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Integrating Artificial Intelligence in MBA curriculum

By Dr Nimisha Singh

Highlights

According to the report "The Future of Jobs 2018" by the World Economic Forum, 75 million jobs will be displaced and 133 million new roles are expected to be created by 2022 with the increased interest in AI. The role of B-schools in training students to meet the new skill sets required for such jobs is worth analysing.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has generated both interest and investment from companies and it is expected to generate job opportunities. According to the report "The Future of Jobs 2018" by the World Economic Forum, 75 million jobs will be displaced and 133 million new roles are expected to be created by 2022 with the increased interest in AI. The role of B-schools in training students to meet the new skill sets required for such jobs is worth analysing.

As of now, the AI has been used mostly in automation. As the technology's cognitive capabilities improve, thenew jobs that will be created will look nothing like those that exist today. Industries will require people who can develop algorithms, have a business understanding to identify problems that can be addressed by AI, and the ethical issues that may arise out of algorithm driven solutions.

What should the course address?

Before introducing any AI course, it is important to understand the current state of AI. In general, AI applications fall under two categories- Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI) and Artificial General Intelligence(AGI). Most of the AI applications such as image, language and handwriting recognitions fall in the

can be realized. The expectation is not that an MBA graduate will become technical expert at AI but be able to be part of a team that uses AI to develop new products, services to gain competitive advantage.

Aligning the set of courses with the roles that the students are expected to play - that is the role as "trainers", "explainers" and "sustainers" (Wilson, Daugherty, & Morini-Bianzino, 2017) will prepare them better.

Trainer

This category of jobs will need people who can modulate the use of AI. One will need to understand

1) the basics of machine learning and AI in different business domains, be it retail, healthcare, banking and financial service or logistics and

2) the role AI will play to create value with new business models, products, services and solutions in these business domains.

Explainers

The industry needs explainers to help nontechnical professionals understand the inner workings of complex algorithms. This is needed to bridge the gap between the technologists and the business leaders.

Sustainers

Sustainers are needed to uphold the norms of human value and morals and to ensure that unintended consequences are addressed. For instance, a huge set of data is needed for training the machines to mimic how humans analyse data. The data collection raises concerns about people's privacy. To ensure the proper operation of these advanced systems, the ethical concerns need to be addressed in compliance with the regulations.

How to integrate AI courses in MBA curriculum?

If we see from the point of view of students, they want to learn aspects to AI that firms use. Some of them would like to take data heavy course on machine learning to get hands on experience on solving complex problems. Such data intensive, rigorous and quantitative AI and machine learning courses can be paired with data analytics degree programs. The others may want to take courses that impart broader understanding about the impact AI can have on business. Here, AI may be integrated within the domain courses such as integrating it in

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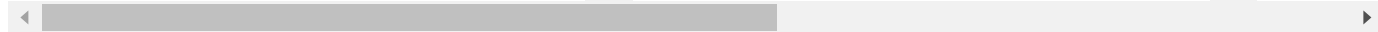
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