

A Conceptual Study of the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Mental Well-Being of Youth

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become deeply integrated into multiple domains of modern society, including education, communication, and entertainment. Today's youth increasingly incorporate AI-driven technologies into their everyday lives, relying on intelligent systems for learning, creativity, and information access. These tools enhance educational outcomes by offering personalized, interactive, and readily accessible support that fosters innovation and skill development. However, alongside these advantages, concerns have emerged regarding potential negative consequences, such as weakened critical thinking abilities, rising mental health challenges and a decline in interpersonal and social competencies. This conceptual paper seeks to examine the potential risks associated with AI usage among youth and proposes strategies to mitigate its adverse effects while promoting responsible and balanced engagement with AI technologies.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Critical Thinking Abilities, Mental Health, Competencies.

Introduction

The youth of today are growing up surrounded by artificial intelligence (AI). Their values, ways of thinking, and moral codes are all shaped not only by their parents or immediate caregivers but also by the technology that is ever-present in their daily lives. AI makes things easier and provides quick access to information, it also brings challenges, especially for younger generations who are still growing mentally and emotionally. AI's impact on youth can be deep, shaping their thinking, emotional control and relationships. As AI becomes a bigger part of life, understanding its mental effects on young people is important to reduce risks and increase benefits Mrs. Premlata Bourai and Dr. Vijay Laxmi Yadav (2025).The constant exposure to AI-driven content, virtual interactions, and algorithmic influences can affect self-esteem, emotional regulation, and social relationships. so examining the impact of AI on the mental well-being of youth is essential to understand both its benefits and potential risks in an increasingly technology-driven world.

Objectives of the Study

The study is guided by the following objectives:

- To examine the influence of AI on the youth.
- To examine the potential risks associated with AI usage among youth
- To suggest strategies for responsible and balanced use of AI among young individuals.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research approach based on secondary data. Information has been collected from research articles, reports and credible online sources that are published. The study involves review of existing literature to examine the impact of artificial intelligence on youth.

Literature Review

Mrs. Premlata Bourai and Dr. Vijay Laxmi Yadav (2025) in their study “The Psychological Impacts of Artificial Intelligence on Young People” examine how AI affects youth’s self-image, social connections, and learning. Their study gives suggestions on how to handle the effects of AI on young people in a world that is becoming more digital. [Blanka Klimova](#) and [Marcel Pikhart](#) (2025) in their study “Exploring the effects of artificial intelligence on student and academic well-being in higher education: a mini-review” synthesize current literature to assess how AI affects student well-being, focusing on mental health, social interactions and academic experiences. The review highlights the need for balanced AI integration that supports both academic success and student well-being, advocating for further empirical studies to comprehensively understand these dynamics. Harsh Shukla, Kshama Pandey, Neeraj Kumar (2025) in their study “The Role of AI in Shaping Digital Well-Being in the Indian Education System” investigated the benefits and challenges of AI-driven digital well-being initiatives, including data privacy concerns, algorithmic bias and the digital divide. The research highlights the importance of ethical AI practices in education, emphasizing the need for responsible implementation and policy development. Gunjankumar Nitin Choudhari (2025) in the study “Impact of AI Tools on Mindset of Youths” explored how AI technologies, including machine learning, algorithms, social media bots and personalized content delivery systems, are reshaping the values, beliefs, and behaviours of young individuals. Through a combination of theoretical analysis and empirical research, their study aims to highlight both positive and negative consequences of AI's role in youth development. [Arslan Asad Chaudhary](#), [Rodolfo Jr Fontanilla Calimlim](#), [Shahan Zeb Khan](#) (2024) in their study “The Impact of AI-Powered Educational Tools on Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes at Higher Education Level” examine the impact of AI-powered educational tools on student engagement and learning outcomes at the higher education level. The findings indicated a significant positive relationship between the use of AI-powered educational tools and student engagement

The above literature review highlights the importance of exploring how AI affects the youth mental health, social interactions and overall well-being.

Different Types of AI

- Reactive Machines (Type I): These are the most basic AI systems that react to current stimuli without storing memories or using past experiences to inform future decisions. Example: IBM’s Deep Blue, a chess-playing computer.
- Limited Memory AI (Type II): These systems can store past data for a short period to improve future decisions. Most modern AI, including self-driving cars, chatbots, and generative AI like ChatGPT, falls into this category.
- Theory of Mind AI (Type III): A, primarily theoretical, next-level AI that can understand human emotions, beliefs, and thoughts to better interact with people.
- Self-Aware AI (Type IV): A future, hypothetical AI that possesses consciousness, emotions, and self-awareness.
- Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI): Often called "Weak AI," these systems are designed to excel at a single, specific task. This includes virtually all AI in use today, such as recommendation engines or facial recognition, as mentioned on the American National Standards Institute - ANSI blog.
- Artificial General Intelligence (AGI): Also known as "Strong AI," this is a theoretical form of AI that can understand, learn, and apply knowledge across a broad range of tasks, acting at the level of human intelligence.
- Artificial Super intelligence (ASI): The highest theoretical level of AI, where machines surpass human intelligence and capability in every field, from scientific creativity to social skills (Naveen Joshi, 2022).

