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From Classroom to Community: Using AI to Foster Intercultural Dialogue and Global Citizenship Education

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Abstract

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education presents transformative opportunities for advancing intercultural dialogue and global citizenship education. With the growing presence of AI-driven platforms, universities are beginning to explore how these tools can foster meaningful cultural exchange, stimulate critical thinking, and cultivate empathy and awareness of global issues among learners. This study examined the perceptions, lived experiences, challenges, and opportunities related to the adoption of AI in state universities and colleges, with particular emphasis on its role in shaping globally competent and culturally responsive students. Findings revealed that AI has the potential to personalize learning, bridge linguistic and cultural gaps, and connect students to collaborative, globally networked environments that encourage dialogue across diverse perspectives. However, challenges persist, including limited access to advanced technologies, institutional hesitancy to adopt AI tools, and inadequate training for educators tasked with integrating such innovations into pedagogy. To address these concerns, the study emphasizes the importance of strategic integration of AI into curricula, the provision of capacity-building initiatives for teachers, and the development of culturally sensitive applications that respect local contexts while engaging with global discourses. By doing so, higher education institutions can maximize the promise of AI not only as a technological innovation but as a pedagogical resource for fostering inclusivity, intercultural understanding, and active global citizenship. This research contributes to the broader discourse on digital transformation in education by offering recommendations for policymakers, educators, and administrators to optimize AI's potential in building globally aware and socially responsible learners.

Keywords: Intercultural Dialogue, Classroom, Community, Global Citizenship Education.

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Introduction

In an increasingly interconnected world, higher education institutions are charged with cultivating intercultural dialogue and global citizenship (GCED) among students. State universities and colleges play a pivotal role in this mission by preparing learners to navigate cultural diversity and global challenges. Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerges as a transformative tool in this effort, offering personalized learning, expanded communication channels, and exposure to multiple global perspectives (Holmes et al., 2019). Educational settings can potentially enhance cross-cultural engagement, empathy, and critical global awareness by leveraging AI-powered platforms, such as language translation engines, interactive virtual experiences, and collaborative digital environments (Klimova, 2024).

However, realizing AI's promise in intercultural and citizenship education requires more than technology; it calls for thoughtful integration that respects diversity, authenticity, and context. AI-created content can simulate global issues like climate change and social justice in immersive ways that resonate with students' lived realities, reinforcing both cognitive and affective dimensions of global competence (Gaitán-Aguilar, 2024; UNESCO, 2025). However, significant challenges remain barriers to effective adoption, such as technological limitations, ethical concerns, institutional resistance, and a lack of culturally attuned AI tools.

There remains a notable gap in the literature concerning how AI specifically supports the development of empathy and intercultural competence within resource-constrained educational settings. This study addresses that gap by investigating how state universities and colleges, with limited infrastructure and resources, can strategically integrate AI to foster meaningful intercultural dialogue and global citizenship education. Doing so offers actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and administrators on leveraging AI in culturally sensitive, pedagogically sound, and conducive to inclusive global education.

It has shown promise in enhancing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among university students. Klimova (2024) reports that AI tools like chatbots and adaptive learning systems can facilitate deeper cross-cultural understanding and student engagement through interactive pedagogy. However, Villanueva et al. (2025) warn that AI's efficacy in fostering intercultural empathy varies across cultural groups due to misrepresentation and bias in AI models, highlighting the importance of culturally authentic AI design.

Gaitán-Aguilar (2024) emphasizes that global citizenship education involves fostering three key dimensions: intercultural competence, identification with a global community, and civic engagement. AI platforms, especially virtual exchange

environments, can offer experiential learning opportunities that bring these dimensions to life. UNESCO (2025) has similarly underscored the need for education systems to equip learners with critical global awareness, empathy, and inclusive values, goals that align well with AI-enabled pedagogical innovations.

Despite AI's potential, practical limitations can undermine its effectiveness. Villanueva et al. (2025) document instances where AI fails to represent non-Western perspectives, illustrating a broader issue of digital neocolonialism and cultural bias (Nyaaba et al., 2024). Other barriers include inadequate technological infrastructure, lack of professional development, and institutional inertia, all of which can stifle AI adoption and exacerbate educational inequities (Cui & Zhang, 2022).

