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Artificial Intelligence and Employee Well-Being: Balancing Technological Progressions with Human-Centric Workplace Strategies, a Research Agenda

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Artificial intelligence (AI) enabled technologies are now corporate organisations' top priorities due to the availability of large data and the advent of the Internet of Things during the past ten years. AI is becoming a crucial component of business model innovation, process transformation, disruption, and gaining a competitive edge for companies adopting digital and data-centric cultures. This study investigates the implications of smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and algorithms (STARA) on the future of work, with a particular emphasis on employee well-being and workplace dynamics. As futurists project that by 2025, 52% of all work functions will be automated, replacing one-third of current jobs, the rapid advancement of STARA creates both opportunities and risks. While automation has the potential to produce 133 million new jobs, it also threatens to eliminate 75 million employments, raising employee anxieties about job security and future roles. Despite the rising volume of studies on smart automation, there is still a major vacuum in our understanding of its implications on employees' mental health, well-being, and the entire workplace. This study investigates STARA's dual influence: while technology reduces physical strain and automates tedious jobs, it also raises new difficulties such as job displacement concerns and shifts in worker dynamics. The study emphasizes the need of human resource professionals to develop methods that strike a balance between technological integration and employee assistance. Key areas of focus include providing reskilling opportunities, adopting mental health initiatives, and encouraging open conversation regarding AI's expanding role in the workforce. By addressing these concerns, organisations may build a more resilient workforce that is better suited to the fourth industrial revolution. The study intends to contribute to a better understanding of how organisations may safeguard and improve employee well-being in the face of fast technological change, ensuring that STARA integration encourages innovation while simultaneously supporting a healthy and engaged workforce.

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INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is marked by the widespread adoption of transformative technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), big data, machine learning, mobile technology, the Internet of Things (IoT), geo-tagging, virtual reality (VR), speech recognition, and biometrics. These innovations are fundamentally altering how businesses operate at both local and global levels, reshaping work creation, workforce engagement, and workplace processes (Oosthuizen, 2022). Innovation is widely recognized as a key driver of economic transformation (Xie & Wang, 2020). As we enter the era of Industry 4.0, characterized by cyber-physical systems, there is increased focus on leveraging advanced robotics and AI to digitally transform enterprises (Rampersad, 2020). However, realizing the full benefits of Industry 4.0 is not just a technological challenge; it also involves addressing human factors, particularly through upskilling and managing significant change (Berger, Von Briel, Davidsson, & Kuckertz, 2019). The ability to adapt to and competently use new technologies will be critical for workers to thrive and survive in the rapidly evolving workplace of the future (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

Despite the potential for enhanced productivity and safety, there is widespread concern that automation and robotics, such as collaborative robots (cobots), may replace human jobs if the transition of skills is not properly managed. This wave of innovation, commonly referred to as the

Fourth Industrial Revolution, has significant implications for employee well-being and mental health. The displacement of human roles by AI and automation, particularly in customer-facing services and decision-making processes, can lead to feelings of job insecurity, resulting in stress, low morale, and a sense of obsolescence. These issues can, in turn, negatively impact mental health.

Moreover, the rapid pace of technological change requires continuous adaptability, which can further strain employees. To mitigate these challenges, organizations must prioritize employee well-being by offering upskilling opportunities, mental health support, and clear communication about AI's evolving role in the workplace. Addressing these concerns can help foster a work environment where employees feel secure, valued, and empowered to succeed alongside AI advancements (Cahill, Howard, Huang, Ye, Ralph, & Dillon, 2021; Haar & Brougham, 2021).

Futurologists predict that smart technology, artificial intelligence (AI), robots, and algorithms (STARA) could take over one-third of current jobs. By 2025, bots are expected to handle 52% of all work tasks—nearly double the proportion from 2019. Although an estimated 75 million jobs may be lost between 2019 and 2022 due to rapid advances in computing, algorithms, and machine learning, these losses could be offset by the creation of 133 million new jobs (Oosthuizen, 2019; Oosthuizen, 2022). The concept of

"STARA awareness" measures the extent to which workers fear these technological advancements might replace them in the workplace.

Despite the surge in research on smart automation, including robotics and AI, human resource professionals still lack a deep understanding of how these innovations will impact both organizations and employees. While robots can reduce physical strain and handle repetitive tasks, they also present new challenges, such as concerns about job displacement and shifts in workforce dynamics. As robots become more prevalent across various industries, it is essential to acknowledge their diverse effects, particularly on employee well-being.

