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EVALUATING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE FACE OF 'DEVELOPING CRITICAL VOICE IN LEGISLATION AND LEGAL PRINCIPLES'

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Abstract

Over the past few years, the legal profession has undergone rapid transformation due to the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), increasing restrictions on freedom of expression, and evolving global communication patterns. Likewise, nations around the globe have taken steps, including imposing legal restrictions that suppress the rule of law, making it difficult for legal professionals to develop independent critical voices. Furthermore, digital platforms, while offering newer and better opportunities for legal discourse, have been subjected to censorship, micro-management and strict and sometimes unconstitutional surveillance. It is in the light of the above that the paper argued the evolving challenges associated with artificial intelligence in developing critical voice in legislations and legal principles. Furthermore, the need to explore how the academic and legal education community can empower law students to critically engage with these challenges and actively shape the evolution of legal principles was evaluated. The author therefore maintained that Legal education resilience project, (a model event and research initiative assessing global academic responses to AI, censorship, and legal suppression and by implementing this initiative, the legal platform Worldwide) will operate to foster generations of lawyers equipped to challenge repressive legal frameworks and advocate for a more just legal order.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, censorship, legal education, legislations, legal order

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1. Introduction

The legal profession is experiencing a profound transformation, as a result of the increase in technological advancement, particularly, ‘artificial intelligence.’¹ The routine integration of AI in the regime of legal practice, governance, and policy-making present new challenges for legal education as well as operate to revolutionize the way lawyers conduct due diligence, draft legal documents, and even predict case outcomes. In fact, many states now leverage on the workability and benefit of AI in order to regulate digital communication. This interaction has led to restrictions such as ‘freedom of expression,’ and etcetera.

The exploration of the interrelated-impact of AI, legal restrictions, and global communication shifts on law students, proposes a strategic event and research initiative to empower them. This exploration exposes the structured initiatives such as international legal summits and research-driven projects capable of providing law students with the necessary skills and platforms to challenge oppressive laws, engage in meaningful legal discourse, and shaping the future of legal practice. The proposed program and research initiative- “*Legal Education Resilience Project*” would serve as a means for Law students to critically analyze legislative developments and engage in advocacy training.

2. Nature and Scope of AI and Censorship

Artificial intelligence, in this context, refers to computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as understanding language, making decisions, and learning from data.²

Before proposing a research initiative or program for the enhancement of Law Student's critical analysis of legislative developments, the impact of Artificial Intelligence tools, Government Censorship and Global communication on Law Students will be critically analyzed in three different sections:

- a. The role of artificial intelligence tools in legal education and practice.
- b. How government use AI to restrict freedom of expression.
- c. The legal implications of global communication shifts.

¹ [Hereafter, AI]

² Gary E. Marchant, *Artificial Intelligence and The Future of Legal Practice* (Summer, 2017) 21

A. The Role of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Legal Education and Practice

Artificial Intelligence tools play a huge role in reshaping legal research, case analysis, and predictive lawyering.³ In legal education, AI leverages technologies like natural language processing (NLP), machine learning (ML), and data analytics to sift through vast amounts of legal data, extract relevant information, and assist lawyers in making informed decisions.⁴

For a better understanding of the roles artificial intelligence plays in legal education and practice, this section will examine the application of AI in legal education as well as the benefits and challenges it poses for law students.

i. An application of Artificial Intelligence in Legal Education

- a. **Predictive Lawyering:** AI algorithms can analyze historical case data to predict the outcomes of similar cases which in turn aids lawyers in making informed decisions about case strategies and settlement negotiations.⁵ This predictive capability enhances a lawyer's ability to advise clients effectively.
- b. **Legal Databases and Document Management:** One of the primary applications of AI in legal research is the management of legal databases and documents.⁶ AI-powered tools can efficiently organize and categorize extensive legal databases, making it easier for legal professionals to access and retrieve relevant information which in turn saves time and reduces the risk of human error.⁷

ii. Benefits of Artificial Intelligence tools in Legal Education

- a. **Efficient and Time Saving:** Traditionally, it would take a Lawyer so many hours to review documents manually, which is a labor-intensive and time-

³ Thomson Reuters, "How AI is Transforming the Legal Profession (2025)" (Thomson Reuters, Jan 16, 2025) <www.legal.thomsonreuters.com> accessed 12 March 2025

