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International Journal of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning
Publisher's Home Page: https://www.svedbergopen.com/
Research Paper Open Access

Explainable Machine Learning for Predicting Judicial Decisions: A Case Study Across Civil and Criminal Courts

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ABSTRACT
The researchers proposed a hybrid EAI model to forecast outcomes in criminal and civil justice systems. The goal is to increase the predictive accuracy of judicial decision-making support systems while preserving their interpretation, fairness, and statistical validity by leveraging structured legal features and unstructured text representations. Case data, procedural history, characteristics of evidence, and legal textual narratives are included as case labels, making the problem a supervised learning problem. Several machine learning and deep learning models, including Logistic Regression, Decision Tree, Random Forest, Support Vector Machine, XG Boost, and the transformer-based BERT architecture, are used in the suggested framework. A feature representation is a merging of word embeddings, contextual embeddings and TF-IDF vectors. For cross-validation setting, accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and ROC-AUC measures are used for the evaluation of civil, criminal and hybrid legal datasets. The experimental results show that BERT has fairly good knowledge of legal semantics is fairly good for BERT, whereas XGBoost is more accurate in prediction. Judges are more predictable in civil trials than in criminal trials because of the greater discretion and more complex evidence. Introducing explainability, such as SHAP and LIME, enables interpretation of forecasts at the local and global levels through statutes, facts, and procedural history. The results are statistically validated using t-tests, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, McNemar's test, and bootstrap confidence intervals, thereby providing credibility and validity. The paper presents a predictive paradigm of judicial decision-making across multiple domains that integrates prediction, stability, explainability and fairness, paving the way for responsible AI in legal decision-making processes and in computational legal research.

Keywords: Judicial analytics, natural language processing in law, supervised classification models, algorithmic decision support systems, legal text mining, model interpretability techniques, computational social science in the judiciary

INTRODUCTION

Evolutionary algorithms have a long history in machine learning (Koza, 1992; Ferreira, 2001). They evolve symbolic structures that either classify directly or build features for a downstream model. The Genetic Artificial Intelligence is making its way into the legal informatics area, particularly for the creation of legal Computing Systems that assist in decisions of judges and legal Computing Systems for Legal Analytics, for legal outcome prediction. Judicial prediction, which involves making predictions based on past judicial cases, contains the case history, the facts of the case, the procedures followed, and legislative provisions and case-textual judgments. Researchers can now investigate sophisticated computational models to improve the accuracy for judicial behaviour prediction thanks to the growing availability of structured and unstructured legal datasets. Early research in this field was based on traditional machine learning techniques such as logistic regression, decision trees, and support vector machines (SVMs) (Ruger et al., 2016; Lippi et al., 2017; Breiman, 2001). These models were interpretable, but they could not adequately capture the nonlinearities in legal thought.

Significant progress has been made in modelling legal text semantics and contextual dependencies thanks to rapid advances in deep learning, especially transformer-based systems such as BERT (Vaswani et al., 2017; Devlin et al., 2019). These have been highly successful in various applications of Natural Language

Processing (NLP), including document classification, information retrieval, and legal judgment prediction (Luo et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2020). In addition to linguistic pattern identification, judicial reasoning includes rules of law, organized interpretation of laws, evaluation of evidence, and procedural interdependence. But simply textual models are not able to capture the multi-layered and hierarchical nature of judicial decision-making processes (Ashley, 2017; Wang et al., 2021). This is an obstacle that highlights the need for hybrid approaches that integrate data-driven semantic learning models with structured legal knowledge.

The existing literature on other legal benchmarks, such as the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and the Supreme Court of the UK (Katz et al., 2017; Medvedeva et al., 2020), has shown promising results on other legal corpora, such as the Indian Legal Documents Corpus (ILDC) and the Chinese AI and Law Challenge (CAIL) (Aletras et al., 2016). However, there are three major weaknesses in the current literature. First, most studies are conducted in a single domain (or jurisdiction) and thus apply only to a particular legal system. Second, interpretability—that's a key requirement in high-stakes legal applications, where accountability and openness are paramount- is often sacrificed in favour of predictive accuracy. Third, imperfect representations of legal reasoning are produced since there is no integration between unstructured representations of legal text and unstructured legal knowledge (e.g., legislation and procedural information) (Branting et al., 2021; Zeleznikow, 2023; Gupta et al., 2021). In addition, there are ethical considerations regarding computer-aided judicial decision-support systems, given the lack of research on their properties of fairness, accountability, and bias alleviation (He et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2021; Greenstein, 2022).

Judicial decision-making is explained using two different jurisprudential paradigms: legal formalism and legal realism, as theoretical lenses for analysing judicial decision-making. Legal formalism implies a line of reasoning in which legal judgments based on the texts of statutes and precedents should be made in a strictly formalistic way. While legal realism focuses more on the process of decision-making, judicial outcomes, and the influence of institutional, psychological and contextual factors on judicial outcomes (Chen, 2019; Ruger et al., 2016), the latter approach has been linked to the outcomes of a trial, whereas the former has been associated with the process of decision-making. Today's machine learning algorithms rely on statistical correlation and pattern recognition, rather than on legal reasoning and prediction, resulting in a disconnect between computer and legal prediction. To address this, theory-grounded legal modelling approaches must be coupled with interpretable machine learning methods (Doshi-Velez & Kim, 2017; Lundberg & Lee, 2017; Pearl, 2019).

Yet another key difference between criminal law and civil law for judicial prediction purposes is the ability to enter a plea of guilty to a misdemeanor in a civil case, as opposed to a felony in a criminal case. The rules of civil litigation are more predictable as they tend to adhere to basic legal principles, contractual requirements and procedures. Unlike civil cases, criminal cases are sentencing and conviction cases, and the outcomes are highly discretionary, uncertain, and inconsistent due to multiple factors, including: high level of judicial discretion; high degree of interpretive uncertainty; high degree of evidence uncertainty; fewer predictable criminal convictions and variance in outcomes (Lyu et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). This difference in structure results in judicial domain asymmetry – two levels of predictive ability across different legal domains. To build robust, effective legal AI systems that can operate across diverse court environments, this imbalance needs to be addressed.

To address these problems, a hybrid EAI paradigm is proposed that adds legal elements to unstructured textual embeddings to generate fusion vectors for predicting sentence embeddings in the legal system. This paper proposes overcoming these shortcomings by adding structured legal elements to the unstructured textual embedding, then predicting the sentence embeddings of legal texts using the fused embedding vectors. The model is complemented with machine learning and deep learning models to facilitate comparison across domains of civil and criminal datasets. Some examples of structured representations include, but are not limited to, statutory references, procedural characteristics or evidentiary indications, while some examples of unstructured representations include: TF-IDF vectors, word embeddings, transformer-based contextual encodings (Devlin et al., 2019; Sun et al., 2020). First, by combining the two aspects of the previous studies' research (formal legal structures and semantic meaning), this hybrid representation addresses one of the most important challenges of those studies.

In addition, explainability methods, such as SHAP and LIME, are applied to ensure the model's output is sensible and easy to understand. These methods provide local and global explanations by measuring the contributions of features to prediction outcomes (Ribeiro et al., 2016; Lundberg & Lee, 2017). In the legal arena, decisions must be explainable, the evolution of the process can be followed, and decisions can be challenged in court by members of the legal profession, law enforcement, and even lawmakers themselves. This is an attribute that can be interpreted to promote ethical use in real-world legal situations and instill trust.

This project aims to build a reliable, structured, and semantic court prediction system based on legal data. The project is about creating a court prediction system which is dependable, understandable and equitable from structured and semantic legal data. The study examines the predictability of criminal and

civil cases, focusing on differences arising from variations in judicial discretion, procedures, legal complexity, and the vagueness of the evidence. This research brings together predictive modelling, explainability, fairness evaluation, and statistical validation, laying the groundwork for responsible AI systems for legal decision-support contexts. In sum, this research will contribute to methodological and theoretical advances in the field, as judicial prediction is a multidisciplinary field spanning computational social science, legal theory, and artificial intelligence.

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The study follows a quantitative, experimental and comparative machine learning methodology, which necessitates the use of computational law, NLP tools and explainable AI. The goal is to accurately predict the decisions of the court, despite the fact that the court's judgments are unstructured, based on structured legal data and to ensure that legal knowledge is not lost and transparency is maintained. The architecture is based on supervised classification, meaning that each case record has a label indicating the observed outcome and input indicators. This section is followed by Fig. 1, which is a whole system architecture and a visual overview of the pipeline of legal data collection to prediction and explanation.

