

AI-Driven Workplaces: Exploring Emerging Challenges for Employees' Psychological Well-Being

Shradha Ramchandra Rathod¹, and *Pooja Agrawal² 

¹Research Scholar, Department of Management, Vishwakarma University, Pune, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Management, Faculty of Commerce & Management, Vishwakarma University, Pune, India

*Correspondence should be addressed to Pooja Agrawal; pooja.agrawal@vupune.ac.in

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ABSTRACT-

Purpose- This research is based on the fact that the increasing use of AI to optimise productivity raises a major concern related to employees' psychological well-being. So, the main purpose of this paper is to identify the numerous challenges associated with AI implementation. It also shed light on essential strategies to reduce AI-related anxiety among employees and organisations.

Methodology- This study is based on an analysis of secondary databases; articles, books, book chapters, newspapers, policy reports, organisational reports and legal regulations. The key purpose of this was to diagnose how AI implementation is influencing employees' well-being and creating numerous challenges in the organisations.

Findings- Analysis revealed that AI integration in the workplace can disrupt work routines, diminish employee autonomy, and increase psychological stress. Furthermore, it highlighted that open communication, regular training, and mental health support are critical factors in mitigating these negative effects and fostering employees' well-being during technological transitions.

Originality- As AI takes over more routine and analytical tasks, the strategic value of employee well-being will increasingly lie in a shift toward "feeling tasks", those requiring emotional intelligence, empathy, and human connection. This study helps in understanding the role of AI from the perspective of employees and employers.

KEYWORDS- Artificial Intelligence (AI), Challenges, Employees, Psychological Well-being, Strategies, Workplace.

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a growing technology of the Industrial Revolution. Especially the 5.0 Industrial Revolution talk about technologies such as big data, machine learning (ML), the Internet of Things (IoT), Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR), Mobile technology, voice recognition, biometrics and more. The advancement of technology is significantly impacting the business. Organisations are restructuring and adopting the latest technologies for smooth functioning. Researchers found that with the increasing use of AI, especially after the 5.0 Industrial Revolution, organisations are working on

innovative technologies to stay relevant in competition. The article published by Future of Life Institute (2015) expressed the potential of AI to spiral out of control and completely disrupt society. Furthermore, the effects of AI will be contingent on the speed and extent of its adoption. Additionally, an analysis by the McKinsey Global Institute (2017) suggested that between 75 and 375 million workers or 3% to 14% of the global labour force may need to enhance their skills or transition to different roles by 2030. Researchers [1], [2], [3], [4] postulated that AI become highly integrated into routine operational activities. All employees need to adapt to powerful computers, develop desirable skills, and re-evaluate expectations about the future of work. Realising the full promise of Industry 5.0 goes beyond just technological improvements; it also relies heavily on successfully handling the human aspects, including enhancing workforce skills and managing significant organisational transformations [5], [6], [7], [8]. Furthermore, it was highlighted that employees should be capable of continuous learning and skilfully employ new technologies to remain competitive and thrive in the rapidly evolving future of work [9], [10], [11].

On the other hand, a wide-range integration of AI brings significant volatility, particularly concerning job stability and the applicability of existing skills. This unpredictability has led to a phenomenon referred to as "AI-anxiety", which is the concern and nervousness that employees perceive about their future opportunities in a world. These AI technologies have become irreplaceable in recent time, which threatens that employees may lose their jobs; and there is a constant requirement to update their skill sets.

In the current scenario it has become necessary for employees to redefine their skill sets to stay relevant with current trends. The rapid changes due to AI are creating an adverse impact on the employees' psychological well-being in the form of high anxiety, especially among those employees who are struggling to understand or manage their emotions.

Enormous researchers [12], [13], [14], [15], [16] focused on analysing how AI affected employees' psychological well-being. Furthermore, researchers highlighted that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace has undoubtedly resulted in enhanced productivity and operational efficiency. At the same time, it poses significant risks to workers' psychological well-being [16], [17], [18], [19],

[20]. Nowadays, professionals are concerned about being replaced by technology and feeling more anxious about their careers. Another factor contributing to employees' anxiety is insufficient training and non-transparent managerial communication. The automation of communication and service-oriented duties might increase social isolation at the workplace. In addition, the role of AI in biased decision-making and surveillance is undeniable, which can cause moral anguish for employees. Adopting AI has given many advantages, benefits, and profits to the organisation, but at the same time, it also introduces complicated psychological hazards to the working employee's well-being. Additionally, researchers [21], [22], [23] found that different theories (perceived value and self-efficacy) highlighted how individual differences influence the management of AI-related anxiety. Collectively, these theories provide a deep understanding of how fear of AI affects employees' risk perceptions and motivations to learn new things in an increasingly AI-oriented world.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The transformation in technology has become more challenging, which has left the employees concerned about job automation and algorithmic control. Rapid technological growth often generates anxiety and uneasiness in handling the new system. Various aspects of AI tools have become prominent and irreplaceable in organisations. Important tasks such as automating routines and monotonous tasks are now dependent on AI. The organisation has become more dependent on these tools for the smooth running of the organisation, from high-level strategy formations to important decision-making. AI is influencing routine tasks, which directly or indirectly affects the employees' performance.