While the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in education has been extensively documented, much of the existing scholarship has focused on its technical applications, such as automated assessment, personalized learning, and adaptive instruction, in dominant global languages and Western contexts (Holmes et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2020; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). These studies highlight AI's capacity to improve efficiency and enhance learner outcomes, but they often underexplore its cultural and ethical dimensions. There is limited research on how AI can be strategically integrated into higher education to cultivate intercultural dialogue and global citizenship education (GCED), especially within resource-constrained institutions such as state universities and colleges in the Philippines.

Recent literature emphasizes that AI-driven platforms, including translation tools, virtual exchanges, and collaborative environments, can support intercultural competence and empathy by exposing students to diverse perspectives (Klimova, 2024; Gaitán-Aguilar, 2024). However, these insights are derived mainly from studies in developed educational systems, leaving a gap in understanding how AI operates in contexts characterized by digital inequities, unstable infrastructure, and limited teacher training (Flor, 2021; Cui & Zhang, 2022). Moreover, concerns regarding AI's cultural bias, misrepresentation of non-Western perspectives, and inability to fully capture the nuances of local traditions and identities remain underexplored (Tupas, 2020; Villanueva et al., 2025).

Thus, there is a clear need for empirical studies that examine the lived experiences, perceptions, and pedagogical adaptations of educators and students in integrating AI for intercultural dialogue and global citizenship. Addressing this gap is crucial for optimizing AI's role in higher education and ensuring that its adoption aligns with cultural authenticity, equity, and the goals of inclusive global education.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the perceptions of students, faculty, and administrators regarding the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing intercultural dialogue in state universities and colleges.
2. To investigate the lived experiences of students and educators in using AI-driven educational platforms to promote global citizenship education.
3. To examine the challenges and opportunities students, faculty, and administrators perceive in integrating AI to foster intercultural dialogue and global citizenship education.

Research Methodology

This qualitative research study investigated the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing intercultural dialogue and promoting global citizenship education in state universities and colleges. Data gathering was based on insights from students, faculty, and administrators. To answer the first objective, participants' perceptions on whether AI could enhance intercultural dialogue were probed through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. To answer the second objective, the narrative inquiry was used to explore the lived experiences of students and educators who use AI-driven educational platforms, capturing personal stories and reflections about how these technologies support global citizenship education. The thematic analysis of the interview and discussion transcripts was used to examine the challenges and opportunities perceived by stakeholders in integrating AI for intercultural dialogue and global citizenship education, thus answering the third objective. The participants were purposively selected to represent diversified perspectives from the academe. A validated guide on semi-structured interviews facilitated data collection. Techniques of triangulation, like member checking and peer debriefing, are applied for a more reliable and valid outcome of this study. This analysis revealed recurring themes and patterns pertinent to the stated research objectives.

Results and Findings

Perceptions of Students, Faculty, and Administrators Regarding the Role of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI as a Tool for Crossing the Cultural Gap

The respondents agreed on AI's role as a powerful bridge of cultural gaps. Tools such as translation through AI, virtual exchange programs, and adaptive learning programs are seen to bridge the cultural gaps between two people from diverse

backgrounds. According to respondents, AI bridges communication barriers easily by allowing students and faculty from diverse backgrounds to communicate and exchange ideas freely worldwide. Consequently, AI-based content curation systems allow users to access culturally relevant material, deepening their appreciation for global diversity.

A student said, *“AI translation tools like Google Translate have been a game-changer for our international collaborations. They help us communicate seamlessly with peers from different countries without worrying about language barriers.”*

A faculty member remarked, *“Using AI platforms in my classes has enabled students to experience different cultural perspectives. The AI suggests readings and resources from diverse contexts, enriching our discussions.”*

An administrator commented: *“AI can help universities globalize their curriculum by integrating culturally relevant content, promoting a sense of inclusivity and understanding among students.”*

AI as an Enabler for Inclusive Learning Environments

There is a significant perception that AI offers the possibility to foster inclusive learning spaces where intercultural dialogue may thrive. For instance, it was perceived to be able to adapt to learner needs through an AI-powered adaptive learning platform, different cultural learning styles, and varied linguistic preferences. Participants perceived AI as a means of democratizing education through offering equal access to culturally diverse resources and facilitating interactions among peers, transcending borders.