To ensure a successful integration of robotic technologies, organizations must prioritize initiatives that support and enhance employee well-being. This includes offering reskilling opportunities, implementing mental health programs, and fostering open, effective communication. These strategies can help blend the adoption of robotic technology with efforts to maintain a motivated and healthy workforce (Tripathi, Sawant, Kaur, Almahairah, Chandel, & Balakumar, 2024; Terminio & Rimbau Gilabert, 2018).

Today, artificial intelligence (AI) is a major driver of innovation, increasingly permeating various services. AI refers to the capabilities of computers that mimic aspects of human intelligence (HI). In many areas of life, automation has become commonplace: robots now assist in homes, healthcare facilities, hotels, and restaurants; virtual bots enable self-service in customer support; big data algorithms replace investment advisors; and social robots or virtual assistants, like Pepper, are used to greet customers in service roles. These advancements exemplify the ongoing transformation of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Huang & Rust, 2018).

In 2019, Oracle and Future Workplace conducted a survey involving 8,370 managers, HR directors, and employees across ten countries, revealing

several notable insights. The use of AI in the workplace had increased significantly, rising from 32% in 2018 to 50%. Despite this growth, 81% of HR leaders and 76% of employees reported struggling to keep up with the rapid pace of technological advancements. Interestingly, the survey found that 64% of employees trusted a robot more than their human manager. Additionally, employees expressed a clear desire for a more user-friendly AI experience at work. Specifically, 34% wanted improved user interfaces, 30% sought training focused on AI best practices, and another 30% desired personalized AI experiences tailored to their individual behavior (Chowdhury et al., 2023).

The rise of robotics, automation, and artificial intelligence (RAAI) is fundamentally altering the nature of work. It is predicted that up to 47% of current jobs in the U.S. may become obsolete within the next five to fifteen years. The effect of RAAI's cognitive capabilities on workers' job satisfaction and sense of self-worth could have significant societal and corporate implications. While there is ongoing debate about whether job losses should be a major concern or whether reskilling efforts alone can address these changes, the specific effects of RAAI on individual employees remain underexplored in academic research (Terminio & Rimbau Gilabert, 2018).

Using a worldwide perspective on HRM's use of AI and other radical technologies, this review gives a thorough evaluation of the existing literature to address the following questions:

- How do workers' perceptions of job security and general well-being change as smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and algorithms (STARA) become more prevalent in the workplace?
- In what ways, can reskilling opportunities and mental health programs help to mitigate the negative effects of STARA on employee well-being?
- How can human resource professionals efficiently manage and convey the shift towards increased automation and AI

integration while preserving employee engagement and mental health throughout the fourth industrial revolution?

Research Gap: Many researchers worry that RAAI technologies might become so advanced that they not only replace human employees but also become too complex for human oversight (Bhargava, Bester, & Bolton, 2021; Webster, & Ivanov, 2019; Raj, & Seamans, 2019; Plastino, & Purdy, 2018). For instance, Castelveccchi (2016) noted that in the 1990s, AI was often seen as a "black box" that could not be fully understood. This underscores the importance of having humans and AI work collaboratively, emphasizing the need to recruit employees with skills that complement these technologies (Plastino and Purdy 2018). Such advancements raise concerns about how RAAI may impact job security, job satisfaction, and employability for employees, and how it might affect employers' challenges in recruiting, retaining, and managing their workforce. To date, most research on the impact of RAAI technologies has been quantitative, lacking insights into the unique perspectives of end-users.

In this respect, the research gap is the lack of a thorough understanding and useful methods among HR professionals concerning the effects of Robots, Artificial Intelligence, Smart Technology, and Algorithms (STARA) on workplace dynamics and employee well-being. Technological upgrades and automation linked to the fourth industrial revolution have been extensively studied, but little has been learnt about how these developments affect employee mental wellness, sense of job security, and general well-being. Particularly, more thorough research is required to determine how companies can successfully implement STARA while also promoting employee wellbeing through mental health programs, reskilling opportunities, and open communication strategies. Closing this gap is essential to creating comprehensive strategies that let workers coexist peacefully with automation and artificial intelligence in the constantly changing workplaces.

