Research Article

Revolutionizing Hr: Unraveling Hr Professionals' Perspectives On Ai Integration Through Qualitative Insights

Dr. Uma Warrier

Professor of OB and HR –CMS Bschool, Jain University, Bangalore, Karnataka, India, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1476-8040

umawarrier@cms.ac.in

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The use of Artificial intelligence (AI) in Human Resource Management (HRM) has become increasingly popular and has the potential to greatly impact HR professionals across various industries. This study aims to comprehensively understand how HR professionals perceive the use of AI in the HRM field. Through semi-structured interviews with 19 HR professionals from different industries, their responses were thematically analyzed. The research identifies four central themes that demonstrate the multifaceted role of AI in HRM: *Utility of AI in HR Functions, AI Application in HRM, Upskilling for AI, and Innovative HR Practices* using MAXQDA**.** This qualitative study provides valuable insights into how professionals across different industries perceive, adopt, and adapt AI within the HRM domain. The identified themes highlight both the opportunities and challenges AI poses in HRM, and offer valuable insights for HR practitioners, educators, and policymakers seeking to maximize AI's potential in HRM. The study provides evidence in support of the Resource Based View theory for the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Human Resource Management (HRM). Furthermore, it proposes a comprehensive research agenda for investigating the mechanisms underlying the adoption and integration of AI in HRM. **Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Human Resource Management , Semi-structured Interview, Thematic Analysis, Resource Based View(RBV).

INTRODUCTION:

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in recent years has revolutionized technology and efficiency across various industries and businesses (Agarwal et al., 2022). One area in particular, Human Resource Management (HRM), has been significantly impacted by the potential of AI-powered solutions (Pandey et al., 2023). AI can optimize processes, augment decision-making, and elevate employee experiences, increasing interest in its implementation. Nevertheless, as AI usage in HRM continues to gain traction, it's crucial to comprehend how HR practitioners perceive and navigate this transformational change.

This qualitative research paper delves into the perceptions and experiences of HR professionals as they encounter the increasing presence of AI in their field. As AI technologies evolve, HR professionals across diverse industries face opportunities and challenges, each demanding a nuanced understanding (Budhwar et al., 2023). Therefore, this study seeks to bridge a crucial research gap by comprehensively exploring how HR professionals perceive the integration of AI in HRM and how these perceptions manifest within their practices.

While existing literature acknowledges the potential of AI in HRM, there is a notable gap in our understanding of how HR professionals, who serve as critical drivers of HRM practices, perceive the utilization of AI (Minbaeva, 2021). Previous research has primarily focused on the technical aspects of

AI implementation (Strohm et al.,2020) or its impact on organizational outcomes(Chatterjee et al., 2021; Lee et al.,2023), leaving a dearth of qualitative insights into the human aspect of this integration.

Although AI has undoubtedly impacted HRM, there remains a dearth of in-depth exploration into the experiences of HR professionals from diverse industries in this field. Furthermore, conceptual studies are prevalent rather than practical research, indicating a gap in our understanding of the operational aspects of AI in HRM. This research identifies a knowledge and methodological gap and acknowledges that the integration of AI may yield a variety of perspectives shaped by distinct industry demands, organizational cultures, and individual backgrounds. Consequently, this study aims to offer a comprehensive perspective by taking into account these contextual factors.

In light of the identified research gaps, this qualitative research paper aims to answer the following research questions from a multi industry perspective:

1. How do HR professionals perceive the utility of AI in HR functions within their respective industries?

2. How do HR professionals perceive the need for upskilling and adaptation in response to AI integration in HRM?

3. What innovative HR practices and strategies are being employed or envisioned by HR professionals to maximize the potential benefits of AI in HRM?

