

LEVEL 7 ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION



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Programme:	DBA		
Module:	Converting Research into Practice		
Module code:	HKBM7020	Contribution to Overall Module Assessment (%):	100%
Lecturer:	Dr Alice Te	Internal Verifier:	Prof. Eddie Yu
Assignment Title:	Report	Word count (or equivalent):	7,500 words (+/-10%)
Submission deadline:	17 February 2025	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	17 March 2025 (Tentative)
Submission method:	All written assessments, where practical and possible, must be submitted via Turnitin unless otherwise instructed by the Lecturer. (Please DO NOT put this assessment specification into Turnitin or it will match many similarities with other students' submissions.) Alternative submission method (if applicable): Late submission of the assessment will result in a late penalty <u>mark</u>: Work which is submitted up to 1 week late will be capped at 50% for the first attempt and will be awarded a mark of 0% for re-assessment. Late submission penalties may be lifted only if there is an approved extenuating circumstances claim. Work submitted more than 1 week late will be considered as a non-submission and will not be marked. The work may be considered as a submission for reassessment if offered by an Examining Board or if there is an approved extenuating circumstances claim.		
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Research Proposal: Artificial Intelligence in the Legal Profession, Barriers to Adoption and Critical Success Factors

A study of the risks and benefits of Generative AI in the Legal Industry, and proposal of a multi-stage framework for AI adoption that considers the barriers and critical successful factors.

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI), in particular, Generative AI (Gen AI) has revolutionized almost every industry, and is considered a top management priority. Since the launch of large language models and generative artificial intelligence software, like Chat-GPT, human and machine interactions have changed forever. The birth of generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) has opened a Pandora's box of opportunities and possibilities, forever changing and rewriting the boundaries between man and machine, and work as we currently understand it.

This research proposal specifically aims to investigate the integration of AI into the legal profession and consider what are the critical success factors and the key barriers to adoption. It will provide a review of the literature on AI, and examine the current role played by AI and its ever-increasing potential role, given the pace of AI development and the widespread adoption of software such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek and other similar applications. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. What will be the impact on the legal industry and future business strategy? How will law firms maintain their competitive edge in the face of increased AI usage? Should law firms commit significant investment in artificial intelligence or take a 'wait and see' approach? If the legal profession is becoming more reliant upon AI, how will law firms differentiate themselves and what is the social impact on human jobs? What is the

subsequent impact on corporate decision-making. What considerations should be given to ethical concerns. By examining contemporary AI applications, existing strategic frameworks, and proposing a novel multi-stage framework, this research will provide a comprehensive understanding of how AI can be leveraged for strategic success in the legal profession.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Gen AI, AI and Law, Implementation Strategy, Barriers to AI Adoption, Critical Success Factors.

Introduction

Background

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is predicted to double economic growth by 2035 and productivity is expected to be increased by up to 40% (Accenture, 2019). Artificial Intelligence, in particular, Generative AI (Gen AI) has revolutionized almost every industry, and is considered a top management priority (Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann, 2025).

Interestingly, whilst 84% of top executives acknowledge the importance of AI adoption, 79% of the same executives admit not knowing how to scale AI in their organisations. Alarming, 75% of those executives believe that if they don't scale AI adoption in the next five years, they risk going out of business altogether (Accenture, 2019).

The sentiment captured in the Accenture survey is understandable. The advent of AI has transformed the landscape of modern business, transcending industries, offering unprecedented capabilities in data analysis, process automation, and minimising human input for repetitive tasks (Lumenalta, 2025). Companies are increasingly incorporating Gen AI into their work processes to enhance efficiency, innovation, reduce costs and increase competitiveness (Rane, 2023).

It is a similar story in the legal profession, where AI is having a major impact (LexisNexis, 2023). Its true potential is far reaching and its boundaries yet unknown. Increasingly, lawyers are using AI to review documents during litigation, to perform due diligence, analyse contracts, perform legal research, and predict case outcomes, freeing up time for lawyers to perform higher value tasks (Donahue, 2018).

Whilst research on the benefits of AI adoption is abundant and the statistics speak for themselves, the path to AI realisation and adoption at scale for businesses is experiencing turbulence. The research on AI adoption strategies lack congruence, is fragmented and fails to address both macro and micro issues within a given context (Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann, 2025). Various barriers to adoption exist for various reasons from the organisation's size, industry, management structure, attitude to change, human resources , to technical resources (Lee *et al.*, 2019).

AI is not a new concept. As early as the 1950s, McCarthy et al. (1955) had defined AI as “making a machine behave in ways that would be called intelligent if a human were so behaving”. However, it's the recent advancement in AI technology that have really begun to inspire transformative thinking into the ways human and machine interact and has begun to impact the augmentation of AI in the workplace. This paper focuses predominantly on developments since the introduction of large language models, such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek and other similar applications.

This research proposal aims to investigate the integration of AI, with particular focus on Generative AI (Gen AI) into the legal profession and consider what are the critical success factors and the key barriers to adoption. It will include a review of the existing literature and explore key conceptual components of AI, current and future risks and opportunities

associated with adoption in the legal world, including consideration of some of the ethical challenges.

