SOUTHEAST ASIAN JOURNAL OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Volume 9, Issue 1, 2024
P-ISSN: 2672-2984
E-ISSN: 2672-2992
www.sajst.org

The Double-Edged Sword: A Review of Artificial Intelligence Integration in the Philippine Educational System

Jb O. Doria[1]
Pangasinan State University

Article Info:
Received: ***10 June 2024;*** *Revised:* ***05 Nov 2024;*** *Accepted:* ***01 Dec 2024;*** *Available Online:* ***15 Jan 2025***

Abstract – *The rapid global ascent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents both profound opportunities and significant challenges for educational systems worldwide. In the Philippines, a nation characterized by a burgeoning youth population and a developing digital infrastructure, the integration of AI into education is a subject of escalating importance. This review article synthesizes the current landscape of AI adoption within the Philippine educational system, from basic to tertiary levels, following the IMRAD (Introduction, Methodology, Results and Discussion, and Conclusion) format. The study's objective is to provide a comprehensive overview of the prevailing trends, benefits, and challenges of AI in this specific context, with a particular focus on the intertwined issue of cybersecurity. This article is a literature review, employing a thematic analysis of peer-reviewed research articles published between 2020 and 2025. The results are organized into key themes: AI-driven pedagogical and administrative innovations, persistent socio-economic and infrastructural barriers, the nascent ethical and policy landscape, and the critical cybersecurity challenges in a digitized educational environment. Findings indicate that while AI offers promising avenues for personalized learning, automated assessment, and administrative efficiency, its implementation is significantly hampered by the digital divide, a lack of comprehensive teacher training, and the absence of robust institutional policies. Concurrently, the increasing reliance on digital platforms has exposed the education sector to a heightened risk of cyber threats, including phishing, malware attacks, and data breaches, which often outpace the development of adequate cybersecurity measures. The article concludes that for the Philippines to harness the transformative potential of AI in education, a multi-pronged approach is essential. Recommendations include substantial government and private sector investment in digital infrastructure, the development of localized and context-aware AI tools, comprehensive and continuous professional development for educators, the establishment of clear ethical guidelines and data privacy protocols, and a significant strengthening of the nation's cybersecurity posture within the educational sphere.*

Keywords – *Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIEd), Philippine Educational System, Cybersecurity, Educational Technology, Digital Divide*

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has been undeniably marked by the pervasive influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), a transformative technology that is reshaping industries, economies, and the very fabric of daily life. In the realm of education, AI is no longer a futuristic concept but a present-day reality, offering a paradigm shift from traditional, one-size-fits-all instructional models to more personalized, adaptive, and efficient learning experiences. Current global trends in AI in education (AIEd) include the proliferation of intelligent tutoring systems that provide individualized student support, the use of machine learning algorithms for predictive analytics to identify at-risk students, the automation of administrative tasks such as grading to free up educator time, and the creation of immersive learning environments through AI-powered virtual and augmented reality (Ouyang & Jiao, 2021). These

Volume 9, Issue 1, 2024
P-ISSN: 2672-2984
E-ISSN: 2672-2992
www.sajst.org

advancements promise to democratize access to quality education, cater to diverse learning needs, and equip students with the skills required for the future workforce.

The Philippines, with one of the largest and youngest populations in Southeast Asia, stands at a critical juncture in its educational development. The national government has increasingly recognized the potential of technology to address long-standing challenges such as large class sizes, resource disparities between urban and rural areas, and the need to improve learning outcomes. The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) have initiated various programs to integrate technology into the curriculum and administrative processes. The advent of powerful generative AI tools like ChatGPT and Google Gemini has further accelerated this conversation, with educators and students alike beginning to explore their capabilities.

However, the integration of AI into the Philippine educational landscape is a complex endeavor, fraught with both promise and peril. While the potential benefits are substantial, the path to successful adoption is paved with significant obstacles. These include a pronounced digital divide, with inconsistent internet access and a lack of necessary hardware, particularly in remote and underserved communities. There is also a critical need for comprehensive training to equip teachers with the pedagogical and technical skills to effectively utilize AI tools. Furthermore, the ethical implications of AI, such as algorithmic bias, data privacy, and academic integrity, require careful consideration and the development of robust policy frameworks.

A crucial and often-underestimated dimension of this technological shift is cybersecurity. As educational institutions become more reliant on digital infrastructure and collect vast amounts of sensitive data on students and staff, they become increasingly attractive targets for malicious cyber actors. The digitization of records, the proliferation of online learning platforms, and the use of interconnected devices create new vulnerabilities that can be exploited for financial gain, identity theft, or disruption of educational services.

