

ETHICS MEETS INTELLIGENCE: RETHINKING VALUES EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly integrated into education, it changes not only how students learn but also the value system they must navigate. This paper explores the growing need to rethink values education in response to the ethical challenges posed by AI. Traditional moral instruction, while still valuable, is insufficient for addressing issues such as data privacy, surveillance, and questions surrounding authorship and intellectual ownership. The study underscores the importance of equipping students with ethical reasoning skills, critical thinking, and AI literacy to prepare them for responsible digital citizenship. It highlights how AI, though beneficial in personalizing learning and improving efficiency, can also perpetuate discrimination and erode trust if used without ethical oversight. By integrating digital ethics across curricula and promoting cross-disciplinary teamwork among educators, technologists, and ethicists, schools can better prepare students for the complexities of the AI age. The study recommended embedding ethics in STEM education, promoting early and continuous ethical education, involving community stakeholders, and establishing national policies to ensure responsible AI use.

Keywords: *Ethics, Values Education, Artificial Intelligence, Rethinking Education, Ethical Values*

Introduction

Education is a powerful tool that influences individuals and build a better society. It teaches young people important skills, good behaviour and how to make the right choices. Today, however, education is changing because of new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is now used in schools, workplaces, healthcare, and even in making important decisions. While it brings many benefits, it also raises serious concerns about privacy, fairness and responsibility. These challenges show that students need more than just basic knowledge, they also need to learn how to think clearly about right and wrong in a world influenced by AI.

Many young people use AI tools daily, but they may not fully understand how these tools work or the values behind them. Traditional ways of teaching morals may not prepare students for the difficult choices they face in the digital world. That is why values education must grow and change. It should help students develop strong thinking skills, understand digital ethics, and learn how to make good decisions with the help of technology. This paper explores how values education can be improved to meet the demands of the AI age and how teachers, schools, and leaders can guide students to become responsible and ethical users of technology.

Conceptual Clarifications

Artificial Intelligence: Artificial intelligence (AI) refers the simulation of human intelligence in machines programmed to think, learn, and perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence such as understanding natural language, recognizing patterns, solving problems, and making decisions (Nwogbo, Agogbua & Anierobi, 2024). These tasks include learning, problem-solving, decision-making, and even understanding language. Anierobi et al. (2025) explained that

Artificial intelligence is the ability of machines to think, learn, and perform tasks that usually require human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognizing patterns, solving problems, and making decisions.

In education, AI is used in tools like virtual tutors, smart learning platforms, and apps that give personalized lessons. With the rise of AI solutions, it is important for educational institutions, especially in Nigeria, to begin to embrace the new trend. Omojuwon and Ojo (2021) noted that AI systems are designed to learn from data, adapt to new inputs, and perform tasks autonomously to mimic human cognitive functions. However, it is important to understand how these technologies work and the values they are built upon, so that students and teachers can use them wisely, ethically, and responsibly to ensure that educational goals remain inclusive, human-centered and equity-driven.

Values Education: Values education is the process of teaching and instilling moral principles, character development, and socially responsible behavior in learners. It aims to equip students with the ability to distinguish right from wrong, show empathy, respect diversity, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Dolgun and Dolgun (2018) noted that by encouraging a sense of integrity, responsibility, and fairness, values education helps influence individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also guided by strong ethical standards. In today's digital era, especially with the growing presence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), values education takes on an even more critical role. It must prepare learners to engage with technology in ways that are thoughtful, ethical, and socially conscious. As students interact with AI tools and digital platforms, they need to understand the ethical implications of data use, privacy, and the importance of human

judgment. In the view of Aneja (2014), instilling these values ensures that technology enhances education without compromising human dignity or societal trust.

