Talking Technology Tutors: The Perceptions of Conversational AI in Education through the Eyes of Parents and Teachers Worldwide

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Article Info

Abstract

As AI becomes an increasingly prevalent tool across society, conversations have begun on whether it should be implemented into education. Teachers and parents are at the forefront of this dilemma, their opinions being an integral part of the ongoing discussion. This study explores parents' and teachers' perspectives on the uses of conversational AI in education through an exploratory survey. Survey results (111 parents, 109 teachers) showed that the majority of parents and teachers believed conversational AI could support their child's/students' development, they were likely to use conversational AI for their child/student, and were comfortable with their child/students using it. In addition, there was a moderate amount of apprehension from both parents and teachers toward AI in education to due privacy, plagiarism and lack human contact concerns. Overall, the findings suggest that while there is enthusiasm for integrating AI into education, concerns about its implications need to be carefully addressed.

Introduction

Science is rapidly implementing new, increasingly intelligent technological systems, most recently Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is a form of technology that aims to replicate human cognitive functions, including critical thinking and problem solving, by enabling machines to learn from experience, adapt to new inputs, and perform tasks that would typically require human intelligence. Conversational AI agents such as ChatGPT that can converse with and educate students have been implemented in the classroom (Limna, Kraiwanit, Jangjarat, Klayklung, & Chocksathaporn, 2023) Wu, He, Liu, Sun, Liu, Han, & Tang, 2023). This has been controversial, with multifarious responses from parents and teachers toward AI integration. The aim of this study is to explore parents' and teachers' perspectives on the use of conversational AI in education.

There are differing perspectives on whether conversational AI is a viable method of helping students learn (Otermans, Baines, Picked-Jones, Thompson, 2024). Kaplan-Rakowski Grotewold, Hartwick, and Papin, (2023) investigated teachers' attitudes toward conversational AI in the classroom. Teachers believed AI promotes collaboration, increases academic achievement and makes teachers feel more competent educators. Similarly, Polak, Schiavo, and Zancanaro, (2022) showed teachers were positive toward using AI in education and were highly motivated to implement it. Furthermore, they believed AI could help their students learn practical skills that helps in the classroom and daily life (Polak et al., 2022). However, despite perceived benefits, a barrier for many teachers was lack of knowledge of how to use AI (Lindner & Romekie, 2019; Polak et al., 2022). On the other hand, research showed that teachers can also train and upskill themselves through the use of AI, namely AI teachers (Otermans & Aditya, 2025) as well as support skills development in students (Aditya, Silvestri, & Otermans, 2024). Furthermore, Van Brummelen, Heng, and Tabunshchyk, (2021) implemented conversational AI workshops into students' and teachers' curriculum. Overall, teachers stated it made classwork easier to understand and they would use AI in their classroom (Van Brummelen et al., 2021). Many teachers also said after interacting with the AI, they felt more comfortable teaching their students about it (Van Brummelen et al., 2021). However, teachers had some concerns, feeling teaching AI would be daunting, and children would get bored learning from it, due to lack of human contact (Van Brummelen et al., 2021, see also Linder & Romekie, 2019; Polak et al., 2022).

For a global perspective, Ibrahim et al. (2023) investigated students' and teachers' perspectives of AI in education from Brazil, India, Japan, the UK and the USA. Students in India believed use of AI was unethical and should not be allowed, whereas those in Brazil believed the opposite. Interestingly, across all countries students indicated that they would use AI in their homework despite ethical considerations. Educators had ethical considerations too. Unlike Van Brummelen et al.'s (2021) and Kaplan-Rakowski et al.'s (2023) findings, educators did not see many positives to AI, viewing it as a form of plagiarism. In the UK, research students' attitudes towards AI are an important factor to consider (Thomson, Pickard-Jones, Baines, & Otermans, 2024; Otermans, Roberts, & Baines, 2025). Affective attitudes drove AI awareness and usage but also led to disengagement. Cognitive attitudes boosted awareness and usage, while behavioural attitudes had no effect, implying engagement without full understanding. However, behavioural attitudes shaped views of AI's educational roles (e.g., tutoring, retention, personalisation), while affective attitudes influenced perceptions of monitoring and prediction. Cognitive attitudes

had little impact. These findings can inform AI-integrated teaching strategies.

