

Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Legal Education: Lessons from The United Kingdom and South Africa

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Abstract

This article explores the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on legal education, drawing insights from experiences in the United Kingdom and South Africa. Examining the integration of AI technologies into legal curricula, the study investigates how these advancements enhance educational methodologies, prepare students for evolving legal landscapes, and address potential challenges. By analyzing the distinct approaches adopted in the UK and South Africa, this research aims to extract valuable lessons that can inform the global evolution of legal education in the context of rapid technological change. The objective of this comprehensive task is to conduct an analysis and comparison of the methodologies employed by two nations, delineating their respective approaches, the obstacles encountered, and the potential prospects for their attainment. It has been found out that United Kingdom is more advanced and utilized AI approaches to support the legal matters whilst South Africa is still in progressive stages in terms of developing strong legal framework and intervention of suitable AI approaches. This study places emphasis on the challenges, common uses, and methods related to information systems within global systems and legal systems. The present analysis is grounded in the notion of envisioning the future of legal education by means of an artificial intelligence system while also providing recommendations for nations seeking to enhance their legal education systems through the integration of technology.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Legal Education, United Kingdom, South Africa

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Introduction

Artificial Intelligence connotes the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings.¹ The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems endowed with the intellectual processes characteristic of humans, such as the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalize, or learn from past experience.² It is undeniable that the development of artificial intelligence (AI) has had a significant impact on a number of international sectors. For example, transforming methods for the workplace, communicating between cultures and fields, and solving complex problems. Furthermore, the growing incorporation of artificial intelligence in diverse businesses has shown its significant influence on legal education. The aim of this research is to clarify the worldwide implications of artificial intelligence (AI) and establish the foundation for a radical re-evaluation of its role in the field of legal education. In particular, the research looks at the profound effects on society, people's capacity to adapt to AI developments, the adaptability of AI technologies, and the unbreakable link between AI and the legal profession. In response to the technological revolution, this study highlights the value of developing critical thinking abilities and offers valuable perspectives on the future direction of legal education from both countries to the international legal community.

According to Guth, Jessica, and Tamara Hervey, within the dynamic landscape of legal education, the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) serves as a transformative influence that both questions and enhances conventional instructional approaches.³ Upon closer examination of the significant influence of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of legal education, it becomes evident that legal practitioners in both the United Kingdom and South Africa are not impervious to the incessant forces of technological advancements. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the consequences of artificial intelligence (AI), encompassing legal principles and real-world instances.⁴ It emphasizes the significant transformative shifts experienced by these two nations.

¹ Definition of Artificial Intelligence available on Britannica Dictionary at <https://www.britannica.com/technology/artificial-intelligence> accessed on the 12th of December, 2023.

² Ibid, n1

³ Guth, Jessica, and Tamara Hervey. "Threats to internationalised legal education in the twenty-first century UK." *The Law Teacher* 52, 350-370.)

⁴ Keys, Clare, Gowri Nanayakkara, Chisa Onyejekwe, Rajeeb Kumar Sah, and Toni Wright. "Health inequalities and ethnic vulnerabilities during COVID-19 in the UK: a reflection on the PHE Reports." *Feminist Legal Studies* 107-118.

The Current State of Legal Education in the UK

The law school system in the United Kingdom, characterized by its structured approach, nevertheless has considerable room for improvement in its role as the foundation for producing competent legal professionals.¹ However, like any complex system, it is not devoid of obstacles, and the necessity for adaptation becomes more apparent when examining tangible instances and engaging in critical analysis.

The exorbitant expenses associated with pursuing a legal education in the United Kingdom pose a substantial impediment to access, hence restricting admission to individuals hailing from socio-economically disadvantaged households.² The presence of a financial obstacle frequently leads to a dearth of diversity within the legal profession, hence affording individuals from affluent backgrounds enhanced prospects for pursuing a career in law. For instance, a prospective law student who encounters financial limitations may opt for an alternative profession, even if they have achieved success within the realm of law.³ These dynamic serves to perpetuate and exacerbate social and economic disparities within the legal profession.