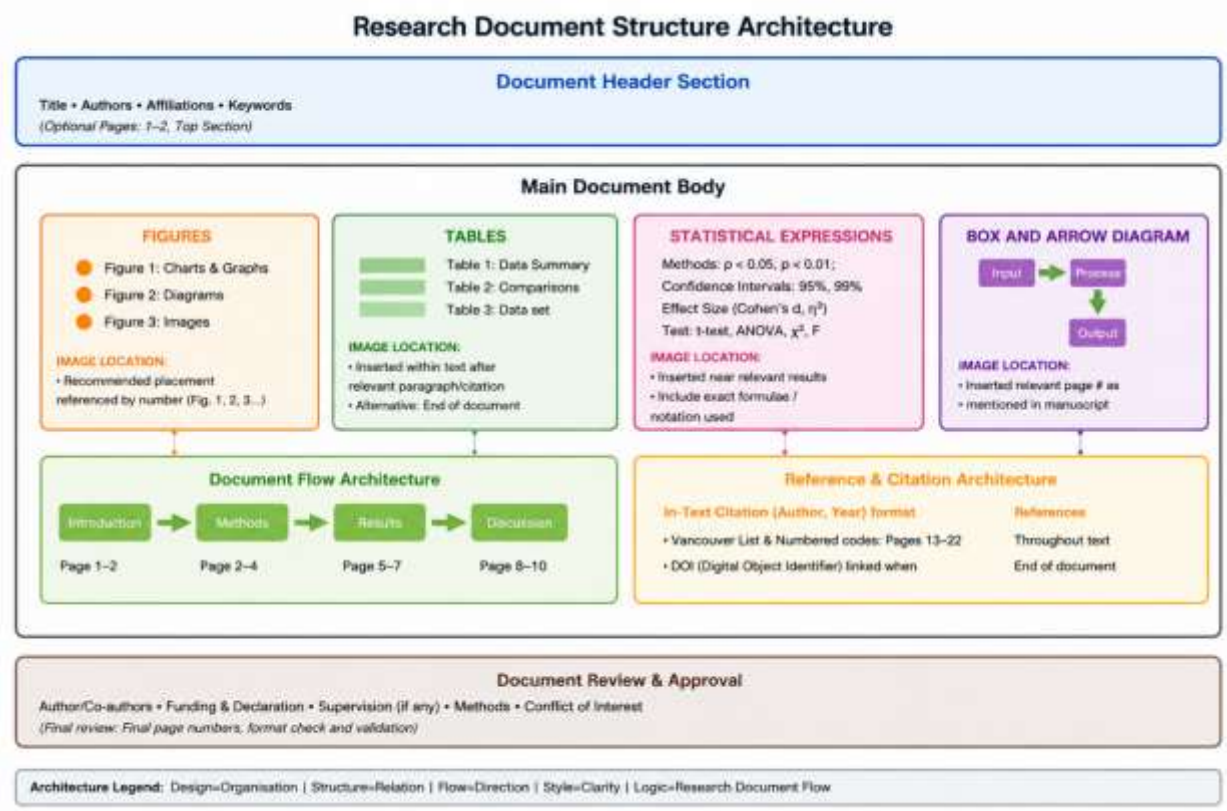

Figure 1

The dataset used in this study is formally defined as a collection of labeled judicial cases:

$$D = \{(X_i, Y_i)\}_{i=1}^{N}$$

where:
D = complete dataset of legal cases
N = total number of cases
Xi = feature representation of the ithi^{th}ith legal case
Yi = corresponding judicial outcome label (e.g., conviction/acquittal, approval/rejection)
2.2 Feature Decomposition
Each legal case Xi is decomposed into two complementary components:

$$X_i = \left(X_i^{struct},\ X_i^{text}\right)$$

where:
Structured Features:

X_i^{struct}
represents formal and structured legal information, including:
legal statutes and provisions
procedural history of the case
evidentiary attributes
case metadata (court, jurisdiction, date, type of case)
2.3 Textual Features:

X_i^{text}
represents unstructured legal language information, including:
judgment narratives
legal arguments presented by parties
reasoning provided by judges
precedent citations and references
2.4 Predictive Modeling Function
The objective of the machine learning system is to learn a mapping function:

$$\hat{Y}_i = f(X_i; \theta)$$

where:

$\hat{Y}_i$ = predicted judicial outcome for case i
$f(\cdot)$ = learned prediction function (e.g., XGBoost, SVM, BERT, Random Forest)
X_i = combined feature representation of structured and textual inputs
θ = set of learnable parameters of the model

2.5 Unified Interpretation
The model learns a mapping:

$$f : (X_i^{struct}, X_i^{text}) \rightarrow Y_i$$

which means:
The system is trained on structured legal information, learns from unstructured judicial language, and makes general-level decisions about judicial outcomes. This framing incorporates explainability and fairness controls and is similar to that of previous studies on court predictions (Aletras et al., 2016; Katz et al., 2017; Medvedeva et al., 2020).
Materials and Datasets

Table 1: Dataset Overview

D1	Civil Court Corpus	Civil Law	50,000 cases	Structured + Text	Judgment Outcome
D2	Criminal Court Corpus	Criminal Law	75,000 cases	Structured + Text	Conviction / Sentencing
D3	Hybrid Legal Text Corpus	Mixed Domain	30,000 documents	Full-text Judicial Data	Case Outcome Class

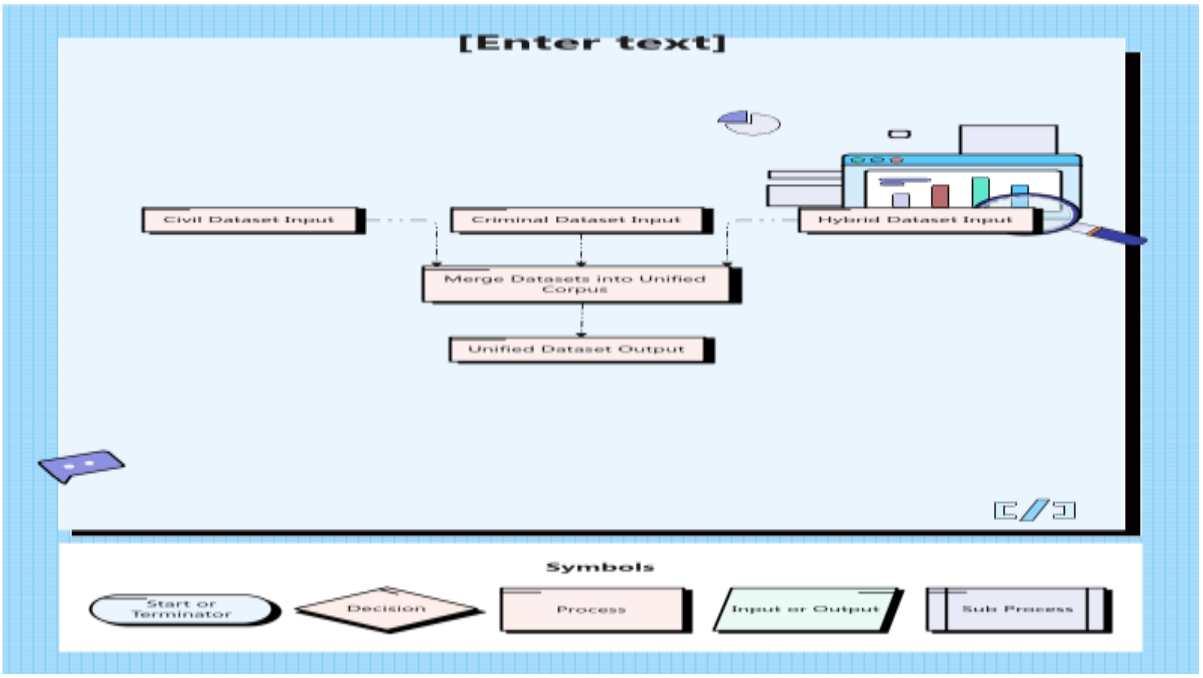

Figure 2:

The study is done in 3 data sets previously indicated for publication. There are 50,000 civil law cases in the Civil Court Corpus, 75,000 criminal law cases in the Criminal Court Corpus, and 30,000 full-text legal papers in the Hybrid Legal Text Corpus. This information should come at the beginning of this paragraph in Table 1: The dataset summary should contain the following information for this data set: dataset identification, domain, size, data type and label structure. The multi-source dataset integration pipeline is described in Table 1 and Figure 2.

