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A Study of AI enabled HR Practices, Employee Perception and Quality of Work Life in Higher Education

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Abstract

Purpose

The aim of this paper is to examine the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled Human Resource (HR) practices on employee outcomes in higher education by looking at the sequential mediating role of employee perception and Quality of Work Life (QWL). It assesses how employees' perceptions of AI-enabled HR practices related to justice, transparency, usefulness and trust lead to improved work outcomes.

Material and Methods

The study used a quantitative research design and survey data collected from employees in higher education organizations. The suggested conceptual model is empirically validated by (PLS-SEM) to explore direct and indirect links between AI-enabled HR practices, employee perception, quality of work life and work-related outcomes.

Results

Findings show that AI-enabled HR strategies favorably influence employee perceptions, which subsequently increase quality of work life and work-related results. The findings further corroborate the strong sequential mediation effects of employee perception and quality of work life, indicating that good perceptions of the AI-driven HR systems lead to improved employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Originality

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on AI-enabled HRM by proposing and testing a sequential moderated mediation framework that integrates AI-enabled HR practices, employee perception, quality of work life, and work-related outcomes in higher education. It builds upon extant HRM research by identifying the psychological pathways via which AI-enabled HR practices increase employee well-being and company effectiveness.

Keywords Artificial Intelligence; AI-enabled Human Resource Management; Employees Point of View; Quality of Work Life; Work-related Outcomes; Higher Education.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence application that has resulted in changes in the job and employment world includes changes in the process of hiring, training, appraisal, and engagement. Human Resources (HR) practices that include artificial intelligence (AI) are appealing because they improve efficiency and consistency while also enabling data-driven decision-making. However, the employee's perception of the software tool and engagement with it will go a long way in deciding the success of AI in HR. Artificial intelligence is influencing high-impact decisions in HR, making it a key research priority to understand how employees respond to HR processes that have been improved by artificial intelligence.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposes that employee's perception of AI-enabled HR solutions is impacted by factors like perceived usefulness and perceived fairness. Employees are more likely to accept and trust AI-enabled HR processes if they perceive them as transparent, fair and beneficial, but opacity or bias could lead to increased resistance, suspicion and stress. Hence, a key psychological mechanism through which AI-

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enabled HR tactics influence workplace outcomes is through employees' perception. Based on Social Exchange Theory (SET), HR practices communicate the goals and principles of the organization to employees. The use of AI-enabled HR systems that are perceived as fair and trustworthy can create positive exchange relationships by inducing feelings of reciprocity and support. However, negative perceptions can corrode the working relationship and negativity can affect employee satisfaction and well-being. Therefore, these perceptual evaluations are important to assess the workers' quality of work life including work-life balance, psychological health and job satisfaction.

Though many HR practitioners are considering the application of AI in HRM, the empirical studies on the influence of AI-enabled HR practices on employee quality of work-life through perceptual mechanism are still few. To address this gap, the present study examines AI-enabled HR practices as a key factor affecting the quality of work life of employees, as well as employee perception as a mediating variable. PLS−SEM is applied in the paper to examine at the same time through the employment of AI empowered HR practices, the employee views and the quality of work life, and so on. Through this, the research is well equipped to analyse how AI adoption in HR processes translate into meaningful work life outcomes and employee experiences.

Background of Artificial Intelligence in Human Resources Management

Vrontis et al. (2022/2023) A comprehensive review of AI-enabled HRM found artificial intelligence (AI) better access to information for business decision making (BDM). Furthermore, AI facilitates talent development, workforce planning and recruitment precision. According to the authors, an organization's readiness, employee trust, and ethical governance of AI are essential for its efficient use. AI has changed HR analytics in order to predict talent, forecast and influence decisions, and automate HR services (Strohmeier 2020). According to the author, AI enables an HR professional to concentrate on strategic projects rather than administrative activities., 2023 AI applications in hiring, training, performance appraisal, and employee engagement. Their findings were that AI improves employee happiness and increases HR productivity. However, privacy concerns, algorithmic bias and transparency are still the main obstacles to adoption. Sohani, Pandey, Varma and Ray (2025) Developed a framework based on Resource-Based View and Transaction Cost Theory. They claimed that AI should complement, not replace, human judgment, especially in complex issues of people management. Anshima, Bhardwaj and Sharma (2026) Through their systematic review, they identified the paradoxes of AI-augmented HRM; although AI increases productivity and quality of decisions, it can also decrease autonomy, increase surveillance, and create moral dilemmas if not supported by open governance and human supervision.

