

The Impact of AI Adoption in the Workplace on Employees: A Systematic Review

BAM 2025
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Abstract

Purpose: This systematic review investigates the impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption in the workplace, particularly focusing on how AI technologies influence employees. The review aims to synthesize and consolidate current findings, assess both the benefits and concerns by AI, providing a comprehensive understanding of how AI implementation affects employees, and propose future research agendas based on gaps identified from existing literature,.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA) methodology is adopted for the review process. We reviewed and analysed 43 peer-reviewed articles published between the period of 2020 and 2024. These studies were chosen through a rigorous process involving multiple databases, where they range across a variety of industries and geographies, utilizing diverse methodologies and theoretical frameworks. This approach ensures a comprehensive coverage of the topic, reflecting a broad spectrum of insights into AI's impact on employees.

Findings: The findings include both positive and negative impacts of AI in workplaces on employees. Key benefits identified include, but are not limited to enhanced efficiency and productivity, employees' positive progress of job roles and advanced tasks, employees' growth in multiple areas of skills, and increased wellbeing. Significant issues are also revealed by the review, including the possible loss of job opportunities, the possible deterioration of employee health conditions brought on by newly developing stress, a lack of employees' skill sets, and urgent ethical issues with regard to privacy and bias in AI decision-making and organisational equity. These findings highlight the diverse perspectives of employees while explaining the complex interactions between AI technologies and employees in professional contexts.

Originality: This review contributes original insights by mapping the complex interactions between AI technologies and workplace dynamics, particularly from the employees' perspectives. It fills the gap in the existing literature by providing a balanced view of the benefits and concerns of AI adoption, and suggests a need for future researchers' methodological improvement, expanded scope of AI impact studies, incorporation of interdisciplinary research design, attention to testing the validity of findings in more diverse contexts, and consideration of evolving forms of AI along with its critical ethical implications.

The review advances academic understanding and offers actionable guidance for organizations navigating AI implementation, making it a reference for scholarly research and practical integration of AI adoption in organizational settings.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI); AI-oriented work environment; Employees; Workplaces; Systematic Review.

1. Introduction

The proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into industries is not only changing but fundamentally transforming the way businesses function and compete (Rajaram & Tinguely, 2024, Soulami et al., 2024). From automating repetitive tasks to enhancing decision-making of tasks and communication, AI increasingly integrated into daily business operations. As a result, AI significantly influences organizational structures and rapidly changes workplaces across various industries, reshaping job roles, workflows, and employee experiences (Nazareno & Schiff, 2021; Özkiziltan & Hassel, 2021). As businesses increasingly rely on AI to drive their operations, workplace dynamics evolve, presenting both opportunities and challenges (Florea & Croitoru, 2025; Gabelaia et al., 2024; Manoharan et al., 2024; Wang & Lu, 2025).

When employees work alongside AI that can learn, predict, and act—with greater accuracy and speed than human beings, the nature of work changes to some extent and demands new skill sets and adaptability from employees (Ooi et al., 2025). The rapid pace of AI advancement and its adoption in workplaces worldwide makes it imperative to comprehensively understand and manage its impact. This is essential not only for maximizing the benefits that AI could bring but mitigating potential disruptions and ensuring that technological advancements contribute positively to employee themselves and organizational success. However, In some circumstances, the rapid implementation of AI into workplace environments frequently goes beyond the capacity of business leaders to fully understand and deal with the potential negative impacts of its adoption (Soulami, et al., 2024).

While existing literature offers a rich exploration of AI's impacts on organizations regarding productivity gains and economic impacts, a cohesive understanding of its influence on employees remains relatively sparse (Milanez, 2023). This gap in literature is significant because it will affect how employees perceive AI adoption in workplaces, which may significantly impact the successful implementation of AI in workplaces (Makarius et al., 2020). Therefore, the diverse effects of AI on employees require an extensive evaluation to provide full insights. The insights obtained may catalyse more research into particular areas of concern or interest, such as the role of AI in workplace job redesign. The study's findings are anticipated to enhance the understanding of AI's influence on the future of job and work environments, aiding stakeholders in addressing the problems and possibilities presented by AI. Furthermore, the insights will help identify areas where employees might benefit from additional support,

training, or policy adjustments to better align digital transformation with human-centric workplace strategies.

Therefore this review seeks to consolidate existing academic research and answer the following key questions:

- 1) *What is the state-of-the-art in academic research on the impact of AI adoption on employee in workplaces?*

The first question examines the characteristics of prior studies on AI's impact on employees, including research designs, theoretical frameworks employed, targeted industries and geolocations, and how AI is conceptualized within these scholarly discourses. In addition to the first research question, the following two research questions are crucial as well as they could improve the comprehension of the practical implications of AI on employees, that includes improvements in job performance, changes in job roles, and potential disruptions or ethical issues stemming from AI implementation in the workplace. The research questions are:

- 2) *What are the primary benefits of AI adoption from an employee perspective?*
- 3) *What are the main concerns and challenges employees face due to AI adoption?*

At the end of this review, the following research question will be answered:

- 4) *What future research agenda is proposed by scholars in response to the identified limitations of existing literature?*

Academically, this review aims to fill the current gap in the literature by synthesizing diverse impact of AI from an employee perspective, thereby providing a clearer picture of the broader impact trends. Simultaneously, this systematic review holds significant value for multiple stakeholders in the digital transformation era. For organizational leaders, understanding the nuanced impacts of AI on employees can inform more effective management practices and the development of training programs tailored to upgrade employee skills and adaptability in an AI-augmented workplace. Additionally, by clarifying the positive and negative impact of adoption among employees, the findings can guide policymakers in crafting regulations that promote beneficial AI use while preventing potential risks.

2. Methodology

In order to effectively answer the research questions, the nature and scope of existing literature regarding the impact of AI implementation on employees is examined, and a systematic literature review is conducted. According to scholars (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2019; Boland et al., 2017; Sivarajah et al., 2017), a systematic review is the best research methodology to use in order to synthesize and analyse the literature that exists on a particular research question or topic. The main aims of a systematic literature review are to establish the extent of current knowledge on a given question or topic, to identify research gaps within the existing body of research, and to identify potential research themes and set new directions for future research on the topic or question of interest (Sivarajah et al., 2017, p. 267). Therefore, in this study, we reviewed scholarly articles that investigate the impact of AI adoption on employees. The literature review's design and implementation are based on the methodological steps for conducting a systematic review proposed by Bryman (2016, p. 99) and Tranfield et al. (2003). The first step is to define the research's purpose and scope and develop the review protocol which is to comprehensively identify the impact of the adoption of AI on employees, including the benefits and concerns. Also, the review will give suggestions on future research directions.

The second step is to conduct the review process, which includes *'seeking out studies relevant to the scope and purpose of the review, assessing the relevance of each study for the research questions and appraising the selected studies'* (Bryman, 2016, p. 99). This is followed by the third step, which is to extract each study's results and synthesize them, meaning that the results are reported in a descriptive and thematic way. Each of these steps was followed as the literature review here was conducted.

