

Perception of Artificial Intelligence Among Generation Z: A Qualitative Exploration of Myths, Concerns and Misconceptions

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to explore and challenge the myths, misconceptions, and fears those the Generation Z holds regarding the Artificial Intelligence (AI). The study focused on the understanding of how media portrayals, the advancement in technology and cultural narratives influence the Gen Z's beliefs about the AI and shape both positive and negative attitudes toward the growing presence of AI in everyday life. The qualitative research was conducted through the focus groups among university students. The findings indicated that participants often viewed AI through the mythological frameworks like perceiving it as powerful force that is capable of both innovation and also destruction. Concerns regarding the ethics, loss of human control, employment replacement, the power dynamics, and misuse in the warfare, privacy threats, and impact of AI on human identity were discussed commonly. Participants also show fears about the AI exceeding human intelligence and being used for the human manipulation, fake news, and majorly propaganda. At the same time the results indicate optimism about AI's potential to solve global challenges, improve efficiency, and support educational, provide quick access to information, support creativity, idea generation, professional tasks or productivity and technological advancement was evident among participants. The article highlights the importance of promoting the literacy related to artificial intelligence also the ethical awareness, and critical thinking among Generation Z in order to reduce the misconceptions and encourage informed engagement with AI technologies. The future research should include the more culturally diverse populations and also interdisciplinary perspectives in order to better understand the evolving relationship between the gen z and artificial intelligence.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Gen z, Myths, Human and AI Interaction

INTRODUCTION

According to recent survey almost 70% of Generation Z believes that Artificial Intelligence may surpass the human intelligence within the next decades (Smith & Anderson, 2022). This perception has increased the curiosity, fear, and various misconceptions among the young people regarding the AI. Some people believed that the AI could replace the human jobs, emotions, creativity, and even decision-making abilities, while others viewed AI as a powerful tool that can improve the education, the healthcare, communication, and also some daily life activities (McKinsey & Company, 2023; Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017). Fear of AI the often develops because of the misinformation spread through the social media, movies, and also

majorly limited awareness about the actual capabilities and limitations of AI (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). Artificial Intelligence is still relatively new concept for many individuals, and also most of individuals not fully understands its significance, applications, or potential risks (IBM, 2024; Russell & Norvig, 2021). Many young people are familiar with the AI technologies as the chatbots, virtual assistants, and also the content-generation tools. Most of the people rely on AI for academic work, communication, entertainment, and also routine daily tasks. This dependence on the AI demonstrates that how deeply the technology has become integrated into lives of the today's young people (UNESCO, 2023; Luckin et al., 2018).

The Artificial intelligence defined as the simulation of Human Intelligence processes by machines especially computer system (IBM, 2024). Artificial intelligence can do many task that are only performed by humans in past but now Artificial Intelligence is capable of decision making, reasoning, problem solving and many more (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020). The studies indicate that AI remains undefined and lacks a unified mathematical framework. Unlike data science, which focuses on data, AI emphasizes high-level goals. Moreover, AI isn't like the human brain but inspired by it instead, it primarily serves for data analysis. Current AI techniques, developed independently, address basic tasks like classification, similar to those in machine learning but still facing challenges in general intelligence (Frank et al., 2020). The ground of Artificial Intelligence began in early 1900s and biggest studies were not made until 1950 (Russell & Norvig, 2021). Knowing its history is important to understand where Artificial Intelligence is now and where it is going in future. The idea related to Artificial Intelligence goes back thousands of years. In early times the inventors made things and called them as "Automatons" which were mechanical and moved independently of human interventions (McCorduck, 2004). The word Automaton comes from the Greek word means "Acting's of one's own will". The concept dates back 400 BCE with mechanical pigeon created by Plato's friend (Boden, 2016).

Artificial General Intelligence: 2012-Present

This era brings us to latest developments in the artificial intelligence. We have seen rush in commonly used artificial intelligence tools like virtual assistants, search engines etc. This period also popularized deep learning and big data (Russell & Norvig, 2021). In 2012 two Google researchers (Jeff Dean and Andrew Ng) trained a neural network to recognize cats by showing it unlabeled images and no background information (Le et al., 2012). In 2016 Hanson Robotics created a humanoid robot named Sophia, which became known as the first (Hanson Robotics, 2016). In 2020 OpenAI began beta testing GPT-3, a model that uses Deep Learning to generate code, poetry, and other similar language and writing tasks (Brown et al., 2020).

