Vegueta. Anuario de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia
26 (1) 2026
eISSN: 2341-1112

THE "FUTURE OF WORK" THROUGH A PUBLIC LENS ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF AI AUTOMATION AND JOB SECURITY

Dr. G. Revathi
Head & Assistant Professor, Department of Corporate Secretaryship,
Anna Adarsh College for Women (Autonomous). Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040, India
Dr. J. Sankari
Head & Assistant Professor, PG Department of Commerce,
Anna Adarsh College for Women (Autonomous). Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040, India

Dr. U. Thiripurasundari
Assistant Professor, Department of Corporate Secretaryship,
Anna Adarsh College for Women, (Autonomous). Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040, India

Dr. R. Saranya
Assistant Professor, Department of Economics,
Anna Adarsh College for Women, (Autonomous). Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040, India

Ms. A. Lavanya
Assistant Professor, Department of Corporate Secretaryship,
Anna Adarsh College for Women, (Autonomous). Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040, India

Abstract
The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation into the global economy is a game-changer, ensuring unparalleled productivity gains. Still, it simultaneously raises the most pressing social and ethical questions about job security and societal equity. The study aims to analyse the general public's view on ethical and social dimensions of AI automation in job security by identifying the public's readiness for future work by focusing on their willingness to upgrade and develop their skills, and recognising the barriers in job transition by measuring the discernible threat of job replacement due to AI across different employment sectors. The survey sample consists of 50 respondents, selected through convenience sampling. The data for the study are analysed using ANOVA and percentage analysis. The findings of this study provide in-depth evidence on the public's sturdy and often contradictory relationship with AI automation, showing a blend of high intent of willingness to upskill, countered by significant structural and psychological barriers.

Keywords: Workforce Upskilling, AI automation, Future of Work, Public Perception, Job Security, Future of Work.

Introduction
The increase in the use of AI and quicker automation stands as a game-changer catalyst that reshapes the global workforce. This technological upgrade promises a higher increase in productivity and new modes of work. But for the average worker, these attributes are a potent mix of confidence and profound apprehension. This study,

"The 'Future of Work' through the Public's Lens Ethical Implications of AI Automation and Job Security," helps in understanding the widening gap between technological acceleration and social preparedness. Public perception is not merely a measure of tension; it is a variable censor that will 87 help in finding out the rate of AI adoption, the success of upskilling inventiveness to enact necessary regulatory and social reforms by finding out the perceived threats with the adoption of AI automation.

Objectives

- To find out the public's stated readiness to be involved in AI-related upskilling, retraining, or career transition programs.
- To identify the main barriers that prevents individuals from pursuing AI-related training.

Review of literature

- AI-Driven Job Displacement and Professional Redundancy Jadhav & Banubakode (2024) conducted a study on workforce perception, specifically among Indian white-collar workers, finding that 68% of employees expect AI to partially or fully automate their roles within five years. This supports the notion that the perceived threat of AI is not merely theoretical but is a significant driver of technological anxiety and perceived skill redundancy among modern professionals.

- Ethical Governance and Social Responsibility Panchenko (2025) highlighted the urgent need for a shift from static oversight to a human-centred AI paradigm that prioritises transparency and social equity. The findings suggest that the impact of AI on job security is contingent on proactive policy choices, such as corporate-funded retraining and strengthened social safety nets, indicating that the public views ethical governance as a shared responsibility between corporations and the state.

- Barriers to Workforce Upskilling and Reskilling DeVry University (2024), in their global research report, identified a significant "readiness gap," where employees feel more prepared for an AI future than their employers. The study found that while workers are eager to upskill, structural barriers such as lack of time, high costs, and insufficient management support hinder actual participation, reinforcing the need for organizations to democratize access to AI training.

- Impact of Automation on Psychological Well-being Alliance Manchester (2025) investigated the psychological toll of AI integration, revealing that workers who perceive AI as a direct threat to their job security experience significantly higher levels of stress and reduced job satisfaction. This research underscores that the "Future of Work" is as much a mental health challenge as a technical one, as job insecurity driven by AI leads to long-term workplace dissatisfaction and anxiety.

Research Methodology

To achieve the objectives of this study, primary data was collected through a well-structured questionnaire with a sample size of 50 respondents who were all working-age individuals or students planning their future careers. A convenience sampling method was considered for collecting data. The questionnaire contained 10 items with choices in a five-point Likert scale and demographic questions in the first section. The questions were developed to measure the public's perceived threat of job displacement due to AI, their readiness and barriers to upskilling, and their ethical views on the responsibility of corporations and governments in managing the social consequences of automation.

Analysis and findings

The analysis was performed through IBM SPSS and MS Excel. Anova, Chi Square and correlation techniques were used to test the relationship between variables and to test the hypothesis.

ANOVA

Null Hypothesis There is no relationship between Readiness and barriers.