Numerous researchers [24], [25], [26], [27] investigated how industries are adopting AI to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of tasks. A few researchers [28], [29] concluded that the increased use of AI created a dependency on AI, which became more challenging than before. It is also noted that the role of AI significantly affects an employee's psychological well-being. Furthermore, researchers [30], [31], [32], [33] focused on big data. They quoted that in the era of AI many employees are facing numerous challenges like dealing with a continuous and rapid change in the technology, AI driven decisions taken by the managements, dealing with the non-transparency issues and fearing of data privacy, which ultimately result into a declining psychological safety among the employees, also can result into increased anxiety, stress, emotionally exhausted employees. Additionally, it has been explained that an exhausted employee feels less job satisfaction, which can be one of the reasons behind the burnouts and less efficient working environments [30], [33].

The continued development of AI has affected employees' psychological well-being on different levels [12], [13], [14], [15], [16], [34].

Researchers [33], [35], [36] suggested that over-reliance on technology can cause isolation and a reduction in human-to-human interactions, which lead to human detachment at the workplace. To deal with such psychological challenges, [30] suggested that proactive measures must be taken by management.

Researchers [5] [6] [7] [8] suggested that to perform and adopt new changes, employees need to work on their skill set to keep themselves in the competition and perform more effectively and efficiently. Continuously prioritising AI over humans can cause mental strain among employees. Many organisations are now helping employees in learning AI tools. They are also offering several potential benefits to the employees so they can develop their skill sets, other benefits such as motivating and assisting them for personalised career development programs.

To overcome such problems, organisations need to work on their humanising-oriented policies, supporting employees via mental health support programs, workshops and by providing them access to digital wellness solutions [9], [10], [11]. However, a comprehensive study needs to be done before the implementation of new technologies can cause a range of new challenges and difficulties on technological, organisational, ethical and legal fronts.

On one hand, AI challenges the ability of employees; on the other hand, it engages employees in stimulating work and gives them free rein to show their creativity to perform the tasks. Creativity freehand somewhat helps to improve job satisfaction among the employees, and the AI tools help them to handle loads of monotonous jobs [27]. At the workplace, the performance is managed and assessed by AI. AI without clear instructions or clear explanations can cause errors, which can be one of the reasons employees can feel neglected and unvalued at the workplace. Human-centric practices must be adopted to manage the unfairness and dullness in the workplace [19], [37], [38], [39]. Based on the above discussion, the following research questions can be framed as a part of this research-

RQ-1: *What challenges are employees facing when dealing with AI?*

RQ-2: *What are the strategies adopted by the organisations to support employees' psychological well-being during AI enactment?*

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on an extensive literature review to examine the psychological challenges faced by employees as a result of AI integration in the workplace. It specifically examines how AI-driven organisational changes contribute to psychological well-being issues of employees, like occupational stress, anxiety and depression. The review also evaluates the effectiveness of existing organisational strategies aimed at addressing these challenges and promoting employees' reliance on secondary data for its findings. The multiple platforms, like Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia, were used to collect a substantial number of published articles, reports, case studies, etc. These literatures were carefully examined to identify the various challenges that AI presents to employees' psychological well-being.

A. Literature Analysis and Findings

In recent years the significance of technology has changed; rapid changes in AI have changed the traditional process working environment, traditional job roles, tasks, agendas, and work routines have significantly changed, such changes have found some negative impact on employees, such as the ability to maintain work-life balance, emotional fatigueless

contributing which can result into an increased stress. The analysis of previous literature identified enormous

challenges, which are summarised in the following Table 1:

Table 1: Challenges Occurred Due to AI Implementation Based on Literature Analysis (Self-Created)

S. No.	Challenges	Description/Details	References
1	Fear of Loss and Job Insecurity	The findings of numerous researchers indicate that the implementation of AI in the workplace has intensified employees' concerns about potential job automation and displacement. This thought contributed to feelings of uncertainty, psychological vulnerability, and insecurity among them. The ultimate emotional result of it often includes stress, anxiety, and a measurable decline in overall job satisfaction.	[28], [40], [41], [42], [43], [44]
2	Increased stress and burnout	The results of numerous researchers' studies revealed that the introduction of AI in the various industries is focused on achieving new job demands and significantly modifying existing work routines, but the technology change can cause mental fatigue, elevated stress levels, and sometimes it can cause physical exhaustion in employees in the process of meeting expectations. Prolonged experience of such conditions resulted in occupational stress, burnout and emotional fatigue, etc.	[13], [14], [23], [43], [45], [46], [47]
3	Altered work routines and work-life balance	Different researchers highlighted that AI integration automates repetitive tasks and streamlines workflow, which increases productivity and efficiency across various industries. Furthermore, it was noticed that employees with more control over their schedules and fewer administrative tasks reported higher job satisfaction and better work-life balance. However, from the other perspective, researchers quoted that AI can distort the boundaries between professional and personal life, especially with remote monitoring and expectations for constant availability. If it is not managed carefully, then lead to high stress and burnout. Furthermore, research revealed that longer working hours and less personal time are strongly connected with work-life imbalance, regardless of AI's efficiency gains.	[45], [48], [49], [50], [51], [52]
4.	Diminished sense of purpose and autonomy	AI integration has a dual impact with respect to risks and opportunities. It can both decrease and increase impact on autonomy and sense of purpose, which depends on design, context, and user involvement. This system can diminish autonomy and sense of purpose when it automates complex, meaningful tasks, imposes algorithmic constraints, or reduces opportunities for human input and critical engagement. This can result in reification, loss of agency, and condensed task significance, especially when AI decisions are opaque or when surveillance and monitoring are involved, but positive outcomes are also possible when systems are designed to empower users, support skill development, and maintain transparency.	[17], [30], [53]