Artificial Intelligence enhance human creativity for automating routine task, freeing time for innovative thinking (Singh et al., 2025). Artificial Intelligence can generate art, music, writings and that can inspire humans to explore further. Both Artificial Intelligence and humans can collaborate to generate novel outputs. Artificial Intelligence analyze and provide input on creative ideas, work and also improve critical thinking (Maslej et al., 2024). The Artificial intelligence also has negative impacts as Artificial Intelligence can replace certain human task like doing house chores, jobs, and many other daily tasks, potentially threatening human livelihood (Wang et al., 2022). Humans are depending more on Artificial Intelligence and less using their own abilities to do any task. Everything is a single click away so human is not using their brain, stifling original thoughts. When people realize new wave of the human economic and social development that is created by the advanced technological innovation they must accept the creative destruction that is brought by the iterative renewal of the new technologies (Michau, 2013; Josifidis & Supic 2018; Forsythe et al., 2022). Artificial Intelligence generated tools and data loss emotional depth and it does not give any feelings of sympathy or anything else which is sometime necessary for human audience (Frank et al., 2020). Artificial Intelligence can also replace humans in different sector by stifling their thoughts they are taking human jobs and replacing them (Masriadi et al., 2023).

The Artificial Intelligence also plays role in public health. the studies were conducted while Evaluating ChatGPT Responses to Vaccination Myths and Misconceptions from the free GPT-3.5 and paid version chat GPT-4.0 by asking 11 questions that were examined by 2 health investigators and the result showed that although 85.5 % accuracy and highlight that now Chat GPT is used in health centers but we should also consider the limitations of AI and future research should focus on improving them (Giovanna et al., 2023). AI chatbots are increasingly used in Sexual and Reproduction Health serving functions such as the education, counseling, symptom triage, and also follow-up support. These digital tools reduce the barriers to the Sexual and Reproduction Health information and care by providing private, instant, and user-friendly assistance (Mills et al., 2023). The study on Artificial Intelligence Chatbot for Young People's Sexual and Reproductive Health in India was conducted that indicates the AI Chatbot Snehai was designed to engage young people in private, one-on-one interactions around sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Using The Gibson's theory of affordances, the study documents that how the Snehai's successfully addressed a range of sexual and reproduction health topics through the millions of interactions. Despite its success the Chatbot faced notable gender gap with the most of users being male. The study emphasizes the Snehai's potential for the social change and also the need for the better strategies in order to engage women. (Nader et al., 2024).

The research shows that the agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishery, mining, manufacturing, and the construction industries those are expected to adopt a high level of intelligence, face a high risk of occupational substitution. The most older and the less educated workers are also faced with a very high risk of substitution (Wang et al. 2022). Some researches tries to evaluate that how the development of AI and the automation in the future will affect the jobs of humans. In one research qualitative data was used from the previous mixed results of the studies and also recent related studies. The use of the artificial intelligence is becoming more and more common in sectors as telecommunications, the banking, and healthcare, leading to a reduction in the human labor. Although the artificial intelligence still struggles in order to imitate the certain service positions, especially those that demand the intuitive and also the empathetic understanding (Masriadi et al., 2023).

Although there is extensive research exists on technical development and applications of AI, most studies focus on machine learning models, system performance, and also the technological advancement (Russell & Norvig, 2021; AI Index Report, 2024). On the other hand, there is limited research on how the Gen z interpret the AI socially, psychologically, and culturally, especially in terms of the myths and the misconceptions. Also there is a lack of the qualitative research that focused on the Gen z perceptions in the developing countries, where the awareness of AI is still the matter of evolution. The aim of this study is to explore the myths, misconceptions, and beliefs related to the Artificial Intelligence among the Gen z. It strives for understanding how Gen z people perceive AI in terms of the advantages, risks, and influence on the life of human including the creativity, decision-making, employment, and also social relationships and most importantly the concept of power (McKinsey & Company, 2023; UNESCO, 2023). Additionally, this study aims to examine how the reliance on Artificial Intelligence technologies shapes the Gen z attitude, dependency patterns, and the fears, particularly in the context of the rapidly growing digital and intelligent systems. Moreover, this study addresses the gap by providing a qualitative exploration of Gen z beliefs, fears, and misconceptions about Artificial intelligence, contributing to the better understanding of how the technological development is perceived at the societal level rather than only on technical level.

METHODS

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design to explore myths, misconceptions, beliefs, and perceptions related to Artificial Intelligence among youth. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to obtain in-depth information regarding participants' experiences, concerns, and understanding of AI in daily life.

Ethical Considerations

To address the ethical requirements of this study, formal approval will be sought from the University. The informed consent obtained from the participants before participation in the study. Participant anonymity insured properly. All digital and physical data will be stored securely in password-protected files.