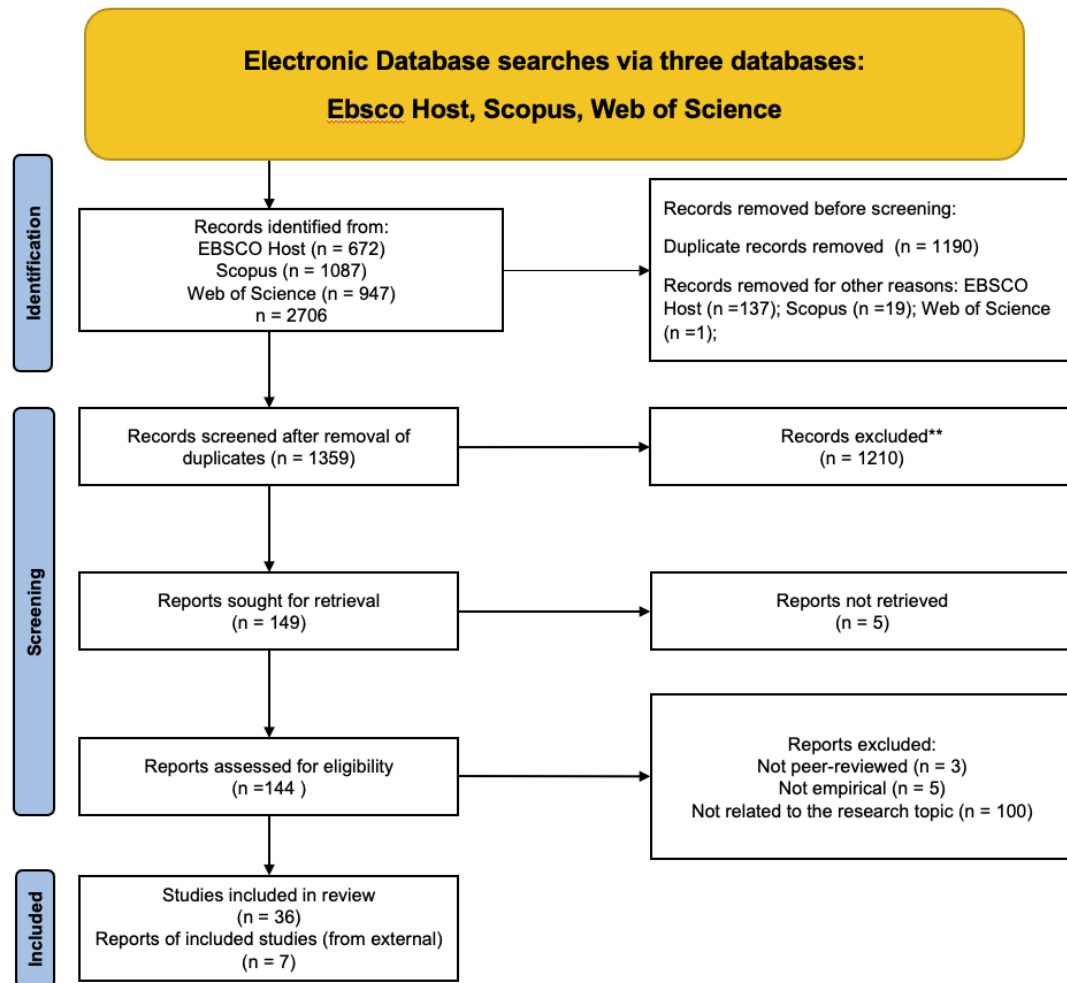


Figure 1. The Prisma Systematic Literature Review Flowchart (Source: Based on Page et al., 2021)

Burnham (2006) describes EBSCO Host, Scopus, and Web of Science (WoS) as three reliable online abstract and indexing databases with enriched data and linked scholarly literature across various disciplines. According to the recommendations of Boland et al. (2017) and based on the Prisma Systematic Literature Review Flowchart (see Figure 1), the following research protocol was developed. To select the most suitable studies to include in the sample, and to answer the research questions, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were set as follows:

- 1) Three databases, namely EBSCO Host, Scopus, and WoS, were identified as appropriate sources for searching online for the appropriate academic articles related to AI adoption and employees that are included in the review;
- 2) Scholarly articles should be published over the period from 2014 to 2024;
- 3) Since the research topic is interdisciplinary, the search was designed to capture any subject area associated with the research topic, and all international studies written in the English language were included;

- 4) In order to improve the quality of the articles sampled, other types of publications, such as conference papers, reviews, book chapters, and research notes, were excluded (Sivarajah et al., 2017);
- 5) To not overlook any important articles and to capture all potentially relevant papers, keywords related to 'AI,' 'workplace,' 'employee,' 'impact', and their synonyms were used to search for recent articles using EBSCO Host, Scopus, and the WoS. Specifically, all academic studies which had a word directly or showed synonyms related to (i) AI (i.e., 'artificial intelligence' or 'AI' or 'machine learning' or 'ml' or 'deep learning' or 'dl' or 'generative artificial intelligence' or 'GenAI') in their titles or among their keywords, and (ii) all works in which the abstracts included keywords related to the context (i.e. workplace or 'work environment' or 'organization' or 'company' or 'firm' or 'corporate'), and the unit of analysis (i.e. 'employee' or 'worker' or 'workforce' or 'job' or 'labour' or 'staff'), were downloaded and evaluated;
- 6) Both empirical studies (e.g., case studies, results, and analyses) and conceptual articles were selected;
- 7) Finally, the relevance of each downloaded paper shortlisted was assessed by reading the full-text content of the article to force an alignment between the selected articles and the research objectives, facilitating the decision on whether or not they should be included in the sample for further analysis (Sivarajah et al., 2017).

Drawing on Delbufalo (2012), several necessary steps must be followed when searching an online database for suitable articles. Firstly, based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria 2, 3, and 4 as above, keywords were entered into the three databases as search criteria. This initial search resulted in the shortlisting of 2706 records (672 from EBSCO Host, 1087 from Scopus, and 947 from WoS). However, when introducing the records to reference management tools, a total of 157, specifically EBSCO Host (n=137), Scopus (n=19), Web of Science (n=1), cannot be recognized. Therefore, after deduplication detection, 1,359 records remained, indicating the removal of 1,210 duplicate entries. Subsequently, a further full-text review was conducted in accordance with criteria 5 and 6 outlined above, which directed us to 144 residual documents. At the end of the reviewing process, we scrutinized the content of these 144 articles. This led to another 108 papers being removed from the sample as it was observed that these articles were not relevant to the research topic. For example, some articles pertained to AI but did not focus on employees. Other studies examined the adoption of AI from an organizational perspective rather than based on its impact. Additionally, certain studies investigated the

application of specific AI tools or systems within organizational settings. Moreover, some research focused on the impact of AI on organizations instead of employees, which was not the primary focus of this research. Five records were removed as their full text cannot be retrieved. Eventually, a total of 36 articles that are highly relevant to answering our research questions were selected for the systematic review. A backward citation search was employed to enhance the number of studies included in the review and broaden its scope. This method, frequently utilized in literature reviews, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses, involves scrutinizing the references or citations of a pivotal document to identify additional pertinent documents or studies (Thomé et al., 2016). Tracing ideas' development and digging into foundational studies assists researchers in compiling comprehensive information on a given topic (Hu et al., 2011). As a result, 7 extra articles were downloaded and added to the included studies. These efforts collectively resulted in our inclusion of 43 papers in this review, and a full list of these papers is provided.