Ethics and Ethical Reasoning: Ethics in education means learning the difference between right and wrong and using that knowledge to make good choices in school and in life. It involves thinking about how our actions affect others and trying to do what is fair and honest. Gülcan (2015) noted that ethics has become important in education, because education is a fundamental process of human life. Therefore, ethics is very important subject in education as it helps students become people who care about justice, kindness, and truth. On the other hand, ethical reasoning is the ability to think carefully about what is right or wrong in a given situation, especially when there are competing interests or no clear answers. In the context of AI, ethical reasoning involves questioning how technologies affect people, who benefits or suffers from their use, and whether such tools align with societal values.

The Impact of AI on Education

Artificial Intelligence is transforming the learning environment and broader society in significant ways. In schools, AI-powered tools enhance learning experiences through personalized instruction, adaptive assessment, and real-time feedback. Systems such as intelligent tutoring programs can tailor content to individual learners' needs, while data-driven platforms help educators track performance and identify areas for intervention (Onu & Mbah, 2021). These innovations improve efficiency, promote learner engagement, and support evidence-based decision-making. In the constantly evolving landscape of education, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as both a beacon of hope and a source of consternation for educators around the

globe. Ezeani and Ibegbunam (2020) noted that as we revolving through this digital revolution, the challenge before every educator is to how effectively we can make the use of AI in education and Administration. In recent years, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force across multiple industries, and education is no exception.

However, the use of AI also presents complex ethical and social challenges. Many AI systems operate through algorithms trained on large datasets, which may contain hidden biases. This can lead to discriminatory outcomes, especially in admissions, grading, or disciplinary decisions. In addition, the collection and analysis of student data raise serious concerns about privacy and consent. Questions of intellectual ownership also emerge when AI generates content traditionally produced by humans. Surveillance technologies powered by AI, such as facial recognition in schools, risk normalizing constant monitoring and reducing trust in the learning environment.

Real-life examples highlight the urgency of addressing these issues. For instance, some educational platforms have been criticized for unfairly flagging students for cheating based on flawed AI detection systems. In broader society, AI hiring tools have been found to disadvantage certain demographic groups. Such scenarios reveal the dangers of relying on systems that lack human empathy or context-based understanding (Yaseen, Ishaq & Mahmood, 2022). Failing to incorporate ethical education in the development and use of AI can lead to long-term consequences. Without proper guidance, students may grow up accepting unethical digital practices as normal, while teacher and developers may unintentionally perpetuate harm. Therefore, the integration of ethics into education is not optional, it is essential to ensure that technology enhances rather than undermines human dignity, fairness, and societal well-being.

The Ethical Challenges of AI in Education

As Artificial Intelligence becomes more embedded in education and daily life, it introduces a number of ethical challenges that demand urgent attention. These challenges go beyond technical concerns, they touch on human rights, social justice, and the fundamental values that guide our communities and institutions.

- 1. Data Privacy and Surveillance Concerns:** AI systems often rely on massive amounts of data to function effectively. In educational settings, this can involve collecting sensitive information about students' performance, behaviour, and even emotional states (Raja Yusof, Qazi & Inayat, 2017). While this data can help improve learning, it also raises serious privacy issues. When students are monitored through AI-enabled tools such as facial recognition or activity tracking software, it may lead to a culture of surveillance, potentially violating their right to privacy and creating a sense of constant scrutiny.
- 2. Bias and Discrimination in Algorithms:** AI systems are only as fair as the data they are trained on. If the training data includes biases whether racial, gender-based, socio-economic, or otherwise, the AI may replicate or even amplify those biases. In education, this can result in unfair grading, biased learning recommendations, or unequal access to resources (Isabella, Desirée, Rénette, Soha & Andrea, 2024). These hidden forms of discrimination can perpetuate inequality and erode trust in technological tools meant to support learning.
- 3. Dependence and Dehumanization:** While AI can enhance educational processes, over-reliance on these systems risks reducing human interaction and emotional intelligence in

teaching. The student-teacher relationship plays a critical role in moral and emotional development, something AI cannot replicate. When schools lean too heavily on technology, there is a danger of dehumanizing education, treating students as data points rather than individuals with unique needs and values.