By addressing these research questions through semi-structured interviews with 11 HR professionals representing diverse industries, this research paper aims to uncover valuable insights into the multifaceted role of AI in HRM and provide guidance for HR practitioners, educators, and policymakers seeking to navigate this transformative landscape effectively

2. Theoretical framework and review of literature

The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of HR professionals on the integration of AI in HRM through qualitative interviews. The research is guided by the Resource-Based View (RBV) proposed by Barney (1991). This theoretical framework emphasizes the importance of HR professionals as valuable resources and AI as a technological capability. RBV is focused on the concept of resources and capabilities within organizations and suggests that businesses can gain a competitive advantage by acquiring, developing, and deploying unique and valuable resources. In this study, HR professionals are considered key resources, and AI is an emerging technological capability that can be integrated into HR functions. The RBV theory provides a framework for understanding how HR professionals view AI as a capability and how its integration impacts HRM practices.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

AI in Human Resource Management (HRM):

The use of AI in HRM has gained traction due to its potential to streamline HR processes, improve decision-making, and enhance the overall employee experience (Prikshat et al., 2023; Marler & Boudreau, 2017). AI applications in HRM include talent acquisition through AI-driven resume screening, employee engagement measurement, and predictive analytics for turnover prediction (Kaushal et al.,2021; Davenport, Harris, & Shapiro, 2010). A systematic review (Mer & Srivastava, 2023). underscores the importance of AI in the form of wearable technology, digital biomarkers in measuring employee engagement . The implementation of AI technologies in HRM has become more prevalent in recent times, with organizations increasingly adopting AI-driven tools for talent acquisition and workforce analytics (Smith & Johnson, 2020). AI offers the potential for automating routine tasks, enhancing employee experiences, and providing data-driven insights for strategic decision-making. This has significant implications for HR professionals, as it enables them to optimize their operations and improve organizational performance. Researchers have highlighted the importance of leveraging AI in HRM, and the potential benefits it can bring to organizations in terms of efficiency, cost savings, and competitive advantage (Brown et al., 2019). White and Lee (2018) emphasize AI's role in HRM,

reducing bias in recruitment and improving HR operations. As per the findings of Garcia and Patel(2021) , the use of AI-powered chatbots is increasingly gaining traction in the field of human resource management (HRM). These chatbots are proving to be an effective means of providing instant support not only to employees but also to applicants.

Perceptions of HR Professionals:

HR professionals' perceptions of AI vary, with some viewing it as a valuable tool for efficiency and strategic decision-making, while others may be concerned about job displacement and ethical issues (Smith, 2020; Rasmussen et al., 2018). Research indicates that HR professionals who embrace AI are more likely to focus on strategic HR activities, such as talent development and succession planning (Makridakis, 2017). According to a study conducted by Brown et al. (2019), HR professionals perceive the utilization of AI in HRM as a valuable tool in streamlining administrative tasks. However, concerns remain regarding the potential impact of AI on the human element of HRM. A recent survey conducted by HR Insights in 2021 shows that a significant majority (65%) of HR professionals expressed positive perceptions towards using AI in their work. They noted that AI has the potential to enhance decision-making processes and mitigate the impact of biases. As per the research conducted by White and Lee in 2018, professionals in the field of human resources who adopt AI technologies tend to consider them tools to enhance their capabilities rather than replacements for their roles. This suggests that using AI in HR functions is viewed as a means to augment and optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of HR processes. In a recent qualitative study conducted by Green et al. (2022), the attitudes of HR practitioners towards the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Human Resource Management (HRM) were investigated. The study revealed a diverse range of opinions on the matter, with some individuals expressing strong enthusiasm while others remained skeptical about the potential benefits of AI integration in HRM.

Upskilling and Training for AI Integration:

As AI adoption in HRM grows, HR professionals may need to acquire new skills and knowledge to effectively use AI tools and platforms (Van den Heuvel & Bondarouk, 2017). HR professionals' willingness and ability to upskill for AI integration are crucial factors in successful AI implementation in HRM (Davenport & Kalakota, 2019). As businesses increasingly integrate AI solutions into their operations, it becomes essential to prioritize upskilling and training programs for employees. This is crucial to ensure that the workforce is equipped with the technical knowledge and skills required to operate and maintain these complex technologies effectively. (Smith & Johnson, 2020). Jaiswal et al. (2022) found five vital skills for employee upskilling using Gioia's qualitative analysis method: data analysis, digital literacy, complex cognition, decision-making, and continuous learning..

