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Empowering Employees: Embracing Artificial Intelligence (AI) in HR Practices in Retail Sector

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Abstract

Human Resource is considered to be the backbone of an organisation where employees as a human asset of the organisation are being taken care of, nowadays organisations are looking at a huge change where the humans are getting replaced by smarter machines, that doesn't mean that those smart machines will take away their jobs but it suggest that human being will have to be one step ahead to learn how to work with those smart machines. This study talks about how can organisations embrace Artificial intelligence in HR Practices to evolve in a better way and embrace this change gracefully and the factors which will affect this change using Technology Acceptance Model and Exploratory Factor Analysis to study the factors affecting the change adoption among the employees of the Retail sector. The demographic study revealed that Age has significant relationship in adoption of Artificial intelligence whereas Income groups and Experience do not have a significant difference on Artificial Intelligence Adoption.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Human Resource (HR) Practices, Employees

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence

The ability of computers to carry out tasks that have historically required human intelligence is referred to as artificial intelligence (AI). It has to do with software technologies that let machines mimic human thought processes and actions. This covers procedures like decision-making, speech recognition and expert systems. A kind of artificial intelligence (AI) called machine learning uses specialised hardware and software to train algorithms. (Ahmed, 2018; Feinzig, 2018; Jarrahi, 2018; Lazanyi, 2018; Pillai, 2021) Large-scale datasets are gathered and ingested by AI systems, which then use the insights gained from these analyses to predict future events. Fundamentally, artificial intelligence (AI) is very good at projecting future events using computational intelligence, specialised software and computer languages. Learning, reasoning and self-correlation are the three main processes that make up AI functioning. (A., 2000; Dwivedi et al., 2012; Holt et al., 2007; Suseno et al., 2021) This branch of AI programming is focused ON gathering and arranging data into a usable and understandable form. Algorithms, often known as rules, provide computers with precise instructions on how to perform specific tasks. In this field of AI programming, the optimal algorithms are chosen to efficiently achieve the desired goals. The goal here is to ensure that the results are as accurate as possible. (Balas, n.d.; Tomassen, n.d.) AI is significant because it makes operational insights that were previously unknown to companies, industries and sectors possible. In certain situations, AI performs better than people and makes fewer mistakes, which boosts productivity. It gives the younger generation a platform to pursue dynamic careers and opens up new and exciting opportunities for businesses to operate more efficiently. AI also helps businesses gain a competitive edge and create frameworks for navigating the competitive and dynamic settings of today, encouraging innovation throughout their operations (Radhakrishnan & Chattopadhyay, 2020; Venumuddala & Kamath, 2020).

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Artificial Intelligence in Human Resources

AI is critical to all aspects of employee lifecycle management. It includes job descriptions, HR policy design, strategy development, recruitment and HR service delivery. In today's fast-paced work world, when automation and customer experience is the key, employees have high expectations for their workplace experiences. They want ideal work experiences that take advantage of current technology, ensuring consistency and assistance regardless of individual preferences or cultural differences. In essence, AI streamlines HR operations while simultaneously increasing employee happiness by guaranteeing a structured and equal environment. Its involvement in designing modern workplaces demonstrates its value in meeting employees' changing expectations and optimising organisational effectiveness (Alfons & Alfons Kodiyan, 2019; Russell & Norvig, 2010; Sotnikova et al., 2021; Sakka et al., 2022). AI is critical for data analysis and delivering well-informed results for decision-making processes. It allows teams to access real-time data, accelerating and improving decision-making accuracy. Furthermore, AI gives HR team timely guidance, eliminating any biases or ambiguities that may arise from human decision-making processes. This skill is extremely useful in essential HR tasks such as attendance tracking, performance appraisals and human performance management, where AI encourages fairness and justice. As a result, AI-powered judgements stand out for their precision and dependability, significantly improving operational effectiveness and boosting organisational success (Smith, 2019; Buck & Morrow, 2018; Albert, 2019). Human Resources (HR) is obviously important but is sometimes disregarded within any organisation due to its direct impact on employee welfare. Employees thrive in favourable, loving work environments where they have healthy relationships with both their bosses and co-workers. HR is critical in ensuring that employees feel safe, supported and able to speak freely with management. AI has transformed the HR landscape, exploiting its quick development and dynamic skills to greatly benefit the department. By automating mundane and low-value processes, AI helps HR professionals to focus their attention on more strategic and impactful jobs. This shift enables HR to prioritise programmes that improve employee engagement, optimise workplace dynamics and build a supportive environment for professional development and collaboration. In essence, AI's integration with HR operations reduces administrative processes while also empowering HR personnel to foster a workplace culture that promotes employee well-being and organisational success (Albert, 2019; Meister, 2019; Mohan, 2019; Papageorgiou, 2018; Tadvi et al., 2020; Bhatt & Shah, 2023a, 2023b; Bhatt & Purabiya, 2021).

