeling meaningful segments. As the analysis progressed, these codes were refined, grouped, and organized into categories and subcategories, creating a coding framework. After coding, researchers conducted a thematic analysis by identifying overarching themes from the data. The topics represented vital concepts, ideas, and perspectives shared by participants regarding AI in the school psychologist setting and focused on the objective of the study throughout the analysis process.

Ethical consideration:

The study adhered to ethical guidelines for conducting research with human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants' privacy and confidentiality were protected throughout the research process.

THEME	SUB-THEME	QUOTE
Education	Inclusive and flexible	So it has helped in making education more inclusive and flexible. For the educational system to be more student-centric, rather than it less than it is like just study-based, kind of like not focused on how students would like it to be.
Technology	Digital learning	Technology has helped every student to grow; there is a lot of information available through which they can have development, through which they can go and search for a lot of information, and AI and digital learning have always integrated technology in Education, which has improved their usefulness and included digital infrastructure.
Peer Learning	Presentation of the topic	Students nowadays do a lot of research, and more peer learning goes on, even many times when we give them presentations like this is certain topics you would be teaching in the class rather than a teacher.

Disadvantage of AI	Blocking creativity	While coming up with disadvantages. Many times I feel that, like the child GPT or Gemini or this somewhere, it drops the creativity of the students. Now what has happened is, do we tell them you think, you imagine, create their own stories. It may times happen that as they know there are just tools available and accessible to them.
Well-being	Development of students	Well-being students' development, yeah, it is a big benefit for the development, because getting a lot of information, thinking new things, maybe going somewhere out of the box, and thinking what more they can add on to whatever is there currently, right now, getting a lot of research scope, that is one thing which I feel is very much great for the development of the student.
Personalized learning	New languages	Okay, so AI, with the use of AI, personalized learning can happen to a very great extent. Students, like using different applications and many whatever things are available, can learn different n numbers of students, even they, can learn new languages and many more things using the online applications and whatever the courses are available,
School counsellor	Job responsibilities	Indian scenario as of now, school counselor is not just a school counselor. The school counselor is given a number of allied responsibilities where the counselor gets stuck so much into the responsibilities. So what their job profile is becomes way different than what they're actually doing.
Indian system	students	Again, some very Indian system needs to be worked upon. The counselor should be kept just to counsel the students and no other things.
Emotion	Computer learnings	Now, if we see AI like tags, basically, so there is no person behind it. Is everything computerized, what we have for total, I don't know how far that AI would be able to empathize with that side, how much emotion, the emotional human can understand the computer cannot
Rural area	AI connectivity	AI net connectivity in a place where there is no net connectivity, no any kind of house to get a Wi Fi also, then, how can an AI can play a role.

FINDINGS

Education and technology are both crucial in the 21st century. The implementation of the National Education Policy is bringing significant changes to school settings. Understanding the mental health perspectives of students highlights the important role that school psychologists play in the lives of school children. Students today are increasingly exposed to technology, which can

impact their well-being. Most schools now have school psychologists available to support students. However, if artificial intelligence (AI) is implemented in the school psychologist environment, it is essential to remember that students still need a human touch to understand emotions and respond appropriately. AI is simply a machine that operates based on human-created coding. There are disadvantages to using AI in school settings; for instance, it may hinder students' creativity. Many students tend to copy and paste ideas from tools like ChatGPT and other AI resources. Technology has both positive and negative aspects. While AI technology may affect students' well-being at times, it ultimately holds potential for growth and development in their overall well-being experiences in a safe environment.

One possibility is to offer customized online sessions that address specific topics relevant to students' needs and interests, such as mental health awareness, coping strategies, and study skills. Research has shown that the physical presence of a counselor can significantly increase a student's comfort level, encouraging open communication and trust. This human connection is often more effective than interactions with AI alone. In this blended model, group sessions led by a physical counselor can be combined with insights from an online counselor. For instance, a physical counselor could facilitate discussions around life skills, allowing students to connect with their peers and share experiences in a safe environment. The online counselor can provide additional resources and strategies that students can explore at their own pace. Moreover, the physical counselor can also reinforce the online learning by discussing the content, addressing any questions, and introducing supplementary topics that arise from ongoing interactions with the students. However, it is crucial to strike a balance when using AI for educational purposes. While AI can streamline processes and provide valuable information, there is a risk that it may inhibit students' ability to think critically or express their personal opinions.

DISCUSSION:

In exploring the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into school counseling, it is important to consider a model where schools have dedicated counselors, supplemented by AI tools designed to enhance the overall counseling experience. This approach allows for a more personalized and versatile form of support for students.

Students might become overly reliant on AI for answers, leading to a reduction in independent thought and creativity. To mitigate these risks, comprehensive training sessions for both students and teachers are essential. These sessions should focus on educating participants about the capabilities and limitations of AI, encouraging them to view these tools as aids rather than replacements for human interaction. Training can also promote skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, and self-advocacy, ensuring that students understand the importance of maintaining their unique perspectives and voices. As I mentioned earlier, over-dependence on AI can result in adverse effects, such as diminished human connection and personal insight. Conducting regular workshops and discussions will empower both students and teachers to navigate the integration of AI in a way that enhances learning while preserving the essential elements of human interaction and emotional intelligence. By fostering a collaborative environment that includes both human support and AI resources, we can create a more enriching counseling experience for all students.

CONCLUSION:

The concerns and challenges regarding the use of AI in schools are diverse in nature. Consider aspects such as privacy, training, infrastructure, and more. Although I don't have direct experience, I think it's important to discuss several key points. Training should be provided on privacy concerns related to AI. As we navigate the internet and various digital platforms, issues like cyber safety come into the picture. It's crucial to ensure that AI does not facilitate any illegal or harmful activities.

The privacy policies in place regarding AI and how we can effectively use AI in educational settings. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding school psychologists' perspectives on AI in education. While AI has the potential to enhance education, its implementation requires careful consideration of ethical implications, student well-being, and equitable access to technology. Continued research and collaborative efforts among stakeholders are crucial for ensuring that AI integration benefits all students and creates a more equitable and effective education system. All of these factors should be included in training sessions for both teachers and students.

LIMITATION:

We need to do qualitative research across Maharashtra states as well as in India to gain more insight into challenges. Moreover, we can conduct quantitative research for some concrete statistical pieces of evidence to suggest new changes in the policy. This study highlighted that we have to gather data on rural pollution in India to understand the opportunities and challenges.

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