Innovative HR Practices:

AI is transforming HR practices by enabling data-driven decision-making, personalizing employee experiences, and automating routine tasks, allowing HR professionals to focus on strategic initiatives (Guenole et al., 2017). Innovative HR practices that utilize AI include chatbots to answer employee questions, predictive analytics for staff planning, and AI-powered diversity and inclusion initiatives. (Van den Heuvel & Bondarouk, 2017). In 2023, Prikshat and team developed a comprehensive framework for integrating HRM(AI). This is Ideal for businesses seeking to streamline HR processes, maximize productivity, and enhance employee satisfaction. According to Chowdhury et al. (2023), firms should prioritize the expansion of non-technical resources, such as leadership, team management, organizational ethos, innovation outlook, governance strategy, and AI-employee incorporation strategies, in order to fully utilize the adoption of AI. Based on the literature review and research gap identification, a broad and exploratory research question, " How do HR executives perceive the application of AI in HRM functions "? is developed. A narrower research question of "Does the propensity of use of AI in HRM increase with earlier exposure to HR innovative practices? "is developed as a second research question.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study's objective was to gain insight into HR professionals' perception of the use of AI and their willingness to adopt AI in HRM. A comprehensive qualitative study was undertaken to delve into the viewpoints of HR professionals from various sectors regarding integrating artificial intelligence in the functions of HRM . The qualitative approach was chosen to facilitate a profound comprehension of the participants' thoughts and perspectives on the subject matter (Boodhoo & Purmessur, 2009). In qualitative research, observation, focus group discussions, and interviews are frequently utilized as key methodologies (Gill et al., 2008). Interviews, in particular, prove valuable in eliciting insights from participants regarding their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors about the research topic(Collis & Hussey, 2013). Semi-structured interviews have been chosen as the ideal method for this study because they offer flexibility in the interview process, gather rich and detailed data, and allow the interviewee to receive guidance on the discussed topic (Lofland, 1971). Data was gathered from 18 individuals using an interview guide to answer the research questions. As per the research conducted by DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019), when employing an interview method, a sample size of 8 to 12 participants is deemed adequate for producing quality research. Therefore, the sample size employed in this study is considered justifiable. Participants for this study were recruited through the maximum variation sampling method from a pool of 150 individuals who attended an HR conclave focused on Artificial Intelligence. This method ensures maximum diversity concerning the research question, providing different strategic dimensions to the research theme (Benoot et al., 2016). HR professionals who currently use AI in their department or have a propensity to use it in the future were included in the study based on an initial screening process. The eight semi-structured interview questions were based on the study objectives and aimed to examine perceptions and propensity to adopt AI in HRM. The following is a sample set of semi-structured interview questions :

1. Which areas in HR functions do you think AI can help in better department functioning
   (Positive perception of AI in HRM)
2. How do you think AI will help HR in better functioning?
3. What will you do to continue working successfully in the HR department in the coming years?
4. Do you currently use any HR innovative practices other than AI ? If so, what are they?
   The following flow chart depicts the process flow of the study.

Two participants volunteered for a pilot study, during which they were interviewed using a four-item semi-structured questionnaire. On average, each interview took 24 minutes to complete. The pilot study participants validated the questionnaire, and based on their feedback, one question was rephrased, and four more probing questions were added. A brief interview guide of eight semi-structured questions was developed and shared with the participants. Figure 1 depicts the process flow of the study.