Instruments for Data Collection

In qualitative research, an interview guide is crucial tool for the collection of data. It serves as the structured framework which helps the researcher gather the information from participants in a systematic and organized manner. The interview guide provides a set of questions or prompts that guide the conversation and ensure that relevant topics are covered during the interview process. The interview guide created it includes questions related to Fundamentals and Personal experience, Perception and Principles and the concerns and future implications. The initial version of interview guide was drafted and also subsequently refined through the pilot study and expert review to ensure its clarity, relevance, and the content validity. Based on the feedback received, the final interview guide was prepared for the use in the focus group discussions. The finalized instrument consisted of the 30 items. Audio recording devices for data recording during interview and the Note-transcribing software as MS Word used for data transcription.

Participants and Procedure

Purposive sampling of 6-8 per Focus Group Discussion participants with diverse demographics, involving both genders (girls and boys) in the discussion. The four focused group's discussions conducted. First practice the mock interview in a group about Artificial Intelligence, facilitated by a moderator and observed by a note-taker, to test the discussion guide and refine questioning techniques. Preferentially interviewed participants from Computer Studies departments, who are well-versed in AI, to counter prevailing myths. Another interview was conducted with participants from various departments, including Mathematics, and Biotechnology.

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in a structured and organized manner to ensure effective data collection. Each session began with an introduction and context setting lasting approximately 5 minutes, during which participants were informed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and ethical considerations. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the discussion started. After the introduction, an open-ended discussion was conducted for approximately 20–30 minutes. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences, beliefs, myths, concerns, and perceptions regarding Artificial Intelligence. The interviewer asked semi-structured questions based on the discussion guide, while the moderator ensured that the discussion remained focused on the research objectives and that all participants had equal opportunities to contribute.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was conducted by interviews and the data was recorded by using different recording tools. Additionally, the observer takes notes during the discussion. After the data transcription the thematic analysis was done by Identify themes, patterns, and codes. Content Analysis: Analyze discussion transcripts for AI-related themes.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Main Theme 1: Understanding AI and Its Dual Nature

Sub Theme 1.1 Defining AI and Its Usage

The participants had proper well-known knowledge of AI and defined AI as processing human-like abilities to perform various functions in the form of robots and computers.

“AI essentially involves incorporating human-like characteristics into a machine. The process of creating AI is more complex than that of traditional machines, such as computers. First, a complete dataset must be created and integrated into the system. Then, the AI needs to be trained similarly to how we train humans to learn and perform new tasks”. (INT 2)

When participants associate AI to human-like abilities like decision-making and problem-solving, their answers also mirror the fundamental ideas put forward by Turing (1950). His "thinking machine" served as a foundation for the current state of artificial intelligence, where systems are designed to mimic humans in a variety of domains, including robotics and natural language processing (Thrun, 2004).

Sub Theme 1.2 AI's Dual Nature

Participants had a dual attitude when asked to weigh the pros and cons of AI and almost all the participants shared the same response that AI itself is not bad, and the possible impact of AI depends on how we are using it. Participants claim that either AI will benefit or harm us depending on how we use it.

“I don't have a bad opinion about AI, but we can't rely on AI in all aspects.” (INT 3, L 414-415).

This perspective is enhanced by the findings of a study by Müller and Bostrom (2016), arguing that although AI would bring about significant changes in society, if misused, it will have disastrous consequences, from potential dangers to global security to economic devastating outcomes.

When we asked participants in interviews 1, 2, and 3 about the role of AI in decision-making, particularly regarding life-and-death situations, they expressed the belief that AI has limited power and will not be able to make such critical decisions.

“AI can't make life-or-death decisions; that's beyond human control. However, if misused, AI can cause destruction worldwide”. (INT 3, L 452-454)

scholars have issued warnings regarding the real misuse of AI in malicious applications, such as forced, automated cyber-attacks or systems that take advantage of mental health weaknesses (Brundage et al., 2018).

Participants of interview 2 had differing opinions, claiming that AI-based suicide bots are now available, which could contribute to self-harm or encourage suicide.

“It can happen that AI will take an individual’s life and death decisions, as now the Suicide Bots are in use, so it is possible” (INT2, L 242-243).

Similarly, all claim that AI has limited power in decision-making because it relies on available information and the information available to AI is dependent on humans.

“AI cannot make decisions about right or wrong because it follows our instructions”. (INT 4, L 504).

This perspective is comparable to Pasquale's (2020) claim that AI is essentially limited by the biased training data it was trained on and can only be viewed as an extension of human intents rather than a morally autonomous entity.