Patterns of Artificial Intelligence Utilization among Contemporary Youth

AI is no longer just a buzzword — it’s woven into how teens learn, express, and explore. But with great power comes the need for even greater awareness. AI applications can help youth to develop new skills, improve vocabulary and increase their knowledge through tutoring sessions, AI systems need a lot of data to learn and sensitive personal data is collected. The responsible AI for youth programme is designed to reach out to students from government schools pan India and provide them with an opportunity to become part of the skilled workforce in an inclusive manner (Kanchan Shukla, 2024).

Today's youth – more popularly known as the Gen Z and Generation Alpha – have grown up with technology. Chances are, they have no idea what a beeper or a typewriter is. They are surrounded by AI even though they may not know what it is. Adults use different gadgets and devices for managing their daily schedules and responsibilities. It is thus not surprising that the youth also know or expect to know how to use these devices. The widespread use of smartphones, tablets and personal computers has helped them to familiarise themselves with technology and more specifically with AI. The most common type of artificial intelligence present today is what experts call weak AI. This is the AI found in algorithms used to predict responses. The best example of these algorithms is found in social media websites that recommend ads or videos specific to the user's interests (Chatty Garrate, 2022). Across countries and contexts, children and young people are learning with AI tools, building digital skills, contributing to data ecosystems and navigating AI-mediated platforms as part of everyday life. AI increasingly influences how youth learn, access services and information, are assessed and how opportunity is distributed. This is not a future scenario. It is already today's reality.

Artificial Intelligence Tools and Platforms Commonly Used by Youth

- Generative AI Chatbots (LLMs): Platforms like ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Snapchat's My AI (popular with 13-17 year olds) are heavily used for school assignments, writing and brainstorming.
- AI Companions/Therapist Bots: Character.ai and similar platforms are used for companionship or navigating difficult emotions, popular with ages 16-30 years.
- Generative Art & Media Tools: Tools such as Midjourney, DALL-E, and various voice-generation apps are used by teenagers to create images, music, or video content.
- Recommendation Algorithms: AI that powers platforms like YouTube and Instagram is continuously used to personalize content consumption.
- Educational AI Tutors: Specialized AI tutors are used for personalized learning support.

Opportunities and Challenges of AI in Shaping Youth Development

In an era where the digital world is increasingly integral to everyday life, digital literacy has become a life skill, essential for education, employment and full participation in society. As artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes economies and labour markets, young people find themselves at the forefront of both the opportunities and the challenges presented by this rapidly evolving technology.

Artificial intelligence has brought significant positive transformations in the lives of young individuals, particularly in the areas of social interaction, education and career readiness. AI-driven algorithms on social media personalize content and enhance user engagement, while also enabling connectivity and information access. In education, AI-powered tools such as adaptive learning platforms and intelligent tutoring systems provide personalized learning experiences by identifying individual strengths and weaknesses, thereby improving academic performance and engagement. Furthermore, AI is reshaping the workforce by creating new opportunities for youth.

However, alongside these benefits, AI also presents several challenges that may negatively impact youth development. Over-reliance on AI tools can reduce independent thinking, creativity and problem-solving abilities. The extensive collection of personal data by AI systems raises serious privacy concerns, including risks of data misuse and cyber threats. Additionally, AI-driven social media platforms can contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and low self-esteem due to excessive screen time, unrealistic comparisons and cyberbullying. Concerns regarding job displacement due to automation and ethical issues such as algorithmic bias further highlight the need for cautious and responsible use of AI. Therefore, a balanced approach that promotes awareness, regulation and skill development is essential to minimize risks while maximizing the benefits of AI for youth.

Strategies for Responsible and Balanced Use of Artificial Intelligence among Youth

Ensuring a balanced use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) among youth requires a multi-dimensional approach that combines education, awareness and responsible guidance. Firstly, promoting AI literacy is essential so that youth understand how AI systems function, along with their benefits, limitations and ethical implications. This awareness enables them to use AI tools critically rather than depend on them blindly. Secondly, establishing healthy boundaries on screen time and encouraging mindful usage can help prevent over-reliance and digital fatigue. Engaging youth in offline activities such as sports, social interactions and creative activities is equally important to maintain a healthy balanced use of AI.

Furthermore, parents, educators and policymakers also play a important role in guiding responsible AI usage by monitoring digital behaviour and fostering open discussions about online risks such as data privacy and other related misinformation. Importance should also be given on developing essential human skills like creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and problem-solving, which complement AI rather than compete with it. Additionally, implementing clear regulations and ethical standards for AI usage can safeguard young users from potential harm. By integrating these strategies, AI can be effectively utilized as a supportive tool that enhances learning and development while protecting the mental well-being of youth.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is a double-edged sword for youth, offering unparalleled opportunities while presenting significant challenges. On one hand, AI empowers youth with personalized learning, career readiness, and inclusivity. On the other, it raises concerns about privacy, mental health and ethical issues. By fostering awareness, implementing regulations and encouraging responsible use, society can ensure that AI becomes a tool for empowerment rather than a source of dependency or harm. As the first generation to grow up with AI as an integral part of daily life, young people have a unique opportunity to shape their future. With thoughtful engagement and proactive measures, they can leverage AI to build a brighter and more equitable world.

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