Smakman, Jansen, Leunen, and Konijn, (2020), investigated parents' moral standpoints toward their children using conversational AI in education. After interacting with an AI tool, parents felt AI was an efficient learning tool that could aid them and their child with homework. However, parents expressed some concerns about data use, privacy and worrying the AI may detract from human contact (Smakman et al., 2020). In contrast, Kucrikova and Hiniker (2023) interviewed parents on their pre-school children using conversational AI and found a complete lack of positivity. They viewed AI as a potential threat to their child's development and violating user autonomy (Kucrikova & Hiniker, 2023). Furthermore, Otermans, Baines, Livingstone, Pereira, and Aditya (2024) found through surveying parents that they would be confident allowing their children to use AI tools. In addition, parents believed their children would learn be quicker for their children when AI is incorporated in the learning journey (Otermans et al., 2024).

A form of AI that has shown appeal for students and parents is age-appropriate conversational AI study buddies (Aslan et al., 2023). KidSpace is an app where first-grade students interact with an online AI studyask buddy, Oscar, to help with maths. Initially, parents were concerned about negative impacts of using KidSpace for education, such as high screen time, lack of social interaction and lack of physical activity. However, after parents interacted with Oscar, they were significantly less worried about these factors and reported positive perceptions and engagement toward the app (Aslan et al., 2023).

Additionally, Lin et al. (2022) investigated how four-to-six year olds interacted with a conversational AI study buddy rabbit called Floppy. Most parents reported their child developing an emotional connection with Floppy. Parents also found Floppy helpful and saw the AI agent as providing emotional and behavioural relief, directing their child toward Floppy when they were too tired to explain a particular concept themselves (Lin et al., 2022). Similarly, Catania, Spitale, Cosentino, and Garzotto (2020) found using their conversational teaching tool ISI for nine- to ten-year-olds showed positive results. ISI engaged students with its friendly nature and ability for students to customise it by accessorising and changing it to their liking (Catania et al., 2020). These studies suggest parents and students see conversational AI study buddies as positive and helpful for the learning (Aslan et al., 2023; Catania et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2022).

The current study used a mixed methods design and a conversational AI study buddy – Teddy AI. Teddy AI is an educational app featuring our educator 'Teddy' who helps students learn and grow (Otermans, Sharma, Singh, & Aditya, 2024). Teddy AI is a personalised study companion powered by Generative AI, designed specifically for children with SEN. Unlike mainstream EdTech platforms, Teddy AI can be fully customised to each learner's cognitive profile, sensory preferences, and emotional needs, making it equally effective for children with autism spectrum conditions, ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning differences. Parents and teachers can direct Teddy to focus on key curriculum areas, set goals aligned with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and receive granular progress reports that track academic and behavioural milestones. We believe Teddy AI will reap the same benefits found in previous studies using AI study buddies (Catania et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2022) as well as decrease parents' initial worries about conversational AI as was found in Aslan et al. (2023). Considering that research has

indicated a mixture of positivity and openness but apprehension toward conversational AI, we predicted that overall parents and teachers will show openness and optimistic, but also some anxiety toward the idea of conversational AI in education. In addition, previous studies tend to derive similar results from both teachers and parents, both indicating some level of positivity as well as apprehension toward AI, therefore our second prediction is that there will be little difference between parents and teachers in terms of their perspectives of conversational AI.

