Risk Toleration & Public Opinion on AI

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Background

Previous literature on public opinion has identified general societal distrust of AI, especially since AI is predicted to drastically impact the workforce.

- In a 2023 survey, 52% of Americans express greater concern than excitement toward AI (Pew Research Center, 2023)

Those valuing stability have a greater aversion to AI.

- Social conservatism, defined as having values of stability and tradition, predicts aversion to AI algorithms (Castelo & Ward, 2023)

However, this research has not been extended to college students yet. Since college students are slated to enter the workforce facing the initial reverberations of AI, it is imperative to analyze the following research question:

- How does self-reported risk toleration among college students impact views toward AI?

Figure 1: Crosstabulation of Risk Toleration Against Views of AI

	Very Excited	Slightly Excited	Neutral	Slightly Concerned	Very Concerned
Low Risk	0	6.45%	3.22%	9.68%	6.45%
Med. Risk	0	8.06%	14.52%	22.58%	1.61%
High Risk	0	6.45%	6.45%	9.68%	4.84%

Methods

The study surveyed UNC students from Nov. 1 to Dec. 5, 2023. A total of 64 students responded.

Main Dependent Variable:

- "Overall, would you say the increased use of artificial intelligence (AI) in daily life makes you feel... ?"
  - Likert scale from Pew Research Center

Main Independent Variable:

- "Are you generally a person who is willing to take risks or do you try to avoid taking risks?"
  - 11-point scale response from SOEP

Analytic Strategy

- Chi-square
- Bivariate & multivariate regressions

Figure 2: Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Demographics Characteristics (N=64)

Variable	Mean or %	SD
Gender		
Female	66%	
Male	30%	
Third Gender / Nonbinary	2%	
No response	3%	
Race		
White	55%	
Black or African American	3%	
Asian	36%	
Hispanic	0%	
Native American	0%	
Mixed	2%	
Other	2%	
No response	3%	
Student Classification		
First-year	0%	
Sophomore	11%	
Junior	28%	
Senior	58%	
No response	3%	

*Values are rounded to the nearest percentage.

Results

Figure 3: Bivariate and Multivariate Regression Results

	Bivariate Regression	***Multivariate Regression***
Intercept	3.471***	3.268***
	(0.238)	(0.439)
Risk:		
Low Risk	0.154	-0.051
	(0.342)	(0.36)
Medium Risk	-0.091	-0.088
	(0.3)	(0.317)
Gender:		
Female		0.301
		(0.286)
Nonbinary / Third Gender		0.82
		(1.065)
Race:		
Black or African American		-1.813*
		(0.725)
Asian		-0.142
		(0.287)
Mixed		-0.528
		(1.04)
Other		-1.812
		(0.992)
Class year:		
Third year		-0.041
		(0.469)
Fourth year		0.331
		(0.433)

Standard errors are given in parenthesis. Coefficients are rounded to the hundredths.
* = p < .05, ** = p < .01, *** = p < 0.001

- Insignificant Chi-square
- Insignificance on most regression coefficients
- Significant Chi-square on 11-point scale

References

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