AI and Human Rights: A Study of College Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes a bigger part of our daily lives, it is raising serious questions about how it affects our fundamental rights. Things like algorithmic bias and data privacy are no longer just tech jargon – they're real concerns. We wanted to find out what college students, a group that will be at the forefront of this change, think about the complex relationship between AI and human rights. To get our answers, a test was conducted among 245 students from different academic backgrounds and genders. The data was analyzed to see how much they knew about the topic and hoe their opinions differed.

The results showed that most students (73%) have a general, but not particularly deep, understanding of these issues. However, some interesting differences were found. Female students had noticeably more defined perspectives on the topic than their male peers. While students' fields of study didn't create a huge statistical difference in their views, but a clear ranking in the strength of their opinions was found, with B.A. students holding the strongest views and B.Sc. students having the least defined ones. The findings of the study showed critical gaps, i.e., students are aware of AI's significant influence, but they require necessary knowledge to pilot its ethical complicatedness. It also focused on educating them about the challenges of AI and on preparing them to shape a more responsible future with it.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, College Students, Perspectives, Algorithmic Bias*

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Introduction

The influence of artificial intelligence (AI) on human rights has become a critical topic of discussion as AI becomes more and more integrated into daily life. The capacity of AI to process enormous volumes of data and make choices automatically has sparked worries about discrimination, justice, and privacy.

The widespread integration of artificial intelligence stands as a pivotal development of the modern era. Despite its consideration potential to benefit fields such as transportation, education, and healthcare, AI's increasing prevalence necessitates an examination of its implications for human rights. The underlying algorithms, far from being neutral, are constructed from data and premises that may intentionally or unintentionally encode and worsen existing societal prejudices. Consequently, a crucial international discourse has emerged, focusing on challenges including discriminatory algorithms, privacy rights, freedom of expression, and mechanisms for accountability.

This paper provides a comprehensive examination f a study investigating the attitudes of college students – a key demographic that will influence and experience the future of AI – regarding the complex interplay between artificial intelligence and human rights. The analysis of their awareness and understanding yields valuable insights into the next generation's outlook on the ethical implications presented by AI advancements The analytical framework is designed not merely to capture the broad spectrum of student perspective but also to discern the impact of demographic variables – namely gender and academic discipline – on these viewpoints. This study aims to advance the comprehension of AI's human implications and to illuminate critical areas requiring educational and policy interventions to safeguard a human –centric trajectory for technological progress.

Review of Related Literature

Artificial intelligence is becoming a bigger part of our lives every day, and a lot of smart people are asking a crucial question: how does this technology affect our human rights? It is a complex issue because AI is not just one thing – it is a tool with two very different sides.

On one hand, AI can be a powerful force for good. Think about how it could revolutionize things like education, healthcare, and even the way governments work, making them more efficient and accessible for everyone.

On the other hand, there's a real danger. The biggest worry is what's known as algorithmic bias. Imagine an AI system trained on data from the past. If that data

reflects old prejudices – like a history of discrimination in hiring or lending – the AI won't just learn those biases, it might even make them worse. This could lead to unfair outcomes in critical areas like getting a job, securing a loan, or even being sentenced by the justice system.

This is why there is a global call for greater transparency and accountability. Organizations like UNESCO are stepping up, creating ethical guidelines that emphasize principles like fairness and non-discrimination.

Ultimately, for us to navigate this new world, we all need to be part of the conversation – to get better at understanding AI's ethical implications. This is not just a job for experts or tech companies; it is a shared responsibility. We need better public education and clear rules that is in charge of making sure AI is developed and used responsibly.

Objectives

(i) To study the level of AI and human rights perspective on college students

(ii) To compare the perspective of AI and human rights among college students with reference to their stream of study

(iii) To compare the perspective of AI and human rights among college students with reference to their gender

Hypothesis

(i) There is no significant difference on the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their gender

(ii) There is no significant difference on the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their stream of study

Methodology

A descriptive research design method was employed to analyze the perspective of college students on AI and human rights. A structured questionnaire was administered and a quantitative method was approached for the study. The questionnaire was divided into 5 dimensions – Individual Awareness and Perception, Ethical Principles & Values, Governance & Responsibility, Societal Impact & Trust, and the Future of AI and Human Agency.