Barclay et al. (2011) and Pittaway & Cope (2007) recommend that for further analysis, researchers' efforts should include reading the selected articles and conducting a qualitative analysis of the articles' content. For the systematic review reported here, after reading the articles, they were coded, tagged, and divided into different groups of based on the specific information they contain. Therefore, articles regarding the same research topic were categorized flexibly into new tags, which eventuate to the development of the finalized taxonomy. Caputo et al. (2016) note that the reason for conducting this procedure is to effectively reduce biases that could arise from an inflexibly pre-set coding system. All the detailed information from this procedure was recorded in a manually created data extraction spreadsheet using MS Excel.

3. Results

Tapping into our analysis, the results of the study were obtained from the use of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches, respectively, grounded in the descriptive and thematic techniques. The descriptive analysis was carried out to address background information, such as the characteristics of the previous research, and the thematic analysis was conducted to address the three research questions associated with the benefits, concerns of AI adoption in workplaces on employees, and future research agenda.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

3.1.1 Year of Publication & Article Distribution Across Academic Journals

Observably, figure 2 reflects a growing trend in the number of publications per year concerning the impact of AI adoption in the workplace on employees. From 2020 to 2024, the number of articles displays a continuously increasing trend, indicating a rising academic and possibly practical interest in the topic. Steadily ascending from 4 articles in 2020 to 15 in 2023, it may also suggest the elevated relevance of AI technologies in workplaces, potentially driven by rapid technology advancement and their popularization in organizational settings. Such a trend underscores the significance of the designated research topic not only to academics but also to business practitioners and policymakers, whose understanding of the effects of AI on the workforce is essential to guide them through informed decision-making processes.

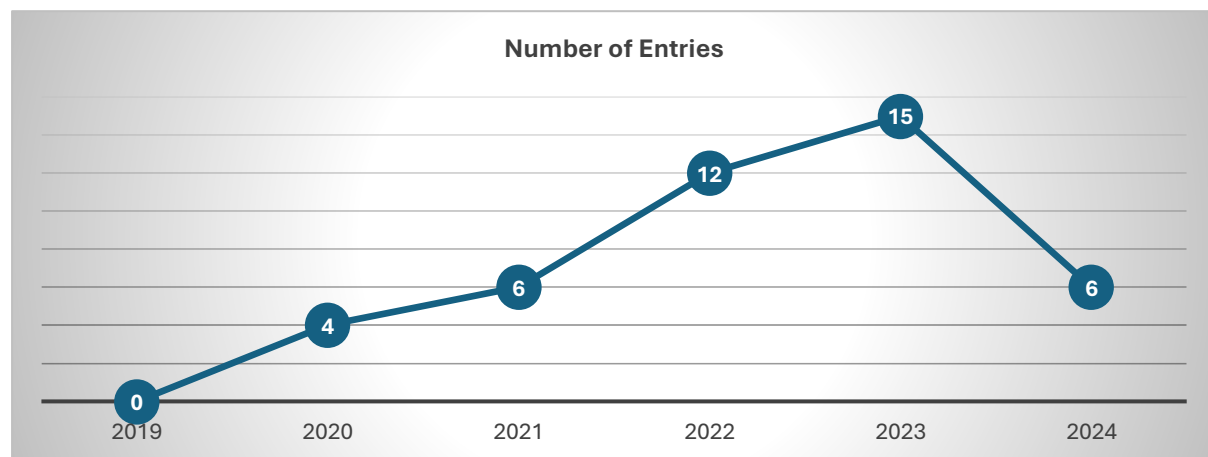


Figure 2. Year of Publication for Selected Articles

Fragmentation is identified as a distinct characteristic of the 43 articles' distribution by journals. Referring to Table 1, journals with high Academic Journal Guide (AJG) (2021) rankings, e.g. the Academy of Management Journal (4*), Journal of Applied Psychology (4*), Human Resource Management (4), Human Relations (4), and Strategic Management Journal (4), International Journal of Operations and Production Management (4) are typically seen as generating more significant academic impact based on more stringent peer reviews than other ones with lower rankings. Shown in the table that articles (4 of 43) were published on Computers in Human Behaviour, followed by International Journal of Human-Computer Interactions (2 out of 43), Journal of Business Research (2 out of 43), International Journal of Manpower (2 out of 43), and Academy of Management Journal (2 out of 43). Meanwhile, the articles' distribution by journals also demonstrates a mix of 'high-quality', 'low-quality', and

even unranked journals based on AJG's benchmark. The presence of these articles in diverse journals reflects that AI's impact on employees spans various disciplines, including psychological impacts, organizational science, technological ethics, and broader societal implications. Hence, the variety of journals from different fields highlights the interdisciplinary nature of research concerning AI in the workplace. This suggests that the topic touches on multiple aspects of human activity and is of interest across various academic and practical fields.

Table 1: Articles' Distribution by Journals

Journal	Number of Entries	AJG Ranking (2021)
Academy of Management Journal	2	4*
Access Journal - Access to Science, Business, Innovation in the Digital economy	1	-
Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources	1	2
British Journal of Management	1	4
Computers in Human Behaviour	4	2
Cross-Cultural Management Journal	1	-
Discover Sustainability	1	-
Frontiers in Psychology	1	1
Frontiers in Public Health	2	-
Frontiers in Robotics and AI	1	-
Human Relations	1	4
Human Resource Management	1	4
Humanities and Social Sciences Communications	1	-
Information and Organization	1	3
Informing Science: International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline	1	-
International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health	1	-
International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction	2	-
International Journal of Manpower	2	2
International Journal of Operations and Production Management	1	4
Journal of Applied Engineering Sciences	1	-
Journal of Applied Psychology	1	4*
Journal of Business Research	2	3

Journal	Number of Entries	AJG Ranking (2021)
Journal of Organizational and End User Computing	1	1
Journal of Service Management	1	2
MIS Quarterly Executive	1	2
Person-Centered review	1	-
Philosophy & Technology	1	-
Review of Business	1	-
Service Business: An International Journal	1	-
South African Journal of Industrial Engineering	1	-
Strategic Management Journal	1	4*
Technology in Society	1	-
The International Journal of Information and Learning Technology	1	-
Topoi	1	-
Wireless Communications and Mobile Computing	1	-

3.1.2 Theories & Research Methods

The multidisciplinary nature of previous research regarding the impact of AI adoption in the workplace on employees is further evidenced by the diversity of theories employed by researchers. Observable from Table 2, a broad range of theories were applied to understand AI's impact on employees, which cover psychology, organizational behaviour, decision-making, and technology acceptance. Some theories, as compared to others, display a heightened level of popularity. For instance, theories on technology adoption (n=5), and psychological and cognitive theories (n=4) are particularly prevalent. This points to a strong focus on understanding both the organizational integration of AI and its psychological impact on employees in previous research. Meanwhile, behavioural theories (n=3) depict a scholarly interest in how employees react to and interact with AI technologies, indicating a behavioural study approach within AI research. Besides these, the inclusion of the job demand-resource model and decision-making-relevant theories underscore emerging trends in researching the tangible impacts of AI on job dynamics and decision-making processes within professional settings. Nonetheless, a significant number of articles (19 entries) did not fit neatly into established theoretical frameworks, implying that there might be new, evolving theories that are being subtly shaped by unique challenges and opportunities presented by AI technologies.