Furthermore, the legal education system faces obstacles due to the competitive labour market. The disparity between the number of law graduates and available teaching positions is contributing to the surplus of qualified individuals encountering difficulties in securing employment.⁴ The phenomenon of oversaturation in the job market can result in a situation of underemployment, where individuals possessing high qualifications are employed in positions that do not fully leverage their legal competence.⁵ This issue has implications not only for the trajectories of individual careers but also for the general efficacy of the legal labour force.

Critics contend that the educational system's prioritization of theoretical knowledge results in a disregard for the cultivation of practical skills essential for achieving success in professional environments.⁶ The disparity between theoretical information acquired in academia and its practical implementation can impede the smooth transition from the educational setting to the professional realm.⁷ An instance of this can be observed in the case of a law graduate who possesses a commendable comprehension of legal ideas but encounters challenges when it comes to effectively resolving practical issues or managing client interactions

Law schools in the United Kingdom are increasingly adopting and incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) learning tools, recognizing their capacity to bring about significant changes and advancements. The examination of artificial intelligence's application in the field of legal study warrants consideration. Algorithms possess the capability to expeditiously examine substantial quantities of case law and legislation, affording law students and legal professionals the opportunity to acquire useful insights at an unparalleled pace.⁸ One such application involves the utilization of a natural language processing (NLP) model to retrieve pertinent instances from past historical contexts.⁹ The aforementioned technical advancements serve to streamline the laborious process of legal research, thereby allowing for a more efficient allocation of time towards comprehensive analysis. Nevertheless, this endeavour is not devoid of its inherent difficulties. The ethical implications of plagiarism are brought to the forefront by the widespread accessibility of information facilitated by artificial intelligence systems.¹⁰ Consequently, individuals in academic and professional settings are compelled to priorities the preservation of the integrity of their work.

It has been explained by McGlynn, Clare, Erika Rackley, and Ruth Houghton, that the study of legal concepts and ethical values is a fundamental aspect of academic inquiry. This field of study explores the principles and frameworks that govern the legal system and the moral principles that guide human behaviour.¹¹ Law schools in the United Kingdom offer students guidance on the critical evaluation of AI-driven financial statements, as an illustrative instance.¹² The adoption of a critical perspective is crucial as proponents seek to guarantee the openness, accountability, and impartiality of AI tools, with a particular focus on mitigating any biases that could disproportionately impact marginalized communities.

The notion of "legal empowerment" is increasingly gaining traction in South Africa, as artificial intelligence

¹ Ibid, n 1

² Ferris, Graham. "Undermining resilience: how the modern UK university manufactures heightened vulnerability in legal academics and what is to be done." *The Law Teacher* 55, no. 1 ,24-41.

³ Ibid, n 4

⁴ McGlynn, Clare, and Nicole Westmarland. "Kaleidoscopic justice: Sexual violence and victim-survivors' perceptions of justice." *Social & Legal Studies* 28, no. 2 (2019): 179-201.

⁵ Ibid, n 6

⁶ Reddy, Bobby V. "The Fat Controller: Slimming Down the Excesses of Controlling Shareholders in UK Listed Companies." *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 38, no. 4 733-763.

⁷ Ibid, n 8

⁸ Ibid, n 8

⁹ Ibid, n 1

¹⁰ Ibid, n 4

¹¹ McGlynn, Clare, Erika Rackley, and Ruth Houghton. "Beyond 'revenge porn': The continuum of image-based sexual abuse." *Feminist legal studies* 25 (2017): 25-46.

¹² Sheldon, Sally. "The decriminalisation of abortion: An argument for modernisation." *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 36, no. 2 (2016): 334-365.

(AI) enables individuals to comprehend and safeguard their legal entitlements. AI platforms designed for legal comprehension offer individuals who were previously marginalized from legal discussions readily available information. However, the emergence of complicated legal concerns in this domain gives rise to an ethical challenge. The distinction between legal knowledge and legal advice has become increasingly indistinct, leading to concerns regarding the unauthorized practice of law.¹ This issue continues to be a subject of controversy within the realm of AI legal education.