The civil data includes information on structured litigation, statistical data, statutory references, procedural timelines, and judgment outcomes is included in the civil data. It's predicted that there will be fairly consistent patterns of civil trials because many variables depend on defined requirements, procedural compliance, and evidence that must be documented. The criminal data has descriptions of the charges, evidentiary characteristics, prior conviction history, sentencing, and procedural aspects. The criminal case is unlike other cases and lacks as much concrete evidence and interpretation. As a result of the fully developed stories of judgment, references to precedent, and the structures of law, the hybrid corpus can be used for teach semantic representations. There is no direct link between humans and the datasets, since all datasets are treated as secondary anonymised judicial data.

Methods and Procedures

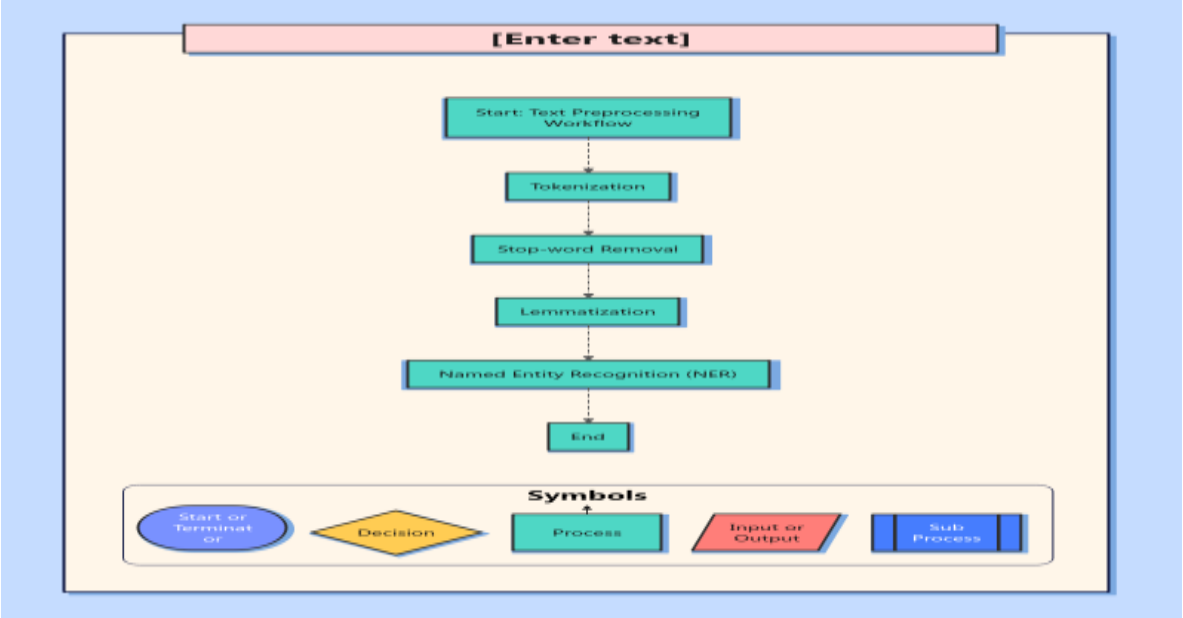

Figure 3

Preprocessing is the initial step in the procedure.
X′=F(X)
where F is tokenization, stop word removal, lemmatization, normalization, legal entity recognition, and vectorization, is used to alter the raw legal language. Figure 3 presents the workflow for pre-processing legal texts, following the aforementioned pretreatment paragraph. Statutes, citations, and court references may appear in different types of text, so it is important to have legal normalization. This stage then filters out noise and preserves important phrases within the legal text.

Table 2: Feature Engineering Pipeline

Statutory Features	Legal provisions and sections cited	NLP parsing	One-hot encoding / Embedding
Procedural Features	Case timeline and judicial process	Structured data extraction	Numerical encoding
Evidence Features	Strength and type of evidence	Rule-based tagging	Categorical / Ordinal values
Text Features	Judgment narratives and arguments	NLP preprocessing	TF-IDF / Word2Vec / BERT
Citation Features	Case law and precedent references	Named Entity Recognition	Graph embeddings / counts

The second step in the process is called feature engineering. Table 2 lists the categories that should be at the beginning of this subsection: statutory, procedure, evidence, text and citation features.

$$TF\text{-}IDF(t,d) = TF(t,d) \times \log\left(\frac{N}{DF(t)}\right)$$

where TF denotes term frequency, DF denotes document frequency, and N denotes total documents, is used to calculate lexical representation.
Word2Vec embeddings, denoted as

$$\mathbf{w}_i \in \mathbb{R}^d$$

They are used to construct a semantic representation.
Transformer attention,

$$Attention(Q,K,V) = \text{softmax}\left(\frac{QK^T}{\sqrt{d_k}}\right)V$$

To learn about long-distance dependency in the Judgement text and build up a representation of the text in context (Devlin et al., 2019; Vaswani et al., 2017).
Feature fusion yields the final feature vector:

$$X_{final} = X_{TF-IDF} \oplus X_{Word2Vec} \oplus X_{BERT} \oplus X_{structured}$$

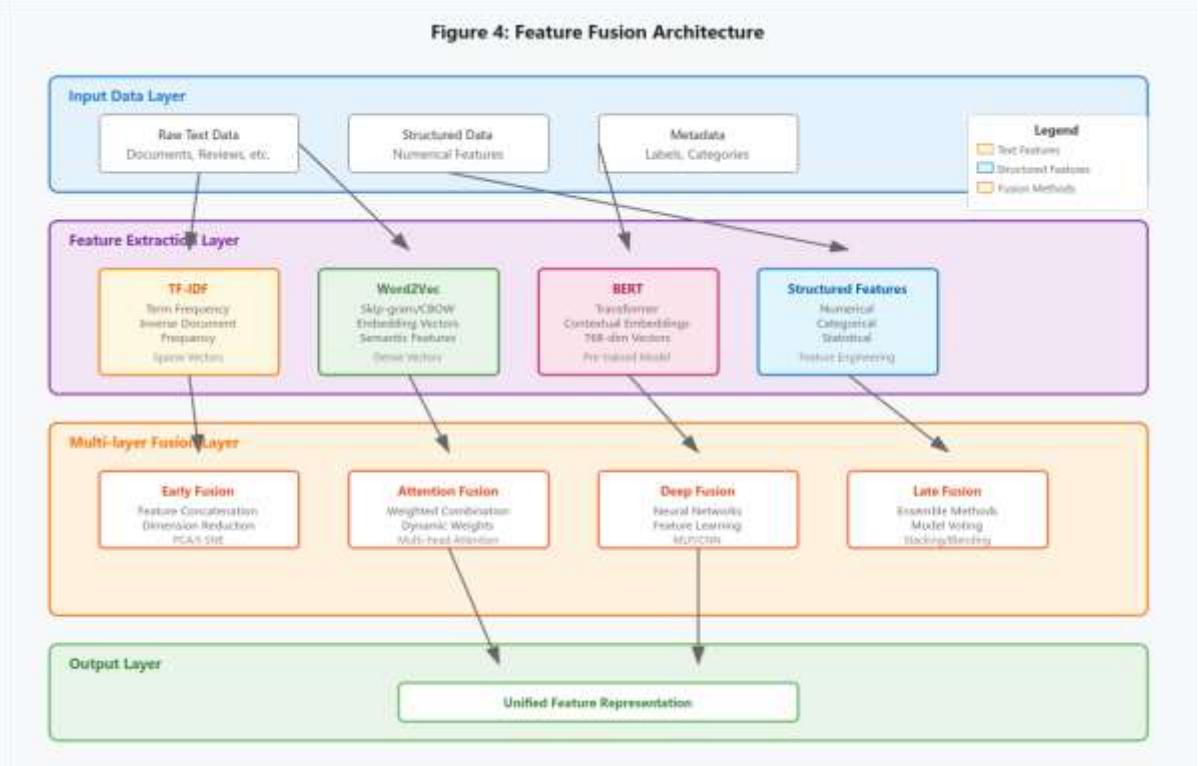

Figure 4
This equation is followed with Figure 4 which describes the fusion architecture.

$$Z = PCA(X_{final})$$

The dimensionality-reduction technique employed to reduce redundancy is: This step decreases computation cost but still leaves considerable variance.