We collected and analyzed data through semi-structured interviews with HR professionals on the integration of AI in HRM. We followed a systematic process, including inviting participants, conducting interviews, transcribing, open coding, axial coding, and defining and describing themes. Open-ended discussions to ensure comprehensive views. We identified significant concepts and relationships within the data and provided rich descriptions of the emerging themes. We initiated the process by inviting a diverse set of HR professionals for semi-structured interviews, transcribed the interviews meticulously, and then conducted open coding to identify initial concepts. Subsequently, axial coding was employed to uncover themes and their relationships, culminating in a detailed definition and description of these themes. This methodological framework allowed us to gain deep insights into the perspectives of HR professionals regarding the integration of AI in HRM, providing a foundation for our analysis and contributions to the field
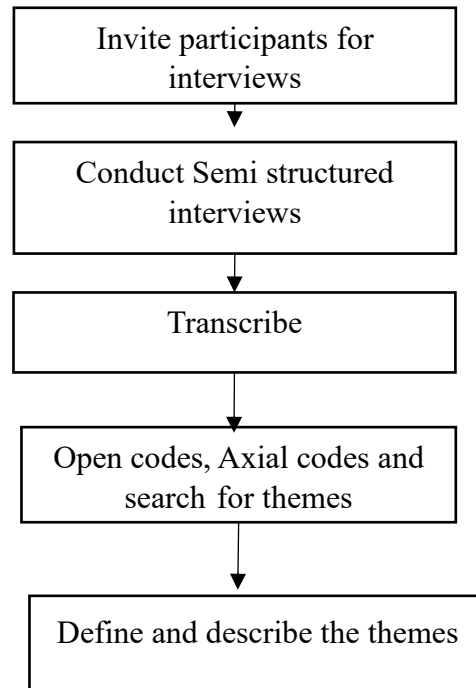
```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│   Invite participants for  │
│        interviews        │
└─────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Conduct Semi structured  │
│        interviews        │
└─────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│        Transcribe         │
└─────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Open codes, Axial codes and │
│     search  for themes     │
└─────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Define and describe the themes │
└─────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 1. Process flow of the study

Participants were informed about the purpose of the interview, and a brief consent form was collected from them. Confidentiality of the information shared was assured before the start of the interview. Participants were informed about the tentative time taken for the interview, and the interviewer's contact details were shared. Participants were not provided any incentives to take part in the qualitative study. Table 1 shows the participant's profile.

Table 1. Participant profile

Interviewee	Designation	HR work experience	Interview duration(in minutes)	Gender	Type of industry
P1	HR manager	12	22	M	IT
P2	VP HR	25	24	M	IT
P3	HR Executive	7	23	F	Consulting
P4	Director - HR	18	25	M	Finance & Consulting
P5	SVP- HR	25	22	M	Banking
P6	HR manager	16	25	F	Hospitality
P7	L & D manager	20	23	F	Health care
P8	Sr Director - HR	20	24	M	Life sciences
P9	Manager- Talent and BP	10	24	M	IT

P10	Staffing specialist	5	23	F	IT
P11	HR Business Partner	11	24	M	Consulting
P12	CHRO	26	24	M	Consulting
P13	Head HR (Compliance)	13	23	M	ITES
P14	TA Specialist	4	25	M	IT
P15	HR Manager	12	23	M	Aviation
P16	DEI specialist	10	24	Nonbinary	IT
P17	HR analyst	6	22	M	ITES
P18	HR manager	14	22	M	Banking

4.   ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study tries to elicit perspectives on using AI in HRM from HR executives of various industries. The study followed a rigorous stage process for qualitative data analysis, as outlined by Williams and Moser (2019). The process included "Data Collection and Analysis, Open Coding, Axial Coding, Selective Coding, Theory Development, and Constructing Meaning". This approach ensured a systematic and thorough analysis of the data, and allowed for robust conclusions to be drawn from the findings. Thematic analysis was considered suitable for analyzing the data since, in this research, coding is done for a specific query (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can be done manually or using software like Nvivo and MAXQDA (Kelle, 2004; Seale, 2000). For the current study, MAXQDA was used for thematic analysis. Six stages of thematic analysis were followed, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). In the first stage, familiarization with data was done to understand the scope of the content. Since the researcher personally conducted the interview and collected the data, reading and re-reading the data to search for meaning was relatively easy. The narrative was captured in MS Excel and fields imported from Excel as codable text were chosen to extract the narrative elements. The responses from participants were transcribed verbatim. A code list was generated using MAXQDA 2020, one of the qualitative analysis software. Based on the aim of the research, coding categories and subcategories were formed. Similar viewpoints were grouped to form individual codes using lexical search. Further, similar codes were clustered to form emerging themes. Next, the themes were analyzed for meaning and interpretation. A thematic map was constructed to illustrate the study's results (Braun & Clarke,2006).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The study aims to understand the perception of the use of AI in HRM among HR professionals in different industries. In this context, we arrived at four themes from the qualitative study.