AI in Legal Education: The United Kingdom's Perspective

Great Britain, renowned for its exceptional legal heritage, has emerged as a trailblazer in the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into legal education, therefore showcasing the profound impact of AI.² The United Kingdom's notable advancements in this realm warrant acknowledgment; nevertheless, a thorough analysis unveils both the advancements made and the obstacles encountered by the country as a trailblazer in the fields of artificial intelligence and legislation pertaining to education.

The arrival of artificial intelligence technologies has had a profound impact on the development of legal education in Great Britain. The utilization of AI tools has become indispensable in the field of legal research, therefore reflecting an ongoing trend.³ For instance, artificial intelligence (AI)-based algorithms are employed to analyse extensive legal databases, enabling the rapid identification of legal precedents and concepts that would often require a substantial amount of time. Furthermore, the incorporation of legal AI technology into legal curricula would facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate aspects of AI within the field of law for law students.⁴ The practical nature of this method will prove to be highly beneficial for aspiring lawyers as they effectively utilize the capabilities of artificial intelligence.

However, the United Kingdom's prominence in the fields of artificial intelligence (AI) and legal education is not devoid of obstacles.⁵ The ethical implications surrounding the increasing prevalence of legal technologies utilizing artificial intelligence necessitate thorough contemplation. For instance, the accessibility and functionality of artificial intelligence (AI) tools might give rise to issues such as plagiarism or an overabundance of content, prompting inquiries into the integrity of research and the appropriateness of certain practices. A comprehensive analysis is necessary to evaluate the impact of artificial intelligence on the ethical landscape of legal education.

The advent of artificial intelligence gives rise to legal and ethical questions.⁶ Legal scholars and practitioners must engage in a rigorous examination of AI-generated legal advice, ensuring its transparency, accountability, and absence of prejudice that could disproportionately impact specific communities.⁷ The expeditious advancement of artificial intelligence necessitates the implementation of safeguards to mitigate algorithmic biases that have the potential to perpetuate and exacerbate socioeconomic inequities within the legal system.

The United Kingdom has emerged as a frontrunner in the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) within the ambit of legal education.⁸ This endeavour serves as an exemplification of the vital qualities of critical thinking and ethical consciousness required to effectively navigate the landscape of AI regulation. The experiences of the nation provide useful insights for the global legal community regarding the obstacles and opportunities associated with the implementation of artificial intelligence in legal education.⁹ The United Kingdom's prominent role in incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) into the realm of legal education imposes a significant obligation on the legal community to effectively manage the convergence of technological advancements and ethical deliberations.

Legal Education in South Africa

Legal education at the university level in South Africa often encompasses a blend of theoretical coursework and hands-on experiential learning.¹⁰ Universities assume a pivotal role in the dissemination of fundamental legal knowledge to students. Prominent academic establishments, namely the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand, play a pivotal role in shaping the legal intellectual discourse within the country.¹¹ Nevertheless, the task of guaranteeing fair and inclusive opportunities for all individuals to obtain a comprehensive legal education is not without its difficulties.

¹ Ibid, n 9

² Ibid, n 10

³ McGlynn, Clare, and Nicole Westmarland. "Kaleidoscopic justice: Sexual violence and victim-survivors' perceptions of justice." *Social & Legal Studies* 28, no. 2 (2019): 179-201.

⁴ Ibid, n 11

⁵ Ibid, n 12

⁶ Sheldon, Sally. "The decriminalisation of abortion: An argument for modernisation." *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 36, no. 2, 334-365.

⁸ Supra, n 21

⁹ Johnston, Andrew, Blanche Segrestin, and Armand Hatchuel. "From balanced enterprise to hostile takeover: how the law forgot about management." *Legal Studies* 39, no. 1, 75-97.