Main Theme 2: AI’s Role in Knowledge

Sub Theme 2.1 The Role of AI on knowledge

While discussing the impact AI has on their knowledge all the participants had almost the same response that AI has helped them to gain knowledge without wasting time before AI they had to spend a lot of time searching for relevant information and now less effort is required which reduces workload moreover they also added AI provides us with excess and relevant knowledge about the interested topic but before AI we have to find the interested material after putting a lot of effort.

“We have become more dependent on technology. When we need something, we search for it. One of its features is that if we search for something, we get data; if we search for the same thing again, we get different data or a different version. So, searching for the same thing again on the same mobile can get different information. This is an advantage of this technology because it provides us with diverse information”. (INT 4, L 452- 455)

Search engines and knowledge-based systems are examples of AI powered tools that improve accessibility to a variety of information while meeting the unique demands and changing search habits of users (Chui et al., 2018). All participants had a positive attitude toward AI's role in their knowledge gain.

“This is an advantage of this technology because it provides us with diverse information”. (INT 4)

When questioned about the use of AI almost all the participants had the same response that they are widely using AI now and AI helps them a lot in completing their academic assignments and projects and for general questions that arose in their minds. Also, the participants seem happy that we can interact with AI using different languages, which makes it easier for those who do not understand English. Research also has demonstrated that artificial intelligence (AI) translation tools, or natural language processing systems, do, in fact, bridge linguistic gaps, resulting in increased access to information and international collaboration (Pérez-Ortiz & Forcada, 2001).

Sub Theme 2.2 Attitudes Toward AI and Its Development

When asked about satisfaction after accomplishing tasks with the help of AI. Some said they were satisfied, citing that AI made their work easier.

“yes, we are happy and more satisfied with the use of artificial intelligence because it makes our work easy”. (INT 1, L 50-52)

Others seemed less satisfied compared to when doing their work independently, while they were more content and fulfilled having done it.

“When creative work is done independently or something is completed on one’s own, there’s greater satisfaction. A person knows what they’ve written, and created, and what data/information was used. Self-knowledge is also enhanced”. (INT 2, L 394-398)

This viewpoint is in line with worries expressed by Carr (2013), who notes that while AI can streamline procedures, excessive dependence on technology could lessen the inherent satisfaction of human Labor and creative problem-solving. Similarly, other authors like Susskind (2020) focus on the sophisticated emotions that AI creates; though it increases efficiency, it reduces the feelings of personal satisfaction. All of the participants expressed a positive attitude towards learning new skills associated with AI despite these different perceptions about their levels of satisfaction: they reported that a better understanding of AI would make them use AI in ways that ultimately produce more positive results.

“AI dominates today’s world, as most things are internet-based and involve AI. To navigate this, we must learn about AI and enhance our skills”. (INT 3, 402-404)

This view is corroborated by research by Makridakis (2017), which highlights the need to give people AI-related skills so they can adjust to a society that is becoming more and more AI-integrated.

Main Theme 3: Impact of AI on Human

Sub Theme 3.1 Impact of AI on Creativity

When asked about the influence AI could have on our creativity some said that it could have a negative influence.

“Before the advent of artificial intelligence, we relied on our thinking to gather information. People used to work hard to learn about various subjects, but with the emergence of artificial intelligence, we no longer put in as much effort to seek out knowledge”. (INT 1, L1-6)

Parry et al. (2021) caution that although AI is highly effective, an over dependence on its results may potentially impede critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. While other consider that for some people it could be threatening to their creativity but for others, it will help them further improve their creativity. In short, its influence depends on how we use it which is highlighted as:

“I would say in response to this, as Elon Musk had said that humans will become completely useless. They will stop doing the maximum work they do now.

Do you think it affects our creativity? It is, but some people believe as if they are some superpowers using AI and their creativity is at its peak because they have created this AI. This comes from two

different points of view, the one who had created this system so obviously had some creative potential in them, but on the other side the ones who are now using it in their daily tasks their creativity will be affected negatively” (INT 2, L 197-208).

Sub Theme 3.2 AI Impact on Employment

Employment is a formal or informal relationship involving an individual who renders Labor, skills, or services to an entity in return for compensation. The compensation may be in the form of wages, salaries, or other benefits that are necessary for people to fulfill their daily needs when participants were questioned about whether AI would influence employment the participants agreed that it would have a great influence on employment leading to unemployment of most of the people, the stance they gave behind it was that AI is better in performing logical functions without errors than humans and in future with further development of AI the organizations would prefer reports on human beings to perform functions to improve their outcome effectively. Arntz et al. (2016) emphasizes that the substitution effect created by AI across jobs might lead to severe social and economic inequalities and thus demands changes in policies of education and Labor. Although participants claim that AI will replace humans in most professions still it would be impossible even for AI to perform without human assistance because when there's a fault in AI humans is required to treat the malfunction.