It could also unveil a gap where existing theories do not fully address the complexities introduced by AI, presenting lucrative opportunities for developing new theoretical approaches.

Table 2: Articles' Distribution by Theories Used

Theories	Number of Entries	Focus	Representative Examples
Motivations	2	Employ theories related to internal motivation, such as intrinsic motivation models, to study the impacts of AI on employee motivation	Jia & Hou, 2024; Gao et al., 2023.
Organizational behaviour (e.g., organisational learning theory)	3	Use theories related to organizational behaviour to explore how AI adoption influences organizational processes and employee experiences (e.g., how employees learn and adapt in response to AI integration)	Sofia et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2022; Wilkens, 2020.
Psychological contract	1	Examine how AI adoption impacts the psychological contracts between employers and employees, particularly focusing on expectations and perceived obligations	Braganza et al., 2021
Job demand-resource model	1	Analyse the balance of job demands and resources in the context of AI implementations and its impact on employee stress and job satisfaction	Yin et al., 2024
Decision-making theory	1	Use of theories related to enhancing decision-making processes through AI, studying how AI tools influence decision-making in professional settings	Almarashda et al., 2022;
Behavioural theories (e.g., social response theory, social organism response, social cognitive career theory)	3	Focus on behavioural responses to environmental stimuli, including interactions with AI technologies	Ossadnik, Muehlfeld & Goerke, 2023; Shaikh et al., 2023.
Technology adoption (e.g., technology acceptance model, dynamic capability view, technology-mediated learning)	5	Explore how technologies are adopted and the implications for organizational practices and employee behaviours	Einola, Khoreva & Tienari, 2023; Wijayati et al., 2022.
Psychological and cognitive theories (e.g., self-determination theory, stress and coping strategy, prospect theory)	4	Address the psychological and cognitive processes influenced by AI, such as coping with stress.	Loureiro, Bilro & Neto, 2023; Passalacqua et al., 2024.
Specific applications & impacts (e.g., theory of impact on labour productivity, AI job replacement)	4	Tap into specific applications of AI and their direct impacts on labour markets and individual performance	Sofia et al., 2023
Others, with no explicit theories mentioned	19	Encompass uniquely described theories or those that do not fit neatly into the aforementioned categories, covering a range of specialized topics	Chondough & Chondough, 2022

In addition, figure 3 categorizes the selected articles according to their methodological designs. The distribution of research methods across the 43 articles analysing the impact of AI in the workplace shows a predominance of quantitative methods, with 20 papers employing statistical or numerical analysis to draw conclusions from the data collected. This observation demonstrates a strong preference for measurable, objective outcomes in previous studies of AI's effects. Experimental methods employed in 10 papers suggest a controlled approach to understanding specific causal relationships or test hypotheses directly involving AI technologies. Qualitative methods, used in 7 articles, underscore the importance of subjective, detailed examinations of individual experiences and complex social phenomena related to AI through a constructivist epistemological approach. At last, the category labelled 'other' consists of 6 papers, which adopt either mixed methods, theoretical studies, or non-traditional approaches, reflecting a diversity of research strategies beyond the conventional boundaries. Efforts of conducting this hybrid research may be attributed to the need to adapt to the multifaceted impacts of AI on various aspects of workplace dynamics.

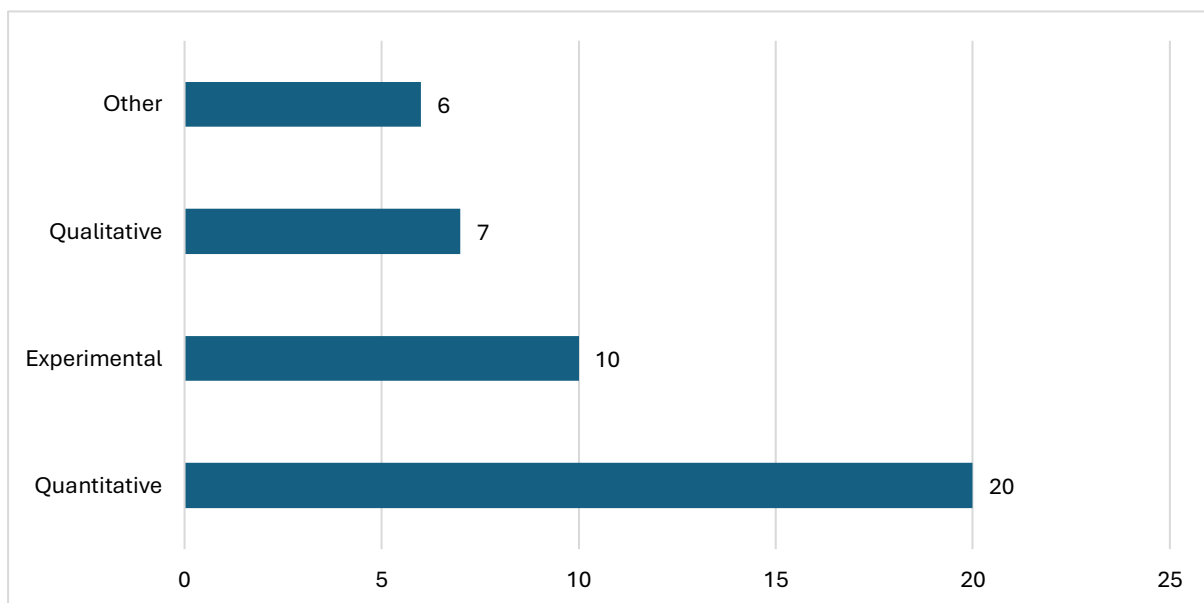


Figure 3. Distribution of Articles by Types of Methodology

3.1.3 Industries & Geolocations

Approaching selected articles' distribution by industries, figure 4 reveals that, as expected, the technology and IT industry leads in the number of studies, reflecting the early and extensive integration of AI technologies in this sector. The focus of these articles centres around exploring both the development and impact of AI on workers, which is at the forefront of technological

innovation. The second-highest number of entries was recorded by the manufacturing industry, which implies the emergence of a significant research interest. Researchers' efforts herein investigate how AI and automation affect manufacturing processes, workers' roles, and productivity. Similar to manufacturing, the finance and banking sector's focus appears to revolve around how AI technologies, such as automated trading systems, risk assessment tools, and customer service automation, influence employee roles and sector regulations. Regardless of the services and education sectors, which had minimal entries, the large number of entries categorized as 'other' indicates a wide array of industries and, again, potentially interdisciplinary studies that do not rigorously fit into any singular industry category. These studies include sector-specific contexts such as logistics, architecture and design, call centres, retail, hospitality, and media and advertising.