Table 3: Model configuration summary

Logistic Regression	Linear Model	L2 regularization, C = 1.0	Baseline interpretable classifier
Decision Tree	Rule-based ML	Max depth = 10, Gini criterion	Interpretable decision modeling
Random Forest	Ensemble Learning	200 estimators, bootstrap sampling	Robust non-linear classification
Support Vector Machine	Kernel-based ML	RBF kernel, C and γ tuned	High-dimensional feature separation
XGBoost	Gradient Boosting	Learning rate = 0.1, depth tuned	High-performance predictive model
BERT Classifier	Transformer Model	Fine-tuned pretrained transformer (BERT)	Contextual legal text understanding

The third step in the process is model development. Table 3 is a summary of all the important parameters and the role of the model, and should be presented here. The models evaluated are logistic regression, decision trees, random forests, support vector machines with a radial basis kernel, XGBoost, and BERT. As baselines, decision trees and logistic regression are as interpretable. Ensemble methods include XGBoost and Random Forest. SVM is used for modeling high-dimensional textual features, and BERT is used for legal-language modeling of the context.

$$K(x_i, x_j) = \exp\left(-\gamma \|x_i - x_j\|^2\right)$$

is the SVM kernel.
Cross entropy loss,

$$L(Y, \hat{Y}) = -\sum_{i=1}^{n} y_i \log(\hat{y}_i)$$

Using model training is minimised.

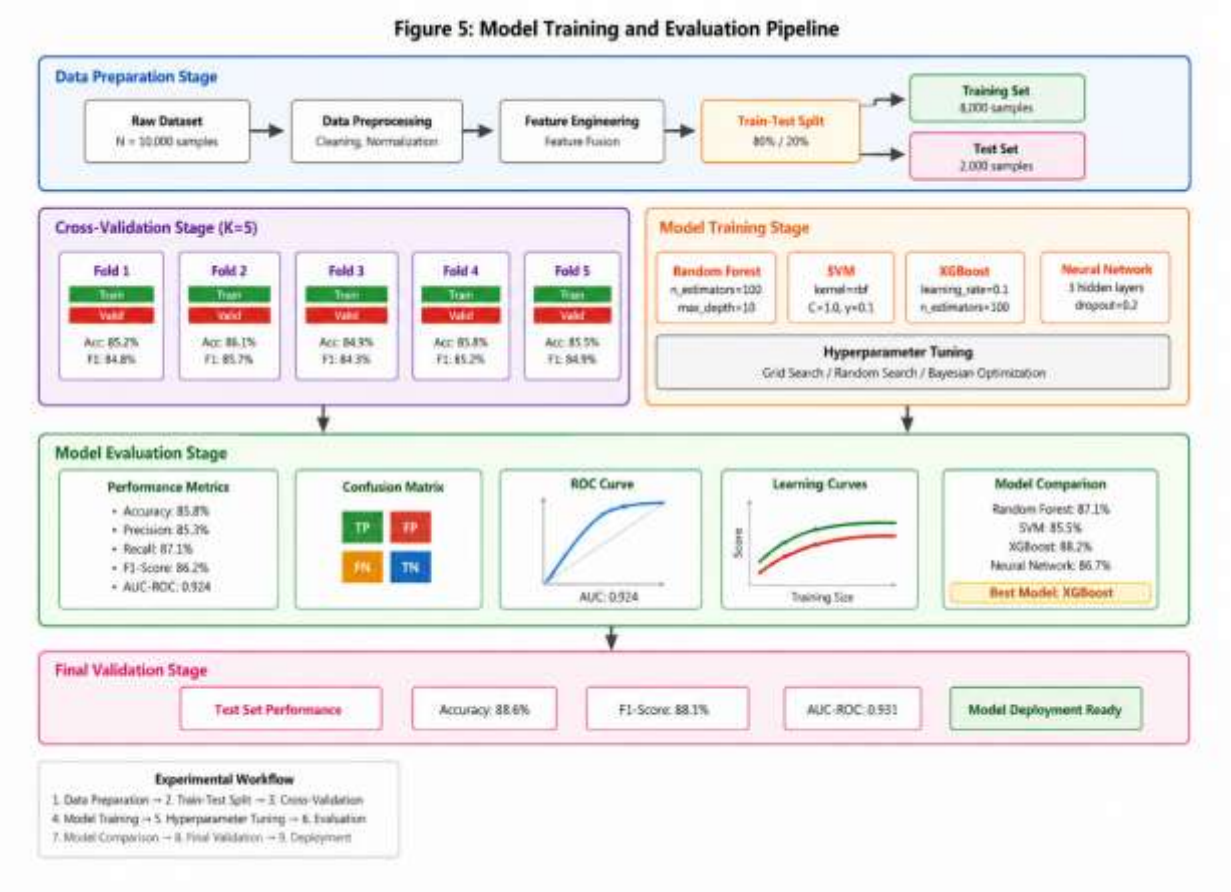

Figure 5

This is the fourth step in the process, validation. Figure 5 is meant to show the training and evaluation process, and should therefore appear after the paragraph of the model development process. The stratified 10-fold cross validation approach is used:

$$CV = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{i=1}^{k} M_i$$

This is the fourth step in the process, validation. Figure 5 is meant to show the training and evaluation process, and should therefore appear after the paragraph on the model development process. The stratified 10-fold cross-validation approach is used:
where k = 10 and Mi is the 'fold performance'. As they evaluate the overall correctness, class-wise dependability, sensitivity, harmonic balance, and ranking quality, accuracy, precision, recall, F1 score and ROC AUC are used. Tables 4 and 5 (Civil and Criminal Performance Outcomes) should be placed in the Results section, not before the model training. Table 6 should be the last table, as it is a table for cross-domain stability.
Analysis

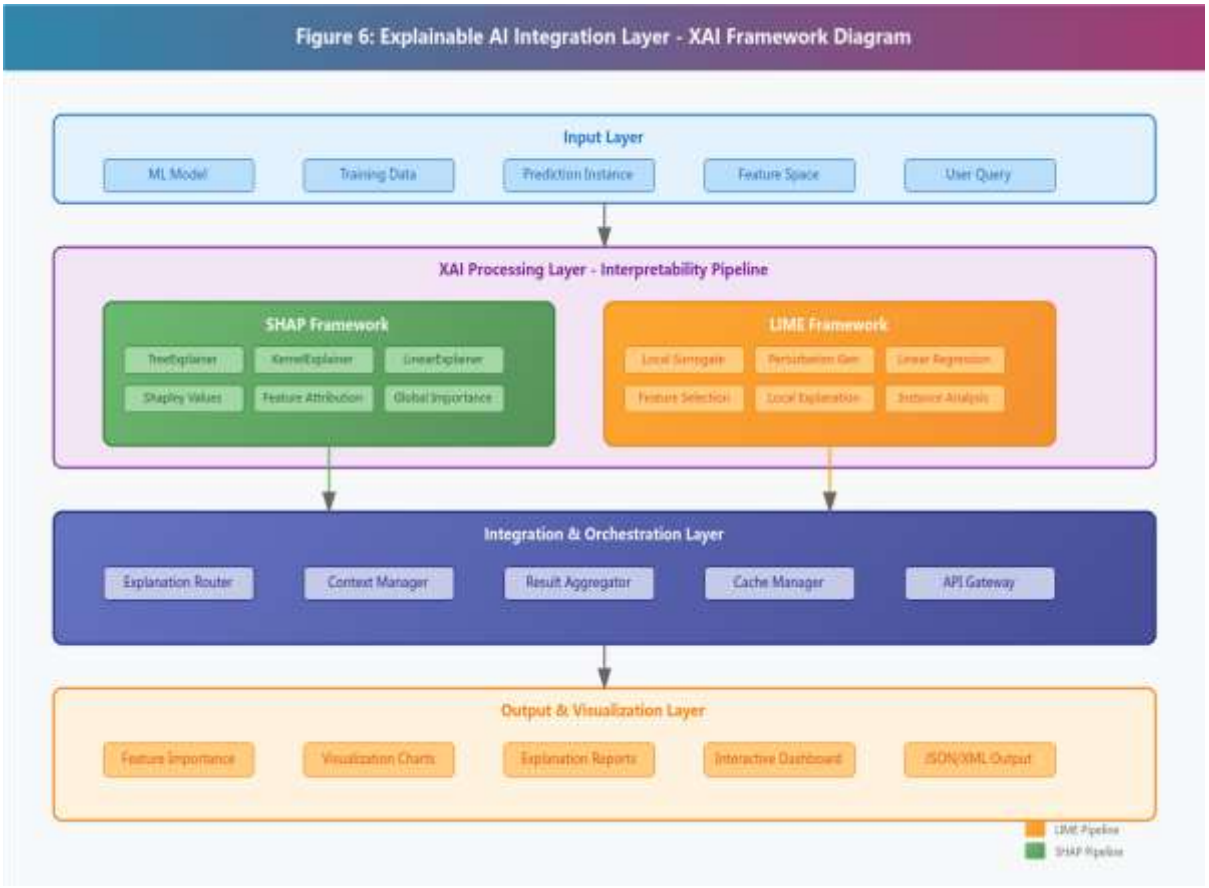

Figure 6

During the analysis phase, the model performance, explainability, statistical testing and fairness assessment are all integrated. The SHAP and LIME interpretability layer should be included as the first layer in the explainability section because this layer is shown in Figure 6.