“AI has replaced humans in various fields. Robots are being used in different sectors, increasing working speed and reducing errors. However, humans are still needed to handle and correct technical faults in robots”. (INT 3, 406-410).

This is in line with the assertion of Frey and Osborne (2017), which estimates that AI and automation might replace a significant proportion of jobs. Specifically, jobs based on repetitive predictable tasks will be replaced. When asked whether participants would be satisfied if AI were used as professional's participants replied that it depends on the task performed They said that they could rely on AI for logical office work but can't trust and are satisfied with AI performing their functions in their lives are involved i.e. in performing surgery or medical decisions in such life important decisions they will prefer and satisfied with a human performing as professionals.

“It depends, like if you take an example of a robot performing surgery, being in the medical field so we wouldn't be satisfied with the results because of the fear of error.” (INT 322, L 219-222).

Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) call this interdependency "machine-human symbiosis," where human oversight is still critical for the management and continual improvement of AI systems.

Main Theme 4: Implications of AI

Sub Theme 4.1 Ethical and Emotional Aspects of AI

Participants of interview 4 said they haven't yet interacted with any AI-based personality and only used AI for discussion on new topics. Moreover, when asked about emotions participants noted that humans are complex beings.

“Unlike humans, who possess feelings, AI is merely a computerized system that follows commands. It cannot comprehend emotions”. (INT 3, L 513-515)

This view is shared by Bryson et al. (2017) as they argue that though AI can simulate emotional responses by virtue of programmed algorithms, it fundamentally lacks consciousness and empathy as well as the subtler aspects of human emotional states. They argued that

no matter how advanced AI becomes, it cannot replace humans; while AI might perform logical functions better than humans, it will never be able to fulfil the emotional aspects of human interactions. People will always rely on other humans to satisfy their emotional and social needs, which can never be adequately met by AI.

“Humans are unpredictable, with emotions like jealousy. AI lacks these emotions and judgments, providing neutral responses. However, humans have emotions and moods, making interactions complex”. (INT 3, L 272-380)

Participants expressed concern about the potential influence AI could have on their emotional regulation and mood, that while using social media apps, they encountered reels that often impacted their mood. This frequent shift in emotions has made them increasingly impatient.

“Many people struggle to express their emotions. Some may feel nothing at all, while others experience their emotions too intensely. This situation can lead to increased impatience and rising anxiety levels. Currently, we observe this behavior on platforms like Instagram, where scrolling through reels often presents artistic content that quickly shifts to something sad. This constant cycle of rapidly changing emotions can result in emotional imbalance for many individuals” (INT 1, L 133-143.)

According to Montag and Diefenbach (2018), the algorithms of AI on social media censure content that exploits human psychological vulnerabilities to exacerbate emotional instability with mood swings and less emotional regulation.

Sub Theme 4.2 AI Relationship with Humans

Participants agreed with the possibility of AI having relationships with humans. In the future,

“we may come to view AI as our friends rather than humans, because we rely on AI for everything” (INT 4, L 556).

They also considered the fact that humans in the future might have relationships with AI, but we can't say that these relationships will be satisfactory because humans are complex entities.

There can be a relationship between a robot and a human. Like you saw in that movie with Shahid Kapoor, Robots 1 and 2, where they added such features that they can marry each other and love each other, just like human feelings. The way you talk to it, it will automatically reply in the same way; it has emotions and feelings just like humans do” (INT 4, L 547-551).

But they also consider and agree with the fact that humans are humans and at the end they also have physical needs which machines can't meet.

In terms of pure human nature, people like to do physical activities so I do not think they will be happy in the long run” (INT 2, L 212-214).

When the participants asked will they make a relationship with AI if they have a chance? Everyone said that they will not but in the future people might be.

“We can consider AI as a friend, but we will value human friends more. AI means that everything is artificial; it cannot reduce depression or stress like a human friend can”. (INT 4, 473-478)

Sub Theme 4.3 Societal Transformation in AI Era

Participants emphasized that we cannot rely entirely on AI. It may not challenge our ideas and can potentially manipulate religious beliefs. For instance, some participants mentioned that AI would never assert that homosexuality is wrong, even though homosexuality is considered Haram in Islam.

“When it comes to sensitive topics like misleading information, it's important to remember that homosexuality is considered haram in Islam. AI may not express this perspective and could potentially influence us in another direction. Ultimately, our reliance on AI is a personal choice. If I use it excessively, there is a risk that it may begin to control my thoughts and decisions” (INT 1, L 94- 102).