They are: 1. Perception utility of AI in HR functions 2. AI application in HRM 3. Upskilling for AI. 4. Innovative HR practices. The emerging themes and related codes are shown in Figure 2 to figure 5

Themes and the codes under each theme and sub themes along with frequencies, are provided in Tables 2 to 6.

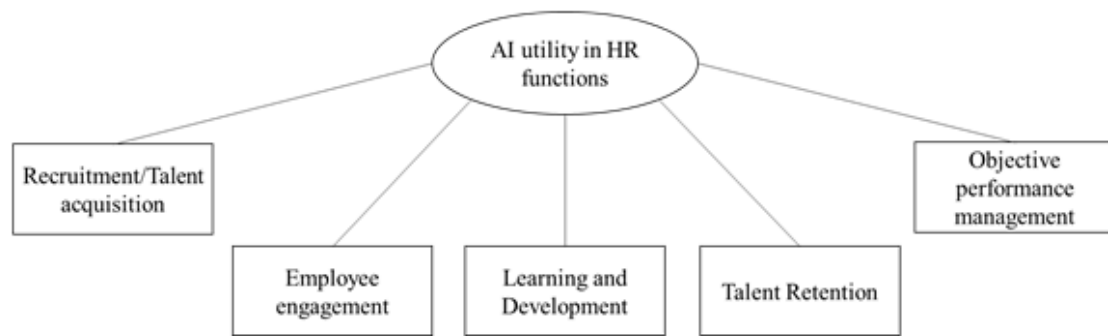### 5.1 Perception of the utility of AI in HR functions

Figure 2 Perception of AI utility in HR functions

The study's findings indicate that participants from diverse industries positively perceive the potential utility of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in HR functions. The participants emphasized the significant efficiency and effectiveness enhancement that AI-driven tools and systems could provide to HR processes. As per the study's respondents, AI has the potential to assist in several tasks, including resume screening, candidate matching, and predictive analytics for talent management, among others. These findings are consistent with previous research conducted by Smith et al. (2020), who also found a positive perception of AI among HR professionals. They suggested that AI can streamline administrative tasks and provide data-driven insights. The study findings suggest that the perception of AI's utility in HR functions is not limited to specific industries.

Table 2: Perception of the utility of AI in HR functions

Views	Frequency
Recruitment/ Talent acquisition	7
Employee Engagement	2
Learning & Development	6
Talent retention	2
Decision making	5
Objective performance management	6
	28

Table 2 illustrates the perceptions of AI utility within HR functions, with recruitment and talent acquisition being the most frequently reported views among the 18 participants interviewed. These findings suggest a clear understanding among the participants about the widespread use of AI, particularly in employee recruitment and broadly within the category of talent acquisition. Johnson et al. (2020) assert that labor-intensive industries, such as hospitality and tourism, can benefit significantly by adopting AI applications in attracting, motivating, and retaining employees. It is noteworthy that although HR professionals perceive high AI utility in recruitment and talent acquisition, companies appear to be reluctant to invest heavily in AI applications beyond task automation tools for recruitment and selection (Albert, 2019).

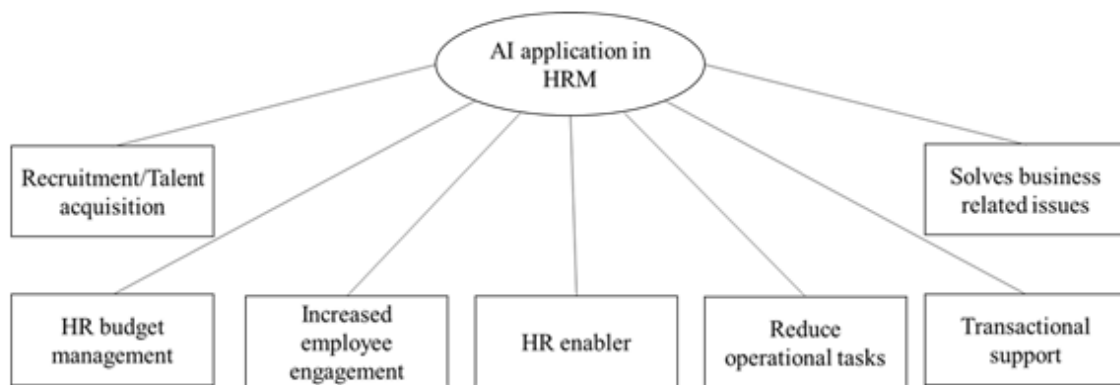*5.2 Application of AI in HRM Functions*

Figure 3 AI application in HRM

The participants from diverse sectors engaged in an exploration of the various AI applications in Human Resource Management (HRM). These applications included AI-driven recruitment tools, chatbots for employee queries, and AI-powered performance evaluations. Participant P10 highlighted the potential of AI applications in HRM to reduce bias in decision-making processes and ensure fairness, especially in staffing. This observation resonates with the research conducted by Lee and Kim (2019), which underscores the growing significance of AI in HRM for optimizing talent acquisition and management practices. Their study posits that AI applications can improve HRM outcomes by enabling data-driven decision-making. P16 opines that using AI will go a long way in avoiding selection bias. Pavlou (2022) suggests that leveraging AI technologies such as screening, background checks, and chatbots can streamline HR tasks while ensuring fairness. P2 mentions that AI can enhance employee experience by providing instant feedback and suggestions. It monitors engagement levels, recommends actions to maintain a motivated workforce, tailors training based on employee needs, analyzes metrics, and identifies career paths. This fosters an adaptive learning environment, boosting job satisfaction and personal growth. P18 believes that AI provides a great help in making the performance review unbiased .AI can automate performance reviews and analyze performance data, providing objective, data-driven performance insights, and predictive analytics for decision-making and development planning in performance management. (Trisca,2023). AI can also be used to identify "employee flight risk" using behavioral analytics (Grensing-Pophal, 2022).