⁴ Alextran, "Role of AI in Legal Research and Case Analysis" (Power Patent, September 8, 2023) accessed 16 February 2025

⁵ Joseph Regalia, "From Briefs to Bytes: How Generative AI is transforming Legal Writing and Practice" (2024) 59 (2) UNLV/ William S. Boyd School of Law

⁶ Prince Ahmed Hassan, "Artificial Intelligence and the Law: The Future of Legal Practice (Part 4)" (Prince Ahmed, Dec 12, 2024) <www.mikeozekhomeschambers.com> accessed 14th February, 2025

⁷ Allie Funk, Adrian Shahbaz, Kian Vesteinsson, "The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence" (Freedom House, 2023) <www.freedomhouse.org> accessed 17 February 2025

consuming process. However, with the introduction of AI-powered tools, it has changed the landscape of legal research by automating these tasks. By this, lawyers can now access comprehensive research results in little time and lower cost.⁸

- b. **Accessibility of Legal Resources:** A.I tools help in conducting comprehensive research by simultaneously analyzing a wide range of legal data sources.⁹ It provides a holistic view of relevant legal information. They identify connections between cases, statutes, and legal concepts that may not be immediately apparent to human researchers. This depth of analysis allows legal professionals to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the legal landscape, aiding in case preparation and strategy development.¹⁰
- c. **Predictive Analytics:** By analyzing historical case data, AI algorithms can predict potential case outcomes. This information is invaluable for lawyers when making informed decisions about whether to proceed with litigation, negotiate settlements, or explore alternative dispute resolution methods.¹¹

iii. Challenges of Artificial Intelligence in Legal Education

- a. **Bias in Legal AI Models:** If AI systems are trained on biased data, they can perpetuate or even incite existing inequalities in the legal system. Lawyers and AI developers must work together to identify and mitigate bias in AI algorithms.¹²
- b. **Ethical Concerns:** Questions arise as regards to the extent to which AI should be used in decision-making processes, especially in sensitive matters like sentencing and legal advice. Striking the right balance

⁸ B. Alextran, 'Role of AI in Legal Research and Case Analysis,' (Power Patent, September 8, 2023) accessed 16 February 2025

⁹ Global Jurid Advocates and Solicitors, 'The Role of AI in Legal Research: Enhancing Efficiency and Accuracy' (Global Jurid, 2024) <www.globaljurix.com> accessed 16th February, 2025

¹⁰ Model Rules of Pro. Conduct r.1.1, 1.3 (AM. BAR ASS'N 1983)

¹¹ B. Alextran, 'Role of AI in Legal Research and Case Analysis,' (Power Patent, September 8, 2023) accessed 16 February 2025

¹² Mitya Amusing, 'AI in Legal Research: How it Works,' (Yellow systems, September 16, 2024) <www.yellow.systems/blog/ai-in-legal-research> accessed 13th February, 2025

between human judgment and AI assistance is essential to maintain the integrity of the legal profession.¹³

However, to ensure that these challenges are checked, Law students must remain vigilant in ensuring that AI-generated content complies with professional conduct rules, intellectual property laws, and confidentiality requirements.¹⁴

3. How Government Uses A.I to Restrict Freedom of Expression

Artificial intelligence tools most times, serve as an amplifier of digital repression, making censorship surveillance faster, cheaper and more effective as the government makes use of these tools to monitor, regulate and suppress digital speech¹⁵.

Millions of case studies abound as to the restriction of freedom of expression through Government's use of AI in different countries.

In a record of 55 countries every year, people face legal repercussions for expressing themselves online. The number of countries in which authorities carry out widespread arrests and impose multiyear prison terms for online activity have been increasing over the past decade, from 18 in 2014 to 31 in 2023.¹⁶ China was found to have the worst conditions for internet freedom, among the many people imprisoned for sharing their views online, prominent civic activist and blogger Xu Zhiyong was sentenced to 14 years in prison in April 2023¹⁷. In Iran, after the death in custody of Jina Mahsa Amini sparked nationwide protests in September 2022, the regime intermittently restricted internet connectivity and blocked WhatsApp and Instagram, the only international social media platforms that had been accessible in the country. But state repression was not limited to