Participants of focus group 3 shared a very interesting experience of being manipulated by misinformation spread through artificial intelligence

“I believe it's possible to discuss the recent issues surrounding Palestine. I watched a YouTube video where Indian President Narendra Modi expressed his support for Palestine, which made me happy. However, later I searched on Google and found another video stating the opposite—that Modi supports Israel. This highlights how powerful technology has become and its ability to manipulate information” (INT 3, L 529-536).

AI can manipulate and change the power balance. (INT 3, L 480)

This resonates with Zuboff's (2019) surveillance capitalism which points out that how AI algorithms may influence perceptions and behaviors through targeted misinformation and propaganda

Sub Theme 4.4 Impact of AI on Privacy

AI is perceived as threat to our privacy as our lives are no longer private we are under the constant scrutiny.

“If AI becomes dominant, it might gain access to vast personal information. This reliance on technology can be increasingly dangerous, as AI systems may hack personal data from various sources, leading to cybercrime” (INT 3, L 424-428).

Participants said that this threat to our privacy leads to limiting our freedom.

“Pagars one and that walkie-talkie attack, it all happened because of it, the main effect of that attack was AI. A person feels like he is in a closed capsule where his every move is being watched and calculated. (talking about the Lubnan Pager attack)But it is like when the pager accident happened, they knew where those people were and who was using it, if we look at it simply, it often happens that what we are thinking or if we talk about something with someone openly, then after a while that thing appears on your phone, like on your feed or in the reel, so it means that we are being watched, that means things are not private anymore, we have no freedom(participant 1). Yes, this is a real issue but what is the privacy of a common man, what will matter to him, what are his secrets that will be revealed, nothing. But a person who feels secure is not feeling the same anymore, they feel like they have no private life. We are just given the idea that we are free, but we are not. Yes, it is and still is, in the sense that like Google or Facebook or the entire Wi-Fi connected to our mobiles, so entire activity is being monitored by them and many people do not

even know this. But if so, then in the future this thing will become more prominent or obvious” (INT 2, L 295-316).

Andrejevic (2020), another scholar in this school of thought, believes that the pervasive collection of data by AI systems does not only invade privacy but also creates asymmetrical imbalances of power limits the sense of control that individuals feel over their lives.

Main Theme 5: AI in Religion

Sub Theme 5.1 AI as a Tool for Religious Knowledge

During the discussion about the impact of AI on religion, participants noted that AI can also help us better understand religious teachings by providing a variety of materials, complete with context and references, in a shorter amount of time.

“It can provide more information about hadith with references, and it also discusses how the subject is addressed in the Quran. This can be done in much less time compared to searching in books of hadith and the Holy Quran” (INT 1, L 56-60).

Participants said that though AI has a positive influence and makes it easier to access knowledge, at the same time we shouldn't ignore the danger of manipulation of religious teachings AI can cause for people with limited knowledge.

“This can affect people with weak beliefs or those who blindly rely on AI. However, we should verify the information and not solely rely on AI. Nowadays, voice recordings and videos can be generated to mimic anyone's voice or face, leading to fake news and misinformation. We should verify information, especially religious or worldly claims, as AI isn't always authentic. In our seminar, we were warned that AI, like ChatGPT, relies on human sources and may provide unverified information. It's crucial to fact-check, as AI won't differentiate between authentic and fake sources” (INT 3, L 437-451)

Participants' responses claim that people who have limited religion will be most prone to be manipulated and affected by AI.

“Those who are distant (less knowledge) from studying are being affected” (INT 3, L 501)

Johnson et al. (2020) warn that the absence of strict scrutiny of AI-generated religious contents is misleading to users, especially the unlearned, hence the participants are threatening to influence.

Sub Theme 5.2 Acceptance of AI by Religious Groups

When asked about religious scholars rejecting AI and forbidding its use in religious studies, nearly all participants responded similarly. They believe that while religious scholars may not accept AI right now, they will ultimately have to embrace it, as they will have no other choice.

“They will, in the end, everyone will, and everyone must. They will make a fuss but for a shorter period, people will see and will understand its use” (INT 2, L 246-248).

Moleiro-Martins et al. (2022) look at the slow integration of AI in religious organizations, demonstrating the resistance to it often not in itself but because people fear change. They point out that, responsibly applied, AI may even complement religious teachings instead of competing with them.

Main Theme 6: AI in Warfare and Security

Sub Theme 6.1 AI in Warfare

Participants stated that in this era and the future, wars will be more based on AI than on traditional weapons. AI has the potential to cause greater damage and to enable more effective warfare against others. They argued that harm caused by AI depends on how humans will use it.