This review article aims to provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of the use of AI in the Philippine educational system. The primary objective is to synthesize the existing scholarly literature to identify the current trends, opportunities, and challenges associated with AI adoption. A significant secondary objective is to specifically investigate and highlight the latest trends in cybersecurity within the Philippine education sector, recognizing its critical importance in ensuring a safe and trustworthy digital learning environment. By examining these interconnected issues, this paper seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of the current state of AIEd in the Philippines and provide evidence-based insights for policymakers, educational leaders, researchers, and practitioners.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to synthesize the current state of Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration within the Philippine educational system, covering all levels from basic to tertiary education. It aims to identify the prevailing trends, benefits, and challenges associated with the adoption of AI in this context. A particular focus is given to examining the critical issue of cybersecurity, especially in light of the increasing reliance on digital platforms in education. Through a thematic analysis of peer-reviewed literature published between 2020 and 2025, the study seeks to analyze AI-driven innovations, socio-economic and infrastructural barriers, emerging ethical and policy concerns, and cybersecurity threats. Ultimately, the study aims to propose strategic and actionable recommendations to enhance AI implementation in Philippine education, emphasizing improvements in policy development, digital infrastructure, teacher training, and cybersecurity measures.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

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P-ISSN: 2672-2984
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This study employed a systematic literature review to synthesize and analyze existing research on the integration of Artificial Intelligence in the Philippine educational system. This methodological approach was chosen for its suitability in providing a comprehensive overview of a research area, identifying key themes and trends, and uncovering gaps in the existing body of knowledge without collecting new empirical data. The review focused exclusively on peer-reviewed research articles to ensure the credibility and academic rigor of the sources. News articles, websites, and other non-academic publications were deliberately excluded to maintain a high standard of evidence.

The literature search was conducted using several academic databases, including Google Scholar, annd other relevant regional academic repositories. The search strategy involved a combination of keywords and their variations, such as: "Artificial Intelligence in Philippine education," "AI in higher education Philippines," "educational technology Philippines," "AI and basic education Philippines," "challenges of AI adoption in the Philippines," "cybersecurity in Philippine schools," "data privacy in Philippine education," and "online learning threats Philippines." The search was limited to articles published between 2020 and 2025 to ensure the inclusion of the most current research, particularly given the rapid advancements in AI and the increased digitization of education following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The selection of articles for inclusion was guided by a set of predefined criteria. Included articles had to: (1) be peer-reviewed research papers; (2) focus on the context of the Philippine educational system (either basic or higher education); (3) address the use, perception, challenges, or implications of AI in education; and/or (4) discuss cybersecurity issues within the Philippine educational context. Articles that were purely theoretical without application to the Philippines, news reports, or from non-reputable sources were excluded. An initial screening of titles and abstracts was conducted, followed by a full-text review of the shortlisted articles to determine their final eligibility.

A thematic analysis approach was used to synthesize the findings from the selected literature. This involved a multi-stage process of familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining themes, and defining and naming the final themes. The identified themes form the structure of the Results and Discussion section of this review. This method allows for a qualitative and in-depth exploration of the prevalent topics and discourses within the research literature, enabling a coherent and structured presentation of the findings. The analysis focused on identifying recurring patterns related to the benefits of AI, the challenges to its implementation, the policy and ethical considerations, and the specific cybersecurity threats and responses within the Philippine educational landscape.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The thematic analysis of the selected research articles reveals several key trends and issues concerning the use of AI in the Philippine educational system. This section presents these findings, organized into four overarching themes: (1) The Promise of AI for Enhanced Pedagogy and Administrative Efficiency; (2) Persistent Socio-economic and Infrastructural Challenges to Equitable AI Adoption; (3) The Developing Landscape of Ethical and Policy Frameworks; and (4) The Critical Imperative of Cybersecurity in a Digitizing Educational Ecosystem.

Theme 1: The Promise of AI for Enhanced Pedagogy and Administrative Efficiency

A significant body of recent research highlights the potential of AI to revolutionize teaching and learning processes in the Philippines. The most frequently cited benefit is the capacity for **personalized and adaptive learning**. AI-driven platforms can analyze student performance data in real-time to identify learning gaps and tailor educational content to

Volume 9, Issue 1, 2024
P-ISSN: 2672-2984
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individual needs and paces (Bautista & Habacon, 2023). This is particularly relevant in the Philippine context, where classrooms are often overcrowded and educators struggle to provide individualized attention. For instance, studies on the use of intelligent tutoring systems in Philippine higher education institutions have shown promise in improving student engagement and comprehension in subjects like mathematics and science (Reyes, 2022).

Another key application is the **automation of administrative tasks**. AI tools can significantly reduce the time educators spend on repetitive tasks such as grading multiple-choice assessments, checking for plagiarism, and managing student records. This administrative relief allows teachers to focus more on instructional design, mentorship, and facilitating higher-order thinking skills among students (De La Cruz & Pineda, 2024). Research by Rodrigo (2024) on supporting basic education teachers in under-resourced contexts suggests that AI-powered tools for automated assessment and data collection could be particularly impactful in the Philippine public school system.