Research Significance

According to a report by the International Bar Association (IBA, 2024), the global legal industry is worth an estimated \$1.6 trillion US dollars, and consists of approximately 20 million lawyers, and a further 14 million workers providing support services. In 2024, the President of the IBA commented that the legal profession must improve legal services by embracing the AI evolution (IBA, 2024). However, despite the growing adoption of AI across all professions and industries (Atallah *et al.*, 2023), there exists a gap in comprehensive research that explores its strategic implications, in the legal field, with particular consideration to the specific barriers to adoption and the critical success factors that will enable organisations to succeed in AI adoption. This proposal seeks to address this gap by investigating how AI can be adopted more effectively by integrating adoption into a business strategy to realise its full potential, in the legal profession. It will explore the barriers to adoption and critical success factors to shed light on potential solutions. Furthermore, the author will provide a framework that incorporates practical implementation strategies. The aim is to enable legal professionals to gain a competitive edge with the adoption of AI resulting in a positive return on investment.

Literature Review

The field of artificial intelligence (AI) has been around since the 1950s (McCarthy *et al.*, 2006), so there is literature on AI spanning a period of time. But it's the more recent developments such as generative AI (Gen AI) that have sparked an AI revolution, with the most relevant literature originating from 2018 onwards. Such advances in AI development

have also gotten global policy makers scrambling to regulate the development of AI, in addition to management teams in organisation wondering how to leverage and scale AI benefits (Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann, 2025).

The initial literature review is based on a broader exploration of the literature on AI and the intersection with business to establish a foundation of knowledge. Subsequently, the literature review will home in on the issues surrounding AI adoption in the legal field.

The literature review considers both macro and micro issues for the purposes of providing context, and to give a holistic view. Some traditional literature on AI is incorporated, with the main focus being on developments in the AI literature of the past five to ten years.

There exist extensive volumes of research into traditional leadership, but existing literature exploring the interaction of AI and leadership, is a recent phenomenon. One particular paper, recently published in The Academy of Management by Hillebrand, Raisch and Schad (2025) is particularly informative on the subject of management and AI. The study explores key concepts, such as, AI interaction, single and collective agency, AI augmentation, across macro and micro organisational interactions, through the lens of human-AI collaboration (HAIC) by Lebovitz, Lifshitz-Assaf and Levina (2021) and algorithmic management (AM) by Curchod *et al.* (2020). This paper is particularly relevant and informative on the topic of AI and management in organisations, however, whilst informative, the broadness of its scope is considered overly ambitious. Its attempts to tackle AI in a very broad organisational sense across several spectrums both internal and external to organisations, lacks specific focus.

Another informative and well researched article, also published in the journal of The Academy of Management by Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann (2025), is of particular relevance, as it focuses on AI and the systematic integration of AI systems into business strategies. The study explores the concepts of self-learning technologies, both supervised and

unsupervised, predictive and generative. It delves into new concepts such as AI task superiority and AI's "black-box perception". The article also proposes a customisable framework to enable leaders to formulate an AI adoption strategy. The strategy is centred around five key questions, which act as guiding principles to determine the AI adoption strategy. The principles although sound lack sufficient depth, thereby rendering it inadequate for informing leaders who want to explore both macro and micro issues.

A study by Abuzaid (2024) considered some parallel issues as the topic of this proposal, by examining AI integration and the corporate decision making process. The study provided some insights into corporate processes and their interactions with AI. Interestingly, their framework fundamentally prioritised the importance of ethics and data security, outweighing other business considerations. This caused the research to appear less practical from a holistic business standpoint. It was in stark contrast with the business practicality that was present in the framework produced by Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann (2025). Such perspectives could also reflect leadership preferences in varying organisations. Interestingly, ethics and data security did not feature at all in the framework by Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann (2025). Which could be perceived as controversial by others, given the importance placed on both ethics and data security. Thus, highlighting some of the tensions that exists around AI adoption and the difficulties of prioritising what is considered important for organisations. The author also considers ethics and data security to be key components of any practical strategy for AI adoption, in any industry, especially in the legal profession.

Search Criteria

The majority of the literature reviewed was conducted through Google Scholar to search keywords and phrases combining "AI", "AI adoption", "AI and Law", "AI Adoption Strategies". Priority was given to articles that addressed the topical issues and had more

citations. Further articles were acquired by exploring the citations within articles, which informed further research. The above was supplemented with Google search to obtain more recent sources of reference materials and data from surveys conducted more recently.

What is AI?

From a review of the literature, there is no universally agreed upon definition of exactly what Artificial Intelligence is (Russell and Norvig, 2022), (MIT, 2024). Despite the adoption of varying definitions, the fundamental principles and concepts were similar, describing a form of machine intelligence that could be somehow likened to human intelligence. For example, one early definition of AI was “making a machine behave in ways that would be called intelligent if a human were so behaving” (McCarthy *et al.*, 1955). Compared with a more recent definition by Radhakrishnan and Chattopadhyay (2020) is that it’s a form of machine based intelligence that is able to perform human like cognitive functions. Another definition is that AI is, an intelligence of machines that is able to come close or equal that of human intelligence (Titareva, 2021). These are general definitions that attempt to define AI in its broad sense. However, in the field of computer science, AI describes a collection of technologies that enables computers to do things that are considered to be intelligent, when done by humans (MIT, 2024). These technologies encompass machine learning, deep learning, generative AI, predictive AI, large language models (LLM) (this list is by no means exhaustive and is only intended to give an indication of the various technologies that is often referred to as “AI”).