“Yes, it is possible that with advancements over time, artificial intelligence (AI) could be used in warfare, which could be very dangerous. The way AI is employed depends on humans; they can choose to use it responsibly or misuse its power. Just as the blue whale can lead people to danger, AI also has the potential to bring about serious consequences” (INT 1, L 149-156)

Supported by Singer (2009), this paper takes account of the evolution of autonomous weapons and their ability to expand the scale and particularity of violence.

Participants expressed concern that AI could lead to greater destruction if developed countries with advanced AI technology engage in attacks on underdeveloped nations. Arif and Kumar (2020) emphasize how the AI-enabled technologies as satellites and drones are increasingly used for the surveillance and targeted attacks consistent with the participants' references to satellites and nuclear detection.

Participants know the AI technology and its application in the security and the privacy breaches.

“it will result in the widespread devastation. The world likely to experience the more destruction particularly if the developed countries like the United States which possess advanced weaponry engage in the attacks on less developed nations. This technology employs rockets and cameras mounted on the satellites to monitor every movement. Drones are also being utilized in order to strike specific targets thereby reducing the likelihood of missing them. Technology as satellites is extensively used to monitor the activities. We studied that these satellites could detect significant changes, such as the movement of tectonic plates beneath the Earth's surface. They are also capable of identifying nuclear tests or the launch of nuclear weapons by sensing radiation and detecting movements” (INT 3, L 482-499)

The fear expressed about AI exacerbating global inequalities ("developed countries. Engage in attacks on less developed nations") resonates with the work of Horowitz (2018), who addresses the geopolitics of AI-prolonged weaponry. Some participants showed their concern about the use of AI in wars in the religious context

“We are navigating through this era through AI. It depends on the era, context, and which period is ongoing. For example, in the earlier era, wars were fought using swords because swords were the only weapons available. Similarly, we hear about Imam Mehdi and Hazrat Isa, and we expect that they will fight wars with swords, but they will conduct those wars in a way that they will control them with AI. We have also heard that Dajjal can do anything; he can control our weather, strike lightning wherever he wants, and make it rain wherever he wants. In this way, when wars occur, they will use AI, AI weapons. Because the method of waging war is different in every era, in today's era, if control is being exercised, it is being done through AI” (INT 4, L 482-489)

These comments from participants regarding AI entering religious stories ("wars that would involve figures like Imam Mehdi or Dajjal use AI") resonate well with Campbell (2019), who discusses ways which religious groups mainstream novel technologies in eschatological conceptualizations. Campbell holds that such interpretations underline the comfort of religious narratives for modern contexts, where it is articulated that not only have technologies, including AI, been accomplished but their tasks are seen to occur as divine or apocalyptic events.

Main Theme 7: AI Dominance

Sub Theme 7.1 Human resistance to AI dominance

"Who would accept being governed by their invention?" (INT 3, L 509).

Many participants share the same sentiment that they would never accept being ruled by AI, regardless of how much better AI might perform certain functions. They believe it goes against human nature for machines, which are made by humans and are non-living, to have control over us.

"Human nature tends to resist the idea of being ruled by something that is not human, regardless of how capable that entity might be" (INT 2, L 339-342).

Attempts to rule over humans might be made by AI with advancements in technology but they will be opposed by humanity.

"Artificial intelligence can never replace humans, and even if attempts are made, humans will not allow it to happen. AI cannot rule over humans; rather, humans will always coexist with one another. However, we cannot deny that AI may try to exert control over humanity. If this occurs, it could lead to conflict. I believe AI will continue to seek ways to influence or control human actions" (INT 1, L 122-131).

We asked the participants a question as part of our interview guide, will they be ok with the idea of AI ruling their country as a prime minister? All the participants had the same response that though AI can perform many functions better than humans no doubt the corruption would be controlled, AI will make objective and unbiased decisions but still, they can't accept AI as a prime minister or ruler over them. This aligns with Coeckelbergh (2020) who looks into the human resistance to be dominated by non-human entities. His assertion is that trust in a good governance system in a society largely depends on human aspects of their behavior such as empathy and moral reasoning that cannot be reproduced by AI. Like this, Bryson (2018) shows that this human hesitation against AI domination flows from human exceptionalism and irrationally suggests fear of losing control.

"People are comfortable with AI assisting in our daily routines or providing a bit of convenience. However, the idea of having a robot or AI as our prime minister is something we would never accept. Even if AI becomes emotionally advanced in the coming years, I believe we would still reject the notion of an AI ruler." (INT 2, L 333-338).

Sub Theme 7.2 Can AI replace humans:

During a discussion about whether AI will replace humans in the future, participants expressed varying attitudes. Some argue that AI is created by humans, making it impossible for AI to fully replace them; they believe humans would never allow this to happen.