¹³ Natalie Pierce & Stephanie Goutos, 'ChatGPT Doesn't Have Ethical Obligations, But Attorneys Do' (Bloomberg L, July 11, 2023) <<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/chatgpt-doesnt-have-ethical-obligations-but-attorneys-do>> accessed 10, February 2025

¹⁴ Jayne Reardon & Tom Martin, 'The Ethics and Regulation of AI' (L. PRACTICE MAG, Jan. 1, 2024) <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_practice/resources/law-practice-magazine/2024/2024-january-february/the-ethics-and-regulation-of-ai> accessed 11, February 2025

¹⁵ Richard Susskind, 'Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future' (2nd Edition, Oxford University Press 2017)

¹⁶ Mwana Pwo Association, 'Digital rights and freedom of expression in the wake of Artificial Intelligence in Angola' (Paradigm Initiative, November 21, 2022) <www.paradigm.com> accessed February 17, 2025

¹⁷ Richard Susskind, 'Tomorrow's Lawyers: An Introduction to Your Future' (2nd Edition, Oxford University Press 2017)

the protests: two people were executed for alleged blasphemy after they shared their religious views on Telegram.¹⁸

4. The Legal Implications of Global Communication Shifts

Artificial intelligence has transformed how legal debates unfold, with social media, misinformation and A.I-generated content influencing public perception of legal issues. These implications include:

A. Spread of Misinformation

The affordability, and easy accessibility of consumer-facing generative AI technology have lowered the barrier of entry to the disinformation market increasing the capacity to create false and misleading information with these tools making the information space more diluted and polluted with fabrications.¹⁹ The Russian private sector played a significant role in spreading disinformation about the Kremlin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year. A sprawling and sophisticated operation known as "Doppelgänger" mimicked German, American, Italian, British, and French media outlets to disseminate false and conspiratorial narratives about European sanctions and Ukrainian refugees, among other topics.²⁰

B. State-Controlled Narratives

Governments manipulate social media to influence public opinion on legal matters. To ensure law students remain critical thinkers, legal institutions must incorporate digital literacy, A.I ethics, and legal technology into curricula, bridging the gap between traditional legal reasoning and modern communication realities.²¹ The 2014 IBA International Principles on Social Media Conduct for the Legal Profession²² also helps to achieve this purpose. Its aim is to assist bar associations and legal regulatory bodies

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Allie Funk, Adrian Shahbaz, Kian Vestein, "The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence" (Freedom House, 2023) <<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2023/repressive-power-artificial-intelligence>> accessed February 12, 2025

²⁰ Jeffrey L. Runoff, "International Legal Scholarship at the Millennium" (2023) 1(1) Chicago Journal of International Law 9

²¹ Anthony E. Davies, "The Future of Law Firms (and Lawyers) in the Age of Artificial Intelligence" (2020) 16 (1)

²² 'IBA Principles on Social Medias'

around the world to promote social media conduct within the legal profession that conforms to relevant rules of professional responsibility as well as considerations of civility.²³

5. The Role of Academia (Legal Education) in Empowering Law Students to check restriction of speech by Government

Education plays an important role in empowering future lawyers, shaping their careers, and ensuring their professional growth. Because the utility of a traditional legal education has been questioned, legal education as used here must move beyond rote learning and instead emphasize more on practical experience²⁴. Academia can empower Law Students in this digital age to curb restriction of speech in the following ways:

A. Legislative Drafting and Policy Advocacy

Training Students to Engage in Legislative Reform: With governments imposing legal restrictions on speech, law students must be equipped to challenge and shape legislation rather than merely interpret it, to ensure that they are responsive to modern challenges such as AI governance and digital free speech rights.²⁵ Legal Education can foster legislative reform skills by integrating legislative drafting into the tertiary institution's curricula for them to be able to prepare and submit legislative proposals to international organizations when advocating for legal reforms.²⁶

B. Upholding AI Ethics in Legal Studies

C. AI is increasingly used by governments, corporations, and social media platforms to regulate content, filter information, and even suppress dissenting voices.²⁷ While AI can enhance content moderation by detecting hate speech and misinformation, it also

²³ IBA, International Principles on Social Media Conduct for the Legal Profession (2014), para 3