Another computer science definition is offered by *RICE* (2023), Artificial intelligence (AI) is a branch of computer science focused on enabling machines to replicate human intelligence. AI aims to solve complex issues and make decisions efficiently and consistently. Through the use of specialized algorithms that allow machines to learn and mimic human cognitive

processes. AI-equipped systems can collect and process large amounts of data, analyse it, and act based on the insights. Despite all definitions being different in the angle they choose to approach the subject from, what is common between them all, is the inference of intelligence between humans and machine. Despite the superior advancement of AI technology, there has been little to no change in the definition of AI, with the definition from the 1950s still being of relevance.

Early Artificial Intelligence

The term ‘artificial intelligence’ is not new. It has been around since the 1950s, since the invention of the early computer, which was already a form of artificial intelligence of its time. British mathematician, Alan Turing first invented the ‘imitation game’ or the “Turing Test”, which was a test designed to compare a machine’s ability to think like a human being (Titareva, 2021). The computer giant, IBM, has been developing and researching AI since the 1950s. One of its early milestones was when one of its systems was able to beat then leading chess player in the world, Gary Kasparov, in a game of chess. It was a momentous achievement at the time. However, the term “AI” has come a long way since then. Since early AI was heavily reliant upon human direction and input to achieve results. Whereas the AI that is synonymous with users today is an era of artificial intelligence that is able to achieve results, far beyond what was possible in the 1950s, with an ever-decreasing requirement for human input. Predominantly driven by the general availability of applications like ChatGPT, Deep Seek and other similar applications, which have truly revolutionised modern AI with its endless possibilities.

Modern AI

Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer (GPT)-3 took the world by storm when it was launched on 3 November 2022, acquiring over 10 million users, daily, after only 40 days

from launch (Rane, 2023). To provide context, that exceeds the number of daily users of popular social media app Instagram. This was followed up with Chat GPT-4, released on 14 March 2023 (Atallah *et al.*, 2023). Chat GPT-4 is described as an artificial intelligence chatbot, capable of generating human like content. DeepSeek another Gen AI platform was released in January 2025 and has become the most downloaded free app on the Appstore in the USA (Baptista, 2025).

Categorising the “Intelligence” of Artificial Intelligence

Peifer, Jeske and Hille (2022) define three categories of artificial intelligence, referred to as “Artificial Narrow Intelligence” (ANI), “Artificial General Intelligence” (AGI) and “Artificial Super Intelligence” (ASI). Despite the recent advances in AI development, it may be surprising to learn that current AI development is only at the Artificial Narrow Intelligence stage of development. From Figure 1, Artificial Narrow Intelligence sits below human intelligence (Peifer, Jeske and Hille, 2022).

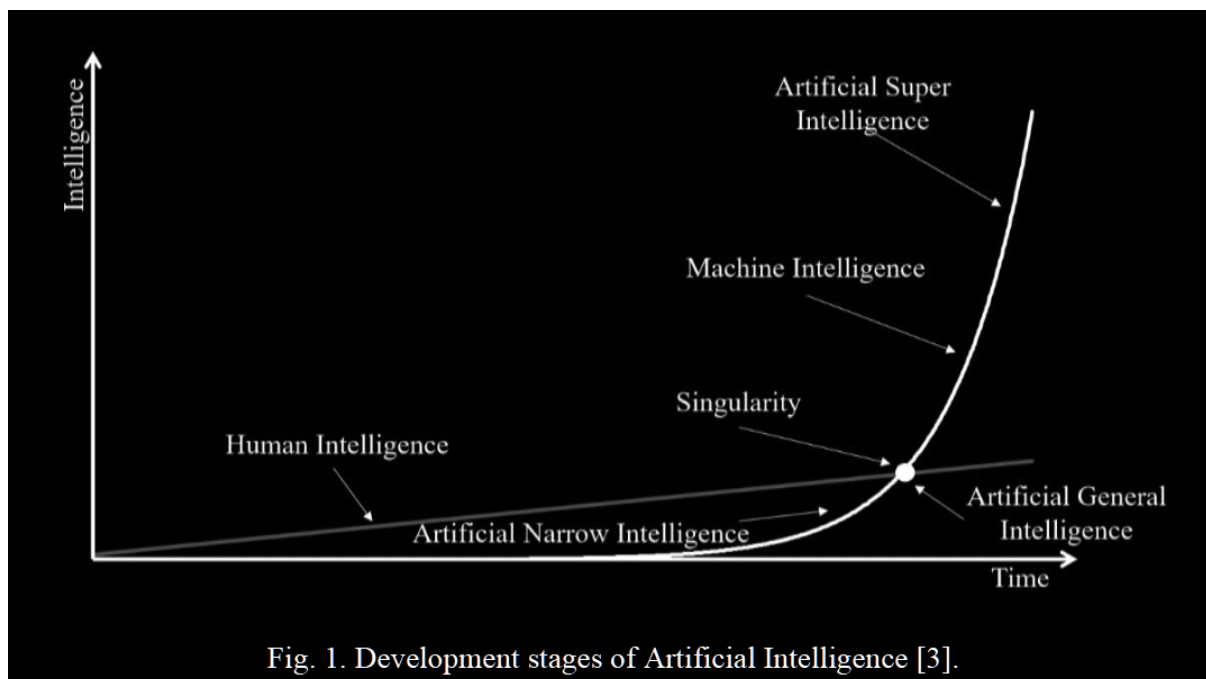


Figure 1-Development of stages of Artificial Intelligence (Peifer, Jeske and Hille, 2022)