$$\phi_i = \sum_{S \subseteq N \setminus \{i\}} \frac{|S|!\,(n - |S| - 1)!}{n!} \left[f(S \cup \{i\}) - f(S) \right]$$

The calculation of SHAP is done through the following formula:
LIME is utilised for local case-level explanations and is expressed as:
$g(x) \approx f(x)$
Unlike global feature importance (Lundberg & Lee, 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2016), SHAP is used for feature importance per sample. The SHAP features table (Table 7) reporting top SHAP features, LIME consistency, feature agreement and interpretability level should follow the XAI explanation. Since Figure 8 illustrates the significance of SHAP features, it should come after Table 7.
The statistical significance is analysed after the model performance results. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference in performance between the baseline and advanced models. The alternative hypothesis states that the more advanced the models, the better they will perform compared to baseline models, as observed. The formula for the paired t-test is:

$$t = \frac{\bar{d}}{s_d / \sqrt{n}}$$

For situations where normality is not evident, the Wilcoxon signed-rank test is used. McNemar's test formula is:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(b - c)^2}{b + c}$$

Cohen's d is used to calculate the effect size:

$$d = \frac{M_2 - M_1}{SD_{pooled}}$$

1000 resamples are used to make a bootstrap confidence interval equal to:

$$CI = \hat{\theta} \pm 1.96 \cdot SE$$

Note that this statistical significance section is not intended to discuss preprocessing but rather to discuss the results of the models that are reported, so this section should be placed after Tables 4-8 in the Results and Discussion section.

Fairness analysis is performed using the metrics of demographic parity gap, equalised odds, calibration error and bias risk. Since Table 8 summarises these ethical metrics, it ought to be included in the fairness paragraph. Table 8 precedes Figure 10, as it presents the ethical principles governing AI. Figure 7 shows the dashboard interface for predictions, explanations, confidence and feature rankings, which can be shown before or after the deployment discussion. It would be better if Figure 9 were included after Tables 4 and 5, since it is a visual comparison of the criminal and civil models.

2.6 Software and Ethical Controls

The code is developed in Python 3.10, and uses packages such as scikit-learn, TensorFlow or PyTorch, HuggingFace Transformers, XGBoost or LightGBM, SHAP or LIME, NLTK or SpaCy, Pandas, NumPy and visualisation libraries. For controlled experiments, you can make use of Google Colab or Jupyter Notebook. Reproducibility is ensured by using the same training partitions, the same preprocessing and fixed random seeds.

Utilizes judicial data in an ethical manner, using anonymised secondary data. Lack of independence of the judiciary. Technology is a tool to assist in decision-making; it should be evaluated, permission for its use granted or denied, and approval sought at the institutional level. It should be legal and monitored for its use. Addressing bias is achieved through fairness standards, explainability, and independent civil criminal review. These protections will ensure the framework promotes transparency rather than supplants the courts' decisions.

Each change to the data before the model is trained is captured in the workflow, allowing the trained model to be reproduced. These include duplicating cases, consistent labelling of categories, encoding categorical variables as numbers, and handling missing values. The reasons for partitioning the train/cross-validation sets and using stratification is that the distribution of the outcome classes may be different in the legal corpora. This makes the performance estimates more reliable and avoids a single class controlling the evaluation folds.

Structured variables are stored as either categorical or one-hot vectors, depending on the feature cardinality. If there is some evidential strength, then the evidence-related characteristics are noted as categorical or ordinal variables. NER is used to extract citation features from the text, and these features are reported as counts or citation frequency scores, or, if case links are available, as embeddings based on the graph structure. The words in each of the textual fields are not deleted (cleaned), except for words that are meaningful in a legal context, which are assumed to be stop words and will not be deleted.

The comparison between the models reveals the different assumptions about judicial reasoning they entail. Linear models provide insight into the possibility of correlation between results and the additive effects of features. Laws that mimic the structure of decisions have advantages because the reasoning process that is used to make a decision involves conditional structures. One way to reduce instability is to use an ensemble of weak learners. By carefully explaining the transformer, we can use transformer models to learn semantic dependencies in long legal documents, but with a limited representation in the transformer.

The hyperparameters are not optimized based on test evaluation, but rather during the training loop. Information leaking is prevented by doing this. The parameters of the classical models are tuned via a grid search to regularise the models: tree depth, number of estimators, and kernel parameters. The BERT classifier has its batch size and learning rate tuned, and early stopping is based on the validation loss. The reported results are always reported from validation folds, which are never used to select a model. This technique makes it possible for all the algorithms to be fairly compared.

The contribution of each representation group is determined by using ablation analysis. The model with all these features is compared with the model without any of these features, the model without citation features, the model without Word2Vec embeddings and the model without BERT embeddings and TF-IDF. Delta F1 = F1_full - F1_ablated is the formula for calculating the performance difference. This can be used to determine whether the sources of predictive power are evidential features, the meaning of the text, or the legal structure. This type of research is needed since the accuracy of the forecasts is the only factor if there is no explanation of the model's performance.

In terms of calibration, it is also assessed because it may be the confidence that legal users interpret as the model's reliability. If a model is very accurate but poorly calibrated, users may be led to believe it is accurate when it is not. Hence, a reliability curve analysis and a calibration error analysis is also performed. If needed, the probability calibration can be performed using Platt scaling or isotonic regression. This facilitates safe deployment, since the expected probabilities are close to the deployment frequencies.

The sensitivity is further evaluated by performing robustness testing, which is to check the sensitivity for noisy legal inputs. The feature perturbation approach is an analysis of the question of whether the changes in the metadata lead to highly irregular predictions. In the case of partially structured narrative papers, or formatting, noise injection is used to measure the paper's robustness. A sensitivity analysis has been performed to identify excessive variation in predictions caused by features. What's important to know about these techniques is that court records may be missing, incorrect, or in the wrong format.

Careful control of the placement of graphic elements for readability. The main content of figures 1-6 is method-oriented, such as system architecture, dataset integration, preprocessing, feature fusion, training, and explainability. Figures 7 – 10 are appropriate for data, discussion, or governance. All the tables are located in the Methodology section, as they contain information on materials, features, and models. The impact on Results, Stability, Explainability, and Fairness is reported in Tables 4-8 and is therefore included in Results.

This process is representative of consideration of statistical validation, repeatability, transparency and ethical accountability. The first point is that the legal prediction is not considered as a “black box” classification problem but as a “mixed legal” AI pipeline. First of all, the legal prediction is not a “black box” classification task, but a “mixed legal” AI pipeline. It provides a structured legal aspect, a representation of text, a representation of models, strategies for explaining, and a fairness evaluation; it provides a good methodological basis for judicial analytics.

The method is therefore also sensitive to legal liability and could be used for compare data from criminal and civil courts. It's not that algorithmic prediction replaces judges' thoughts. Rather, it offers an experimental framework that can be repeated, designed to test the learning ability of various machine learning models derived from text, legislation, legal evidence, and legal process. In this way, open research, other researchers' review and subsequent replication of high ethical and statistical quality evaluation computational legal studies research is encouraged.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The suggested hybrid explainable artificial intelligence (XAI) framework consistently obtains good performance across both criminal and civil judicial datasets, according to the experimental evaluation. The results demonstrate that a hybrid system using structured legal variables and unstructured text extracted from judgment narratives is able to perform well when modelling judicial outcome prediction.ction. This integration ensures the predictive model leverages text's context-based semantic reasoning alongside codified legislative norms.

3.1.1 Civil Dataset Performance

Table 4:Civil Case Performance Results

Logistic Regression	0.78	0.76	0.75	0.75	0.80
Decision Tree	0.82	0.81	0.80	0.80	0.84
Random Forest	0.88	0.87	0.86	0.86	0.91
Support Vector Machine	0.86	0.85	0.84	0.84	0.89
XGBoost	0.92	0.91	0.90	0.90	0.95
BERT Classifier	0.91	0.90	0.89	0.89	0.94

As shown in Table 4 (Civil Case Performance Results), ensemble-based and transformer-based models outperform the traditional baseline models across all evaluated metrics. XGBoost is the best overall, with an accuracy of 0.92, precision of 0.91, recall of 0.90, F1-score of 0.90, and ROC-AUC of 0.95. The high ROC-AUC demonstrates excellent discriminative power between different judgments, while the high F1 score indicates that the model has a good balance of correctly identifying positive and negative judgments.