Method

Participants

One-hundred eleven parents and 109 teachers, recruited through social media (e.g., WhatsApp, LinkedIn, X) and Prolific (online participant pool), took part in the survey. Survey data collection took place between 11th April and 11th November 2023. Parents were from 18 and teachers were from 23 countries globally (these were obtained through data from Microsoft Clarity and not specifically asked to the participants and therefore cannot be analysed further). Teachers taught a wide range of age groups from 4 to 11+ years old (see Table 1). No other demographic details were collected from parents and teachers as this was not the focus of this study. Future studies could collect data on AI literacy, tech savviness, socio-economic status, etc.

Table 1. Age Ranges of Students that the Teachers Support in their Role

How old are the students you teach/support?	Number of people who teach each age group *taught* (teachers could pick more than one option)
Below 4	5
4-5	11
6-8	27
8-10	26
11+	75

Materials

Our survey consisted of three sections. Section one consisted of the consent form and demographics. In section two, participants were asked questions about conversational AI in education, perceived concerns, benefits and reservations of conversational AI, and educational topics to be included with AI. These questions were designed by the authors based on previous literature. The questions asked can be seen in the tables in the Results section. The final section consisted of a brief interaction and evaluation of their perception of a specific child-focused AI tool, a conversational AI study buddy, called Teddy AI. Feedback was given through 15 statements which participants had to rate on Likert-type scales from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree').

Procedure

Participants were informed about the goal of the study, provided consent and then completed the survey. Before

completing section two, they were directed to the conversational AI website (www.teddyai.com/chat). Participants were asked to interact with our conversational AI agent (TeddyAI) for at least ten minutes so that they could answer the questions. As this was exploratory, this duration was deemed to be sufficient. Follow-up research can look into the longitudinal perceptions after interacting for 2 weeks. Participants were debriefed and provided with the social media accounts to contact the team.

Data Analysis Strategies

The data were analysed using SPSS. Frequency analysis were conducted. An independent t-test was conducted to compare teachers and parents responses for each survey questions in relation to the TeddyAI statements. As this study was exploratory in nature without specific hypotheses, no inferential statistics were conducted. The open questions in the survey were analysed through categorising the responses and counting the frequency of responses in each category.

Results

Quantitative Data

When analysing the top three perceived features, benefits and concerns in conversational AI of parents and teachers, there were some contrasting results. The top three features teachers wanted to see included natural language processing ($N = 80$), personalisation and adaptation ($N = 69$) and accessibility features ($N = 60$) (see Table 2). Parents' answers were similar, the feature they wanted to see most was continuous learning and improvement ($N = 80$), followed by natural learning processing ($N = 63$) and personalisation and adaptation ($N = 42$) (see Table 3).

Table 2. Features that Teachers looked for in Conversational AI

What are the top 3 features or functionalities you would look for in a conversational AI tool for your pupils?	Number of times option was selected
Natural Language Processing	80
Personalisation and Adaptation	69
Accessibility Features	60
Analytics and Insights	46
Multi-Turn Dialogue Handling	40
Integration of External Systems	26
I have no use for a tool like that	1
Some students may learn slower, so an AI could track and improve learning	1
Accuracy of responses	1
For children not able to read and write, voice able	1
Vernacular	1

Table 3. Features' Parents would look for in Conversational AI

What are the top 3 features or functionalities you would look for in a conversational AI tool for your child?	Number of times selected
Continuous Learning and Improvement	80
Natural Language Processing	63
Personalisation and Adaptation	42
Analytics and Insights	41
Accessibility features	39
Multi-Turn Dialogue Handling	20
Integration of External Systems	14
(blank)	12
Speed of response	1
No idea what most of these mean	1
Privacy and safety	1

When looking at teachers perceived benefits of AI, the top three benefits they selected were skill development ($N = 63$), personalised learning ($N = 58$) and cognitive enhancement ($N = 37$) (see Table 4). Again, parents had similar answers with skill development ($N = 75$) and personalised learning ($N = 62$), followed by improved communication ($N = 43$) (see Table 5).