“Machine intelligence” has, for the most part, been lacking any real intelligence that comes even remotely close to human intelligence, until recent advances in AI, specifically, the likes of Chat-GPT, Deep Seek and other similar AI Chatbots capable of synthesizing and exhibiting genuine “intelligence” comparable in some form to human intelligence (Peifer, Jeske and Hille, 2022). In the short to medium term, whilst the field of AI remains in the realm of Artificial Narrow Intelligence, the next major goal would be for AI to reach the next stage of development on its journey towards human intelligence, which when referring to Figure 1, would be the singularity of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), where machine intelligence converges with human intelligence. No one can predict precisely when Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) is likely to be achieved, but some experts in the field have predicted it to come about within this century (Müller and Bostrom, 2016).

Forms of AI

Artificial Intelligence is an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of machine enabled processes and specialisms. These various forms of artificial intelligence can be further identified as, Machine Learning, Deep Learning (a subset of Machine Learning), Big Data, Large Language Models (eg. ChatGPT and DeepSeek). These are not mutually exclusive systems and are often interrelated, operating together to form the AI that we have come to experience today. For example, Chat-GPT is a large language model that deploys Machine Learning and Deep Learning algorithms that was trained using vast amounts of Big Data. Chat GPT-3 was trained using 175 billion computing parameters (Atallah and Atallah, 2021). The diagram below represents the relationship between the various technologies.

In addition, there is another subset of AI known as Natural Language Processing or NLP. Natural Language Processing is dedicated to the use of machine learning to enable computers to be able to communicate with humans (IBM, 2021).

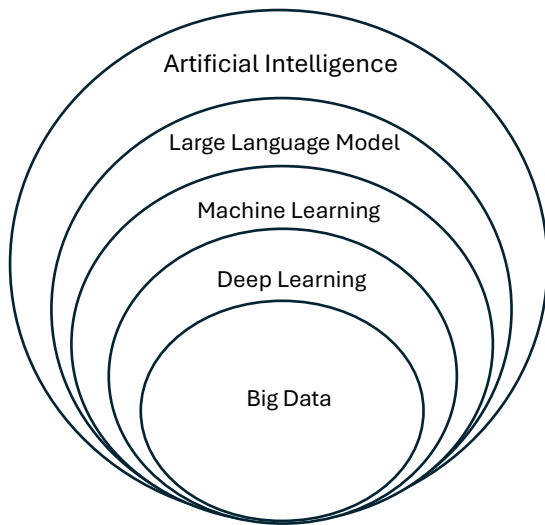


Figure 2 – The AI Family Circle

Another way to look at AI tools is to categorise them in a two by two matrix, below (Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann, 2025). The categories of AI tools can broadly be described as “task specific” and “non task specific” in the y-axis and “content generation” and “prediction making” in the x-axis. Examples of non-task specific will be ChatGPT, which can be applied to a plethora of tasks, often only limited by human imagination. An example of task specific is an AI music generator application (Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann, 2025).