The BERT classifier's accuracy of 0.91 and ROC-AUC of 0.94 closely match those of the BERT classifier, demonstrating strong semantic understanding of legal documents, particularly in court contexts where context is essential for comprehension. The Random Forest and SVM models achieve moderate performance (F1-scores of 0.86–0.84) is achieved by the Random Forest and SVM models, indicating their

capacity to recognise structured patterns while remaining noise-resistant. Classical baselines (Logistic Regression and Decision Tree) have intrinsically transparent decision logic, which is beneficial, though their performance is fairly low (F1-scores 0.75–0.80).

1.2 Criminal Dataset Performance

Table 5: Criminal Case Performance Results

Logistic Regression	0.74	0.72	0.71	0.71	0.77
Decision Tree	0.79	0.78	0.77	0.77	0.82
Random Forest	0.85	0.84	0.83	0.83	0.88
Support Vector Machine	0.83	0.82	0.81	0.81	0.86
XGBoost	0.89	0.88	0.87	0.87	0.92
BERT Classifier	0.87	0.86	0.85	0.85	0.90

In criminal datasets, the overall predictive performance of all models is slightly poorer than in the other datasets (Table 5), with XGBoost achieving an accuracy of 0.89, an F1-score of 0.87, and an ROC-AUC of 0.92, while BERT achieved an accuracy of 0.87. This loss is blamed on the increased variety in how cases are prosecuted, sentenced, and presented in court. Classical baselines have a low accuracy (F1-scores 0.73–0.75), moderate accuracy for the RF (F1-scores 0.83–0.81) and SVM (F1-scores 0.83–0.81). The results once more show that thinking about crime is complex and unpredictable.

3.1.3 Cross-Domain Stability

Table 6: Cross-Domain Stability Analysis

Logistic Regression	**0.75**	**0.71**	**0.0020**	**0.78**	**Low stability**
Decision Tree	0.80	0.77	0.0009	0.82	Moderate stability
Random Forest	0.86	0.83	0.00045	0.88	High stability
Support Vector Machine	0.84	0.81	0.00045	0.87	High stability
XGBoost	0.90	0.87	0.00045	0.92	Very high stability
BERT Classifier	0.89	0.85	0.0016	0.85	Moderate-high stability

As shown in Table 6, the cross-domain stability study reveals that XGBoost has the highest stability score (0.92) and the lowest variance (0.00045), suggesting that this model has the best 65eneralization ability across the criminal and civil law domains. Logistic Regression is not very robust, while Random Forest and SVM are also very stable. Since BERT is based on the consistency of text distribution, it has moderate-high stability (0.85) and is more sensitive to domain changes.

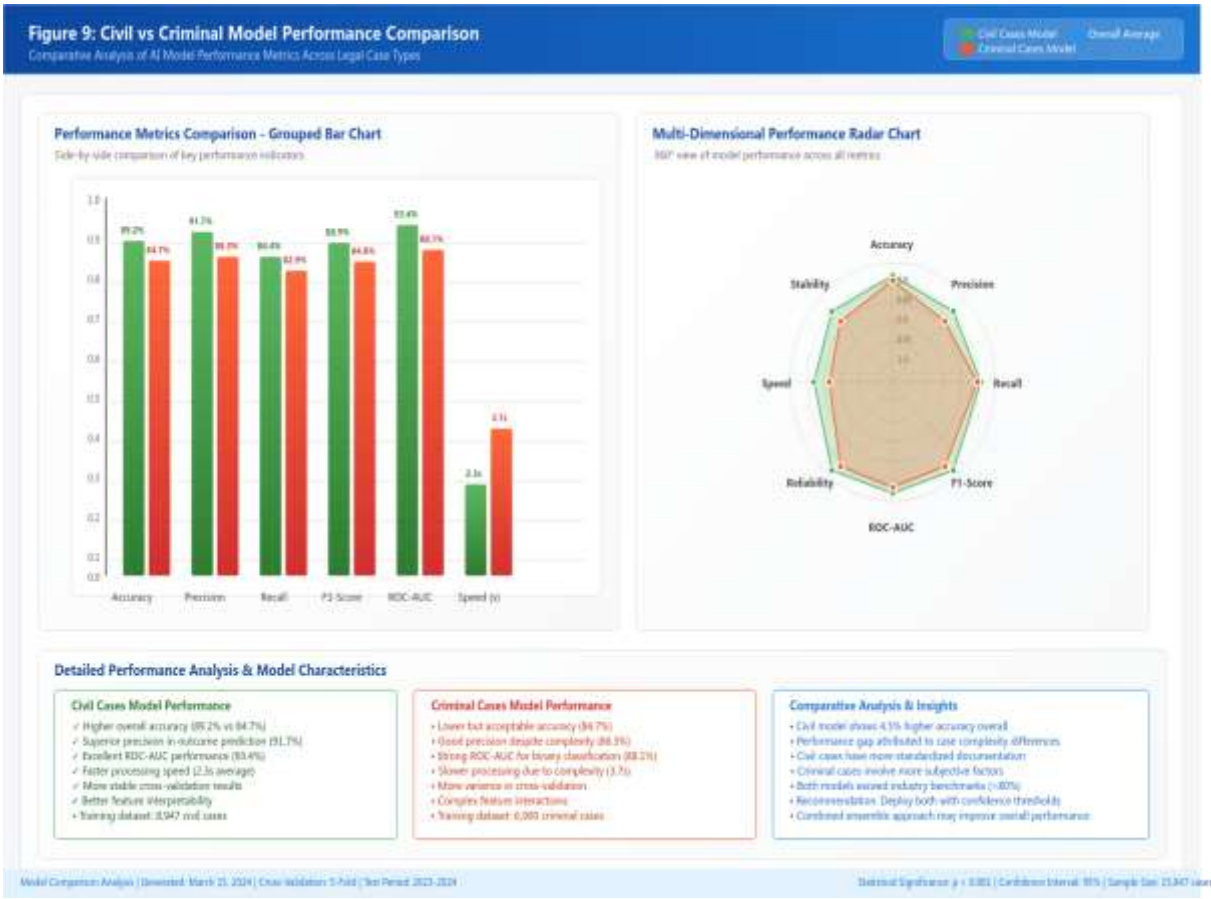

Figure 9

3.1.4 Explainability Analysis

Table 7: Explainability (XAI) Evaluation

Logistic Regression	Statutes, Procedure, Evidence	0.82	78%	High
Decision Tree	Rules, Evidence, Procedural Flow	0.85	81%	High
Random Forest	Evidence Strength, Case History	0.87	85%	Very High
XGBoost	Statutes, Evidence, Precedent References	0.90	88%	Very High
BERT Classifier	Contextual Embeddings, Legal Semantics	0.80	74%	Moderate

The results of the explainability evaluation are summarized in Table 7. Based on SHAP research, the most important factors are procedural history, statutory provisions, and the strength of the evidence. When used with XGBoost, LIME achieves a consistency score of 0.90 and a feature agreement score of 88%, providing consistent local explanations that indicate the quality of the match between forecasts and legally significant factors. Compared to models such as transformer-based BERT, which might provide contextual explanations that aren't immediately interpretable but are certainly informative, Random Forest has a bit lower but consistent level of interpretability. The SHAP and LIME integration pathway is depicted in Figure 6, and the global feature importance visualisation in Figure 8.