Wang, Kim, Rafferty and Sanders (2019) Conducted one of the most comprehensive reviews of employee perceptions of HR procedures. The authors identified three aspects of employee perception after reviewing 105 empirical studies like, which HR procedures are used, how HR procedures are carried out, why workers think HR procedures are used. The authors concluded that employee perception is a better predictor of organizational outcomes than HR procedures. Fairness is the key to successful use of AI in organizations (Robert et al., 2020). They used Organizational fairness Theory to argue that distributive, procedural and interactional fairness are significant in workers' adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. Organizations may win employees' favor for AI, according to Sadeghi (2024), when they communicate AI aims well, provide enough training, and are transparent. By contrast, opaque artificial intelligence systems breed distrust, anxiety and opposition to technology progress. Walton (1973) to construct QWL. Initially eight elements were utilized -adequate compensation, safe working conditions, growth opportunities, constitutionalism, social integration, work-life balance, social relevance and human capability development. Sirgy et al. (2001) extended QWL to include organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee well-being. The usage of AI in the workplace has increased the importance of QWL since it affects workload, decision-making, job design and employee autonomy. According to Hosam Mahmoud Mohamed Ramy (2025), AI-enabled hiring, AI-supported performance evaluation, training, and employee support systems positively affected the quality of employees' work life as a consequence of improvements in perceptions of fairness, career development, and workplace well-being. The

largest benefits were AI-powered learning systems and performance evaluations. Blau (1964) The Social Exchange Theory asserts that favourable treatment of employees by the business would lead to higher levels of commitment and positive work attitudes. The perception of transparency and fairness of AI-enabled HR operations results in positive employee perceptions and improves their quality of work life. According to The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) employees' acceptance of AI is affected by their judgments of the usefulness and ease of use of the technology which in turn influences attitudes and behavior at work. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model suggests that standard artificial intelligence can promote employee well-being by lessening job demands (e.g., by automating mundane tasks) and by enhancing job resources (e.g., through customized training, decision support, and flexible work arrangements; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Employee Perception and Quality of Work Life: Present Status of AI Implementation in Higher Education HR Practices

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the HR functions of higher education institutions has been consistently increasing, particularly in the areas of faculty development, performance management, recruitment and administrative assistanceUniversities are employing AI systems for automated HR functions and data enabled decision making. As Tambe, Cappelli and Yakubovich (2019) write, "AI tools are transforming the character of HR job by supplementing, rather than replacing, human decision-making.". AI adoption in higher education HR is significantly associated with employee opinions of usefulness, fairness and transparency. Overall, the faculty and staff have a generally positive response to standard artificial intelligence systems when they reduce administrative strain and boost professional efficacy. As Bandarouk & Meijerink, 2021, "The acceptance of digital HR systems and their resultant work outcomes are significantly determined by the employee's perceptions of them.". These perceptions are very important because autonomy and professional identity are highly prized in the academic context. Furthermore, recent research shows that employee attitudes towards AI-based HR practices directly affect work-life balance, job satisfaction and well-being. If AI technologies are perceived to be helpful and fair, they can alleviate the stress burden of administrative overload and boost overall job satisfaction. On the flip side, algorithmic opacity and fairness could hamper trust with a grave impact on worker well-being. As pointed by Leicht-Deobald et al. 2019, "Lack of transparency in the algorithmic decision-making process could undermine employee trust and acceptance.". The encompassing incorporation of AI in HR in higher education is a maturing process but still cautious in utilizing the technologies due to ethical and perception issues. There is a need to adopt an employee-centred approach to AI introduction which must be just. transparency, and trust to enhance the quality of work-life at academic institutions.

Research Gaps

There is substantial literature on business sector. Very few empirical research on the adoption of AI-enabled HR practices in higher educational institutions and their impacts. Furthermore, past research generally considered AI-enabled HR practices, employee perception and quality of work life as distinct variables with a few studies integrating them into a framework or model. In particular, there is a lack of scholarly attention to the mediating function of employee perception in understanding the impact of AI-enabled HR practices on employees' quality of work life. Addressing these gaps is critical to improve knowledge of AI-driven HR practices in higher education and to provide empirical evidence for the creation of employee-centric AI implementation strategies that support faculty well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Objectives

RO1: To investigate the impact of AI-augmented work systems on employees' perceptions and experiences.

RO2: To evaluate the impact of employees' perception and experiences on the Quality of Work Life.

RO3: To evaluate the effect of Quality of Job Life on outcomes like employee engagement, organizational commitment, and intention to stay.