Table 4. Benefits Teachers saw in using Conversational AI

What potential benefits do you see in using conversational AI for your pupils?	Number of times option was selected
Skill development	63
Personalised Learning	58
Cognitive Enhancement	37
Enhanced Educational Abilities	37
Improved Communication	37
Blank (non answer)	26
Improved Speech	23
Data and Analytics,	23
Assistive Technology	19
I would not use a tool like that	1
None	1
Telling the AI things that they would ever tell to an adult	1
Mental happiness	1

In terms of perceived concerns, the top three concerns selected by teachers were a lack of human interaction ($N = 65$), overreliance on technology ($N = 65$) and data and privacy ($N = 53$) (see Table 6). The top three concerns for

parents were similarly lack of human interaction ($N = 77$), data and privacy ($N = 67$) and overreliance on technology ($N = 66$) (see Table 7).

Table 5. Benefits Parents saw in Using Conversational AI

What potential benefits do you see in using conversational AI for your child?	Number of times selected
Skill development	75
Personalised Learning	62
Improved Communication	49
Enhanced Educational Abilities	40
Cognitive Enhancement	35
Assistive Technology	28
Blank	23
Data and Analytics	19
Making my child's life easier with homework	1
Learning to type well	1
Don't know enough about it	1

Table 6. Concerns Teachers have of Conversational AI

Are there any concerns or reservations you have regarding the use of conversational AI with your pupils?	People who selected that option
Lack of human interaction	65
Overreliance on technology	65
data and privacy	53
inability to address complex needs	53
Blank (non response)	43
ethical and social implications	42
Only AI will assist with the students and hence the students will lack learning from real human beings	1
Cheating may increase in homework tasks , tests etc	1
Sometimes addictive	1
Most AI stops pupils thinking for themselves	1
This might actually reverse their communication skills as they might become unfamiliar with talking to REAL human beings	1

When teachers were asked how comfortable they were with their pupils using conversational AI, many felt very comfortable, i.e., 9.17% were very uncomfortable, 12.84% were somewhat uncomfortable, 29.36% were neither comfortable nor comfortable, 34.86% were somewhat comfortable, and 13.76% were very comfortable. For the parents, the responses were slightly different, 20.72% were very uncomfortable, 39.64% were somewhat uncomfortable, 22.52% were neither comfortable nor uncomfortable, 10.81% were somewhat comfortable, and

6.31% were very comfortable.

Table 7. Concerns Parents had in Using Conversational AI

What potential concerns do you have regarding the use of conversational AI with your child?	Number of times selected
Lack of human interaction	77
Data and privacy	67
Overreliance on technology	66
Inability to address complex needs	50
Ethical and social implications	44
Blank	28
Authenticity	1

When teachers were asked about their awareness of conversational AI tools or platforms specifically designed for children with learning difficulties or special needs, 18.35% were unaware, 25.69% were unaware, 20.18% were neutral, 30.28% were aware, and 5.50% were very aware. For the parents, the responses were very similar, 9.91% were unaware, 29.73% were unaware, 19.82% were neutral, 28.83% were aware, 11.71% were very aware. An important element that was parents & teachers were asked about was how important customising AI was. For the teachers, for 6.42% this was unimportant, 2.75% this was unimportant, 27.52% were neutral on this topic, for 43.12% this was important, and for 20.18% this was very important. For parents, the ability to customise and personalise according to the child's preferences and requirements was also important; for 2.70% very unimportant, 2.70% unimportant, 25.23% neutral, 35.14% important, and 34.23% very important.

In terms of how likely teachers and parents were to consider using conversational AI as a support tool for children's learning or development, the responses from teachers were very positive with only 8.26% mentioned very unlikely, 8.26% mentioned someone unlikely, 21.10% mentioned neutral, 45.87% mentioned likely, and 16.51% mentioned very likely. For the parents, they were also positive, with 8.11% mentioned very unlikely, 14.41% mentioned somewhat unlikely, 18.92% mentioned neutral, 36.04% mentioned likely, and 22.52% mentioned very likely. Quite interestingly, teachers were roughly equally split in terms of using conversational AI where 49.54% would use it for general-purpose learning needs and 44.95% for specifically tailored to pupil's learning needs, with only 3.67% mentioned both, and 1.83% mentioned none. For parents on the other hand, the preference was clearly stronger to use AI tools that are specifically tailored to the child's learning needs (i.e., 67.57% for specifically tailored use, 31.53% general purpose learning, .90% none).