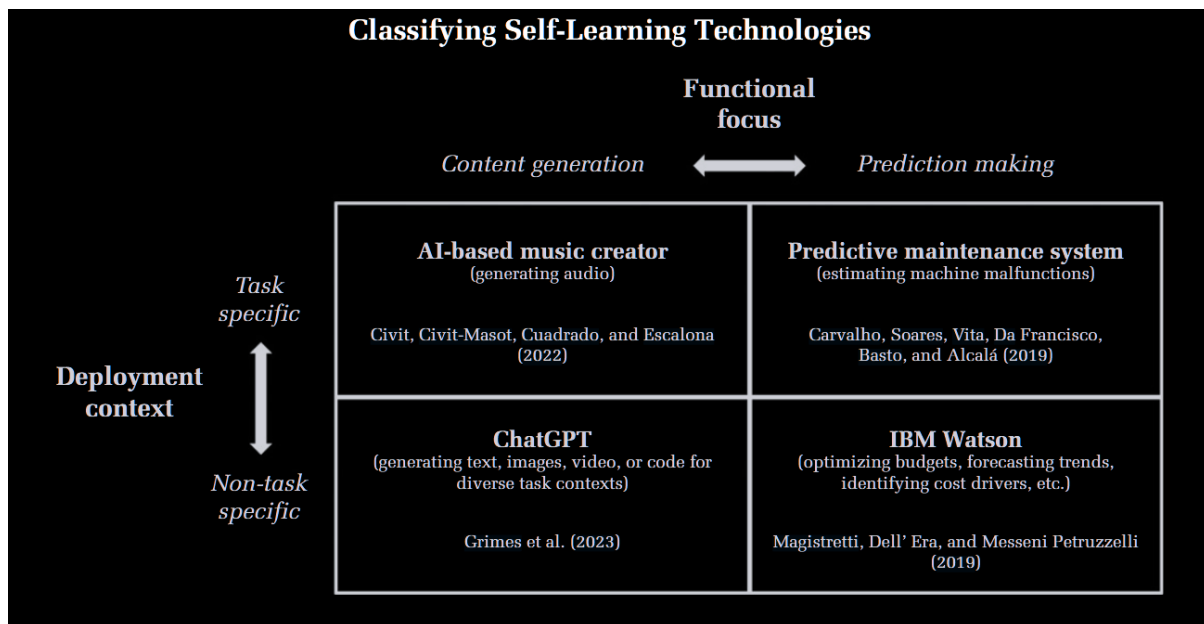


Figure 3 – Classifying Self-Learning Technologies (Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann, 2025)

The Evolution of AI in Business

Global spending on AI exceeded US\$150 billion in 2023 (Shirer, 2024). Artificial Intelligence has evolved from theoretical concepts to practical tools that are integral to business operations (Russell & Norvig, 2016). Early applications of AI focused on automating routine tasks, but recent advancements have enabled AI to tackle complex problems and provide strategic insights (Rane, 2023).

In 2017, a survey by Accenture found that 85% of executives surveyed, had plans to invest extensively in AI over the next three years (De Cremer, 2019).

AI and Strategic Management

Strategic management involves making long-term plans and decisions to achieve organizational goals. AI can enhance strategic management by providing data-driven insights, predicting market trends, and optimizing resource allocation (Porter and Heppelmann, 2014).

Studies have shown that companies using AI in their strategy formulation tend to outperform their competitors (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017)

When it comes to an effective AI strategy, (Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann, 2025), proposed what they deem to be the five most important questions to ask in relation to formulating an effective AI business strategy. These five questions fit into three categories identified by the researchers. The questions provide a simplistic framework for any organisation looking to adopt AI. (i) Where should AI be adopted in the organisation? This is a critical question because it can't be everywhere, especially given the technology is new and resources naturally being limited to start. It is logical and pragmatic for an organisation to first identify a problem that it believes AI can help to solve and achieve success in. Presuming the organization is successful in solving the problem with AI then it can then proceed to identifying another area for AI to focus on, and so on and so forth. (ii) How does the AI create value and thereby increase competitive advantage? (iii) How will the AI contribute to the financial success of the company? Essential, these are the “why?” questions that any organisation must first embark on when deciding on an AI strategy. Tackling these questions will naturally lead to the next questions, which can be categorised into “technology”. (iv) What type of Information Technology (IT) is required to realise the organisation's AI goals? The final question relates to the ongoing management of the AI implementation process. (v) How will the AI implementation be managed? This question goes beyond the current needs of the organisation and will have a particular focus on the future, given the new frontier nature of AI, companies will have to remain nimble in order to ensure that they are leveraging the most appropriate technology and advances in AI to suit their AI goals. The authors of the paper conclude that an effective AI strategy must address all the above questions. They also deploy a novel AI strategy wheel that encompasses the five

questions referred to above, thus providing a systematic approach to addressing the issue of AI implementation strategy for businesses.

Benefits of AI Adoption

AI Applications in Law

Below are some of the risks and opportunities in the legal field that can be realised with increasing AI adoption.

Increased productivity

AI can automate repetitive tasks, freeing up human resources for more strategic activities. This automation can lead to increased efficiency and reduced operational costs (LexisNexis, 2023). Through the automation of repetitive tasks, AI allows lawyers to focus on specific work that requires specialist human input. In a survey of the legal profession, 59% of surveyed respondents had observed or expected AI to bring an increase in productivity (Thomson Reuters, 2025). In addition, AI is well equipped to streamline and expedite tasks, such as, performing contract reviews, e-discovery, due diligence, research past cases and extract relevant case law. AI is also better equipped to trawl through thousands of pages of legal legislation and documentation, streamlining legal research (Donahue, 2018), and since AI does not get tired, it also does not need to take breaks. AI can perform all of these tasks and much more in a fraction of the time that it would require a human to perform just one of those tasks

Data Analysis and Decision-Making

AI algorithms can process vast amounts of data to uncover patterns and insights that human analysts might miss (Solaimani and Swaak, 2023). This capability is crucial for making

informed strategic decisions and can be especially powerful in complex legal disputes where AI can inform strategies that may not have been previously analysed

Enhanced client servicing

AI-powered tools, such as chatbots and personalized marketing, can enhance customer interactions and improve satisfaction with clients (Rane, 2023). IT can also form the first line of consulting with clients, freeing up time for lawyers to focus on other tasks. AI tools can be optimised to streamline legal services, be more resourceful, be quick to act and react, provide more data driven insight, improve real-time decision making, thus enhancing client service levels (Mukherjee, 2020). 41% of respondents to a legal profession survey by Thomson Reuters (2025) agreed that AI would result in better client response times.

Reduce costs

Research by Accenture (2017), found average savings of between 20%-25% resulting from AI in industries from IT, banking, and operations. Even after factoring investment costs, due to automation and economies of scale, amongst other things, AI will drive increased efficiency, which will result in reduced costs and increased productivity.