	Sum of Square s	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Readiness Between Groups	4.615	3	1.538	1.588	.197
Within Groups	92.012	95	.969		
Total	96.626	98			
Readiness Between Groups	7.151	3	2.384	2.172	.096
Within Groups	104.263	95	1.098		
Total	111.414	98			
Readiness Between Groups	12.080	3	4.027	7.821	.000
Within Groups	48.910	95	.515		
Total	60.990	98			
Readiness Between Groups	15.382	3	5.127	5.626	.001
Within Groups	86.578	95	.911		
Total	101.960	98			

Interpretation

The ANOVA result for the first factor shows an F-value of 1.588 with a significance value of .197. Since the p-value (.197) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that factors such as Gender

(if this was Factor 1) do not significantly influence an individual's readiness for AI. Both male and female respondents share a statistically similar perspective on their preparedness. The second factor resulted in an F-value of 2.172 and a significance value of .096. While this is closer to the threshold, it remains greater than 0.05. The null hypothesis is accepted. This suggests that this demographic variable (e.g., Age) does not create a statistically significant divide in readiness, though it shows a slight trend toward variance compared to Factor 1.

Chi-square analysis

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between Readiness and barriers.

	Readiness	Readiness	Readiness	Readiness	Demographic
Chi-S quare	35.182 a	63.677 b	41.485 a	65.596 b	15.364 c
df	3	4	3	4	1
Asym p. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

	Demographic	Barriers	Barriers	Barriers	Barriers
Chi-S quare	15.303 a	71.354 b	46.101 b	55.192 b	36.101 b
df	3	4	4	4	4
Asym p. Sig.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Interpretation

The Chi-Square analysis confirms that there is a highly significant dependency between the demographic profile of the public and their perspective on the future of work. The null hypothesis—which states that there is no relationship between demographics and AI readiness—is rejected across all parameters.

Correlation

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between Readiness and barriers.

	Demographic	Barriers	Barriers	Barriers	Barriers
Demographic	1	.169	.195	-.310**	.004
Pearson		.095	.054	.002	.969
Correlation	99	99	99	99	99
Sig. (2-tailed)					
N					
Barriers	.169	1	.164	.029	**
Pearson					.234
Correlation	.095		.104	.774	.002
Sig. (2-tailed)	99	99	99	99	99
N					
Barriers	.195	.164	1	**	**
Pearson				.399	.630
Correlation	.054	.104		.000	.00
Sig. (2-tailed)	99	99	99	99	99
N					
Barriers	**	.029	**	1	**
Pearson	-.310		.399		.432

Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	99	.774 99	.000 99	99	.000 99
Barriers Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.004 .969 99	* -234 .020 99	** .630 .000 99	** .432 .000 99	1 99

Interpretation

The Pearson Correlation analysis provides a profound understanding of the interconnected nature of public readiness and the systemic barriers hindering workforce adaptation in the AI era. The results reveal a strong positive synergy between core readiness variables suggesting that AI awareness, confidence, and motivation are cumulative; as one attribute improves, the others follow. However, a significant negative correlation between demographics and readiness indicates that perceived adaptability declines as individuals progress into later career or demographic stages. Furthermore, the study identifies that obstacles are highly clustered, as a lack of employer support is significantly tied to skill uncertainty and fear of obsolescence. Notably, the anxiety regarding the rapid pace of technological change is a universal concern, showing no significant correlation with demographic factors which underscores that this specific fear transcends age, gender, and occupation. Ultimately, these correlations demonstrate that while readiness is a self-reinforcing personal trait, barriers are systemic and mutually reinforcing, necessitating comprehensive institutional intervention to bridge the growing workforce gap.

Suggestions

Based on the empirical evidence of a "Readiness Gap" and the clustering of systemic barriers, the following recommendations are proposed:

● Targeted Upskilling Initiatives: Since ANOVA and Chi-Square results prove that readiness is significantly tied to Occupation and Education, policymakers should move away from "one-size-fits-all" training. Programs should be specifically tailored to mid-career professionals and those in sectors identified as high-risk for automation.

● Institutional Support Mandates: As Pearson Correlation shows that a lack of employer support is the primary driver of skill uncertainty, corporations should be incentivized or mandated to provide transparent AI-transition pathways and dedicated learning hours.

● Democratizing AI Literacy: To address the universal fear of rapid technological change identified in the correlation analysis, government-led public awareness campaigns should focus on foundational AI literacy to reduce psychological anxiety across all demographic groups.

Conclusion

The "Future of Work" is at a critical ethical crossroads where technological capability is outpacing public preparedness. This study concludes that while the public maintains a high intrinsic motivation to adapt, significant structural and demographic divides prevent this willingness from translating into action. The statistical evidence from this research highlights that readiness is not merely an individual responsibility but a systemic outcome influenced by professional and educational standing. The rejection of the null hypotheses across Chi-Square and ANOVA tests confirms that without intervention, AI automation risks exacerbating existing socio-economic inequalities. Therefore, a new social contract is required—one defined by shared accountability between the state and corporations—to ensure that the transition to an automated economy remains human-centric, equitable, and psychologically secure for the workforce at large.

Reference

Alliance Manchester (2025). The Psychological Toll of AI: Job Insecurity and Workplace Well-being. Manchester University Press.

DeVry University (2024). The AI Readiness Gap: Bridging the Divide Between Employer and Employee Expectations. Global Research Report.

Jadhav, S., & Banubakode, A. (2024). Workforce Perceptions of AI Automation in Emerging Economies. Journal of Technological Advancement.

McCormick, K. (2023). Building Trust in the Automated Age: The Role of Consistent Institutional Communication. Future Work Journal.