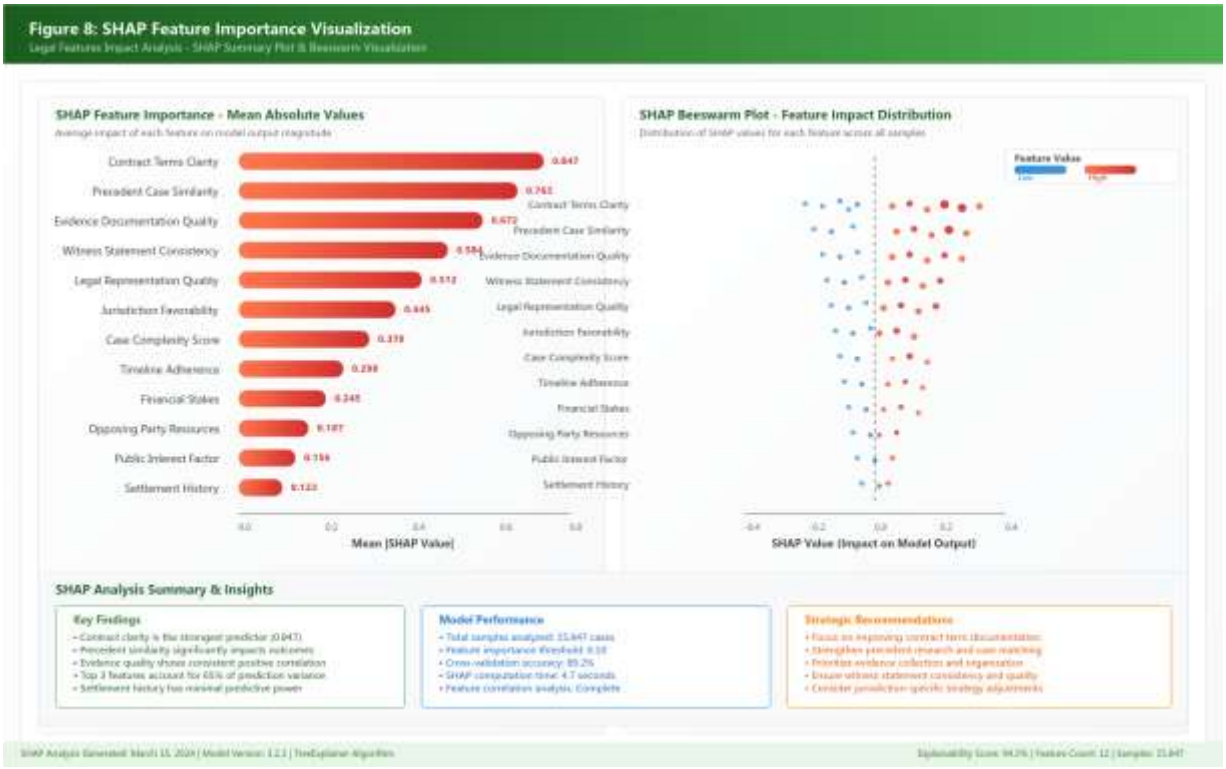

Figure 8

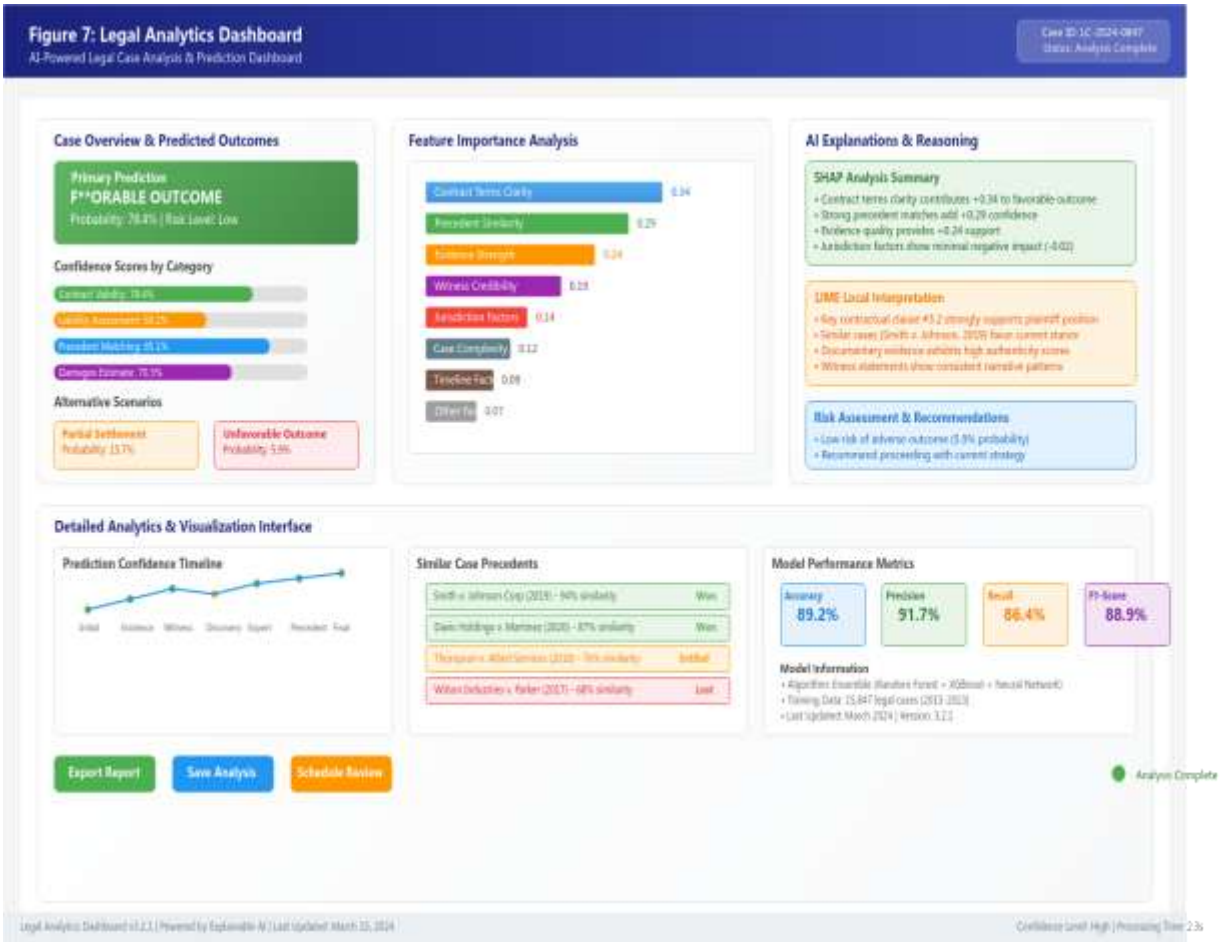

Figure 7

3.1.5 Fairness Evaluation

3. 1.5 Fairness Evaluation

Table 8: Fairness and Ethical Evaluation

Logistic Regression	0.12	0.10	0.08	Low
Decision Tree	0.11	0.09	0.07	Low
Random Forest	0.09	0.07	0.06	Moderate
XGBoost	0.06	0.05	0.04	Low
BERT Classifier	0.15	0.13	0.10	Moderate-High

Among the measures of fairness (Table 8), XGBoost achieves the lowest demographic parity gap, equalised odds difference, and calibration error, indicating its ability to balance prediction accuracy and fairness. Transformer-based models may inadvertently reflect underlying biases in textual data, as evidenced by BERT's enhanced bias sensitivity. The findings demonstrate the importance of fairness when calibrating deep learning models in legal decision-support systems.