Challenges and Barriers

While AI offers significant benefits, there are also associated challenges and risks that come into play. Such as, ethical considerations, data privacy concerns, and the social context, which includes the potential for job displacement (Bostrom and Yudkowsky, 2014). Companies must ensure that they navigate these challenges carefully to ensure the successful integration of AI (Floridi *et al.*, 2018). Research although limited, has shown that many early adopters have struggled to implement AI in their organisations effectively. Often AI initiatives have

failed to deliver as planned nor have they provided the return on investment that the implementor had hoped for (Browder *et al.*, 2022).

Job displacement

Due to the efficiency of AI, there will be a disruption to traditional roles for human lawyers, which will have an inevitable impact on the workforce (Clio, 2024). However, it is not a simple case of us or them. The reality is that AI will create a knowledge shift and whilst some jobs will inevitably be reduced or even eliminated, there will also be new jobs created with the increased adoption of AI, in addition to a requirement for reskilling (Sharma and Reddy, 2024).

Confidentiality and security

As AI is a digital tool, it is capable of being anywhere and everywhere if not carefully managed, security of information in the age of AI will be an increasingly difficult challenge, especially for law firms, where client confidentiality holds stringent liability and consequence. Compliance in this respect will be of increased importance (Clio, 2024) Firms will have to balance the benefits of AI with good governance in order to minimise the possibility of breaches in confidentiality of sensitive information.

Cost of Implementation

The potentially high costs of implementation may act of a barrier to AI adoption for some law firms. Besides software, security, storage, and other IT related investment, firms will also have to invest significantly in training of their staff, including management and leadership to increase AI literacy in their organisations to support an increased uptake in the adoption of AI within their firm and the wider industry. Having said that, the cost of AI related software and

security is also decreasing as uptake increases and economies of scale are expected to be realised (Lee and Shin, 2020).

Accuracy and Lack of Transparency

Critical to the success of AI, is ensuring accuracy of its results and the content that it generates, 43% of those surveyed by Thomson Reuters (2024) highlighted accuracy as a concern for them, which is one of the reasons why a high degree of human intervention is still required to assure confidence in conclusions provided by AI. This in turn will require increased AI training in order to properly scrutinise outputs. In the medium term, there will be a need for increasing human and AI augmentation (Clio, 2024). Current AI solutions lack transparency and have therefore been termed “black boxes” given that only inputs and outputs can be readily seen or understood (IBM, 2024).

AI Hallucinations

Chat GPT (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer) has been heralded as revolutionary. However, it's not without its problems (Emsley, 2023). Frequently termed AI “hallucinations”, this term refers to the false and incorrect information that applications like Chat-GPT have been observed to produce. Research by (Bhattacharyya *et al.* (2023) in to the accuracy and authenticity of references generated by Chat-GPT found that only 7% of the results were accurate and authentic, whilst the remaining 47% of the results were fabricated, and 46% of the results were completely inaccurate.

Ethics

Biases are likely to be inherent in the AI decision making process if such biases are present in the training data or in the design (IBM, 2024). Some examples of ethical issues and AI

include, fairness, privacy, accountability, moral agency, transparency, trust, discrimination (IBM, 2021a) this list is not exhaustive.

AI cannot replace Humans (yet)

With current AI technology only at Artificial Narrow Intelligence (Peifer, Jeske and Hille, 2022). Despite that reality, the virtual reality is quickly gaining upon humanity. In a recent article by Ovsyannikova, de Mello and Inzlicht (2025), their study on compassion, concluded that AI outperformed humans in all aspects when it came to composing messages with the objective of conveying compassion.

Discussion on Solutions to AI Adoption

The literature reviewed proposed some novel ideas and frameworks, each varying considerably depending on the proposed hypothesis and the juxtaposing propositions. Given the wide scope proposed by AI, each author had varying ideas and arguments to support what they deemed to be critical for AI adoption. What was common across the literature was a general appreciation of the opportunities and risks associated with AI. Although various concepts and novel ideas were argued, no comprehensive and systematic approach to AI adoption could be observed, and there was no specific work dedicated to the adoption in the legal profession.

There are many considerations that go into a strategy, which is especially influenced by factors such as, industry, size of organisation, organisational structure, number of employees, etc. The novel strategy wheel (Figure 4) devised by Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann (2025) proposes a practical cross-industry strategy tool with wide applications for AI adoption. However, it lacked specificity and does not provide depth and would benefit from a multi-stage approach to render the framework complete.

