



Human-Centered Machine Learning for Educational Systems: A Review of Prediction, Behavioral Analytics, and Explainable AI

Jayashree More^{1*}, Kirti Dinkar More², Sunita Nimba Deore³

Assistant Professor, MVP Samaj's K.T.H.M. College, Nashik^{1,2}

Assistant Professor, MVP Samaj's S.V.K.T. College, Deolali Camp, Nashik³

*Corresponding Author

Abstract: Machine learning (ML) has become a fundamental component of modern educational systems [1], [2]. Its applications extend from predictive analytics to learning analytics, personalization, and decision support [3]-[5]. This paper presents a comprehensive and human-centered review of ML applications in education using recent studies [1]-[10]. The study emphasizes interpretability, pedagogy, and ethical considerations. It identifies key application domains, commonly used techniques, and emerging research trends. Challenges such as bias, transparency, and scalability are critically examined [5], [10]. A structured literature review table and detailed discussion are provided. The paper concludes with research gaps and future directions for responsible and inclusive ML integration in education.

Keywords: Machine Learning in Education, Explainable AI, Learning Analytics, Personalized Learning, Educational Data Mining

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid digitization of education has transformed teaching and learning processes [1], [3]. Educational platforms such as Learning Management Systems and MOOCs generate large volumes of data [2], [8]. These datasets include student performance, demographics, and behavioural interactions. The complexity and scale of such data limit traditional analytical methods [4]. Machine learning provides efficient solutions for analyzing high-dimensional educational data [1], [5]. It enables pattern discovery, prediction, and decision support. Applications include student performance prediction, dropout detection, and personalized learning [2], [3], [8]. These approaches enhance learning outcomes and institutional efficiency. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of online learning systems [10]. This increased reliance on digital platforms created demand for scalable and adaptive solutions. ML models support real-time feedback and engagement monitoring [9], [10].

Despite these benefits, several challenges exist. Data privacy, algorithmic bias, and lack of transparency are major concerns [5], [10]. Black-box models reduce trust among educators [3]. There is also risk of reinforcing inequalities. A human-centered approach is essential. It focuses on fairness, interpretability, and pedagogical alignment [5], [7]. ML systems should assist educators rather than replace them. This paper presents a structured review of ML in education with emphasis on responsible adoption.

II. REVIEW METHODOLOGY

In this review, articles were selected from major publishers covering 2020-2026. Inclusion criteria include:

- ML applications in education
- Predictive modelling, analytics, or personalization
- Empirical or review-based studies

Each paper is analyzed based on objectives, datasets, techniques, and outcomes [9]. Studies are grouped into thematic categories such as prediction, behaviour analysis, and AI literacy [5], [7]. This ensures systematic synthesis.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Authors [1] present a comprehensive review of ML techniques in educational data mining. The study categorizes methods into supervised and unsupervised learning. Classification and regression are identified as dominant



approaches. The work provides a strong methodological base for future research. Article [2] focus on predicting student dropout using machine learning. The study uses academic and demographic features. Models such as decision trees and ensemble methods show improved accuracy. Early prediction supports timely intervention strategies. Study [3] emphasizes explainable AI in education. They integrate interpretability techniques with predictive models. The study shows that transparent models improve trust and usability. It also discusses trade-offs between accuracy and explain ability.

Paper [4] explore ML as a teaching strategy. The study integrates ML concepts into classroom learning. It promotes active and project-based learning. Results show improved student engagement and understanding. Authors in [5] analyze ethical and policy issues in AI-based education. They highlight concerns such as bias, surveillance, and governance gaps. The study stresses the need for responsible AI deployment.

Study [6] examines ML education in K-12 systems. The study identifies challenges in curriculum design and teacher training. It emphasizes the need for accessible tools and structured programs. Article [7] focus on AI literacy. They propose hands-on and constructionist approaches. The study identifies gaps in student understanding. Experiential learning is recommended. Article [8] applies deep learning for dropout prediction in MOOCs. The study uses large-scale interaction data. Neural models capture complex learning patterns. Results show improved prediction performance.

Table 1. Summary of reviewed studies on machine learning applications in education

Ref.	Year	Technique	Contribution
[1]	2024	ML Models	Review of ML methods
[2]	2026	ML Models	Dropout prediction model
[3]	2025	XAI	Decision Support Interpretability
[4]	2024	ML Teaching	Education, Teaching strategy
[5]	2020	AI Ethics	Policy, Ethical issues
[6]	2021	ML Education	K-12, Curriculum need
[7]	2024	AI Literacy	Education ,Conceptual learning
[8]	2022	Deep Learning	Dropout , Early detection
[9]	2024	Behavior ML	Analytics , Engagement insights
[10]	2023	Mixed Methods	Online Learning, COVID impact

Work in [9] 696analyses behavioural data using ML techniques. The study identifies engagement patterns and learning behaviours. It supports adaptive learning strategies. Paper [10] examines online learning during COVID-19. The study highlights demographic differences in access and engagement. It emphasizes the need for inclusive digital education systems. Summary of reviewed articles on machine learning applications in education is presented in Table 1.

IV. APPLICATIONS OF MACHINE LEARNING IN EDUCATION

A. Student Performance Prediction

ML models predict academic outcomes using historical and behavioral data [2], [8]. These predictions help identify at-risk students. Early intervention improves retention and performance.

B. Learning Analytics

Learning analytics uses ML to analyze student behavior [9]. It identifies engagement patterns and learning trends. Educators can refine teaching strategies based on insights.

C. Personalized Learning

Personalized systems adapt content to individual learners [3], [7]. Recommendation algorithms improve learning efficiency. They enhance motivation and knowledge retention.

D. Intelligent Tutoring

ML-based tutoring systems provide adaptive feedback [4]. They simulate personalized instruction. These systems improve learning efficiency and scalability.

E. Decision Support

ML supports institutional decision-making processes [3], [5]. Applications include curriculum planning and resource allocation. Explainable AI improves transparency.



F. AI and ML Literacy

AI literacy is essential in modern education [6], [7]. Students require knowledge of ML concepts and ethics. Structured programs enhance understanding and skills.

V. CHALLENGES AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Data privacy is a major concern. Educational data contain sensitive information [10]. Proper data protection is required. Algorithmic bias can lead to unfair outcomes. Models may reflect historical inequalities [5]. Bias mitigation techniques are necessary. Lack of interpretability limits adoption. Complex ML models are difficult to explain [3]. This reduces trust among educators. Real-world deployment is limited. Many systems are tested in controlled environments [9]. Scalability and generalization remain challenges. Addressing these issues requires ethical frameworks, governance policies, and XAI integration [3], [5]. Continuous monitoring is essential.

VI. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Evaluate long-term impact of ML systems on learning outcomes.
2. **Inclusive Research:** Study diverse populations and contexts [10].
3. **Explainable AI:** Improve transparency and trust in ML models [3].
4. **AI Literacy Programs:** Develop structured training for students and educators [6], [7].
5. **Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Combine expertise from education, AI, and ethics.

These directions support responsible ML adoption.

VII. CONCLUSION

Machine learning is a key enabler of modern educational systems [1], [3]. It supports prediction, personalization, and decision-making. These applications improve learning outcomes and efficiency. However, ethical concerns must be addressed. Transparency, fairness, and privacy are essential [5]. A human-centered approach ensures responsible use. Future research should focus on interpretability and inclusiveness. Properly designed ML systems can effectively support education.

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