Arslan, Cooper, Khan, Golgeci, & Ali, (2022) agree that a variety of industries and organisational tasks exhibit the interaction and cooperation between human workers and robots when both are functioning as members of a team. This creates special difficulties for HRM departments in modern workplaces, as they must deal with employees' anxiety about collaborating with AI, particularly in light of potential job losses and the challenging dynamics involved in developing a relationship of trust between human employees and AI-enabled robots. To preserve the collaborative spirit and facilitate future performance reviews of staff members, HRM personnel must also carefully convey and oversee the task fulfilment expectations of human workers with their AI-enabled robot coworkers. The research conducted by Kong, Yuan, Baruch, Bu, Jiang, and Wang (2021) serves as an important reminder for managers on the possible adverse effects of artificial intelligence on human capital. It highlights how crucial it is to take into account both the possible benefits of AI and the risks it poses to human resources. Managers must give staff members the help and resources they need in order to support their workforce efficiently and reduce the hazards related to AI (Raj, & Seamans, 2019).

Leading artificial intelligence (AI) email generator GMPlus is transforming business communication and showcasing the flexibility of AI in human resource management (HRM). Its uses range from improving internal communications to expediting the recruitment process, all of which lead to more effective and efficient workflows. Organisations can greatly enhance their communication strategies and create a more engaging and productive workplaces by incorporating GMPlus into HR systems (Khare, 2024). Employee well-being may be directly affected by this increased communication. Effective and transparent communication lowers stress and misconceptions, creating a happier work environment. Additionally, GMPlus frees up staff time for more purposeful work by automating repetitive tasks, which may lessen burnout and boost job

satisfaction. As AI develops, solutions such as GMPlus are improving workflow effectiveness and contributing to employee well-being by fostering an atmosphere in the workplace where technology enhances and complements human strengths.

The development of artificial intelligence and machine learning is putting human resources on the precipice of a revolutionary era. With their creative approaches to time-honored problems and potential for unprecedented efficiency, these technologies have the potential to completely transform HR procedures. Although AI and ML have been widely integrated into many different industries, their influence on human resources (HR) is especially noteworthy. Artificial intellect (AI) describes systems or machines that mimic human intellect by performing activities like learning, problem-solving, and decision-making. AI's machine learning field uses data analysis methods to automate the creation of analytical models. This reduces the amount of human input required for computers to learn from data, identify patterns, and make judgements. These technologies are being used more and more in HR, improving human capabilities and streamlining HR processes. In HR, the metaverse is emerging as a revolutionary innovation that goes beyond AI and ML. Interactive experiences provided by this virtual reality environment have the potential to completely transform HR processes including hiring, onboarding, and training (The DataTech Labs Inc, 2023). Artificial Intelligence (AI) encompasses a broad range of technologies that provide businesses numerous benefits in terms of increased revenue. In recent years, with an abundance of data and a significant surge in processing power, businesses have been looking more and more to artificial intelligence (AI) to provide economic value. However, businesses are still finding it difficult to integrate and use AI in their daily operations. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding is required due to the lack of a coherent understanding of how AI technologies create business value and what kind of business value is expected (Enholm, Papagiannidis, Mikalef, & Krogstie, 2022).

Travel, hospitality, and leisure (THL) are being driven by smart technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics. These technologies are opening up new business models, customer touchpoints, and potential for value (co-)creation. Key corporate operations are supported by these technologies, which also enable crucial governance features and improve human interactions. Robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) can offer better client experiences and organised, automated services (Koo, Xiang, Gretzel, & Sigala, 2021). From the standpoint of the company, they facilitate enhanced employee productivity and efficiency, secure data collecting, rich service delivery, and consumer engagement and interaction. AI and robotics expand the scope of action, facilitate the adoption of new governance models, and increase efficiency to unprecedented heights from a governance standpoint (Terminio, & Rimbau Gilabert, 2018; Webster, & Ivanov, 2019).