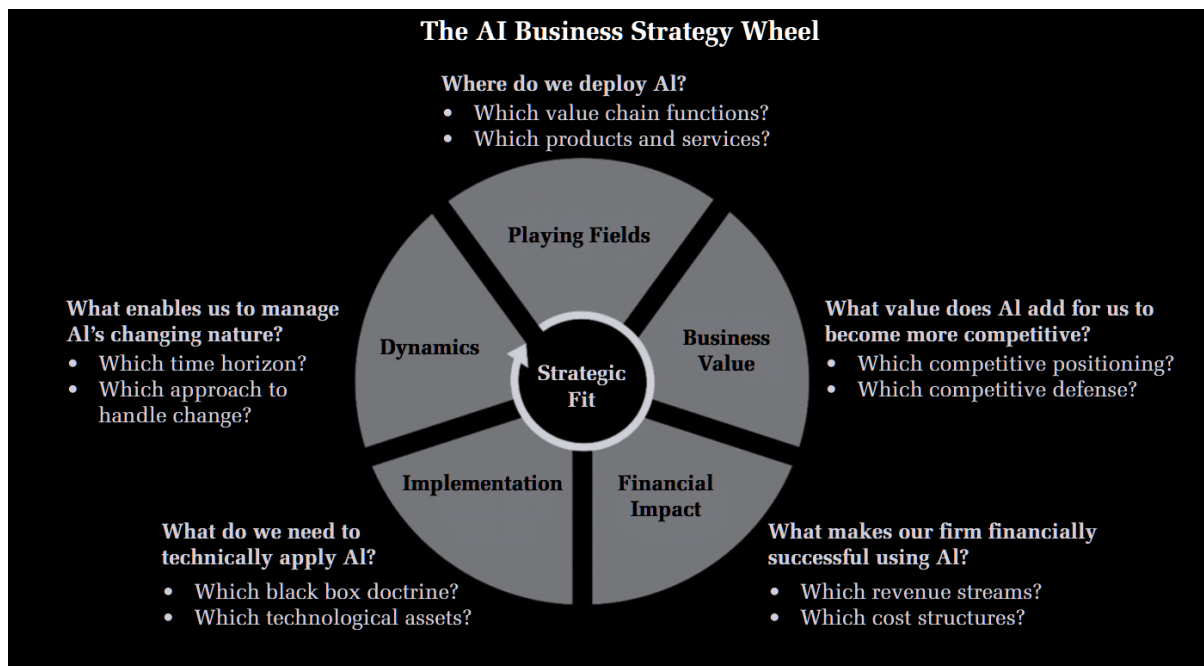


Figure 4 – The AI Business Strategy Wheel (Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann, 2025)

Having a specific goal and a particular “playing field” as identified by Hutzschenreuter and Lämmermann (2025) can help a firm or its directors focus on an specific area of AI development. Such a strategy would be more effective than trying to implement AI “across the board” in an organisation. With a super focused approach, it would be much easier to track costs, measure return on investment (ROI), and other key performance indicators (KPIs) to help the organisation track results and to measure results against expectations. Working through each segment of The AI Business Strategy Wheel will help an organisation to determine which “playing field” i.e. department or sub-department within the organisation would best reap the benefits of AI adoption. The author finds the above approach useful as initial tool but because of its simplicity, the framework does not inform beyond “stage one”.

The Complete AI Adoption Business Strategy Wheel (CABS_w)

Whilst The AI Business Strategy Wheel provides a good starting point with sound considerations for firms starting out on their AI adoption journey, it is superficial and lacks depth in the guidance beyond tackling the initial issues or “stage one” issues. A more detailed

strategy wheel is required to guide new AI adopters on their metaphorical journey to provide next step considerations that enable firms to progress their AI implementation strategy, e.g. “stages 2-3”. As a practitioner, the author envisages the CABS_w framework to include more micro factors, including but not limited to, change management, business integration, risk mitigation, training, policy, compliance, testing, feedback, social, ethics. The CAB_Ws framework would directly address the issues identified by the study into the barriers and would also incorporate the critical success factors, also uncovered by the conclusion of the proposed study.

Critical Success Factors

A key component of this study is to understand the critical success factors that can be attributed to AI adoption in the legal industry. These will be informed from the quantitative and qualitative studies to discern contemporaneous data in conjunction with the literature. The study of critical success factors is a common practice amongst scholars to understand the critical components that underpin success in a given subject matter (Duan, Edwards and Dwivedi, 2019).

Research Aim(s) and Objectives

Aims

To provide a multi-stage strategic framework for AI adoption in the legal industry (CAB_Ws)

To uncover the barriers to scalable AI adoption in the legal industry

To identify and understand the critical success factors for AI adoption in the legal industry

Objectives

- To examine the current state of AI adoption in the legal profession.
- To analyse the impact of AI on legal decision-making processes.
- To identify the challenges/barriers associated with AI adoption in the legal profession
- To understand the investment that is required to leverage scalable AI adoption in the legal profession
- To evaluate the potential risks associated with AI implementation in the legal industry.
- To identify the stages required for a comprehensive AI adoption strategy in the legal profession
- Identify and critically analyse the critical success factors for scalable AI adoption in the legal industry

Proposed Methodology

Research Design

Given that this topic is still in its infancy, this study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining exploratory qualitative and quantitative methods in order to triangulate findings for a more thorough information gathering process. The research design will be separated into two parts.

Part 1: Qualitative Data Collection

The core objective of the qualitative data collection is to accumulate the perspectives and views of key industry leaders in the legal profession. The qualitative component will involve interviews with industry experts, practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders. Interviewees will be targeted through collaboration with professional networks and their members, such as,

IEEE Computational Intelligence Society (CIS), which boasts over 10,000 members worldwide, Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI), with over 4,000 members, International Association for AI and Law (IAAIL), with over 300 international members, The Partnership on AI, with over 100 registered firms (Ozsevim, 2023), The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb), The Law Society of Hong Kong (LSHK), and The Hong Kong Bar Association (HKBA). All of which are renowned professional associations, relevant to the study.