¹⁰ Supra, n 20

¹¹ Scheppele, Kim Lane. "Autocratic legalism." *The University of Chicago Law Review* 85, no. 2, 545-584.

In addition to its academic curriculum, South Africa adopts a pragmatic approach to legal education.¹ Many individuals who aspire to become attorneys frequently engage in practical legal training, which encompasses activities such as law clerkships and internships, in order to acquire firsthand knowledge. The acquisition of this level of professional training is important in order to effectively translate theoretical legal knowledge into practical abilities.

The South African setting presents distinct issues, notably in terms of accessibility and diversity.² The historical backdrop of apartheid has exerted a significant influence on educational possibilities, hence necessitating the need to redress disparities in the accessibility of legal education. The topic of diversity remains a persistent concern with regards to the demographic composition of students and the representation of legal matters. The aforementioned issues necessitate the implementation of new solutions that not only enhance accessibility but also foster the advancement of the legal profession.

The significance of integrating current technologies and innovations into legal education should not be overlooked. Similar to numerous other nations, South Africa is currently facing challenges in adapting its legal education system to keep pace with technological advancements. Innovation encompasses not just the act of remaining current but also the ability to surmount problems with greater efficacy.³ This includes the incorporation of technology into educational methodologies, the utilization of technology for legal research purposes, and the delivery of legal services with the aid of technology.

A comprehensive analysis and juxtaposition of South African education policy and the legal system in Great Britain highlights shared problems and differing methodologies.⁴ Legal education in the United Kingdom frequently places emphasis on the cultivation of scholarly rigor and the development of professional competence.⁵ In South Africa, historical considerations might not have as much of an impact on the discretionary nature of access to legal education.

The evaluation of legal education that South African and British academics conducted highlights the need for specialized solutions that take into account the particular contextual factors.⁶ Simultaneously, it emphasizes the significance of shared objectives in the realm of international educational law. Through the process of leveraging individual strengths and effectively addressing distinct issues, both domains have the potential to make valuable contributions towards the advancement of legal education.⁷ This collaborative approach aims to foster a legal education that not only emphasizes theoretical rigor but also encompasses a full understanding of the diverse demands of contemporary legal society.

AI in Legal Education: South African Perspective

When examining the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into legal education in South Africa, it is crucial to take into account the distinct problems and opportunities that arise within this particular setting.⁸ The exclusion of particular populations may arise as a result of limited access to technology or inadequate educational opportunities, which is of utmost importance to consider.⁹ Nevertheless, these aforementioned issues offer a promising prospect for artificial intelligence (AI) to address the existing disparities and offer groundbreaking remedies to enhance accessibility and foster inclusivity.

The practical implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in South African legal education can be better understood by examining specific instances of its utilization or ongoing development.¹⁰ AI platforms specifically developed to provide virtual legal clinics have the potential to effectively address the issue of delivering legal services in geographically isolated or underserved regions.¹¹ Furthermore, the integration of AI-based learning resources tailored to the specific requirements of the South African legal curriculum has the potential to enhance students' educational experiences through the provision of individualized and tailored learning materials.

¹ Watson, Susan Mary. "The corporate legal person." *Journal of Corporate Law Studies* 19, no. 1, 137-166.

² Reimann, Mathias, and Reinhard Zimmermann, eds. *The Oxford handbook of comparative law*. Oxford University Press.

³ *Supra*, n 20

⁴ Lindsey, Jaime. "Testimonial injustice and vulnerability: A qualitative analysis of participation in the Court of Protection." *Social & Legal Studies* 28, no. 4, 450-469.

⁵ Wilson, J. Clare, and Caroline Strevens. "Perceptions of psychological well-being in UK law academics." *The Law Teacher* 52, no. 3, 335-349.

⁶ Wilson, J. Clare, and Caroline Strevens. "Perceptions of psychological well-being in UK law academics." *The Law Teacher* 52, no. 3, 335-349.