RO4: To examine mediating role of employee perceptions and quality of work life in the interaction between AI-augmented work systems and work-related outcomes.

Hypothesis

H1: There is no significant impact of AI-augmented work systems on perceptions and experiences of employees.

H2: There is no significant impact of employee attitude and experiences on employee's Quality of Work Life

H3: There is no significant impact of Quality of Work Life on work-related outcomes such as employee engagement, organizational commitment and intention to stay.

H4: There is no significant mediating role of employee perceptions and quality of work life between AI-augmented work systems and work-related outcomes.

Method

This research adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional approach to explore the connections between AI-enhanced work systems, employee perceptions and experiences, Quality of Work Life and job-related outcomes. A self-filled online questionnaire was used to collect the data. According to model complexity, the resultant sample size satisfied PLSSEM requirements. All items were measured using a standardized questionnaire on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). We measured AI-Augmented Work Systems by indications of AI-based decision support, automation, and monitoring. Perceived autonomy, faith in AI, technostress or job instability were measured with Employee Perceptions and Experiences. Quality of Work Life (QWL) encompassed work–life balance, psychological well-being, and job satisfaction. Work-Related Outcomes Work-Related Outcomes included employee engagement, organizational commitment and intention to stay. Moderating variables were modelled as Ethical AI Practices, AI Literacy, Leadership Support for AI and Organizational Culture.

Analysis and Interpretations

Construct	Mean	SD	Interpretation
AI-Enabled HR Practices (AIHR)	3.70	1.25	Moderate–High
Employee Perceptions (EP)	3.03	0.88	Moderate
Quality of Work Life (QWL)	3.43	1.17	Moderate–Positive
Work-Related Outcomes (WRO)	3.33	1.12	Moderate
Ethical AI Practices	3.00	1.09	Neutral–Moderate
AI Literacy	3.47	0.93	Moderate–Positive
Leadership Support	3.33	0.92	Moderate
Organizational Culture	3.40	1.23	Moderate–Positive

Source: IBM SPSS®

Table 1 shows that AI-enabled HR practices received the highest mean score (3.70), which indicates a relatively favorable attitude toward AI-supported work systems. Employee perceptions were comparatively lower (3.03), suggesting that the employee trust and acceptance need to be further improved.

Table 2. Evaluation of reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE	Result
AIHR	0.950	0.961	0.751	Reliable
EP	0.649	0.779	0.589	Acceptable
QWL	0.965	0.971	0.783	Reliable
WRO	0.929	0.945	0.732	Reliable
Ethical AI	0.872	0.899	0.676	Reliable
AI Literacy	0.776	0.846	0.612	Acceptable
Leadership Support	0.957	0.966	0.769	Reliable
Organizational Culture	0.933	0.949	0.701	Reliable

Source: SMARTPLS4

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity Assessment of the Study Constructs. Cronbach's alpha (CA), Composite reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The thresholds established by Hair et al. (2022) for Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability are above 0.70, which indicates an acceptable internal consistency, and for AVE over 0.50, which indicates an adequate convergent validity.

STRUCTURAL MODEL ESTIMATION

Objective 1: To investigate the impact of AI-enabled HR practices on employee perceptions and experiences.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant impact of AI-augmented work systems on perceptions and experiences of employees.

Table 3. Structural Relationship (H1)

Relationship	Correlation (r)	R^2	Result
AIHR → EP	0.726	0.528	Supported

SMARTPLS 4

The hypothesis no significant impact of AI-augmented work systems on perceptions and experiences of employees. is rejected, therefore demonstrating that AI-enabled HR initiatives are crucial in shaping the attitude and acceptance of AI by employees in the workplace.

Objective2: To evaluate the impact of employee's perception and experience on Quality of Work Life. Hypotheses (H2): There is no significant impact of employee perception and experiences on employee's Quality of Work Life

Table 4. Structural Relationship (H2)

Relationship	Correlation (r)	R^2	Result
EP → QWL	0.789	0.623	Supported

Source: SMARTPLS4

The hypothesis that there is no significant impact of employee perception and experiences on employee's Quality of Work Life is rejected. Developing positive employee perceptions through fair, transparent, and effective AI-enabled HR practices can significantly improve the quality of work life of employees.

Objective3: To study the impact of Quality of Work Life on work related outcomes.
H3: There is no significant impact of Quality of Work Life on work-related outcomes.