“Artificial intelligence can never replace humans”. (INT 1, L 122).

This is echoed by Daugherty and Wilson (2018) who argue that the future that AI will birth is one of hybrid human-machines collaboration rather than a future without people.

Participants agreed with the myth that in the future there will be AI-based robots that look like humans and possess human-like characteristics but still, they will be considered robots, not humans.

“In the future, there may be AI-based beings designed to resemble humans, created by owners who can install desired traits and characteristics in them. However, I believe that, regardless of these modifications, they will still lack genuine emotions and feelings.” (INT 1, L 170-175).

Others contended that in the future, AI could become so independent and advanced that it might attempt to replace humans. Participants also considered the idea that our increasing dependence on AI in daily life could lead us to become overly reliant on AI, making it difficult to perform tasks without its assistance. While many acknowledged the possibility of AI replacing or dominating humans, they ultimately shared the consensus that, although AI might try to supplant humans, people would never allow AI to fully take control or rule over them.

“Yes, in my perspective if not now than in the upcoming 50 or 100 years when AI will be so advanced, developed, and matured then this whole world will become like an illusion. Ninety percent of people will lose their jobs. (participant 1). For me, AI in the future will become emotionally independent. (participant 2). Now because we are so dependent on AI, just for assignment work or even for a simple idea we ask AI, so it will lead us to become slaves to AI (participant 3). But I think it will be still for the people who have an average IQ because the brilliant minds, the top 10% will never become slaves to AI. So, AI will replace everyone but not that 10%. (participant 1)” (INT 2, L 253-264)

As Dertouzos (2020) reflects in this context, emotional independence does not mean the ability to lead from a place of real moral and ethical understanding. Thus, developing emotional intelligence in AI could increase human-machine interaction, but it would not bridge the gap between humans and non-human decision-makers.

DISCUSSION

An analysis of interviews and focus groups with Gen z revealed various perceptions and mythological associations regarding artificial intelligence (AI). Participants often viewed AI in Mythological framework linking it to mythological archetypes and perceiving it as either a powerful force with human-like qualities or a malevolent entity capable of disruption. There were fear about the AI surpassing the human capabilities and leading to the negative consequences as well as the optimism about its potential to solve the global challenges. Discussions also revolve around whether AI can be trusted with moral decision-making and its potential to surpass human intelligence. Artificial intelligence is beneficial in various everyday life tasks as gathering information for assignments or presentations (Mwakalinga & Mabilika, 2025). The artificial intelligence can help in generating ideas, suggestions, and also guide tasks (Milne Publishing, 2026). Along with positive effects the artificial intelligence also has negative effects as promoting laziness and facilitating plagiarism (Rambe, 2025). One of the main fear associated with the artificial intelligence is its potential to replace the human beings in future. This could lead significant job losses and also economic disruption (Baslandze et al., 2026). The artificial intelligence lacks the emotion and empathy, which could have devastating consequences if used to make the life-or-death decisions (Rodillosso, 2026). There is also possibility of using the artificial intelligence for manipulation and

propaganda. With the advancement in technology it becomes easier to create fake news and disinformation (Tunga et al., 2025). The question of whether humans can co-exist with machines that lack emotion and empathy is complex. Others have argued that AI will replace human tasks, potentially threaten human livelihoods, and suppress original ideas (Wade, 2024). Participants raised different concerns about future implications of the artificial intelligence. They were concerned about the artificial intelligence potential to replace the human jobs, its use in the wars like nuclear war and its impact on the privacy. Some participants also have concerns related to the dominance of the artificial intelligence in society, arguing that people would never accept robot or the artificial intelligence as their prime minister.

Limitations

As the sample chosen was in a certain geographical location so the findings can't represent the broader Gen z population. This lead to skewed perceptions and conclusions about how Artificial intelligence is viewed across different cultures or socioeconomic backgrounds. Some people did not have a comprehensive understanding of the Artificial intelligence leading to misconceptions that distorted the research outcomes. As artificial intelligence is advancing quickly and perceptions can change as new development occurs. So research findings may become outdated after short period of time that made it challenging to draw conclusions for long term.

Future Recommendations

Ensure choosing a diverse sample that will include participants from different cultures, backgrounds, age and geographical locations. Using educational interventions like providing participants with accurate information about Artificial intelligence before surveying them will help minimize misconceptions and more informed responses. Analyze how Artificial Intelligence is portrayed in various media forms (movies, social media, news) and examine the impact of these portrayals on Gen z perceptions. Understanding the media landscape also can provide the context for their beliefs. Collaborate with the experts from the different fields in order to gain well-rounded perspective on subject. This can enhance the depth and the quality of the research.

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