⁷ *Supra*, n 21

⁸ *Supra*, n 23

⁹ Van Rooij, Benjamin, Anne Leonore de Bruijn, Chris Reinders Folmer, Emmeke Barbara Kooistra, Malouke Esra Kuiper, Megan Brownlee, Elke Olthuis, and Adam Fine. "Compliance with COVID-19 mitigation measures in the United States." *Amsterdam law school research paper* 2020-21.

¹⁰ Murahwi, Tadiwanashe, and Nomalanga Mashinini. "The Legal Nature of Systems of Artificial Intelligence in South Africa." In *ECLAIR 2021 3rd European Conference on the Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics*, p. 115. Academic Conferences and publishing limited.

¹¹ *Ibid* 31

Comparative Analysis

This comprehensive part examines the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into legal education in both the United Kingdom and South Africa. Through a comparative examination, the study uncovers diverse approaches, identifies problems, and extracts valuable insights that can guide the global integration of AI into legal education.

Organizational Framework

In the United Kingdom, esteemed establishments for legal education, such as the School of Law and BPP University, have been at the forefront of incorporating artificial intelligence into the sphere of legal education.¹ These institutions employ a methodical and coordinated strategy that guarantees stability and uniformity in the incorporation of artificial intelligence instruments. In contrast, South Africa has a greater degree of landscape diversity, characterized by the presence of well-established academic institutions and legal technology companies that actively facilitate the incorporation of artificial intelligence.

Curriculum Integration

Curriculum integration refers to the process of incorporating many subject areas and disciplines into a cohesive and interconnected curriculum.² The extent and manner in which artificial intelligence (AI) is included in legal education programs differ and are influenced by the distinct legal landscape of each jurisdiction. In the United Kingdom, where legal education frequently falls behind international legal advancements, there is a growing integration of artificial intelligence into research methodologies and case analyses.³ South Africa acknowledges the significance of contextual factors and exhibits a commitment to giving priority to the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into educational curricula, with the aim of effectively tackling the distinctive legal obstacles prevalent in the region. The necessity for critical evaluation arises from the imperative to strike a balance between advancements in international law and the customization of education to suit local requirements.

Legal Considerations

Regulatory measures exert a significant influence on the incorporation of artificial intelligence within the ambit of legal education.⁴ The United Kingdom, under its existing legal framework, might be seen as an exemplar for the ethical application of artificial intelligence, effectively managing the interplay between technological advancement and legal safeguards. In the context of South Africa, it is imperative to implement proactive regulatory measures in response to the evolving legal technology landscape in order to ensure the appropriate operation of artificial intelligence (AI) systems.

The experiences of the United Kingdom and South Africa highlight the significance of adopting a contextual approach. The United Kingdom emphasizes the advantages of employing a methodical approach within well-established institutions, whereas South Africa emphasizes the necessity of adaptability and ingenuity in tackling distinct issues. The establishment of best practices is a result of the harmonious interaction between worldwide advancements and contextual appropriateness at a local level, wherein the integration of artificial intelligence is tailored to the specific social and legal circumstances of individual regions. Critical evaluation is the incorporation of these findings into adaptable tactics that possess a global resonance.

Future Recommendations

South Africa should encourage AI in their legal education policy to increase solution depth. Considering the unstable political situation in South Africa, the intervention of AI in legal education would foster a solution-oriented atmosphere in the long run.⁵

In South Africa the allocation of resources towards research endeavors is necessary in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the implications of artificial intelligence in the field of legal education. It is imperative for governments, academic institutions, and business stakeholders to collaborate in order to provide financial backing and assistance for research endeavours that investigate the efficacy, ethical considerations, and enduring consequences of artificial intelligence (AI) in the realm of legal education.⁶

In the UK Legal practitioners and educators are required to engage in continuing adaptation and training

¹ Adebisi, Foluke. "Decolonising the law school: Presences, absences, silences... and hope." *The Law Teacher* 54, no. 4, 471-474.

² Adams, Rachel. "Can artificial intelligence be decolonized?." *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 46, no. 1-2, 176-197.