A student reflected: *“AI tools make learning more personalized. They adapt to my learning style and even recommend content that resonates with my cultural identity, which makes me feel seen and valued.”* S11

A faculty member stated, *“With AI, I can design more inclusive lessons, considering cultural sensitivities and linguistic diversity. It has made my classes more engaging for international students.”* E10

An administrator highlighted: *“AI enables state universities to adopt a global perspective while addressing local educational needs, fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong.”* A6

Ethical Issues and Inherent Challenges in AI Integration

Those warmly appreciative of AI integration reported that the ethical concerns are to challenge the inclusion of AI in intercultural dialogue. Some significant issues addressed were concerns over algorithmic bias, privacy of data, and inequalities in

access to AI technologies. Therefore, they argued for responsible AI use to avoid reinforcing stereotypes or cultural misrepresentation.

A student warned: *"Sometimes, AI systems do not accurately represent my culture or language. It makes me cautious about relying on these tools for intercultural dialogue."* S1

A faculty member shared: *"While AI has great potential, we must critically evaluate its outputs. Algorithms can perpetuate biases that might harm intercultural understanding."* E4

An administrator observed: *"The lack of infrastructure in some areas limits access to AI tools, creating a gap between those who can participate in global dialogues and those who cannot. It is something we need to address urgently."* A4

Lived Experiences of Students and Educators in Using AI-Driven Educational Platforms

Empowering global awareness through AI-driven platforms

Participants reported an increased global consciousness and appreciation for cultural diversity, citing AI-led educational platforms for improving their perception of the globe. Such applications open immense amounts of international content, with which users engage through diverse lenses, histories, and cultures. AI-based technology, like adaptive learning systems and virtual exchange programs, is believed to facilitate global citizenship. Students and instructors can be prepared for cross-cultural experiences and equipped with empathy while engaging in student-centered learning.

A student stated: *"Through AI tools, I have been able to connect with peers from different countries and learn about their cultures. It has changed how I see the world and made me more open-minded."* S14

An educator shared: *"AI platforms have been instrumental in promoting discussions about global issues in my classes. They recommend resources from around the world, making our conversations richer and more meaningful."* E12

A faculty member remarked: *"The AI system's personalized content suggestions encourage students to explore global topics, which they might not have otherwise encountered. It broadens their perspective on international issues."* E8

Empowering global awareness through AI-driven platforms

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technology, like adaptive learning systems and virtual exchange programs, is believed to facilitate global citizenship. Students and instructors can be prepared for cross-cultural experiences and equipped with empathy while engaging in student-centered learning.

A student shared: *"AI platforms help me learn at my own pace. They recommend content that aligns with my interests, making global topics more relatable and exciting."* S2

An educator observed: *"The adaptability of AI tools means I can tailor lessons to address different cultural contexts in the classroom. It helps students connect with the material on a deeper level."* E7

An administrator remarked, *"AI has allowed our institution to provide a more inclusive educational experience. Students from diverse backgrounds can engage meaningfully with global content, regardless of their prior knowledge or linguistic abilities."* A3

Challenges in the Integration of AI for Global Citizenship Education

There were benefits derived from using AI-driven platforms in global citizenship education, but challenges were raised. Common issues were technological inequality, algorithmic bias, and some educators' and students' lack of digital literacy. Such problems limit the efficiency of the use of these platforms in enhancing global citizenship. Therefore, there is a need to train the people and equitably provide them with access to the resources.