B. Strategic Interventions

The following strategies can help to reduce psychological well-being challenges faced by employees due to the implementation of AI at the workplace.

C. Workflows Aligned to Human Strengths

Enormous researchers [28], [54], [55], [56] emphasised redesigning work to align human capabilities with technology. Instead of replacing human labour, the integration of AI should enhance and support it. Employees will maintain a strong sense of purpose and their professional identity if tasks managed by AI and those requiring human judgment are clearly distinguished.

D. Foster Work–Life Balance through Flexibility

Successful implementation of AI requires redesigning the workflow as well as human support. Organizations need to play an important role in adopting these changes in workflow and reducing employees' anxiety, which occurs due to interrupted workflow. Organizations need to provide flexible work schedules, remote and hybrid workspaces. The various research findings also suggested that flexibility in work schedules as well as hybrid and remote workspaces can facilitate work-life balance among employees [57], [58], [59], [60].

E. Workforce Reskilling, Upskilling and Development

The human resource reskilling, upskilling and development is highly required to implement AI successfully. Organizations should offer regular and continuous training and development programmes to boost technical as well as human skills. The upgradation of technical skills will help the workforce to implement AI more skilfully. Similarly, the advancement in human skills like emotional intelligence enables them to adjust well and maintain their value in workplaces enhanced by AI. Researchers [51], [61], [62], [63], [64] also highlighted the value of reskilling and upskilling of the workforce. Furthermore, they suggested that the organisation should be more focused towards continuous reskilling, upskilling and development of human resources with AI technology.

F. Transparent and Explainable AI Practices-

It is highly necessary to increase the acceptance rate of AI technology among employees and also reduce the anxiety of the same. To facilitate this, organizations need to adopt practices like open, transparent and two-way communication in the decision-making process. It will also help to enhance the employees' sense of control, perceived value and alignment with organisational values. Additionally, researchers [32], [65], [66], [67], [68] suggested that the organisations need to maintain transparency in AI- driven decision making and its implementation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The growing demand for technology is increasing day by day, and to keep in the competition, businesses are using AI. Use of AI in business has both positive and negative effects in the process, which can be notable in operational benefits and psychological difficulties faced by the staff members. The ultimate goal of implementing AI is to contribute to positive productivity and process, but the frequent requirements of new technical skills are upsetting the established work routines, reducing perceived autonomy and increasing worries about job stability. As a result, the increase in stress, anxiety, and disagreement among the employees is resulting in instability. To reduce the anxiety and to increase the acceptance of AI technology among the employees, they must adopt practices like open, transparent and two-way communication in the decision-making process to enhance the employees' sense of control and alignment with organisational values. To address the AI-related issues, the organisations need to adopt policies focusing on employee-centric strategies. By offering open and transparent communication regarding AI implications, offering opportunities to learn ongoing skills development in the process can help boost confidence among employees, which can result in improved mental health. In recent times, the ongoing digital transformation requires organisations to have adaptive and resilient work environments where employees feel more supported and recognised.

V. FUTURISTIC IMPLICATIONS

This research work will help in multifaceted at the workplace. *Firstly*, sustainable innovative organizations required high psychological well-being among employees, job satisfaction and management of professional integrity at the workplace. This article will help to guide organizations in embedding well-being during digital transformation. *Secondly*, this research work also supports the fact that organizations need to work on human-centric AI adoption. They should not replace the human element with the implementation of AI, but they need to design strategies for human-centric adoption to encourage a more human-friendly and cooperative human-AI interface to help employees' autonomy. *Thirdly*, this research will provide a pathway for organisations to invest in workforce resilience & adaptability for the implementation of AI. *Fourthly*, with the help of this article organization can understand the value of the psychological well-being of employees. So, they need to organize well-being programs, counselling sessions, stress management strategies and psychological well-being support. Lastly, researchers, industrialist and practitioners can explore more challenges occurring due to the implementation of AI as well as numerous strategic interventions to implement it successfully.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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