Literature Review

AI is a term coined in the mid-1950 by John McCarthy, but recently this term has seen a lot of attention. A lot of researchers have started studying the topic as per (Singh et al., n.d.) In this study, researchers looked at how AI has been evaluated throughout the last several decades. They investigated the effectiveness of AI in HR activities and decision-making processes. They considered aspects such as recruitment, hiring, data analysis, machine languages and computing. They also investigated the problems and implications of AI for the economy. They have also investigated recruitment software and its suitability in the company.

AI is revolutionising the retail industry by automating jobs, improving consumer experiences and streamlining operations. AI technology like chatbots, recommendation engines and inventory management systems are becoming more popular.

AI automates repetitive tasks like inventory management and checkout processes, potentially reducing the need for manual labour. This can lead to job displacement but also frees employees to focus on higher-value tasks (Bhatt et al., 2023). AI analyses vast amounts of data to inform product selection and pricing strategies, necessitating employees to have strong data interpretation skills (Shah, 2024). AI can optimise labour scheduling and demand forecasting, improving work-life balance and reducing turnover by matching employees with suitable roles and providing personalised career development recommendations (Murugesan et al., 2023; Nyathani, 2023; Soulami et al., 2024).

AI can automate HR tasks such as recruitment, payroll management and employee feedback analysis, allowing HR professionals to focus on strategic planning. AI helps in identifying and acquiring top talent by analysing large

datasets and predicting candidate fit, thereby streamlining the hiring process (Bhatt, 2023). AI can improve employee satisfaction by optimising work schedules, providing personalised career paths and enhancing overall workplace conditions (Chao, 2019; Li, 2020; Li & Zhao, 2021; Matias, 2021; Murugesan et al., 2023; Nordhoff et al., 2020; Nyathani, 2023; Pina et al., 2019; Soulami et al., 2024).

Employee expectations are high due to the high degree of automation and the dynamic work environment's strong emphasis on the customer experience. When it comes to their workplace, they anticipate the most beneficial experience. These days, technology is essential. It offers a separate framework for employees' individual engagement and how they would like to contribute to the culture and support. AI may be effectively applied to every stage of an employee's career. It can be applied to hiring, providing HR services, HR policies and initiatives and job descriptions. (Bhatt & Shah, 2023a) AI aids in data analysis and provides appropriate results or outputs for the processing of decisions. They also aid in the team's decision-making process by giving them access to real-time data. HR departments receive real-time recommendations from AI. Furthermore, AI helps eliminate bias and uncertainty because there are no human beings left. In addition, AI eliminates prejudice from most HR operations (Hmoud, 2021). For instance, human performance management, performance review, leave and attendance tracking, among other things. As a result, decisions made possible by AI are true and correct. (*How Artificial Intelligence Will Affect Retail Workers in the Next 3-5 Years — Digital Literacy Licence*, n.d.; Singh et al., n.d.; Soni, 2022; Bhatt & Chimanbhai, 2022).

The purpose of the research is to investigate how AI affects employees' roles and duties in the retail industry. It will specifically look at how AI automation affects jobs and the shift in employee skills necessary because of AI integration and assess the influence of AI on employee work-life balance and job satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics is critical for retailers to properly manage the shift and ensure that employees are prepared to succeed in an AI-driven world.

The goal is to measure employees' readiness and willingness for AI adoption. This includes assessing retail employees' present digital literacy, defining training needs for effective collaboration with AI systems and designing methods to improve employee readiness and acceptance of AI-driven improvements. This allows businesses to foster an innovative culture while also ensuring a smooth transition to AI-enhanced operations.

Finally, the study intends to investigate the interaction of AI and human resource management in retail. It will investigate how AI might improve HR processes like recruitment, talent management and employee engagement. It will also investigate the use of AI in improving employee experiences through personalised career development and feedback mechanisms. Finally, it will look at how AI-driven insights may help HR strategies increase staff retention and performance, eventually aligning HR practices with the changing needs of an AI-integrated retail environment.