Finally, AI tools or other digital tools are often used through recommendations by others teachers & parents, and here the data showed that both parents and teachers were likely to recommend using conversational AI to other teachers or parents. For the teachers, for 9.17% it was very unlikely that they would recommend using conversational AI to other parents/teachers, 12.84% mentioned somewhat unlikely, 29.36% mentioned neutral, 34.86% mentioned likely, and 13.76% mentioned very likely. For parents, the numbers were similar, 9.91% mentioned that it was very unlikely they would recommend the use of conversational AI to other parents/teachers,

11.71% mentioned somewhat unlikely, 31.53% mentioned neutral, 28.83% mentioned likely, and 18.02% mentioned very likely. In relation to TeddyAI, there was a significant difference for question 15: "My waiting time for a response from Teddy AI was short" where parents were significantly more positive toward waiting time than teachers $t(218) = 3.09$, $p = .002$, $d = .42$. There were no other significant differences (see Table 8).

Table 8. Percentage of Teachers (T) and Parents (P) who Agreed with Each Statement

Statement	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree, disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
	T	P	T	P	T	P	T	P	T	P
The chat function on Teddy AI web was easily detectable.	5.5	4.5	27.8	9.0	16.5	20.7	33.9	32.4	41.3	33.3
It was easy to locate Teddy AI conversational tool on the web.	4.6	3.6	3.7	7.2	10.1	17.1	37.6	33.3	44.0	38.7
Communicating with Teddy AI on the web was clear.	4.6	4.5	4.6	6.3	18.	22.5	33.9	37.8	38.5	28.3
I was immediately made aware of what information that Teddy AI can give me.	7.3	9.0	9.2	15.3	24.8	27.0	38.5	28.8	20.2	19.8
The interaction with Teddy AI felt like an ongoing conversation.	9.2	13.5	11.9	9.9	21.1	30.6	42.2	32.4	15.6	13.5
Teddy AI was able to keep track of context.	8.3	6.3	9.2	15.3	19.3	25.2	39.5	34.2	23.9	18.9
Teddy AI was able to make references to the web.	12.8	5.4	12.8	14.4	43.1	47.8	21.1	20.7	10.1	11.7
Teddy AI could handle situations in which the line of conversation wasn't clear.	11.9	9.9	10.1	9.0	31.2	37.8	34.9	36.9	11.9	6.3
Teddy AI's responses were easy to understand.	5.5	4.5	9.2	7.2	15.6	13.5	37.6	37.8	32.1	36.9
I find that Teddy AI understands what I want and helps me achieve my goal.	6.4	7.2	10.1	12.6	23.9	25.2	38.5	36.0	21.1	18.9
Teddy AI gives me the appropriate amount of information.	9.2	7.2	9.2	10.8	23.9	25.2	39.5	32.4	18.4	24.3
Teddy AI only gives me the information I need.	9.2	7.2	12.8	12.6	30.3	29.7	32.1	38.7	15.6	15.3
I feel like Teddy AI's responses were accurate.	11.9	6.3	10.1	4.5	19.3	24.3	37.6	43.2	21.1	21.6
I believe Teddy AI informs me of any possible privacy issues.	14.7	9.9	13.8	16.2	44.0	41.4	22.0	22.5	5.5	9.9
My waiting time for a response from Teddy AI was short.	5.5	13.5	6.4	16.2	22.9	21.6	35.8	27.9	29.4	20.7
Conversational AI can support student's learning or development.	7.3	3.6	5.5	5.4	18.4	25.2	49.5	48.7	19.3	17.1
The specific challenges or concerns you face as a teacher/parent could be addressed by conversational AI tools.	6.4	3.6	14.7	16.2	29.4	37.8	33.9	34.2	15.6	8.1

Qualitative Data

Teachers most desired AI help with for problem solving, language skills and communication and conversation (see Table 9). Teachers wanted to use AI to improve/aid teaching. This included support on what the best teaching methods were, as well as devising new questions and techniques.