A student commented: *"Not all of us have the same level of access to technology or internet connectivity, which makes it hard to use these AI tools fully."* S4

An educator noted: *"While AI platforms are helpful, they sometimes suggest content that reflects biases or stereotypes. It is important to evaluate the material they provide critically."* E5

An administrator stated, *"We must ensure educators and students are properly trained to use AI platforms effectively. Without this, the technology's potential remains underutilized."* A2

AI-based platforms empowering global awareness

They admitted that through AI-driven learning platforms, their global awareness has increased and, therefore, they have become more informed about cultural differences. These provide access to enormous global content, which enables users to interact with varied perspectives, histories, and cultures. Adaptive learning systems and virtual exchange programs as AI-powered tools were considered imperative in pursuing global citizenship: exposing students and educators to experiences across cultures, fostering empathy, and understanding among people.

A student stated: *“Through AI tools, I have been able to connect with peers from different countries and learn about their cultures. It has changed how I see the world and made me more open-minded.”* S8

An educator shared: *“AI platforms have been instrumental in promoting discussions about global issues in my classes. They recommend resources from around the world, making our conversations richer and more meaningful.”* E1

A faculty member remarked: *“The AI system’s personalized content suggestions encourage students to explore global topics, which they might not have otherwise encountered. It broadens their perspective on international issues.”* E2

Personalized and Inclusive Learning Experiences

Participants expressed that AI-powered learning platforms present a personalized path for learning experiences that are adaptive to the requirements of the learners, thus enabling inclusivity. Such learning environments adjust to student-specific learning styles and cultural situations to ensure equal access to education. Tailoring by AI enables teachers and learners alike to address critical global issues as if they were relevant to them, keeping them engaged toward global citizenship.

A student shared: *“AI platforms help me learn at my own pace. They recommend content that aligns with my interests, making global topics more relatable and exciting.”* S7

An educator observed: *“The adaptability of AI tools means I can tailor lessons to address different cultural contexts in the classroom. It helps students connect with the material on a deeper level.”* E7

An administrator remarked, *“AI has allowed our institution to provide a more inclusive educational experience. Students from diverse backgrounds can engage meaningfully with global content, regardless of their prior knowledge or linguistic abilities.”*

Challenges in AI Integration for Global Citizenship Education

While there are benefits, the participants voiced several challenges related to integrating AI-driven platforms for global citizenship education. The most frequently mentioned issues were technological disparities, algorithmic biases, and the lack of digital literacy among some educators and students. These issues hampered the effectiveness of the platforms in achieving global citizenship and necessitated training and equitable access to resources.

A student commented: *“Not all of us have the same level of access to technology or internet connectivity, which makes it hard to use these AI tools fully.”* S3

An educator noted: *"While AI platforms are helpful, they sometimes suggest content that reflects biases or stereotypes. It is important to evaluate the material they provide critically."* E6

An administrator stated, *"We must ensure educators and students are properly trained to use AI platforms effectively. Without this, the technology's potential remains underutilized."* A4

These themes highlight the duality of AI integration: the potential to enhance intercultural dialogue and global citizenship education while considering the challenges that must be overcome for effective and inclusive implementation.

Conclusions

In conclusion, AI-driven tools play a transformative role in intercultural dialogue by facilitating communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries and fostering mutual understanding and collaboration among students. AI further supports global citizenship education by promoting critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness through interactive and personalized learning experiences. However, AI integration is confronted by resource constraints, technological differences, and cultural resistance, pointing to the requirement for adaptive strategies and institutional intervention. Findings point out that strategic planning and policy support are important aspects to ensure fair access and effective implementation of AI in educational contexts, especially in state universities and colleges.

Recommendations

Strategic steps should be taken to optimize AI integration into intercultural dialogue and global citizenship education. Institutions should develop adaptive AI to adapt to diverse needs in their education efforts and provide extensive training for educators and administrators in properly using AI. Substantial investment in technological infrastructure is needed to bridge the disparities found among institutions. Policymakers must create fair and inclusive policies that ensure all students' equitable use of AI. Cooperative programs with international organizations can help to share best practices and innovation in using AI to support intercultural and global education. Lastly, there is a need to research how AI will positively influence the development of empathy, cultural awareness, and critical thinking among diverse populations in the long run.

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