Table 3: Application of AI in HRM functions

Views	Frequency
Recruitment/ Talent acquisition	**6**
HR budget management	**2**
Increased employee engagement	**3**
Transactional support	**2**
Solve business related issues	**2**
HR enabler	**2**
Reduce operational tasks	**2**
Total	**19**

Table 3 provides insights into participants' views on the current use of AI in HR functions. However, there is a discrepancy between perception and reality. While the perception suggests that AI is widely used in HRM, its application is limited to some functional areas. One of the participants, P8, stated that their organization does not have extensive AI applications in HRM and only uses it for routine tasks. On the other hand, P2 mentioned that AI is extensively used in HR budgeting, which makes it an HR enabler for their firm. P9 added that their company can handle CVs written in different languages with the help of AI tools, which is particularly helpful as they operate globally. P4 noted that their firm has not yet adopted AI for HR functions but may consider doing so next year based on their growth plans. Meanwhile, P10 said that AI application in their department is limited to using CV screening software. P6 mentioned that their organization uses an employee engagement chatbot named Amber for the well-being and engagement of employees. Additionally, they use chatbots to look up online materials on company policies on certain aspects. Finally, P3 confirmed that their company uses AI to source the best candidates from social media applications.

AI streamlines hiring and ensures fairness. Screening, background checks, and chatbots save HR time and keep the process equitable.

It is worth noting that AI adoption and utility are concentrated in the technology sector, as Albert (2019) validated in a thematic analysis of responses from recruitment and selection experts.

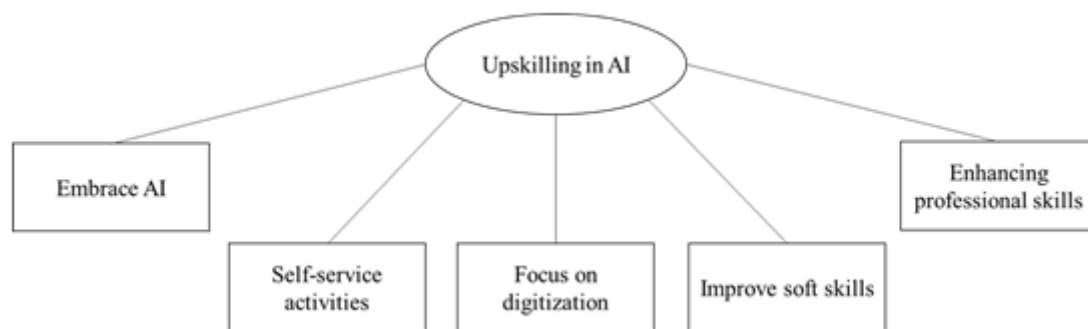**5.3.Action plan for Upskilling for AI.**

Figure 4 Action Plan for Upskilling in AI
To implement an effective action plan for upskilling AI within HR functions in Indian companies, a strategic approach is essential. Firstly, organizations need to assess their current HR capabilities and identify areas where AI can be integrated for improved efficiency. Companies must assess the effectiveness of AI in HR functions and set clear objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure its impact. To equip HR professionals with the necessary AI skills and knowledge, companies should invest in comprehensive training programs and workshops. This can be facilitated by collaborating with AI training institutes or partnering with AI experts. Moreover, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous learning within the HR department is essential. To successfully adopt AI, HR professionals should embrace it as an enabler rather than a threat. Creating cross-functional teams that combine HR expertise with AI proficiency can help drive innovation and problem-solving in HR processes. Lastly, organizations should keep themselves updated with the evolving AI landscape and adjust their upskilling initiatives accordingly. Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the upskilling programs and making necessary refinements will ensure that HR functions in Indian companies are well-prepared to leverage AI effectively and contribute to organizational success in the dynamic business environment.

Table 4. Action plan for Upskilling for AI

Views	Frequency
Embrace AI	8
Self-service activities	4
Focus on Digitalization	4
Improve soft skills	2
Enhancing professional skills	3
Total	21