Although AI promises to increase development and productivity, its effects on economies and society are unpredictable, depending on the sectors and employment categories it affects, and it may even widen existing gaps. Artificial intelligence (AI) is expected to unleash a positive productivity shock that will expand countries' production frontiers, reallocate labour and capital, and perhaps cause fundamental changes in a wide range of jobs and sectors (Oosthuizen, 2022). Artificial Intelligence has unparalleled prospects for resolving convoluted issues, calibrating forecasts, refining judgement, stimulating financial expansion, and augmenting quality of life. Nonetheless, the ramifications for economies and society are uncertain, owing to its broad and adaptive relevance in a variety of disciplines. Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to a wide range of technologies targeted at giving robots the ability to detect, interpret, act, and learn in order to mimic human cognitive processes. Gen AI, or generative artificial intelligence, refers to a wide range of systems, including highly developed large language models capable of producing new content, such as text and graphics, based on extensive training data. In contrast, other AI

models are highly specialised and focus on certain tasks such as pattern recognition. Automation differs from original material in that it focusses on streamlining repeated activities to boost production. The area of AI is changing quickly, particularly with the introduction of Gen AI, which has expanded AI's possible uses. This implies that the consequences will spread to alter job functions and the division of labour (Cramarencu, Burcă-Voicu & Dabija, 2023; Webster & Ivanov, 2020).

The multidisciplinary field of artificial intelligence (AI) incorporates concepts from computer science, statistics, linguistics, cognitive psychology, decision theory, neurological sciences, and computer engineering. The contemporary discipline of neural networks and Artificial Intelligence began in 1956 with an amateur summer workshop organised by Dartmouth College (Howard, 2019). Since then, e-commerce websites, Internet searches, product and service recommender systems, speech and picture recognition, sensor technologies, robotic devices, and cognitive decision support systems have all benefited from the use of machine learning (ML), a sub discipline of artificial intelligence. As more applications are integrated into everyday life, AI is predicted to have a globally transformative influence on economic and social structures (Mer, 2023; Dirican, 2015; Brougham, & Haar, 2018). The progress in technology has led to the replacement of human labour by robots in industry since the 19th century. They cost less and operate with more precision than humans. Human labour will be replaced by innovative alternatives like 3D printers and these production robots' capacity for self-learning (Wisskirchen, Biacabe, Bormann, Muntz, Niehaus, Soler, & Von Brauchitsch, 2017). Advances in robotics, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and sensors have made it possible for machines to automate functions that were previously thought to be immune from disruption. These tasks include thinking, learning, emotion recognition, implicit judgement, and even illness diagnosis. The ethical concerns surrounding artificial intelligence and

corporate automation—including who will be impacted and how—remain poorly understood in spite of these progressions (Wright, & Schultz, 2018).

Future workplaces with innovative AI applications present significant concerns for worker safety and health. Occupational research and practice will become more proactive by exercising strategic foresight regarding AI workplace applications. It will be possible to lessen the negative consequences of AI on worker safety, health, and well-being by being aware of the opportunities and difficulties it presents for the future of work (Howard, 2019; Cramarencu, Burcă-Voicu, & Dabija, 2023; Haar, & Brougham, 2021; Budhwar, Malik, De Silva, & Thevisuthan, 2022). While AI offers strong tools to improve efficiency and productivity, emotional intelligence is still vital to relationship management, creating a happy workplace, and guaranteeing the wellbeing of employees. The best workplaces, in the eyes of employees, combine both types of intelligence in a seamless way: AI effectively handles monotonous and technical duties, while Emotional Intelligence directs the human-centered parts of work. This well-rounded strategy guarantees a comprehensive and rewarding work experience, where human empathy and technology work in harmony to create an engaging workplace (Prentice, Dominique Lopes, & Wang, 2019).

The promotion of wellness is significantly aided by work. Nevertheless, it may also be deleterious to our physical and mental health, resulting in burnout, stress, exhaustion, and poor collaboration and engagement. Many businesses view their employees as valuable assets. The "human factor"—that is, the connection between employee well-being and productivity—as well as the technology and work management procedures that are designed to support it are commonly overlooked in operations management. Risks and opportunities linked to modern employment and workforce practices and patterns, such as the flexible and hybrid workforce, as well as the new automation and artificial intelligence (AI)

technologies that enable job efficiency and performance management for the workforce and business processes. Cahill, Howard, Huang, Ye, Ralph, and Dillon's 2021 idea of "intelligent work" defines work as smart, healthy, ethical, and safe. Additionally, it is supported by principles of workplace health protection and promotion, as well as innovations in robotics and artificial intelligence technology (Cahill, et al., 2021).