Table 9. Teachers Categorised Answers to Open Ended Questions

Are there any specific topics or areas where you believe conversational AI could be particularly helpful for your child's learning or development	Number of people in the category (some people fit into more than one category)
Blank	26
Problem solving and general learning	16
No	13
Language skills	6
Communication and conversation	5
Helping students find information	4
Science	4
History	4
Mathematics	4
Understanding physical changes/sex/relationships	3
Helping teacher teach class	3
Helping children with disabilities	3
Geography	2
Talking about feelings and emotions	2
Simple fact finding	2
Understanding and comprehension	1
Social and life skills	1
Spelling	1
Developing independence	1
Memory improvement	1
Decision making	1
Psychology	1
Yes	1

Another common theme was wanting an easy-to-use AI, which was simple to understand and helped make lessons easy or interactive. Considering teachers tend to teach 20-30 students, they wanted to find ways to make learning beneficial and productive for all students, some of whom are likely to be at different levels of learning. Teachers wanted to use AI to gather what students need to work on and what would work best for them. Teachers wanted to use AI to diversify knowledge, train them to use the new technology and help them progress in their learning. Overall, there were dual aspirations for conversational AI, for it to help them and make their job easier and

efficient and aid students to have the best possible education. While many teachers had positive aspirations for the use of AI in their classroom, a minority did not respond so fondly or with as much knowledge. Some teachers simply were not aware of what AI was or were relatively negative or dismissive toward the use of AI in the classroom.

The most common responses from parents where conversational AI could be useful were language skills, mathematics, problem solving, learning and communication and conversation (see Table 10).

Table 10. Parents Answers to Open Ended Questions

Are there any specific topics or areas where you believe conversational AI could be particularly helpful for your class's learning or development	Number of people in the category (Some people fit into more than one category)
No	26
Blank	16
Language skills	14
Mathematics	14
Problem solving and learning	9
Communication and conversation	8
Yes	5
Understanding physical changes/sex/relationships	4
Geography	3
History	3
Understanding and comprehension	3
Writing and reading skills	3
Social and life skills	3
Educational/behavioural reinforcement and management	2
General cultural knowledge	2
Science	2
Simplifying concepts for children	1
Space	1
Coding	1
Politics	1
Research	1
Arts and crafts	1
Philosophy	1
Improving attention	1

The most prevalent theme that emerged for areas where parents wanted support from AI was helping improve their child's learning. This was even more common in parents' the teachers' answers. Parents wanted the AI to help with homework, to aid their child in focusing and for it to help them achieve to the best of their potential.

Another common theme was wanting to use the AI to track their child's intellectual growth and learning and receiving update reports. This was more common in parents' relative to teachers' responses. Like teachers, parents were focused on its ease of use both for themselves and their children. Parents also focused on using AI as a tool to help their child in areas that exceeded the parents' expertise. This theme of the parent wanting help when they felt they were out of their depth was not specific to schoolwork but also life skills and physical body development. Discussing sensitive topics such as growth and physical changes may be awkward for both parents and children. AI may ease the awkwardness and help the child if they are too afraid to talk to them. Like teachers, some parents indicated they wanted the AI's help for specific topics while others just indicated they wanted help for broader material. Despite openness to technology, parents had a few key worries about their children using AI in education, the main one being privacy concerns. Others were worried about what the AI would do with the child's data and if it was safe to use.