Data Model

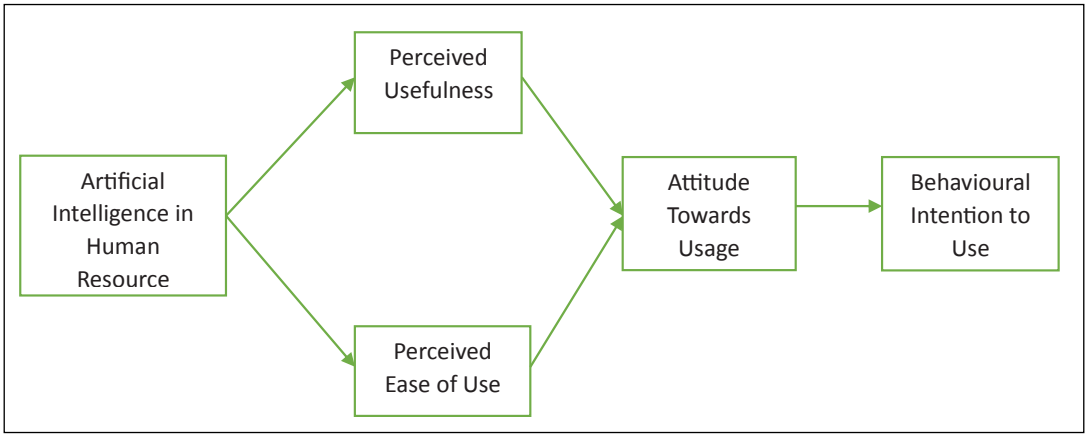

Fig. 1: Model Derived from TAM (Technology Acceptance Model)

Data Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted using five components affecting the usage of AI in HR Practices using Varimax rotation and principal component analysis. Factor loading was set at a minimum of 0.40. To make sure there were sufficient levels of explanation, the scale's commonality—which shows the degree of variance in each dimension—was also evaluated. The findings indicate that every communality was greater than 0.40.

Measuring the correlation matrix's overall importance using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which calculates the statistical likelihood that certain of its components have significant correlations with one another, was a crucial step. The results showed that it was suitable for factor analysis, with a significant x(n=221) 2190.826 ($p<0.001$). The data's suitability for factor analysis was indicated by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA), which came out at 0.832. Accordingly, data that have MSA values greater than 0.700 are deemed suitable for factor analysis.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.832
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2190.826
	df	351
	Sig.	.000

This study examines AI adoption in HR practices through an extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework, focusing on four core psychological constructs and their operationalisation:

Perceived Usefulness (PU): Defined as employees' belief that AI enhances job performance, this variable was measured through the relevance of AI to daily tasks, anticipated organisational benefits (e.g., cost savings, efficiency), output quality improvements, long-term strategic advantages for the organisation and psychological benefits (e.g., reduced cognitive load).

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU): Assessed employees' perceptions of AI's usability, focusing on time efficiency gains, learning and skill development, self-efficacy in using AI tools, reduction in workplace anxiety and stress mitigation through automation.

Behavioural Intention to Use (BI): Captured willingness to adopt AI in HR workflows via: practical utility in decision-making, emotional comfort with AI integration, fear of job replacement, anxiety about AI's unpredictability, technophobia and resistance to workflow changes.

Attitude toward Usage (ATU): evaluated psychological barriers to adoption, including: anxiety about new technologies, perceived training inadequacy, risk aversion (e.g., fear of errors), social resistance from peers/managers and knowledge gaps in AI functionality.

AI Adoption in HR Measured employees' readiness to integrate AI into HR tasks through: reliability of AI outputs, process optimisation metrics, sof AI-driven services, alignment with HR-specific workflows, satisfaction with AI-enhanced outcomes.

Table 2: Communalities

Communalities		
	Initial	*Extraction*
PU1	1.000	.506
PU2	1.000	.599
PU4	1.000	.470
PU5	1.000	.550
PEU1	1.000	.585
PEU4	1.000	.534
PEU5	1.000	.668
BI1	1.000	.593
BI2	1.000	.658
BI6	1.000	.498
ATU1	1.000	.541
ATU4	1.000	.572
ATU5	1.000	.712
AI1	1.000	.639
AI2	1.000	.706
AI3	1.000	.700
AI4	1.000	.733
AI5	1.000	.763
AI6	1.000	.740
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Items PEU2, PEU3, PU3, ATU2, ATU3, ATU4, BI3 and BI5 were eliminated from the study since their communalities were much lower than the necessary threshold of 0.400. Additionally, item BI4 was not loaded on any factor of the rotational component matric; therefore, it was not taken into consideration for further study.

The five factors found as the part of the study are:

- AI items AI1 to AI6 loaded in factor 1
- ATU items ATU1, ATU4 & ATU5 loaded in Factor 2
- BI items BI1, BI2 & BI6 loaded in factor 3
- PU items PU1, PU2, PU4 & PU5 loaded in factor 4
- PEU items PEU1, PEU4 & PEU5 loaded in factor 5

Table 3: Rotated Component Matrix

Component Matrix					
	Component				
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
PU1				.639	
PU2				.680	
PU4				.576	
PU5				.686	
PEU1					.472
PEU4					.566
PEU5					.725
BI1			.474		
BI2			.481		
BI6			.519		
ATU1		.433			
ATU4		.588			
ATU5		.757			
AI1	.774				
AI2	.790				
AI3	.785				
AI4	.780				
AI5	.807				
AI6	.792				
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					

Analysis of Demographic Variables

H_0 - There is no significant difference in the use of AI in HR across various age groups.