As can be seen in Table 4, plans for upskilling to use AI in HR functions are very diverse. Many participants (P4 and P6) mentioned, "We will embrace AI. It will be an added skill." Participant P6 plans to pair AI with Tele medicines for greater effectiveness and reach. Participants P1 and P3 plan to have HR self-service for repeated HR queries, "as most of the HR queries are repetitive. Almost 50 % of the HR queries are repetitive, and by adopting self-service, we will free up some time for better team bonding". Participant 10 plans to learn talent management software, whereas Participant P7 feels it is essential to upskill in gamification. P9, who handles employee wellness in his company, brought out an interesting angle. P9 feels that there is a definite need to improve soft skills, as AI should go parallelly with enhanced use of soft skills. The dire need for upskilling and re skilling to use AI as an enabler is validated by Pradhan & Saxena(2023) in their review study

5.4 Innovative HR Practices adopted in the company

Figure 5 Innovative HR practices adopted in the company
In the fast-paced business environment of today, it has become essential to develop innovative Human Resources (HR) practices that are aligned with Artificial Intelligence (AI). The traditional HR processes often find it challenging to keep up with the constantly evolving requirements of the modern workforce and the complexities of global business operations. AI-powered HR solutions provide an opportunity to transform various HR functions such as recruitment, talent management, employee engagement, and performance evaluation. By leveraging the power of AI, organizations can gain valuable insights, make informed decisions based on data, and optimize their HR strategies to attract, retain, and develop talent more effectively. As AI continues to reshape industries and job roles, adopting innovative HR practices aligned with AI is not just a competitive advantage but a necessity for organizations striving to remain agile and responsive in the face of constant change.

Table 5: Innovative HR practices adopted in the company

Views	Frequency
Prediction models	**9**
Drive value through value awards	**2**
Proprietary AI tools	**3**
Job shadowing	**2**
Psychological counselling	**6**
Total	**22**

Table 5 displays the view of participants on innovative HR practices presently undertaken by the company. Participants P1 and P3 confirmed that they use prediction models that will help forecast the manpower need based on analytics. Driving the company values through value awards is an innovative HR practice described by Participant P6. An employee per month is identified as someone who follows company values to the core, and the employee is appreciated in the monthly town hall meeting. Participant P9 listed Job shadowing as an innovative HR practice to ensure that the successor learns the designated job role faster, leaving ample room for mentoring by the senior . Participant P11 describes the facility of in in-house Counselor as an innovative HR practice. The consulting Counselor alleviates the emotional challenges experienced by the employees. It is interesting to note that even when AI chatbots are available for 24/7 services for employees to access when they encounter a challenge, tech companies still rely on a psychological Counselor to ensure employee wellbeing. As evident from the responses, the HR managers exposed to innovative HR practices showed a greater inclination towards early adoption of AI in HR functionalities. According to an empirical study conducted using the Task-Technology Theory framework, the incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) in talent acquisition has been validated to result in a more innovative process (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020).

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research paper significantly contributes to the existing literature on AI adoption in HRM from a theoretical perspective. The study validates the Resource-Based View theory by demonstrating how HR professionals perceive AI as a strategic resource that can create a sustained competitive advantage for organizations. Moreover, the identified themes in this study provide a theoretical framework for understanding the adoption and integration of AI in HRM. This can help future researchers develop more comprehensive models and theories in this domain, aiding practitioners in effectively implementing AI in HRM practices. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the evolving role of HR professionals in leveraging AI. It highlights how HR practices are becoming more data-driven and technologically advanced, and how HR professionals are required to develop new competencies to integrate AI in their practices effectively. This has important implications for developing HRM theories, as it indicates the need for new theoretical frameworks to account for HR practices' changing nature.