Discussion

In this study, our primary objective was to explore parents' and teachers' perspectives on conversational AI and its potential integration into education. Viewpoints were measured through a combination of closed and open survey questions. The majority of teachers and parents were positive about the use of Teddy AI, supporting our first prediction that parents and teachers would favour implementation of conversational AI into education. There was some hesitancy toward AI, supporting our second prediction that parents and teachers would show moderate apprehension toward AI in education. Additionally, there was very little difference in how parents and teachers viewed conversational AI, supporting supported prediction. This aligns with previous research with conversational AI study buddies (Lin et al., 2022; Aslan et al., 2023; Catania et al., 2020). However, while previous research largely focused on younger children (Lin et al., 2022; Aslan et al., 2023; Catania et al., 2020), our study included a wider age range of students, from four to 11+, indicating that conversational AI study buddies may be equally effective for older children, a gap in the literature that warrants further investigation.

A deeper look into the specific benefits highlighted by parents and teachers reveals interesting contrasts. AI as a tool to support children's learning was a common theme. Parents highlighted a desire for help with homework or focusing a child's study, as well as support with subject areas they were not able to help their child. Teachers focused on practical features such as monitoring progress and developing questions tailored to a child's needs. This reflects the broader role parents see AI playing in supporting overall child development, while teachers seem to prioritize its classroom applications. Teachers not only focused on how AI could aid their students in the classroom, but also how it could assist them in making their jobs easier and more efficient. Teachers expressed a desire for AI to offer advice on optimizing teaching materials and creating engaging lessons, which aligns with previous research suggesting AI's potential to reduce workload and increase efficiency for educators (Van Brummelen et al., 2021). However, the emphasis in this study on personalizing lessons for children with learning disabilities (Kaplan-Rakowski, 2023) could suggest an area for further exploration, particularly regarding whether conversational AI could effectively replace the nuanced judgment of experienced teachers in managing diverse learning needs. While AI's role in assisting personalized education is emphasized, little attention has been paid to how AI could impact teachers' interactions with children in complex, emotionally driven educational settings.

In addition to educational assistance, parents expressed interest in AI helping to develop their child's social skills. Many parents indicated they wanted the AI to assist their child with conversational skills, keeping the child up to date with current affairs, and helping them learn values such as respect. This was less prevalent with teachers, who focused more on strictly academic learning. The emphasis on social skills, however, highlights an emerging area of concern: research on AI in education often underplays its role in social and emotional development (Elias, 2009). This could indicate a gap in how AI is designed or perceived in educational settings, particularly if AI is predominantly considered an academic tool. Further, the findings regarding parents' desire for social development assistance are consistent with previous research that emphasizes AI's potential to bridge the gap between formal education and broader life skills (Vallor, 2018). However, a key contradiction lies in the fact that despite these desires for social and emotional development support, many teachers were not as inclined to see conversational AI as a tool for nurturing these aspects. This may reflect a narrower view of AI's role, potentially overlooking the growing recognition that emotional intelligence is vital for success in modern education.

Both teachers and parents emphasized ease of use. Parents focused on the AI making learning easier for the child and for it to describe things in simple ways. Teachers wanted to ensure smooth integration of technology in the classroom, hoping that it would run without glitches or interruptions. This is consistent with prior suggestions that uncertainty regarding how AI works is a common barrier for both parents and teachers (Lindner & Romekie, 2019). Interestingly, the study did not delve deeply into the specific technical challenges faced by teachers and parents when interacting with AI. More insight into the types of challenges experienced during implementation would allow for a clearer understanding of how to facilitate smoother adoption of AI tools in classrooms.

Despite the overall openness of parents and teachers to conversational AI within the classroom, there was some uncertainty. Much of this may have stemmed from participants' lack of knowledge about how AI works. Additionally, some expressed concern about privacy, worrying about what the AI was doing with their child's data and whether it was safe to use. This was particularly prevalent among parents. Similar concerns over privacy and data use were observed by Smakman et al. (2020). The persistent concerns regarding privacy and security could present a significant obstacle to AI adoption in educational contexts. This finding contrasts with the optimistic outlook about AI's potential educational benefits. These issues might be addressed by developing AI systems with transparent data handling practices and clearer communication about data privacy policies to reassure both parents and teachers (Selwyn, 2022).