Furthermore, AI is seen as a catalyst for developing **21st-century skills**. The integration of AI tools in project-based learning and research activities can enhance students' digital literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. Students are increasingly using generative AI to brainstorm ideas, synthesize information, and even assist in coding and data analysis, preparing them for a future workforce where human-AI collaboration will be paramount (Santos & Garcia, 2023).

Theme 2: Persistent Socio-economic and Infrastructural Challenges to Equitable AI Adoption

Despite the recognized potential of AI, its widespread and equitable implementation in the Philippines is severely constrained by long-standing issues. The most prominent of these is the **digital divide**. There remains a stark disparity in access to stable internet connectivity and appropriate digital devices between urban and rural areas, and between private and public schools (Corpuz & Salac, 2021). Without equitable access to this fundamental infrastructure, the benefits of AIEd will remain confined to a privileged few, potentially exacerbating existing educational inequalities.

A second major challenge is the **lack of comprehensive teacher training and preparedness**. Many educators in the Philippines feel ill-equipped to integrate AI into their teaching practices effectively. Studies have shown that while many teachers are optimistic about the potential of AI, they lack the necessary technical skills and pedagogical knowledge to move beyond basic use (Magsaysay & Lizada, 2023). This highlights a critical need for sustained, high-quality professional development programs that are context-specific and focus on both the "how" and the "why" of using AI in the classroom.

Finally, the **cost of AI technologies and the localization of content** present significant barriers. The development and procurement of sophisticated AIEd platforms can be prohibitively expensive for many educational institutions, particularly in the public sector. Moreover, many existing AI tools are designed for Western contexts and may not be culturally or linguistically aligned with the needs of Filipino learners (Dizon, 2022). There is a pressing need for more research and development into creating affordable and culturally relevant AI solutions for the Philippine market.

Theme 3: The Developing Landscape of Ethical and Policy Frameworks

The rapid influx of AI technologies has outpaced the development of clear ethical guidelines and institutional policies governing their use. A primary concern is **academic integrity and plagiarism**. The ease with which students can generate text and other content using generative AI has raised significant concerns about cheating and the erosion of critical thinking and writing skills (Alonzo, 2024). Research

Volume 9, Issue 1, 2024
P-ISSN: 2672-2984
E-ISSN: 2672-2992
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indicates that a majority of students are using AI tools for their schoolwork, yet a significant portion are unaware of their institution's policies regarding such use, largely because such policies are often non-existent or unclear (Besa & Calimag, 2023).

Data privacy and security also emerge as a major ethical consideration. AIEd systems often require the collection of vast amounts of student data, from academic performance to behavioral patterns. This raises critical questions about how this data is collected, used, stored, and protected, especially in the context of the Philippines' Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173). Ensuring that student data is not used for commercial exploitation and is protected from breaches is a paramount concern for which many institutions are still unprepared (Ramos & Villanueva, 2025).

The potential for **algorithmic bias** is another significant ethical challenge. AI models trained on biased data can perpetuate and even amplify existing societal inequalities. For example, an AI-powered admission or assessment tool could inadvertently discriminate against students from certain socio-economic backgrounds or geographical regions if not carefully designed and audited (Medina & Ong, 2024). The development of fair, transparent, and accountable AI systems is therefore crucial.

In response, there are nascent efforts by government bodies like the DepEd to formulate policies for the responsible use of AI. However, these are still in the early stages, and there is a clear need for a more cohesive national strategy and for individual institutions to develop and enforce their own clear and comprehensive AI usage policies.

Theme 4: The Critical Imperative of Cybersecurity in a Digitizing Educational Ecosystem

Directly linked to the challenges of AI adoption is the escalating threat to cybersecurity within the Philippine education sector. As schools and universities digitize their operations, they become more vulnerable to a range of cyberattacks. The latest trends identified in the literature point to several key areas of concern:

- **Phishing and Social Engineering:** These remain the most common attack vectors. Malicious actors frequently target students and staff with deceptive emails and messages designed to steal login credentials for learning management systems, school portals, and email accounts. The lack of robust cybersecurity awareness training makes the educational community particularly susceptible to these attacks (Natonton, 2022).
- **Malware and Ransomware Attacks:** The education sector is increasingly being targeted by ransomware, where attackers encrypt institutional data and demand a ransom for its release. Such attacks can cripple school operations, lead to significant financial loss, and result in the breach of sensitive student and employee information (De Ramos & Esponilla, 2021). The reliance on outdated software and inadequate network security in many institutions exacerbates this risk.
- **Data Breaches and Unauthorized Access:** With the centralization of student records, financial information, and intellectual property in digital databases, the risk of large-scale data breaches has grown. These breaches can result from external hacking or insider threats. The consequences are severe, ranging from identity theft to reputational damage for the institution (Velasco & Tiu, 2023).
- **Lack of Institutional Preparedness:** A recurring finding is that many Philippine educational institutions lack a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy. This includes a shortage of skilled cybersecurity personnel, insufficient investment in security technologies like firewalls and intrusion detection systems, and a failure to implement basic security practices such as multi-factor authentication and regular data backups (Quisumbing, 2022). Furthermore, there is a significant gap in cybersecurity education and awareness programs for both students and staff, who represent the first line of defense.

Volume 9, Issue 1, 2024
P-ISSN: 2672-2984
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www.sajst.org

The convergence of AI and cybersecurity presents a dual challenge: while AI can be used to enhance cybersecurity defences (e.g., through threat detection and automated response), the AI systems themselves can become targets or be used by malicious actors to launch more sophisticated attacks. Therefore, securing the digital infrastructure is a prerequisite for the safe and effective implementation of any AI-driven educational initiative.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The integration of Artificial Intelligence into the Philippine educational system presents a compelling, albeit complex, vision for the future. This review of recent scholarly literature reveals a landscape of immense potential tempered by significant and deeply rooted challenges. AI offers transformative tools to personalize learning, streamline administrative burdens, and cultivate future-ready skills among Filipino students. However, the promise of these innovations is contingent upon overcoming the formidable barriers of the digital divide, inadequate teacher preparedness, and the high cost of technology. More critically, the accelerated push towards digitization, powered by AI, has concurrently amplified the sector's vulnerability to a host of cybersecurity threats, ranging from phishing and malware to catastrophic data breaches.

The findings indicate that while there is growing enthusiasm for AI, the foundational pillars required for its successful and equitable implementation are not yet firmly in place. The lack of comprehensive national policies, clear institutional guidelines, and robust cybersecurity infrastructure creates a precarious environment where the risks could potentially overshadow the benefits. The ethical dimensions of AI, particularly concerning academic integrity, data privacy, and algorithmic bias, require a proactive and culturally-attuned approach that is still in its infancy within the Philippine context.

To navigate this double-edged sword and steer the Philippine educational system towards a future where AI serves as a genuine force for equitable and quality education, a concerted and strategic effort is required from all stakeholders. Based on the thematic analysis of the research, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Policymakers (DepEd, CHED, DICT):

1. **Bridge the Digital Divide:** Prioritize and accelerate public-private partnerships to expand affordable and reliable internet access and provide necessary digital devices to students and teachers in underserved areas.
2. **Develop a National AIEd Strategy:** Formulate a clear and comprehensive national roadmap for AI in education that includes ethical guidelines, data privacy standards compliant with the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and benchmarks for successful integration.
3. **Mandate and Fund Cybersecurity Initiatives:** Allocate specific funding for cybersecurity infrastructure upgrades in public schools and state universities. Mandate regular cybersecurity audits and the development of incident response plans for all educational institutions.

For Educational Institutions (Schools, Colleges, and Universities):

1. **Invest in Continuous Professional Development:** Implement sustained, practical, and pedagogy-focused training programs for educators on how to effectively and ethically integrate AI tools into their teaching.
2. **Establish Clear Institutional Policies:** Develop, disseminate, and enforce clear policies on the acceptable use of AI by students and faculty, addressing issues of academic integrity, data privacy, and ethical conduct.
3. **Strengthen Cybersecurity Posture:** Implement multi-layered security measures, including firewalls, regular software updates, multi-factor authentication, and routine data backups. Conduct regular cybersecurity awareness campaigns for all members of the academic community.

For Researchers and Developers:

1. **Promote Contextualized AI Research:** Focus research efforts on the specific challenges and opportunities of AI in the Philippine context, including longitudinal studies on the impact of AI on learning outcomes and socio-emotional development.
2. **Develop Localized and Affordable AI Tools:** Innovate and create AI-powered educational tools that are culturally relevant, available in local languages, and affordable for the Philippine market.

By adopting a proactive, informed, and collaborative approach, the Philippines can harness the power of AI not just to modernize its educational system, but to make it more inclusive, effective, and secure for all Filipino learners. The journey is challenging, but the potential to transform the nation's future through education makes it a necessary and worthwhile endeavour.

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Volume 9, Issue 1, 2024
P-ISSN: 2672-2984
E-ISSN: 2672-2992
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PLEASE INCLUDE CONTACT INFORMATION:
NAME: JB O. DORIA
CONTACT NO: +63915-4375-222
EMAIL ADDRESS: JB@PSU.EDU.PH