²⁴ Rahul Ranjan, "Empowering Future Lawyers: The Crucial Role of Education" (The Law Brigade Publishers, September 5 2023) <www.thelawbrigadepublishers> accessed 17, February 2025

²⁵ Helen Xanthaki, Drafting Legislation: Art and Technology of Rules for Regulation (Hart Publishing 2004)

²⁶ Lyria Bennett Moses and Janet Chan, "Using Big Data for Legal and Law Enforcement Decisions: Testing The New Tools" (2018) 72 (1) University of New South Wales Law Journal 643

²⁷ Gary E. Marchant, Artificial Intelligence and The Future of Legal Practice (Summer, 2017) 21

poses serious risks, such as algorithmic bias, lack of transparency, and state-controlled censorship.²⁸ Thus, legal education can address A.I-driven censorship through the introduction of AI-ethical courses to train Law students in the ethical implications of A.I-driven censorship and the promotion of student-led research on how A.I policies affect democracy and free speech.²⁹

D. Implementing the practical aspect of Legal Education

To effectively challenge evolving legal principles, law students must be trained in real-world advocacy and policy engagement through the creation of mock legislative hearings and partnership with human rights organizations to give students direct exposure to freedom of expression cases.³⁰

5. Proposed model event and research exercise

To put these principles into practice, this is a proposed event designed to empower law students to critically analyze and challenge legislation shaped by AI and digital censorship alongside the implementation plan which the Academic and Professional Development Committee could consider for a future project.

a. Proposed Initiative

Legal Education Resilience Project: A Law Student-Led Advocacy Forum

The objective is to create a student-led platform where law students will:

- i. Analyze AI's impact on legislation and advocate for better legal frameworks.
- ii. Engage in legislative analysis and advocacy training.
- iii. Develop policy recommendations on AI-driven free speech laws.
- iv. Collaborate with legal practitioners, policymakers, and civil society organizations.

The key activities will include Artificial Intelligence and Law Symposium with a panel discussion involving legal scholars, technologists, and policymakers.

Another key activity will extend to Freedom of Expression Moot Court which would stimulate court cases on digital rights violations.

²⁸ LexisNexis, 'Lawyers and Robots? Conversations around the Future of the Legal Industry,' 3 (2017) (comment of David Halliwell of U.K. law firm Pinsent Masons)

²⁹ Karen Yeung, Algorithmic Regulation: A Critical Interrogation (2018) 12(3) Regulation & Governance 505

³⁰ Rahul Ranjan, "Empowering Future Lawyers: The Crucial Role of Education" (The Law Brigade Publishers, September 5 2023) <www.thelawbrigadepublishers> accessed 17, February 2025

- b. Legislative Hackathon where law students would draft legal reforms addressing AI-related speech restrictions.
- c. Research Grants for Students: Funding student-led research on AI, censorship, and legal innovation.
- d. Global Virtual Law Network: A collaborative initiative for students across countries to share legal perspectives.

There is also need for Implementation Plan. The strategies for implementation include the following:

The key activities will be hosted by universities and legal associations to be supported by NGOs, law firms, and human rights organizations.

For better implementation, the key activities listed above would be integrated by the tertiary institutions into legal education as an annual event.

6. Conclusion

We have examined the challenges posed by AI, government restrictions on the freedom of speech, and shifting global communication patterns to legal education. It also proceeded to explore the role of academia in equipping law students with the tools to challenge restrictive laws. An event and research initiative that bridges academic learning with real-world advocacy was also recommended by the essay.

It is clear that legal education has an important role to play in helping Law Students safeguard freedom of expression and the rule of law in the A.I era and as A.I continues to influence law and policy, Law students can develop resilience and strategies to challenge censorship as well as to harness digital tools for activism and legal reform.

Conclusively, artificial intelligence carries a significant potential for harm, but it can also be made to play a protective role when designed and used safely and fairly. To achieve this, the Academic and Professional Development Committee (APDC) and legal institutions must take proactive measures to equip law students by encouraging advocacy training. Through initiatives like the "Legal Education Resilience Project," as proposed in this essay, the next generation of lawyers can play an important role in preserving

freedom of expression, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring that Artificial Intelligence is regulated in a way that aligns with democratic values.