Research Methodology

In order to obtain a thorough understanding of the implications of STARA (smart technology, artificial intelligence, robotics, and algorithms) on the future of work, this study will take a mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methods with a focus on workplace dynamics and employee well-being. By examining quantitative trends in addition to individual experiences and viewpoints, the mixed-method approach will facilitate a comprehensive analysis and provide a fair assessment of the ways in which STARA technologies impact automation, job displacement, and workplace dynamics.

Obtaining numerical data to find trends, patterns, and connections between automation and worker well-being will be the main goal of the quantitative aspect. It will specifically look at how the implementation of STARA technologies affects workplace dynamics and job displacement, with a focus on finding links between these aspects and worker mental health. This will offer quantifiable insights into how much of an influence STARA technologies have on different businesses, especially those that are going through major digital change.

On the other hand, focus groups and in-depth interviews will be part of the qualitative method. This will enable a more thorough investigation of workers' thoughts, emotions, and experiences with the incorporation of STARA technology in their workplaces. The qualitative phase will concentrate on how their general well-being, job stability, and mental health are impacted by automation. In order to understand their

viewpoints on the organisational policies and tactics they use to control the effects of automation on their workforce, it will also involve company leaders and human resource (HR) specialists. Gogo & Musonda (2022) defined the exploratory sequential technique as a progressive strategy used when quantitative (QUAN) results are supplemented by qualitative (QUAL) data. In this approach, QUAN data is analyzed first, followed by the QUAL data, which is used to explain and interpret the QUAN findings. This technique differs from the explanatory sequential approach, which focuses on validating a concept, while the exploratory method prioritizes the discovery of new ideas through QUAL analysis. This approach is especially favored in projects involving the development of new instruments, as it allows researchers to design the instrument based on QUAL data and later validate it through QUAN analysis (Márquez, & Delgado, 2017).

An exploratory sequential design will be used in this study's research methodology. In order to investigate vital topics like employee anxiety, job dynamics, and mental health in connection to STARA technologies, the qualitative phase will first comprise holding focus groups and interviews with staff members, HR specialists, and business executives. A survey will then be designed with the information acquired from this phase in mind. In order to get more information about how STARA affects the workplace, this survey will be sent to a wider sample of workers in a variety of businesses that have embraced AI-enabled technologies.

The study's participants include employees in industries undergoing digital transformation, HR specialists who can offer insights into organisations, and futurists and business executives who can contribute viewpoints on how AI will impact the nature of work in the future. The intentional selection of sample units from a population subset that is most knowledgeable or pertinent to the feature of interest is known as purposeful sampling. For estimating location parameters and their corresponding variances in this context, nonparametric bootstrap techniques

are recommended (Guarte, & Barrios, 2006; Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, & Walker, 2020).

Purposive sampling will be employed for the qualitative phase, with employees of STARA-integrated organisations being the target population. Stratified random sampling will be used in the quantitative phase to guarantee a representative sample from various organisational levels and industries, particularly those impacted by technological development. The goal of this mixed-method approach is to produce a thorough understanding of how STARA affects workplace dynamics and employee well-being.

CONCLUSION

Integration of cutting-edge technology like automation, robots, and artificial intelligence (AI) is enabling the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which is causing revolutionary changes in many industries. These developments pose serious issues for workers even as they have the potential to revolutionise global corporate operations and increase productivity. As automation and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies proliferate, worries about job loss, worker welfare, and the effects these quick changes may have on mental health have gained traction. The cognitive powers of RAAI (Robotics, Automation, and Artificial Intelligence) technologies raise concerns about the nature of work in the future and the place of human labour in an automated society by potentially affecting employees' feeling of self-worth, job satisfaction, and general mental health. The widespread adoption of these technologies necessitates careful consideration of the human factors involved, notwithstanding the promise of enhanced efficiency. The replacement of traditional roles by AI and automation may lead to stress, low morale, and worry regarding job security among employees. Furthermore, workers may find it intimidating to continue adapting and upskilling due to the quick speed of technological change. Organisations must put employee well-being first by supporting mental health programs, offering reskilling opportunities, and keeping lines of communication open about how

technology is changing the workplace in order to lessen these consequences. Businesses must strike a balance between technical improvements and human factor as the 4IR develops to ensure that workers are prepared to flourish alongside automation and artificial intelligence. To close the knowledge gaps on how RAAI impacts mental health, job satisfaction, and the dynamics of the workforce as a whole, future study must examine the effects of these technologies on specific individuals. Companies may create an environment where technology improves human experience rather than detracts from it by doing this.

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