Next, I will talk about ethical concerns of applying algorithms decision making in recruiting process.

Let’s start with an outstanding resume:

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**Read content**

So, here’s the question

If you are the HR manager, would you pass this resume?

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She posted this resume to many companies, and had a surprising 90% call back rate.

And please notice that, the companies applied are mostly top technology companies.

She even attached a link to her personal blog in the emails which is actually a link to Rick Roll video.

Why does this happen? This is because these companies are using AI to make decisions in the early stages of recruiting process.

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Let’s see how does the resume look like from the AI perspective. The models seek the keywords in the resume and evaluate them quantitively by the weights of the keywords. If the final mark passes the requirement, the candidate can go to the next stage.

As shown in this slide the algorithm focuses on the red words like… And it doesn’t care about the irrelevant words.

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It is efficient, but is it ethical? Here I will talk about three moral issues related to applying algorithm decision making in recruiting process. The first one is about fairness and impact to society, followed by concerns about objectivity and neutrality. And in the end, I will discuss the inherited limitations of algorithm decision making due to it’s programmed nature.

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First, the fairness.

Unquestionable, algorithms can help to find non-obvious patterns and factors to improve accuracy and fairness.

With more factors, pool of qualified applicants can be expanded so that the diversity is improved as a result.

But it is mentioned in a report that the biases from the database may produce discriminatory decisions.

As all we know the models are developed based on the dataset.

Dataset may underrepresent members of protected classes.

By mining the hidden biases in a dataset, the algorithm can develop discriminatory strategies.

Illegal discrimination can be intentional and unconscious. When neutral procedure disproportionately and systematically harm protected classes, it can be regarded illegal discrimination, even it’s not intended.

Besides, the applicants can elaborate a model-oriented resume to pass the filtering process. It is also unfair to those one who don’t know the models well. So eventually, people would tend to write a model-oriented resume.

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Algorithm decision making may also be problematic in objectivity and neutrality.

A study shows that most models make decisions solely based on numerical indicators. But it is impossible to assess a person based on the mark of his resume.

And they also mentioned that this may cause compliance mechanism where people only do the things that will raise the mark. Thus, the processes may lose their original meaning.

That’s because the companies only focus on problem solving instead of philosophical pros and cons.

According to Morozov (2013, p. 1), the culture of Silicon Valley reflects an “intellectual pathology that recognizes problems as problems based on just one criterion: whether they are ‘solvable’ with a nice and clean technological solution … and not because we’ve weighed all the philosophical pros and cons.”

So, the decisions made may be unethical when they initially come out.

Also, some articles mentioned that algorithm-based HR decision-making is embedded in a particular “worldview” related to its makers and funders.

Even, the code written may represents culture background/subconsciousness

As a result, the algorithms themselves can reflect the norms and values of its makers and funders.

This inevitable bias rooted in the source code is a serious threat to neutrality.

It is also worth mentioning that, tech failure is also an important factor that can harm objectivity because the failure is hard to detect and the influence can be significantly large thanks to the algorithms’ efficiency.

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The last point is about the limitations of the algorithm itself.

Machine, and algorithms are inflexible.

According to discourse ethics aspects of morality are difficult to prescribe because most values are context depended and “the validity of moral claims cannot be justified by an isolated individual reflecting monologically upon the world

And due to the inflexibility, lack of capacity of moral imagination is diminishing opportunities for human sense-making.

In different value, the context is varying, so even for same event, the decision may vary as well.

Previous studies also showed that applicants’ and employees’ acceptance of algorithmic decision-making is lower in HR recruitment compared to common procedures conducted by humans

Furthermore, Lee found in an experiment that when recruitment decisions and performance evaluations are made by an algorithm, they are less likely to be perceived as fair and trustworthy, while simultaneously evoking more negative emotions than human decisions.

And because usually algorithm is efficient and accurate, people would tend to rely on technology in situations where reflexivity would be needed

This would lead to blind Trust in Rules.

But as we discussed before, the rules are unfair and biased.

The algorithm cannot detect errors themselves, to handle the changing situation, we need more human sense.

Besides, using algorithms may lead to unexpected result

Predictive discrimination

Filter target audience for recruiting ads

It is possible that the algorithm learns that male is easier to be persuaded when he see the ad for a position. Then it decides to show the related ads to male only. Thus the femail audience lose the oppo to see the jobs.

Technological discrimination

Technology works well on some groups. For example, performance of facial detection ai is different among people from different areas.

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Finally, we come to the question:

Whether we should use algorithm decision making in recruiting process?

Although it’s efficient, and can improve overall accuracy and variety.

But it also harm others’ interest, especially that of the protected groups,

And the algorithm may filter out some eligible candidates

Should we make a conclusion from a consequentialism’s perspective, and accept that because overall utility is improved?

Or is there any acceptance criteria?

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In conclusion,