Specifically, the author will use multiple methods to reach out to key stakeholders within these organizations, including site visits, emails, and phone calls. An information sheet soliciting voluntary interviews will be posted in newsletters or sent via listserv to member organizations. In addition, recruitment ads on professional media channels such as LinkedIn and community group boards will be leveraged to solicit interviews.

The author will target approximately 50 interviews with those in the legal profession. Each interview is targeted to be approximately one hour in duration. Interview questions will follow a structured interview methodology, while allowing for follow-up questions to probe distinctive responses that warrant additional information. Guiding interview questions will broadly cover interviewees' current role and responsibilities, familiarity and use with AI, the manner and function of which AI is utilized in the interviewee's organization, the interviewee's work, barriers preventing interviewees from incorporating AI into daily practice, and factors that would facilitate or enable better AI use in the interviewee's role. Interviews will be recorded, with the permission of each interviewee, on transcription software.

Following completion of the interviews, transcribed data will be analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes. Themes will focus on (a) barriers to effective AI utilization

and (b) factors promoting AI use within the legal sector. Descriptive analyses will be displayed in table format, indicating the number of respondents raising each factor, and weighting the relative importance of each barrier and success factor.

Part 2: Quantitative Data Collection

Following themes generated from the qualitative data analysis, the author will develop a preliminary framework of barriers and critical success factors to AI implementation, depicting the factors uncovered from the interviews. In Part 2 of the data collection, measures of each factor will be assessed in an online survey to be distributed to the same organizations referred to above and targeted to their members. The global nature of the organisations will yield a diverse and informed dataset.

Similar to the recruitment methodology in Part 1, an information sheet describing the objective of the survey will be posted on newsletters or sent via listserv to member organizations. In addition, recruitment ads on social media channels such as LinkedIn and community group boards will be leveraged to solicit interviews. The link to the online survey will be included in the information sheet. Interested participants can click on the link and complete the one-time survey at their convenience.

The survey will be hosted using the Qualtrics platform. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey structure will consist of the following: (a) information sheet; (b) informed consent; (c) survey questions; (d) demographic questions; (e) debriefing, contact information, and thank you sheet.

The information sheet will comprise a brief overview of the topic of the research. It will also note the type of questions participants will answer, will inform participants that they have the right to skip any question they wish and the right to exit the survey at any time, and inform participants of the time required to complete the survey. Participants are also informed of the

confidential nature of their responses, and anonymity is ensured as no personal identifiers are collected in the survey. The informed consent sheet will ask participants whether they comply with the instructions. Should participants choose not to participate, they may simply close their browser.

Survey questions will follow from the qualitative data analyses in Part 1 of the study. Given that this study has not yet commenced, the specific measures are not noted here. However, examples of measures to be included are, for instance, measures of barriers identified in Part 1, such as resistance to change, fear of being discovered, fear of career repercussions.

Examples of measures to be included to capture critical success factors identified in Part 1 include, for example, leadership support, technology support, and training. In addition, questions around the familiarity and experience using AI, along with demographic questions such as job tenure in their current organization, job level, age, gender, and ethnicity will be captured. Data will be analysed using SPSS software.

Pilot Study Approach

The pilot study will adopt the same methodology as outlined above but utilise a smaller sample dataset. For the quantitative portion, only one or two of the professional organisations mentioned above will be contacted. Similarly, the qualitative portion will be based on 5-10% of the sample size of the main study. The lessons learned from the pilot study will inform the main study, with appropriate adjustments made accordingly. The pilot study will be conducted in Hong Kong only for convenience purposes and to avoid global time-zone issues.

Expected Outcomes and Contributions

The research will provide valuable and informed contemporaneous insights into the strategic adoption of Gen AI, specifically to the legal industry. It will identify barriers to adoption and critical success factors that law firms can leverage to realise the full potential of Gen AI in their legal practice. It will also showcase best practices and highlight potential risks. One of the fundamental contributions will be a strategic framework coupled with critical success factors for leveraging Gen AI that is practical and capable of balancing the needs of the business with ethical considerations. The findings will be beneficial for leaders of legal practices, policymakers, and scholars interested in Gen AI and strategic adoption in the legal field.

Research Plan of Work and Timetable

	Activity	Duration
1	Detailed literature review	3 months
2	Part 1: Qualitative study – Interviewee recruitment	3 months
3	Part 1: Conduct interviews	3 months
4	Part 1: Qualitative data analysis	3 months
5	Part 2: Survey design	1 month
6	Part 2: Participant recruitment	1 month
7	Part 2: Administer surveys	3 months
8	Part 2: Quantitative data analysis	6 months
9	Write up findings	6 months

Conclusion

This research proposal aims to shed light on the critical role of AI in the legal industry and provide a framework for AI adoption in business strategy. The literature review concluded that despite the growing body of research in AI across various industries, there exists a gap in specific studies that explored the topic of this proposal. By exploring the applications, benefits, challenges, and critical success factors, this study will make a significant contribution to the growing body of knowledge on AI and strategic management, with a spotlight on the legal industry. The proposed research will provide actionable insights that can help any law firm or legal practitioner harness the power of AI for strategic success.

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