The lack of human contact was another concern, consistent with findings from Smakman et al. (2020) and Aslan et al. (2023), where parents worried about how students' education and well-being might be affected by interactions with non-sentient beings. However, this concern may be amplified by a general resistance to technology replacing human interaction in education, as has been noted in research on human-computer interaction (HCI) in learning (Hughes, 2020). Despite some opposition to conversational AI in education, participants in our study were overwhelmingly optimistic about its use. This optimism suggests an opportunity for further exploration into how AI can be integrated to complement, rather than replace, traditional teaching methods.

Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into parents' and teachers' perspectives on the integration of conversational AI in education, there are several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, there is sample bias. The study primarily relied on survey responses, which may not fully capture the diverse views of all parents and teachers, particularly those who are less familiar or more sceptical about AI technologies. The sample may also be skewed toward individuals who are already open to the idea of AI in education, thus limiting the generalisability of the findings to the broader population. Secondly, there was limited geographic scope. The study did not explore regional or cultural differences in attitudes toward AI. As AI adoption can vary significantly by region, the findings may not be representative of global perspectives, especially in areas where technological infrastructure or attitudes toward digital tools in education differ. Thirdly, as the data were collected at one moment in time, there is a lack of longitudinal data. As AI technology evolves rapidly, it is possible that participants' attitudes may change over time as they gain more experience with AI in educational settings. A longitudinal study could provide deeper insights into how perceptions of AI evolve with exposure and practical use. Fourth, linking also the first point, the study relied on self-reported data, which can introduce biases, such as social desirability bias, where respondents may provide answers that they believe are expected or socially acceptable. Additionally, participants' actual experiences with conversational AI in education were not directly observed, which limits the study's ability to assess how their perceptions translate into real-world behaviour. Future research could include observations of people using different AI tools. Fifth, technical and practical implementations need to be considered. While the study explored general perspectives on the potential uses of conversational AI, it did not address in-depth the technical challenges of implementing such technologies in diverse educational settings. For example, there were no examinations of how different AI systems would perform across varying levels of technological infrastructure, nor were issues related to teacher training and adaptation fully explored. Future research can include these in the design. Finally, the study focused on narrow aspects of AI such as the use of conversational AI, such as Teddy AI, but did not explore other forms of AI or more comprehensive systems that could integrate AI for broader educational purposes, such as adaptive learning platforms or AI-driven data analytics for personalised learning. This focus may limit the breadth of the findings and overlook other important aspects of AI in education. However, it was important to keep the focus narrow as it was exploratory.

Future Research

To build on these findings, we recommend further research that includes students' perspectives to better understand how they perceive AI in educational settings. Comparing students' views with those of parents and teachers could provide valuable insights into the alignment or disparity between stakeholder expectations and experiences. Additionally, further studies could explore how AI impacts learning outcomes and emotional development, providing a more comprehensive understanding of its role in education. Ultimately, such research could inform the development of best practices for implementing AI in ways that maximise its benefits while addressing the concerns and needs of all parties involved.

Conclusion

In summary, our study explored parents' and teachers' perspectives on the integration of conversational AI into education. Despite some mild apprehension, such as concerns over privacy, plagiarism, and the lack of human contact, there was overall optimism about the potential benefits of conversational AI. Both parents and teachers recognised the potential of AI to support children's development, enhance learning experiences, and provide valuable assistance in areas where human support might be limited, such as homework help or personalised learning. The study revealed that most participants were comfortable with the idea of their children or students using AI, though there was a shared awareness of its limitations and risks. This study highlights the significant interest in and potential for AI to be integrated into educational environments. However, it also points to the need for more focused attention on addressing the concerns raised by both parents and teachers, especially around data privacy and the role of AI in reducing human interaction. Given the mixed sentiments, it is clear that successful implementation of conversational AI in education requires not only technological advancements but also strategies to mitigate apprehensions and ensure that the technology aligns with educational goals and values.

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