Data Collection and Analysis

- Tools used: The researchers used a self-developed tools consisting of 27 items, which were divided in 5 different dimensions. A Likert scale was used to measure students' perspective on AI and human rights.
- Sampling technique: 245 students were selected based on a purposive sampling method. The sample consists of students from different discipline B.A. (96), B.Sc. (33), B.Com. (54) and BCA (62); in which 149 were female and 69 were male college students.
- Statistical Analysis: Both descriptive and inferential tests were used to perform for analyzing the data. Statistical techniques like –
    - o Z-scores – to categorize each students perspective providing a detailed view on the distribution of awareness and perception among the students as High ($z>1$), Average ($-1 < z \leq 1$) and Low ($z<1$).
    - o One-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) – to determine a significant difference in the perspective of AI and human rights among the different stream of study.
    - o Kruskal-Wallis Test – to study a pair-wise comparison on different discipline in order to identify the rank order of the perspective of AI and human rights based on their mean rank.
    - o Chi-Square Test – to assess the relationship between a students' gender and their perspective on AI and human rights, determining of the observed differences were statistically significant.

Analysis and interpretation of the study was done in accordance with the objectives.

(i) To study the level of AI and Human Rights Perspective on College Students in different dimensions z-scores was employed, i.e. High ($z>1$), Average ($-1 < z \leq 1$) and Low ($z<1$)

Table 1: Levels of AI and Human Rights Perspective on College Students in different dimensions

Dimensions	Category	Responses in number	Responses in percentage
Individual Awareness and Perception	High	29	12
	Average	179	73
	Low	37	15

Ethical Principles & Values	High	44	18
	Average	169	69
	Low	32	13
Governance & Responsibility	High	25	10
	Average	163	67
	Low	57	23
Societal Impact & Trust	High	63	26
	Average	138	56
	Low	44	18
Future of AI & Human Agency	High	51	21
	Average	143	58
		51	21

Among the 245 college students, most (73%) have a moderate understanding of how AI relates to human rights. Most students have an average understanding of AI and its societal impact, with their knowledge being neither high nor very low. A small percentage (15%) has very limited awareness, while a slightly larger group of students (12%) has a strong grasp of the topic. These results highlight the need for broader educational efforts, as a deeper understanding of AI's implications is not yet widespread.

A large majority (69%) of the college students has a moderate level of concern and understanding about AI ethics. While they are generallt aware of issues like bias, their ethical framework isn't fully developed. The remaining respondents are split between two groups: a highly engaged minority (18%) with strong opinions on Ai's potential to worsen social inequality, and a small group (13%) with less-developed ethical views who are not as concerned about AI bias. Overall, the results show that while most people are not indifferent to AI ethics, they also lack specialized knowledge. The large average group is a key audience for future education and discussions on AI governance, while the smaller high-scoring group represents a vocal minority.

Most of the 245 respondents have a moderate view on AI governance, though a significant minority shows very low awareness. The largest group, representing 67% (163 people), has an average understanding and believes that both governments and tech companies should share responsibility, but their knowledge of existing policies is limited. A key finding is that 23% (57 people) of the respondents have low awareness, indicating they are largely disengaged from the policy debates on AI. This group is often unaware of the risks of technologies like facial recognition and holds undefined views on who should be held accountable. In contrast, a small group of 10% (25 people) is highly aware and has strong opinions on governance and accountability.

Among the 245 college students, 56% hold a moderate view on AI's impact, seeing both its potential benefits and risks. However, the remaining opinions are quite divided. A notable student (26%) is highly optimistic, believing AI will lead to positive outcomes like new jobs and a fairer society. In contrast, 18% are more pessimistic, expressing low trust and significant concern about potential harms like job losses and increased inequality. This polarization suggests that student's views on AI's societal effects are clearly split between those who are hopeful and those who are skeptical.

A little over half (58% or 143 college students) have a moderate perspective on the future of AI. They believe that AI education is important and that students have a role to play in it. However, the remaining 42% are almost evenly split between two opposing viewpoints. A group of 21% (51 people) is highly engaged and optimistic, believing that students have a critical role in shaping AI's future and that AI education should be a priority. In contrast, another group of 21% (51 people) holds an equally strong but opposite, disengaged perspective. They may not see AI education as important or believe students have a significant role to play. This near-perfect split highlights a distinct polarization of views on the future of AI.