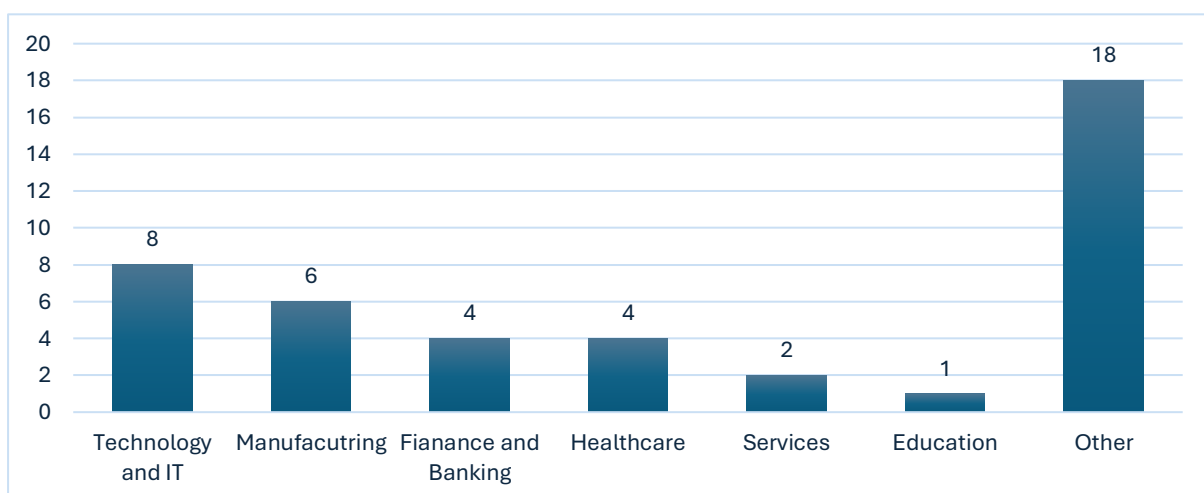


Figure 4. Articles' Distribution by Industries

Geolocation-wise, the geographic distribution of the 43 articles on AI's impact in the workplace reveals a global interest (see Figure 5), with significant contributions from China (17%, n=9), the United States (15%, n=8) and the United Kingdom (7%, n=4), reflecting their roles as AI leaders in the world. Figure 4 also demonstrates that a notable proportion (35%) of studies are not geographically specified, suggesting purely theoretical research. The 'other' (26%) contains studies from various countries including both developed (Germany, n=2; Netherlands, n=1; and Sweden, n=1) and emerging economies (Indonesia, n=1; South Korea, n=1; Nigeria, n=1; Saudi Arabia, n=1; Philippines, n=1; Vietnam, n=1, and Malaysia, n=2; and India n=2), underlining broad international research engagement. This diversity from emerging economies

suggests a growing interest and perhaps unique challenges or opportunities in AI adoption in these regions. This diverse geographic spread indicates a global interest in AI adoption in the workplace, with significant contributions from both developed and emerging economies. However, the high number of geo-unidentified studies could also suggest a need for clearer reporting or categorization in future research. The spread between developed and emerging economies shows a balanced interest, but the specific interest in countries like China and the USA could point towards a concentration of research in places with significant technological infrastructure and investments in AI.

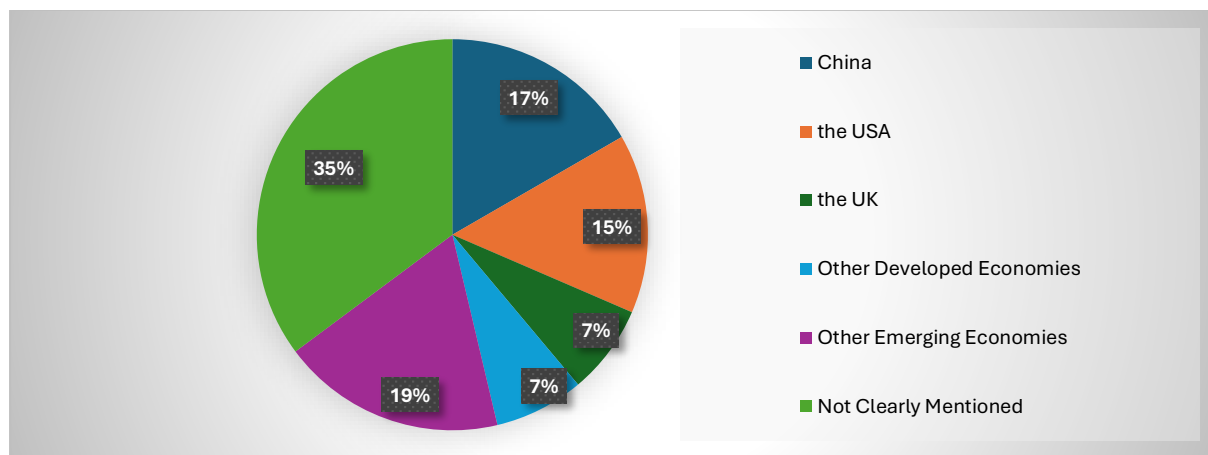


Figure 5. Articles' Distributions based on Countries/Regions

3.2 Literature Review

3.2.1 Definition of AI Across Studies

A thematic review and analysis of the 43 selected articles reveal that 25 studies explicitly conceptualize the definition of AI, showing a rich diversity in interpretations of AI. While AI is broadly defined across the literature, three central thematic perspectives emerge: (1) AI's cognitive advancement and intelligent task performance, (2) AI's impact on humans and employment in workplaces, and (3) AI's technological features, integration within organizations, and innovative capabilities. Notably, some studies conceptualize AI in ways that intersect multiple themes. From the perspective of AI's cognitive and intelligent essence, several studies define AI as mechanisms that stimulate intelligent behaviours in machines (Wijayati et al., 2022), adaptively interpret and respond to data (Cao et al., 2023), and replicate human cognitive processes through learning algorithms and natural language processing (Jeong et al., 2024; Loureiro et al., 2022). These conceptualizations position AI as a tool that facilitates

traditionally human-centered decision-making and problem-solving processes (Chondough & Chondough, 2022; Wilkens, 2020; Malik et al., 2021; Tang et al., 2023a; Almarashda, 2022). Collectively, these perspectives emphasize AI's continuous advancements in cognitive capacity, allowing it to increasingly mimic human intelligence. Beyond its cognitive capabilities, a subset of studies conceptualizes AI in relation to its impact on humans and employment within workplaces. For instance, Sofia et al., (2023) define AI as mechanisms that augment—and in some cases replace—human activities in organizations, leading to shifts in required employee skills and job design. Similarly, Guo et al. (2024) conceptualize AI through its influence on physicians' performance, distinguishing AI's role in automating and augmenting work tasks. Meanwhile, Presbitero and Teng-Calleja (2022) explore AI's influence on employees' job attitudes and self-management practices, portraying it as a potentially autonomy-enabling tool. Wang et al. (2023) take a broader perspective, emphasizing AI's evolution from laboratory research to operational implementation, with a particular focus on its role in facilitating information exchange and supporting human resource management. Some scholars define AI primarily through its positive workplace impacts. For example, Lavazza & Farina (2023) describe AI as a nonbiological reproduction of human behaviour that enhances workplace efficiency. Similarly, Fukumura et al. (2021) frame AI as a technology that aids workplace adjustments and supports employee behaviour. Alnaggar and Adbulkader (2024) highlight AI's role in mediating organizational innovation and improving employees' quality of life, particularly benefiting workers with disabilities. However, other studies adopt a more critical stance. He et al. (2023), for instance, conceptualize AI as embodied robots capable of performing human-based tasks, raising concerns about its potential to undermine employee collaboration and self-esteem.