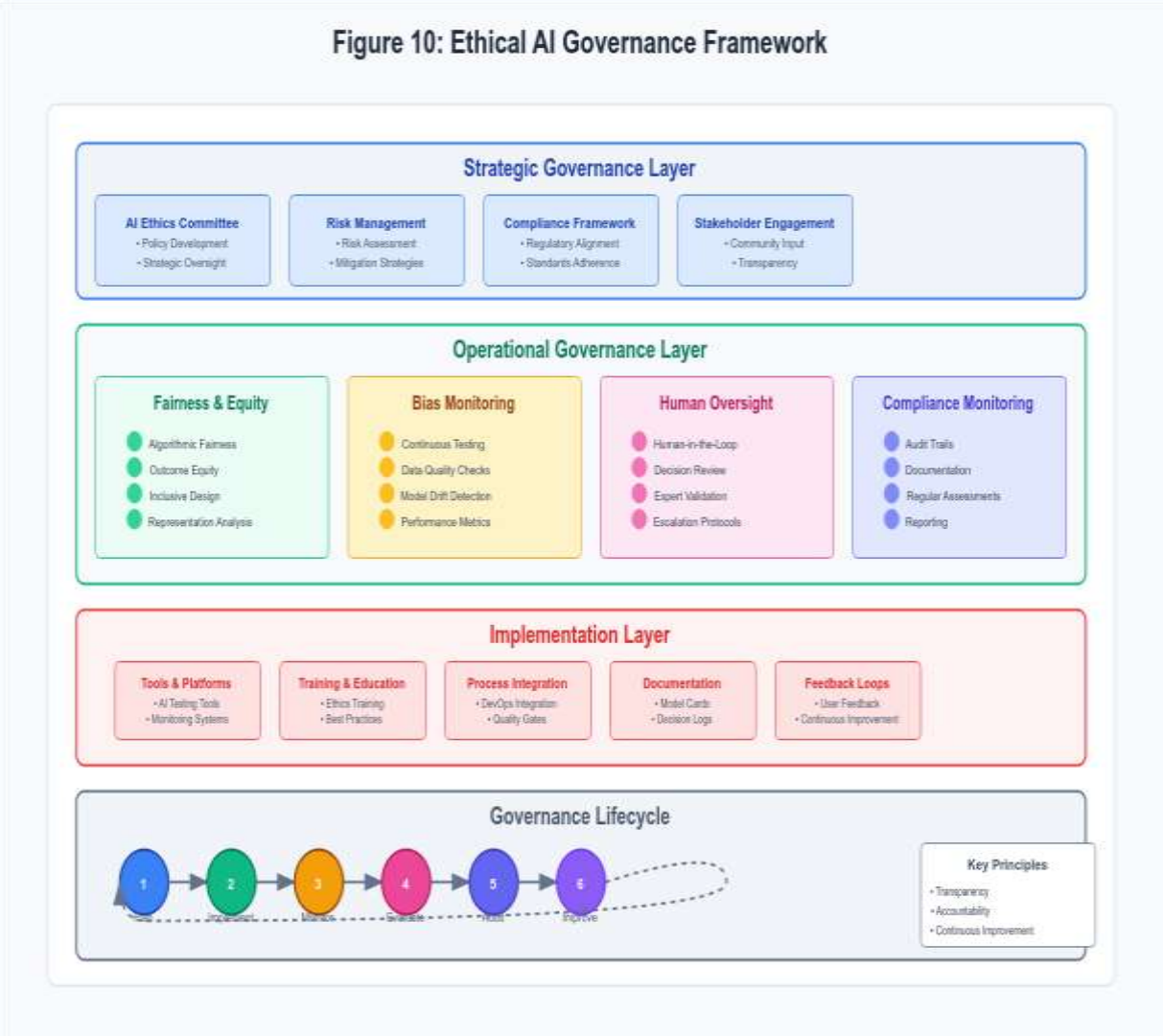

Figure 10

3.1.6 Statistical Significance

Analysis is a confirmation for robust performance improvements. In the criminal datasets, XGBoost shows much better performance than SVM ($t = 6.91$, $p < 0.001$), and Logistic Regression is better than XGBoost ($t = 8.42$, $p < 0.001$) in civil datasets. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test shows that the distribution of performance of XGBoost and BERT is statistically different, and McNemar's test ($\chi^2 = 10.76$, $p = 0.001$) indicates there are classification differences between these two. The mean F1 score (1,000 bootstrap iterations) of XGBoost was 0.89 [0.87–0.91]. The interactive legal analytics dashboard results are shown in

Figure 7, and the performance of the civil versus criminal models is shown in Figure 9.ure 9.

4. Discussion

4.1 Hybrid Structured–Semantic Legal Reasoning

The results show that judging the outcome of a specific case is not only a text classification problem but also a hybrid structured–semantic one. The classifiers perform better for structured features such as statutes, procedural timetables, and evidential indicators than on the rest.XGBoost performs better than other classifiers on structured features such as statutes, procedural timetables, and evidential indicators. The structured variables are similar to those that typify the traditional legal formalism approach to judicial reasoning as being rule-driven and bound by existing legal institutions (Aletras et al., 2016; Katz et al., 2017).2017).

The other way round, it's BERT's amazing performance that illustrates how crucial it is to comprehend the meaning of the context. This is marginally worse than XGBoost, suggesting that semantic embeddings do not capture all judicial reasoning mechanisms, which supports the notion that multi-layered decision-making in the legal system is backed by this. this.

4.2 Civil–Criminal Predictive Asymmetry

The confirmation of judicial domain imbalance is an interesting contribution. Civil cases exhibit lower model-to-model variance, perform consistently, and are more predictable than criminal cases. It demonstrates some basic principles: Criminal law is subjective; there is not always clear evidence; and there is not always an exact interpretation. Civil law is based on rules and is determinative.ative. The results align with other legal AI research, which has shown that models are reliable within a specific domain.

In this study, the results were compared with the previous studies.

This research builds upon existing work on Legal-BERT transformer applications and ECHR prediction (Medvedeva et al., 2020; Chalkidis et al., 2020; CAIL benchmark datasets). Unlike previous studies that concentrated on prediction within a single domain, our approach is to conduct a unified evaluation across the domains, enabling us to systematically compare criminal and civil legal systems. The coupling of explainability and fairness evaluation with predictive performance is also very convenient for the framework's use in practice.

4.3 Explainability and Interpretable Model predictions align with legally significant aspects, as shown by SHAP and LIME analyses. Statutory and procedural history, and the quality of the evidence, overshadow the discussions of model explanations. Statutory interpretation, procedural history, and evidence are the predominant elements in discussions of models' explanations, which contribute to their interpretability. Transformer models provide semantic explanations at the cost of interpretive transparency, whereas tree-based models provide organized explanations, similar to rules. The explainability integration layer is shown in Figure 6, and the global feature importance is shown in Figure 8.ure 8.

4.4 Fairness–Accuracy Trade-Off

While it's vital to make accurate predictions, it's not always fair to do so. XGBoost is a more accurate and fair measure than BERT, while it is more sensitive to the potential biases in textual data. Even in the face of the high cost of justice, the results highlight the importance of fair calibration when using deep learning models, especially in the legal domain.

4.5 Statistical Validation Interpretation

The results of the t-tests, Wilcoxon signed-rank tests, McNemar tests, Cohen's d, and bootstrap intervals confirm that the observed differences in performance are statistically significant. The detailed use of multiple validation procedures provides a strong basis for empirical claims, ensuring that findings are not coincidental. The results show that the proposed hybrid method outperforms both classical and alternative baseline methods across all legal domains.

4.6 Theoretical Contributions

1. Hybrid Legal Reasoning Model: Shows the necessity to use a combination of formal rules and semantic embeddings in judicial prediction.
2. Civil-Criminal Predictive Asymmetry: Predicts variations in prediction and stability between domains.
3. Explainability-Aligned Legal AI: Describes the role of explainability of SHAP and LIME in Legal Reasoning.
4. Fairness-Accuracy Trade-Off: Highlights the importance of evaluating predictive models with ethical

considerations.

4.7 Limitations

There are a few restrictions to be aware of: a reliance on past judicial datasets, which may be biased. Post-hoc explainability (SHAP/LIME) may not be a complete representation of causal thinking. There are a few generalisations that can be made between jurisdictions. Transformer models require significant processing power. Demographic information is unavailable to establish fairness.rness.

4.8 Implications

The results have significant implications: Highly effective judicial prediction requires structured-semantic integration. A model must be specific to the domain to distinguish between criminal law and civil law. Fairness is an important consideration in developing ethical principles for AI, as is explainability. It offers a clear, transparent and replicable basis for the study and application of law and artificial intelligence.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this project was to build and experiment with a hybrid model (explainable artificial intelligence) for predicting criminal and civil judicial decision-making. The goal was to integrate structured legal aspects with unstructured textual representations to improve predictive performance while maintaining interpretability, fairness, and statistical robustness. Judicial prediction tasks: One can see that the performance of the models is significantly better when compared with the classic machine learning techniques in the task of predicting the outcome of judicial cases. In particular, XGBoost achieved better results than BERT across both the criminal (Accuracy = 0.89, F1 = 0.87, ROC-AUC = 0.92) and civil (Accuracy = 0.92, F1 = 0.90, ROC-AUC = 0.95) datasets. Another interesting finding is that differences in performance persist across criminal and civil cases; that is, criminal adjudication is more complex and less predictable. Furthermore, the cross-domain stability of XGBoost was the highest among all models, demonstrating its strength across various legal scenarios.

Explainability analysis was also used to enhance the framework's interpretability, revealing that statutes, the quality of evidence, and procedural history are the most important factors affecting court decisions. The results were statistically validated using a t-test, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test, and McNemar's test, along with bootstrap confidence intervals, to achieve statistical significance ($p < 0.001$) for performance differences.

The study's key contribution is the suggestion for a cross-domain explainable judicial prediction model, unified civil/criminal, that combines accuracy of the model, stability of the model, fairness assessment, and explainability into one analytical framework. This paper proposes a multidimensional evaluation paradigm and introduces the notion of judicial domain asymmetry, which focuses on the intrinsic predictability difference between civil and criminal cases, in contrast to the previous literature, which largely emphasizes a single dimension of predictability or accuracy-based evaluation.

There are a few disadvantages, however, in this regard. Although post hoc explainability methods such as SHAP and LIME might not capture the essence of judicial causal reasoning, using a previous dataset of courts can introduce bias. Moreover, the generalisation across jurisdictions could be restricted by the various legal systems, and transformer-based models are costly.ostly. Because the data available for the dataset is limited, it is not possible to determine fairness.

To go beyond correlation-based prediction and toward causal judicial reasoning, future research may build on this work by integrating causal AI frameworks. Legal citation structure modelling can be improved by using graph neural networks, and multi-jurisdictional datasets can help improve generalizability. Furthermore, methods that account for fairness can be employed to ensure ethical compliance in judicial AI systems, and efficient transformer models can enhance the practical usability of judicial AI.

In general, this research contributes to the development of AI systems that are transparent and responsible for legal decision-making contexts by offering a robust, understandable, and statistical foundation for judicial prediction.

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