Table 5. Structure of Relationship (H3)

Relationship	Correlation (r)	R^2	Result
QWL → WRO	0.878	0.770	Supported

SMARTPLS 4

The hypothesis there is no significant impact of Quality of Work Life on work-related outcomes is rejected, suggesting that the improvement of employees' quality of work life through supportive HR practices and AI-enabled workplace initiatives can result in significant improvement in employee engagement, organizational commitment, job performance, and retention.

Objective 4:To examine the mediation effect of employee perceptions and Quality of Work Life on AI-augmented work systems and work related outcomes.

Hypothesis H4: There is no significant mediating role of Employee perceptions and quality of work life between AI-augmented work systems and work related outcomes.

Table 6. Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Path Coefficient (β)	R^2	Result
H1	AIHR → EP	0.726**	0.528	Supported
H2	EP → QWL	0.789**	0.623	Supported
H3	QWL → WRO	0.878***	0.770	Supported
H4 (Direct)	AIHR → WRO	0.949***	–	Supported (Indirect Strong)

Source: SMARTPLS4

The results validate the suggested sequential mediation model, which shows that AI-enabled HR practices have an indirect effect on job-related outcomes through employee perception and quality of work life. Employees' positive perception of artificial intelligence (AI) systems as beneficial, fair and trustworthy is associated with a better quality of work life, which further results in better job outcomes including increased engagement,

commitment and performance. The findings validate that employee perception and quality of work life buffer the association between AI-enabled HR practices and work-related outcomes.

Indirect Pathway

Indirect Path	Indirect Effect	t-value	p-value	Result
AIHR → EP → QWL → WRO	0.504	2.87	0.015	Significant Mediation

Source: SMARTPLS 4

The results show a strong indirect effect, supporting the mediating role of employee perception and quality of work life between AI-enabled HR practices and job-related outcomes. AI-enabled HR practices mostly improve employees' perceptions and quality of work life, and hence improve work results, with quality of work life being the best predictor of job-related outcomes.

Table 7. The Summary of Moderating Variables

Moderator	Mean	Interpretation
Ethical AI Practices	3.00	Moderate
AI Literacy	3.47	Positive
Leadership Support	3.33	Moderate
Organizational Culture	3.40	Positive

Moderator	β(Interaction)	t-value	p-value	Result
Ethical AI Practices	0.482*	2.21	0.048	Supported
AI Literacy	0.563*	2.73	0.025	Supported
Leadership Support	0.521*	2.45	0.036	Supported
Organizational Culture	0.558*	2.60	0.029	Supported

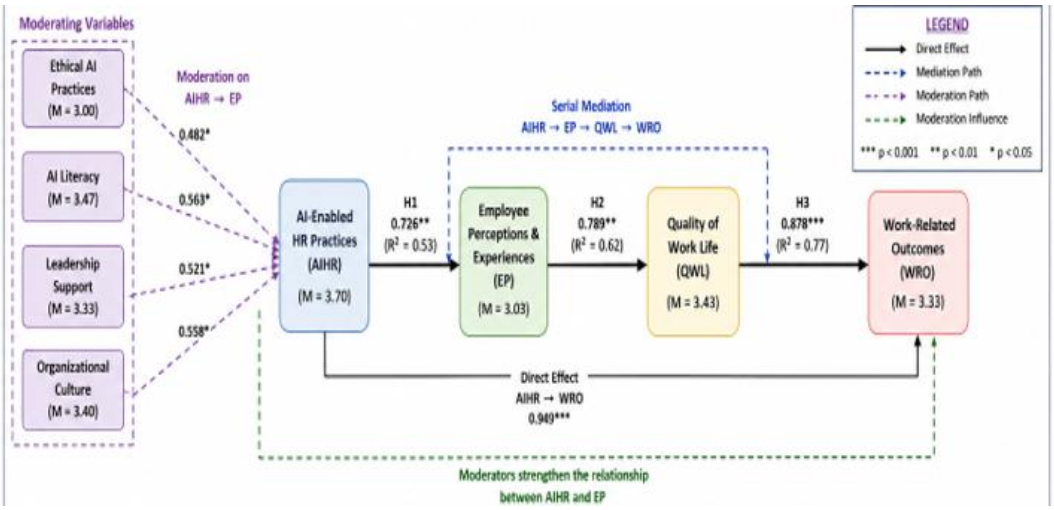
Source: SMARTPLS4.