These varied conceptualizations illustrate the multifaceted nature of AI, reflecting its cognitive capabilities, workplace implications, and broader technological characteristics. The diversity of definitions underscores the evolving understanding of AI in academic discourse and highlights the need for further interdisciplinary exploration to comprehensively capture its complexities.

In addition to the previously discussed themes, some scholars adopt a more general conceptualization of AI, emphasizing its technological features and role in organizational integration and innovation. Jeong et al. (2024), for instance, define AI as a catalyst for organizational innovation, enhancing decision-making efficiency. From a technological

standpoint, AI is described as encompassing advancements in robotics, machine vision, speech recognition, and text generation (Furendal & Jebari, 2023). It is also framed as a variety of automation solutions, albeit with certain limitations arising from technical constraints (Parker & Appel, 2021). Other scholars conceptualize AI as a tool for enhancing worker productivity through data analytics and adaptive functions (Tong et al., 2021; Cao et al., 2023; Tang et al., 2023b) or as a digital voice assistant with learning capabilities (Ossadnik et al., 2023).

A more context-specific perspective is offered by Nguyen and Malik (2022), who define AI in terms of its contributions to organizational service quality, highlighting its competitive advantages and positive effects on employee satisfaction. At a broader scale, AI is conceptualized as a system with predictive intelligence and learning abilities, designed to optimize decision-making processes in organizational environments (Nazareno & Schiff, 2021), thereby exerting a transformative influence on business growth (Braganza et al., 2020). Drawing from the conceptualizations presented in Table 3, AI may be defined as an intelligent system equipped with advanced learning capabilities that mimic human cognitive processes while achieving an elevated level of information-processing efficiency. This definition synthesizes AI's cognitive, technological, and organizational dimensions, offering a comprehensive understanding of its role in contemporary workplaces.

Table 3 – Scholarly Definitions/Conceptualizations of AI

Complete tables are omitted due to space limitations and are available upon request.

3.2.2 Types of AI Researched by Articles

Among the 43 studies, 31 articles specifically tapped into context-specific types of AI. Such diverse types of AI encompass but are not limited to machine learning and chatbots (e.g., Jiang et al., 2022; Braganza et al., 2020); social media marketing AI (e.g., Wijayati et al., 2022); advanced natural language processing tool (e.g., Jeong et al., 2024); generative AI (e.g., Yu & Qi, 2024); error detection AI system (e.g., Passalacqua et al., 2024); engineering and biometric AI (e.g., Lavazza & Farina, 2023); conversational bots for sales (e.g., Jia et al., 2024); and generative and advanced learning AI (e.g., Sofia et al., 2023). To organize these types of AI into coherent themes, the 31 articles can be classified according to AI systems' primary functionality and application areas. Correspondingly, the types of AI observable from the articles are categorized into 1) AI for enhancing decision-making and operational efficiency; 2) AI for cognitive and emotional interaction; 3) AI for workforce augmentation and skill

improvement; 4) AI related to automation and process simplification; 5) advanced robotics and AI in service delivery; and 6) AI with ethical and social implications (see table 4).

Table 4 – Categorization of AI by Types

Complete tables are omitted due to space limitations and are available upon request.

4.1 Benefits of AI Adoption in Workplace on Employees

4.1.1 Growth of Employee Performance and Productivity

The various benefits of AI adoption in the workplace on employees are recorded in Table 5. As indicated by our thematic analysis, most articles reveal a consensus on AI's positive impact in boosting workers' individual productivity and their overall performances. This growth in results came from AI-enabled efficiency in specific tasks, as well as AI's favourable impacts on addressing workplace societal issues, such as inclusion and discrimination. Wijayati et al. (2022) suggest that the adoption of AI enhances employee performance through personalized engagement, significantly when change leadership is strengthened. Specifically, in tasks, such as writing, customer support, and routine processes, AI empowers employees to boost production at reduced time, mainly thanks to greater automation of the work environment (Yu & Qi, 2024; Chondough & Chondough, 2022; Fukumura et al., 2021). Additionally, AI serves as an error-detection mechanism that reduces manual mistakes and human interventions in organizational processes, ultimately increasing productivity and efficiency (Sun, 2022; Lavazza & Farina, 2023). This, in turn, leads to improved product and service quality, along with increased job performances (Cao et al., 2023). Notably, some studies stress the augmentation benefits of AI, which enhances workers' efficiencies (e.g., Monod et al., 2024). Similarly, Guo et al., (2024) highlight that AI-driven augmentation allows employees to engage in more innovative job performances. Such innovation can also be attributed to AI assistances, which supports workers in dealing with untrained customer inquiries, leading to increased organizational sales (Jia et al., 2024). Furthermore, Loureiro et al. (2022) suggest that AI has the potential to foster collaborative intelligence in the context of service industries to boost productivity of employees collectively. Moreover, the overall improvement of organizational performance is somewhat caused by AI's favourable impact on addressing societal problems. Although such impact is less mentioned, Braganza et al. (2020) emphasize AI's positive influence on promoting worker inclusion and preventing gender discrimination and cyberbullying in British workplaces.

4.1.2 Enhancement of HR & General Work Efficiencies

Some studies further examine AI's benefits in enhancing efficiencies of HR functions and specific work processes. For instance, generative AI systems tend to direct to organizations' enhanced retention of employees (Yu & Qi, 2024), such as skilled workers in India's hi-tech sectors (Verma & Singh, 2022). This may be caused by AI's delivery of enhanced HRM practices that favour engagement (Jia & Hou, 2024), constructive performance feedback (Tong et al., 2021), and optimized training, evaluation and recruitment mechanisms (Gao et al., 2023). Besides, AI systems also optimize work processes (Jia & Hou, 2024), in multiple ways, including but not limited to automation of physical and manual tasks at reduced human errors (Sofia et al., 2023), creation of new, advanced work roles (Nordas & Klugl, 2021), and delivery of intelligence which boosts completion of works with refined outcomes (Marikyan et al., 2022). These benefits are particularly pronounced in healthcare and software development industries (e.g., Sofia et al., 2023; Nordas & Klugl, 2021). To a great extent, AI adoption in a professional setting brings about more accurate completion of tasks through data analytical insights, automation, and streamlined workflows.

4.1.3 Workers' Outperformance Based on Transfer of Responsibilities to AI

Notably, several studies emphasize the benefit of AI adoption in the workplace on employees in regard to the potential transfer of conventional tasks performed by humans to AI systems, which redirect employees to more advanced work roles and tasks. It is believed that the transfer of certain work responsibilities to AI frees up employees' time, thereby upgrading employees to more advanced roles and tasks exemplifiable by creative thinking and strategic decision-making (Sun, 2022; Lavazza & Farina, 2023; Parker & Appel, 2021). As employees' time is freed by AI, they are allowed more resources and energy to get engaged with advanced tasks with more critical values (Nordas & Klugl, 2021), which eventuates to stimulation of innovative work behaviours (Verma & Singh, 2022; He et al., 2023). This responsibility transfer also explains employees' outperformance in customer communication, especially when conveying negative news, such as rejected loan application, in the financial service sector (Mayer et al., 2020). Hence, AI taking over those repetitive mundane tasks has strategic advantages for employees in relation to optimized resource management.