³ Goffi, Emmanuel R. "Teaching Ethics Applied to AI from a Cultural Standpoint: What African "AI Ethics" for Africa?." In *AI Ethics in Higher Education: Insights from Africa and Beyond*, pp. 13-26. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

⁴ Hebing, Mireille, Tatiana M. Martinez, and Stephen Barber. "Human trafficking and the law: the importance of interdisciplinarity in learning and teaching." In *International Workshop on cross-cutting topics in legal studies*, pp. 29-43. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

⁵ Mubangizi, John Cantius. "A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO THE USE AND REGULATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE—AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE." *Journal of Southwest Jiaotong University* 57, no. 4.

⁶ Mahomed, Safia. "Healthcare, artificial intelligence and the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Ethical, social and legal considerations." *South African Journal of Bioethics and Law* 11, no. 2, 93-95.

initiatives in order to remain abreast of advancements in artificial intelligence.¹ This entails the incorporation of artificial intelligence modules into professional development courses and the provision of ongoing educational opportunities, ensuring that lawyers are adequately equipped to address evolving demands.

In both nations, access to artificial intelligence (AI) tools should be prioritized to ensure their widespread availability in the context of legal investigations.² It is imperative for governments and organizations to collaborate in order to mitigate socio-economic disparities and allocate resources towards projects that ensure the equitable availability of AI tools for all individuals striving to become legal professionals.

The future prospects of integrating artificial intelligence into legal education appear promising, contingent upon the proactive efforts and collaborative endeavours of relevant stakeholders. By strategically envisioning a future that places emphasis on innovation, collaboration, and ethical considerations, nations and regions can establish legal education institutions that are flexible, encompassing, and well-prepared to address the demands of a dynamic legal landscape. Undergo fast development.

Conclusion

This study aims to provide a comparative examination of the legal education systems in the United Kingdom and South Africa, with a specific focus on examining the distinct effects of artificial intelligence (AI). The analysis of institutional frameworks, access barriers, curriculum integration, industry collaboration, regulatory factors, and experience aids in comprehending the diverse strategies employed by various locations. Based on the acquired experience, it is evident that artificial intelligence plays a pivotal role in shaping the evolving landscape of global legal education.

The comparison reveals a wide range of methods for the integration of artificial intelligence (AI), encompassing many institutions in the United Kingdom and the diversified and dynamic ecosystem in South Africa. The observed variability in the AI's performance demonstrates its capacity to effectively adjust to various circumstances, hence highlighting the necessity for the implementation of adaptable tactics.

The presented research demonstrates that artificial intelligence (AI) is well positioned to revolutionize the landscape of global education. The individual's capacity to confront obstacles, enhance standards, and enhance availability significantly influenced the advancement of legal education. AI-powered solutions have been shown to enhance the learning experience by incorporating personalized, adaptable, and immersive elements, hence fostering innovative learning experiences. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) is expected to bring about a revolution in legal education by enhancing accessibility and eliminating obstacles associated with geographical location, socioeconomic status, and historical disparities.

The incorporation of artificial intelligence is not only a passing fad but rather a necessity for transformative progress. The primary emphasis lies on fostering teamwork, doing thorough research, and engaging in ongoing adaptation. Through the responsible and ethical utilization of artificial intelligence, the field of legal education may effectively and adaptively respond to the evolving landscape, ensuring a future characterized by the convergence of quality and accessibility, ultimately benefiting legal professionals worldwide. The pursuit of AI-driven legal education encompasses more than mere technological exploration. Our dedication lies in crafting a future where the convergence of law and technology gives rise to the legal cognition of tomorrow.

¹ Kayuni, Steven William. "Legal education pedagogy: A policy perspective plea to sub-Saharan African legal scholarship." In *Education, Communication and Democracy in Africa*, pp. 50-69. Routledge.

² Twining, William. "Rethinking legal education." *The law teacher* 52, no. 3 ,241-260.