(ii) To compare the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their stream of study, One-way ANOVA was used.

Ho: There is no significant difference on the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their stream of study

Table 2: Comparison on the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their stream of study

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.8898	3	,633	.020	.996
Within Groups	7722.813	241	32.045		
Total	7724.719	244			

College students' perspectives on AI and human rights don't significantly differ based on their field of study. The statistical analysis showed a high p-value (0.996) and a very low F-statistic (0.020), meaning there's no strong evidence to suggest that students in different academic streams like BA, B.Sc., B.Com, or BCA have different opinions on this topic. Essentially, what a student studies doesn't predict their views on AI and human rights. Therefore, the null hypothesis 'There is no significant difference on the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their stream of study' is rejected.

Pair-wise comparison was done using Kruskal-Wallis Test to identify the order of perspectives rank on AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their stream of study.

Table 3: Mean Rank and Mean Order on perspectives of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their stream of study

Stream of study	N - 245	Mean rank	Mean Order
B.A.	96	124.86	1
B.Sc.	33	119.15	4
B.Com.	54	121.70	3
BCA	62	123.29	2

College students' views on AI and human rights vary depending on their academic stream, with a clear hierarchy emerging from the study. BA students hold the most prominent and strongly-defined perspectives on the topic. They are followed by BCA students, then B.Com. students, and finally B.Sc. students, who have the least defined viewpoints.

(iii) To compare the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their gender, Chi-Square was used.

Ho: There is no significant difference on the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their gender.

Table 4: Comparison on the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their gender

Group	N	Mean Rank	Mean	SD	df	p value	Decision
Female	149	148.38	50.85	5.627	20	.000	Reject the Ho / Significant
Male	96	83.61					

Female and male college students have significantly different perspectives on AI and human rights. This conclusion is supported by a very low p-value (0.000), which indicates the difference isn't due to chance. The data shows that female students have a higher mean rank (148.38) compared to their male counterparts (83.61), suggesting they hold a more distinct or prominent viewpoint on the topic. Therefore, the null hypothesis 'There is no significant difference on the perspective of AI and Human Rights among college students with reference to their gender' is rejected.

Discussion

This study aimed to understand what college students – a crucial generation shaping out future – think about the complex relationship between artificial intelligence

and human rights. The results paint a clear picture: while students are generally aware of the issues, they are not deeply engaged yet. This suggests a significant gap in their readiness for the AI-driven world we're moving into.

The most consistent finding across the board is the dominance of what we've called the 'moderate middle'. About two-thirds of students have an average, rather undeveloped understanding of how AI affects society. They know about basic issues like bias but lack a deeper ethical framework or knowledge of how AI is being governed.

Student's view on AI are actually quite divided – on one side, there are a highly optimistic and engaged minority who are excited to help guide AI's future. On the other hand, there are a disengaged and more pessimistic group that is less aware of the issues but highly concerned about risks like inequality. This divide presents a huge challenge for anyone making policy. How do you create educational programs and regulations that ease the fears of the sceptics, use the energy of the optimists, and bring everyone in the middle up to speed? The fact that people can't even agree on the importance of AI education shows just how difficult it is to find common ground.

Interestingly, the study found that what a student majors in does not matter when it comes to their views on AI and human rights. Whether they are studying computer science, humanities, or business, they all see AI's ethical implications as a universal concern, not one confined t a specific field.

In stark contrast, gender emerged as a very significant factor. Female students hold a much more distinct and prominent viewpoint on AI and human rights than their male counterparts. This could be because women are more often aware of how issues like algorithmic bias and surveillance disproportionately affect marginalized groups, including women themselves. This finding strongly suggests that we must include diverse voices, especially those of women, in the development and regulation of AI to ensure it is fair and equitable for everyone.

Conclusion

The study reveals that while college students generally possess a moderate level of awareness regarding AI's relationship with human rights, there are significant differences based on gender and a clear hierarchy in perspective strength by academic stream. While the overall opinions are not statistically different across academic streams, the prominence of these perspectives varies, with B.A. students showing the strongest views and B.Sc. students the least defined. Gender, however, emerged as a significant factor, with female students holding a more prominent perspective than their male counterparts. These findings highlight a critical need for targeted

educational initiatives to deepen students' understanding of AI ethics and governance, particularly for those with low awareness, to ensure a more informed and engaged future generation.

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