4.1.4 Aids in Skill Development, Knowledge Transfer & Learning

Behind employees' improved productivity and workplace performance resulting from AI's impact seems to be their simultaneously-improved skills, eased knowledge management process, and optimized learning experiences grounded in adoption of AI in organizations. Jiang et al. (2022), Wilkens (2020), and Jia and Hou (2024) all stress AI's substantial benefits for employees in terms of the delivery of customized, individualized learning and development opportunities, which enhance their motivations for skill acquisition, elevate their self-efficacy, and lead to their achievements in precision, accuracy and quality of works. AI systems also create a favourable environment where knowledges are shared among employees to boost their productivity and performance (Shaikh et al., 2023). In addition, as Presbitero and Teng-Calleja (2022) mentioned, AI's capability to create new jobs in workplaces translates further into employees' acquisition of new competencies. These upskilling and reskilling benefits are reflected in employees' growth in multiple domains, including but not limited to innovation, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, language competency, and digital literacy (Yin et al., 2024; Alnaggar & Adbulkader, 2023; Sofia et al., 2023; Malik et al., 2021).

4.1.5 Improvement of Mental Health & Wellbeing

The last theme related to AI adoption in workplaces points to those favourable impacts on employees' mental health and physical well-being. Malik et al. (2021) underline AI's potential elevation of employees' job satisfaction through the provision of work-related flexibility (e.g., work-life balance) and autonomy. Parker and Appel (2021) similarly highlight that AI results in higher engagement of employees at reduced pressure during client interaction. These reduced stressors, accompanied by AI-enabled autonomy and organizational support, often attach stress with a benign essence (Loureiro et al., 2022; Ossadnik et al., 2023), whilst creating employees' positive emotions among themselves as well as during interactions with customers (Henkel et al., 2020). Further, given AI's elicitation of helping behaviours, coworkers oftentimes experience a strengthened sense of connection that favors their psychological wellness based on the fulfilment of their social affiliation needs (Tang et al., 2023a). According to Wei and Li (2022), these benefits are more pronounced among low-skilled workers and the workforce born before the 1980s.

Table 5 – Benefits of AI Adoption in Workplace on Employees

Complete tables are omitted due to space limitations and are available upon request.

4.2 Concerns of AI Adoption in Workplace on Employees

4.2.1 Perceived Ethical Risks

Apart from the broad range of beneficial impacts of AI adoption in the workplace on employees, the articles also richly cover concerns about AI's impacts in professional settings on workers (see Table 6). Ethical risks perceived by employees have been articulated as a concern, predominantly cantering on information security, data privacy, surveillance, and moral issues. Various scholars reach a common ground that adoption of AI in the workplace gives rise to increased control and machines' dominance, which may trigger a substantially elevated level of surveillance (Fukumura et al., 2021). The dominance of AI, coupled by the growing level of surveillance-oriented political/social control, raise worries about workers' data privacy, perceived reinforcement of managerial control instead of autonomy and empowerment, as well as information insecurity (Monod et al., 2024; Furendal & Jebari, 2023; Wang et al., 2023; Lavazza & Farina, 2023; Malik et al., 2021; Marikyan et al., 2022). On the other hand, some studies suggest that employees tend to display concerns about the accuracy of AI-generated feedback. Tong et al. (2021), Parker and Appel (2021) both highlight workers' lack of complete trust in AI-powered solutions. Such an issue has a more detrimental effect in workplaces that involve individuals with disabilities, as AI dominance can potentially lead to biases, unfairness (Alnaggar & Adbulkader, 2023), and even procedural injustice (Tong et al., 2021). Externally, AI adoption may be perceived by employees as a source of immoral conduct. Non-transparency of processes and discriminations might occur at victimizing customers' interests, in sectors such as the banking industry (e.g., unethical loan approval/rejection) (Mayer, Strich & Fiedler, 2020).

4.2.2 Job Displacement & Skill Depletion

Another significant concern expressed by employees concerning AI adoption in workplaces revolves around job prospect deterioration and skill depletion. The most frequently highlighted concerns of such include job disruption in certain industries (e.g., logistics) (Jiang et al., 2022), through the forms of job replacement (Tong et al., 2021) and displacement attributable to task automation (Yin et al., 2023; Yu & Qi, 2024; Braganza et al., 2020; Loureiro, Bilro & Neto, 2022), job loss (Chondough & Chondough, 2022), job insecurity (Parker & Appel, 2021; Malik et al., 2021), and uncertainties about changes in work processes (Gao et al., 2023). Both knowledge and blue-collar workers face these perceived risks (Sofia et al., 2023). For instance, Verma and Singh (2022) find that high-skilled Indian workers fear the risk of job replacement

caused by AI. In China's manufacturing sector, automation-focused AI similarly threatens the perceived job security of low-skilled workers (Wei & Li, 2022). At the same time, while some workers' job prospects may not be jeopardized by AI, they do fear depletion of existing skills. Wijayati et al. (2022) articulate how the emergence of AI transforms human roles into machines, driving an underestimation of human capabilities in the Indonesian banking and service sectors, and Passalacqua et al. (2024) elaborate on concern about humans' loss of critical thinking, creative problem-solving, human and adaptability skills based on overdependence on AI. In the scenario of AI-enabled augmentation, unequal effects on job skills have been additionally observed by Jia et al. (2024), explicitly disadvantaging low-skilled employees. These issues tend to result in a heightened level of turnover and workforce frustration (Presbitero & Teng-Calleja, 2022).

4.2.3 Negative Impacts on Wellbeing

Negative impacts of AI adoption in the workplace on employees' well-being also represent a prominent and intensively researched area. Such unintended effects manifest in psychological impacts such as job dissatisfaction and anxiety, fears exemplified by technological obsolescence, and the emergence of new stressors such as workload increases at reduced autonomy. Despite the benefits of AI adoption, its side effects are displayed in the form of employees' feelings of obsolescence, cognitive overload, increased pressure from work (Joeng et al., 2024; Nazareno & Schiff, 2021), concerns about job prospect (Wang, Xing & Zhang, 2023), reduced sense of control and autonomy (He et al., 2023; Furendal & Jebari, 2023; Wang, Xing & Zhang, 2023), undermined self-esteem (He et al., 2023), feeling of loneliness (Tang et al., 2023a), and thereby decreased job satisfaction and health (Jeong et al., 2024; Furendal & Jebari, 2023). Herein, stressors brought by AI adoption typically arise from the need of workers to adapt to new technology (Henkel et al., 2020), increased job demand (Shaikh et al., 2023), and technostress in the form of growing complexity of jobs or tasks (Malik et al., 2021). Plus, employees have been reportedly feeling frustration about the weakened relational nature of psychological contracts and, therefore a reduced engagement (Braganza et al., 2010), as well as managers' greater trust in AI than in humans (Einola et al., 2023). Such negative feelings are most pronounced in scenarios where employees lose control over AI (Marikyan et al., 2022) and when their interaction with AI fails (Almarashda., 2022).