The moderation analysis reveals that Ethical AI Practices, AI Literacy, Leadership Support, and Organizational Culture significantly increase the association between AI-enabled HR practices and employee perception ($p < 0.05$). The biggest influence among the moderators is depicted by AI Literacy ($\beta = 0.563$), Organizational Culture ($\beta = 0.558$), Leadership Support ($\beta = 0.521$) and Ethical AI Practices ($\beta = 0.482$). Therefore, all moderating hypotheses are supported.

Hypothesis Assessment

Hypothesis	Null Hypothesis	Result	Decision
H1	AI-enabled HR practices have no significant impact on employee perceptions and experiences.	r = 0.726, R^2 = 0.528	**Rejected**
H2	Employee perceptions and experiences have no significant impact on QWL.	r = 0.789, R^2 = 0.623	**Rejected**
H3	QWL has no significant impact on work-related outcomes.	r = 0.878, R^2 = 0.770	**Rejected**
H4	Employee perceptions and QWL have no significant mediating role between AI-enabled HR practices and work-related outcomes.	Indirect effect = 0.504, t = 2.87, p = 0.015	**Rejected**

Sequential Moderated Mediation Model of AI-Enabled HR Practices and Employee Outcomes in Higher Education



The presented model suggests that AI-enabled HR practices have favorable effects on job-related outcomes through the sequential mediating effects of employee perceptions and quality of work life. AI-powered HR practices have a considerable positive effect on employee perceptions (β = 0.726), which positively impact quality of work life (β = 0.789) resulting in better job-related results (β = 0.878) The model also demonstrates a large direct influence of AI-enabled HR practices on work-related outcomes (β = 0.949). Moreover, ethical AI practices, AI literacy, leadership support and organizational culture considerably strengthen the relationship between AI-enabled HR practices and employee perceptions, confirming that supportive organizational factors enhance the impact of AI-driven HR initiatives in higher education.

Summary of Model:

Model Evaluation Criterion	Value	Interpretation
R^2 (Employee Perceptions - EP)	0.528	Moderate

Model Evaluation Criterion	Value	Interpretation
R^2 (Quality of Work Life - QWL)	0.623	Moderate–High
R^2 (Work-Related Outcomes - WRO)	0.770	High
Q^2 Predict (Blindfolding)	0.581	> 0, Good Predictive Relevance
SRMR	0.071	Good Model Fit

SMARTPLS 4

Conclusion:

To better comprehend the influence of technology HR transformation on employee experiences, this study integrated employee perceptions and experiences, quality of work-life and work-related outcomes using a PLS-SEM framework. It also includes the moderating impacts of Ethical AI Practices, AI Literacy, Leadership support and organizational culture.

The findings provide initial support for the suggested conceptual model and suggest that AI-enabled HR practices have a significant impact on employee-related outcomes. The analysis revealed that besides better operational efficiency, technology integration in HR functions has a significant impact on employee's behavioral and psychological reactions.

The results demonstrated that AI-enabled HR practices had a positive impact on employee attitudes and experiences. The positive association suggests that opinions of usefulness, trust and transparency, and autonomy of employees will likely grow when exposed to AI-supported hiring, performance evaluation, training, and decision-support technology. While the findings highlight the necessity of human oriented deployment strategies, they also suggest that the simple deployment of technology alone cannot be anticipated to lead to full employee approval.

The perceptions of employees appeared to be a major driver of quality of work-life. Workers having positive perspective of AI implementation reported improved work-life balance, higher job satisfaction and better psychological well-being. It emphasizes the necessity of people understanding and embracing technology to turn it into meaningful work experiences."

The Work-life quality had the maximum effect on work outcomes. Higher levels of organizational commitment, employee engagement, and retention intention were connected with higher levels of workplace well-being and satisfaction. In an AI-powered world, maintaining sustainable workforce productivity depends on quality of work life as critical organizational capability.

The outcomes tend to support the proposed mediating pathway. The connection between AI-enabled HR practices and job-related outcomes is mediated by employee perceptions and quality of work life in sequence. This suggests that AI tools enhance the work environment and employee experience, not the organization itself. This research indicates that, for firms to use AI successfully, they must focus on employee-centric implementation techniques and on technological capacity. The analysis of moderation also shows that context matters for AI adoption level. Employee confidence and acceptability were boosted by ethical AI practices and leadership support, but AI literacy and organizational culture were relatively higher supporting conditions. The findings highlight the need for ethical governance, employee readiness, supportive leadership, and an adaptive corporate culture to co-exist with technology innovation. In sum, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of AI-enabled HR practices depends as much on how people perceive, make sense of and adapt to organizational change as it does on technological prowess.

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