H_1 - There is significant difference in the use of AI in HR across various age groups.

Table 4: Anova of AI in HR and Age Groups

ANOVA[a]						
Model		*Sum of Squares*	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
1	Regression	7.826	1	7.826	10.792	.001[b]
	Residual	159.548	220	.725		
	Total	167.374	221			

The p-value (Sig.) is .001 which is less than the normal alpha level for statistical significance (0.05). Hence, reject the null hypothesis (H0) & accept the alternative hypothesis (H1). The application of AI in HR practices varies significantly by age group. The F-statistic (10.792) shows that the variation across age groups is significantly greater than the variation within groups. This shows that age-related factors (such as technological familiarity and generational attitudes) influence how AI is used or perceived in HR operations.

H_0- There is no significant difference in the use of AI practices across various income groups.

H_1- There is a significant difference in the use of AI practices across various income groups.

Table 5: Anova of AI in HR and Income Groups

ANOVA[a]						
Model		*Sum of Squares*	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
1	Regression	4.017	1	4.017	2.741	.099[b]
	Residual	322.438	220	1.466		
	Total	326.455	221			

The p-value (Sig.) is .099 which is above the conventional alpha level for statistical significance. There is adequate

proof to support the alternative hypothesis (H1). This data shows no statistically significant difference in the use of AI practices across socioeconomic categories. The F-statistic (2.741) value is rather low, implying that the variation across income categories is not much greater than the variation within them.

H_0- There is no significant relationship between AI adoption and experience level.

H_1- There is significant relationship between AI adoption and experience level.

Table 6: Anova of AI Adoption and Experience Groups

ANOVA[a]						
Model		*Sum of Squares*	*Df*	*Mean Square*	*F*	*Sig.*
1	Regression	.879	1	.879	.863	.354[b]
	Residual	221.958	220	1.018		
	Total	222.836	221			

The p-value (Sig.) is .354, which is above the standard alpha level for statistical significance. This data does not show a significant correlation between AI adoption feelings and experience level. The F-statistic (0.863) value is low, indicating that the variance explained by experience level is not significant when compared to the residual variation.

Table 7: Summary of Demographic Study

Hypothesis (There is a Significant Difference Between)	*Significance*	*Hypothesis Accepted / Rejected*
AI Use in HR across Age Groups	0.001	H_1 Accepted
AI Use in HR across Income Groups	0.099	H_0 Accepted
AI Use in HR across Experience Level	0.354	H_0 Accepted

The study found that age impacts the acceptance level of AI in HR practices, but income groups and experience level do not affect the acceptance level of AI in HR practices. Hence, in a set of hypothesis tests conducted using ANOVA for the first hypothesis, H_1 is accepted, i.e., there is a significant difference in the use of AI in HR across various age groups. For the second hypothesis test between AI in HR practices and income groups H_0 is accepted, i.e., there is no significant difference in the use of AI practices across various income groups. And for the third hypothesis test between AI in HR practices and experience level, H_0 is accepted, i.e., there is no significant relationship between AI adoption feeling and experience level.

Discussion and Implications

Organisations today are facing a significant shift in which smarter machines are replacing humans. This does not imply that workers will lose their jobs, but rather that humans will need to be one step ahead to learn how to work with these machines. HR are thought of as the foundation of an organisation where employees are treated as its human asset. This report discusses the elements that will influence this transformation as well as how organisations may use AI in HR practices to adapt more effectively and accept this change.

This study focused on a few characteristics, including age, income groups and experience level, to investigate the factors impacting the adoption of AI in HR practices. According to the factor loading analysis, the study identified five key elements that had a major influence on AI adoption in HR. The model studied by the researcher was found to be a good fit to carry out further study in the field of AI in HRM.

Future studies may look at how organisational culture influences AI acceptance. Specifically, how do leadership styles, communication methods and organisational readiness for change influence employees' willingness to accept AI in HR? While this study used quantitative approaches, qualitative research (such as interviews or focus groups) could provide more in-depth knowledge of why AI is accepted or rejected in HR. Such research may reveal personal experiences, emotional responses, or issues that standardised surveys cannot capture. Finally, the study's findings shed light on the elements that influence AI acceptability in HR practices. While age was found to be a key factor in AI adoption, wealth and experience were not as influential. HR departments may make AI integration go more smoothly by focusing on aspects like perceived usefulness and simplicity of usage. Future study could build on these

findings by investigating other demographic variables, organisational characteristics and longitudinal patterns in order to optimise AI adoption techniques in HR situations.

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