4.2.4 Decrease of Work Quality

At last, some studies underline employees' the 'side effect' of AI adoption on work quality, given the potentiality of technical error and breakdown (Chondough & Chondough, 2003), along with the stimulation of vicious workplace competition. According to Furendal and Jebari (2023), AI will likely encourage cutting-corner and human-stunting practices in a professional setting. At the same time, overly relying on AI may reduce employees' task performance, which, accompanied by technical faults of AI systems, can result in the drastic decline in the quality of work and task accuracy.

Table 6 – Concerns of AI adoption in Workplace on Employees

Complete tables are omitted due to space limitations and are available upon request.

5. Limitations & Future Research Directions

While the academic contributions and practical significance of this review are acknowledged, distinct limitations from the review can also be observed. Most limitations identifiable from the articles centre around specific methodological imperfections embedded in deficient research design and sample size; the need to expand the scope of studies to enhance the generalizability of findings in different geographic, industrial, and demographic contexts; and the inclusion of more specific variables or factors to enhance the depth of research insights. Correspondingly, to tackle the last research question, a thematic analysis is conducted to draw codes and themes on the studies' future research agenda in relation to the impact of AI adoption in the workplace on employees. The results of such analysis are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7 – Summative Overview of Included Studies' Future Research Directions

Complete tables are omitted due to space limitations and are available upon request.

Methodological improvements, whether through the introduction of novel research designs or the refinement of existing methodologies, constitute a critical theme in the literature. Eighteen articles explicitly address areas within their studies that warrant methodological enhancement. For example, Wang et al. (2023) emphasize the necessity of a longitudinal study to assess the evolving impact of AI-driven technologies on employees' responsibilities over time. Similar recommendations are echoed in the works of Nguyen & Malik (2022), Wei & Li (2022), Verma & Singh (2022), Jia and Hou (2024), Marikyan et al. (2022), Guo et al. (2024), and Passalacqua et al. (2024). In addition to these calls for longitudinal investigations, several

studies highlight the importance of establishing causal relationships between AI adoption and employees' cognitive and behavioural responses (Nazareno & Schiff, 2021; Jia & Hou, 2024; Guo et al., 2024). Addressing causality in this context is imperative for advancing scholarly understanding, as it enables researchers to explain the mechanisms through which AI adoption influences employee experiences and workplace dynamics over extended periods. These methodological improvements are expected to provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of AI implementation in organizational settings by clarifying both temporal trends and underlying cause-effect relationships among key variables.

Beyond these identified methodological improvements, a critical yet relatively underexplored track for future research lies in the adoption of more integrative and interdisciplinary approaches. Specifically, future studies would benefit from synthesizing insights from disciplines such as sociology, psychology, technology studies, and organizational behaviour to cultivate a more comprehensive and theoretically enriched understanding of AI's complicated impact on employees. Despite the growing body of research, this interdisciplinary perspective remains notably underrepresented among the 43 reviewed articles. Encouraging such methodological pluralism will not only enhance analytical depth but also foster a more comprehensive conceptualization of AI's implications in contemporary workplaces.

Conversely, the majority of future research recommendations in the reviewed articles focus on broadening the scope of impact studies. Specifically, studies emphasize the need for further investigation into a wider range of workplace and worker-oriented dynamics influenced by AI adoption. Several studies suggest that the impact of AI extends beyond the aspects examined in existing research and highlight additional areas warranting scholarly attention. These include, but are not limited to, the exploration of alternative pathways through which AI affects employees' mental health, such as its role in career progression and promotion (Wei & Li, 2022); the antecedents influencing employees' collaboration with AI (He et al., 2023); and the incorporation of trust as a fundamental variable in AI-related assessments (Loureiro, et al., 2022; Fukumura et al., 2021; Wijayati et al., 2022).

Furthermore, several studies advocate for an in-depth examination of AI's diverse forms and modes of presentation and their respective impacts on workplace dynamics (Tang et al., 2023b). Other propose integrating additional intermediary moderating or mediating variables—such as workplace peer support and corporate culture—to better capture the complex interactions between AI adoption and employee experiences (Nguyen & Malik, 2022; Sun, 2022; Jiang et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2023a; Presbitero & Teng-Calleja, 2022; Cao et al., 2023). In addition, three studies (Einola et al., 2023; Jia et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2023) underscore the importance of incorporating advancements in AI technology or improvements in existing systems into empirical investigations. The advocacy for extending the boundaries of impact studies is closely intertwined with calls for a more comprehensive consideration of technological advancements. Given that AI continuously evolves, acquiring new technical characteristics, its transformation is likely to generate novel workplace dynamics and unforeseen effects on employees. Consequently, ensuring that future research systematically monitors and integrates AI's ongoing technological progress while concurrently expanding the scope of impact studies is essential for capturing the full range of AI's implications in organizational settings.

Moreover, scholars emphasize the need for future research to incorporate a broader range of employee groups, workplace contexts (both cultural and geographic), and industries to enhance the scope, generalizability, and applicability of research findings. This recommendation constitutes another frequently cited research agenda in the reviewed literature. Several studies advocate for testing the validity of existing findings across various industries, as evident in the works of Einola et al. (2023); Nordas & Klugl (2001); Presbitero & Teng-Calleja (2022); and Alnaggar & Adbulkader (2024). Similarly, multiple studies suggest adopting a cross-cultural, cross-context, cross-cohort, and cross-country research approach to better capture the complexities of AI's impact in diverse environments. Such recommendations are present in studies by Jeong et al. (2024); Nguyen & Malik (2022); Parker and Appel (2021); Shaikh et al. (2023); Gao et al. (2023); Henkel et al. (2020); Malik et al. (2021); and Guo et al. (2024). These methodological advancements are crucial for comprehensively exploring and monitoring the evolving impact of AI on employees in varying settings, where contextual factors—such as cultural norms, workplace conditions, workforce dynamics, and industry-specific characteristics—potentially play essential roles. Expanding the scope of AI impact studies in this manner is expected to yield novel insights into the diverse ways AI shapes employee experiences across different environments. By accounting for contextual diversity, future

research can move towards constructing a more comprehensive academic understanding of AI's implications in contemporary workplaces.

Finally, much like the limited research agenda proposed by a small number of articles addressing AI's technological advancements, only four studies explicitly advocate for increased exploratory efforts into the ethical implications and regulatory requirements of AI in contemporary workplaces. Notably, Monod et al. (2024), Alnaggar & Adbulkader (2024), and Cao et al. (2023) emphasize the necessity of comprehensively understanding AI's ethical controversies, potential negative consequences, and so-called 'dark sides' in workplace environments. These concerns are particularly related to issues such as data privacy, which may increasingly require regulatory interventions as AI continues to evolve. The relatively scarce attention given to this research direction suggests a gap in academic awareness regarding the need to balance AI adoption in workplaces with strategic measures to mitigate its unintended consequences. This underscores an important avenue for future research, particularly in addressing the ethical issues and governance challenges posed by AI integration in workplaces. Despite the extensive contributions from the 43 reviewed articles, the continuous evolution of AI technologies, along with the potential expansion of impact studies, the improvement of research methodologies, the contextual variation in AI, and the critical need for ethical scrutiny, collectively underscore the necessity of sustained academic inquiry. As AI continues to reshape workplace dynamics, ongoing research will be essential in ensuring a comprehensive and well-regulated approach to its adoption and implications.

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