4. Intellectual Ownership and Authorship Dilemmas: With AI generating content such as essays, art, or code, questions arise about who owns the output. Should credit go to the student who prompted the AI, the developer of the tool, or the system itself? These dilemmas complicate traditional understandings of creativity, originality, and academic integrity. They also challenge educators to rethink how assessment and authorship are defined in the digital age.

Rethinking Values Education in the Age of AI

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence into education and everyday life has exposed the limitations of traditional values education frameworks. These frameworks often focus on general moral teachings and character development but may not adequately address the complex ethical issues that arise in digital and AI-driven environments (Wambugu, 2020). As AI systems increasingly influence decisions, behaviors, and even relationships, it becomes clear that values education must evolve to remain relevant and effective.

To respond to this challenge, there is a need to move beyond passive moral instruction toward active ethical engagement. Rather than simply teaching students what is “right” or “wrong,” education should encourage them to question, debate, and reflect on real-world ethical dilemmas involving AI. This includes scenarios such as whether it is fair to let algorithms grade essays,

how surveillance tools affect student freedom, or who is responsible for biased outcomes in automated systems (Oluwatobi & Adekunle, 2021). Such critical engagement helps students develop ethical reasoning skills that go beyond memorizing moral rules.

Central to this shift is an emphasis on digital ethics, critical thinking, and AI literacy. Students must learn not only how AI works but also how it shapes society, influences behavior, and impacts fairness and accountability. AI literacy involves understanding the capabilities and limits of these systems, while digital ethics equips learners to make responsible choices in a connected world (Eke & Eke, 2022). Integrating these topics into everyday classroom discussions prepares students to navigate technology ethically and wisely.

Ethics must be embedded into STEM and technology-based curricula, not treated as an optional add-on. As future engineers, scientists, and developers are influenced in classrooms today, it is essential that they graduate with a sense of responsibility for how their creations affect society. Interdisciplinary collaboration between ethicists, educators, and technologists can ensure that future innovations reflect not only technical excellence but also human values.

Recommendations

To effectively align education with the ethical demands of the AI era, a coordinated and proactive approach is required. The following recommendations offer actionable steps for educators, curriculum developers, policymakers, and institutions to ensure that values education remains relevant and impactful in the age of artificial intelligence:

1. Ethical issues related to AI should be introduced early and consistently across all levels of education through age-appropriate discussions on privacy, bias, responsibility, and digital fairness. Rather than being taught as a standalone subject, ethics should be integrated across various disciplines, especially in computer science, engineering, and the humanities.
2. To ensure a well-rounded ethical education, schools should encourage collaboration among educators to help students understand both the workings of AI and its societal impacts through interdisciplinary lessons that link technical knowledge with moral reasoning.
3. Governments and education ministries should establish and enforce comprehensive policies that promote ethical AI use, including national guidelines for schools, ethical standards for edtech companies, and accountability mechanisms to prevent misuse or harm.
4. Ethics education should extend beyond the classroom by involving parents, local leaders, tech developers, and community stakeholders through initiatives like community forums, digital literacy campaigns, and school-led outreach programs that promote responsible AI use while reflecting local values and needs.

Conclusion

As Artificial Intelligence continues to transform education and society, it brings with it new ethical questions and responsibilities. These changes challenge traditional values education frameworks, demanding a renewed focus on ethical reasoning, digital responsibility, and AI literacy. Students today are not only future users of technology, they are future creators and decision-makers whose actions will influence the digital world. To meet this challenge, values education must evolve from passive instruction to active engagement, where learners are encouraged to think critically, question technologies and make informed moral decisions. Educators, curriculum developers, and policy makers

all have a vital role in embedding ethics into learning experiences and ensuring that the development of AI aligns with human values.

In this age of technological advancement, the call to rethink values education is not optional, it is urgent. Only by promoting ethical awareness and responsibility at every level of education can we ensure that intelligence, both human and artificial, serves the greater good.

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