This qualitative research paper provides profound insights into the perceptions of HR professionals regarding AI in HRM. The findings have significant implications for various stakeholders, including HR practitioners, educators, policymakers, technology vendors, and organizational leaders. HR practitioners can benefit from the research by gaining practical insights into the challenges and opportunities of AI adoption, and making informed decisions regarding AI integration in their organizations. Educators can use these insights to emphasize the importance of AI-related knowledge and skills in HR curricula and prepare future HR professionals to be AI-ready. Policymakers and regulatory bodies can use the research findings to develop guidelines and regulations related to AI in HRM, ensuring ethical and fair use of AI technologies in employment practices. Technology vendors can use these insights to develop more tailored and effective AI tools for the HR industry, which can

address the specific needs and concerns of HR professionals. Organizational leaders can use the identified themes to formulate strategies for AI adoption in HRM, including upskilling their HR workforce, addressing privacy and security concerns, and implementing innovative HR practices. Leveraging AI in HRM can lead to a competitive advantage by attracting and retaining top talent, optimizing HR processes, and making data-driven decisions about human capital. Overall, this research offers valuable insights into the perceptions of HR professionals regarding AI in HRM, and has theoretical and practical implications that extend to HRM theory development, HR practice improvement, and policymaking in the context of AI adoption.

CONCLUSION

The study captures HR executives' perspectives on using AI in HRM. The study also tries to connect the propensity of using AI in HRM to previous exposure to creative HR practices. Using descriptive data analysis method using MAXQDA 2020 provided four themes. The themes provided a quick view in the context of the perception of the application of AI among HR professionals. The study results indicate that HR executives perceive digital transformation positively. There is a clear understanding of the utilization of AI in different functional areas of HRM, with a greater accent on talent acquisition. HR professionals exposed to innovative HR practices showed early adoption of AI in HRM. The divide between the perception of AI application and reality is visible as midsize companies are yet to embrace AI in HRM. Companies that plan to introduce AI in the HR functional areas can initiate the process by exposing the professionals to innovative HR practices as a precursor to introducing AI to HR functions.

5. Limitation and scope for future research

The generalizability of the study findings is one of the study's limitations, as the study is based on the thematic analysis of the responses of 18 HR executives. A larger sample size with focus group interviews may provide more robust results (Santos & Mata, 2021). Since the study findings are based on qualitative research, future studies can conduct more rigorous content analysis where the frequency of occurrence of the study dimensions is also mentioned (Wilkinson, 2000), making the data suitable for converting initially qualitative data into something more suitable for quantitate analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Besides, though the researcher tried to gather participants from a wide spectrum of industries, there is a greater concentration of the technology sector in the participation, which may differ from HR professionals of other sectors. Including automobile manufacturing, hospitality, academic, and pharmaceutical sectors will give a more accurate perspective of the study themes. The study developed a theoretical framework for understanding the adoption and integration of AI in HRM.

Figure 3. Proposed theoretical framework for future empirical testing.
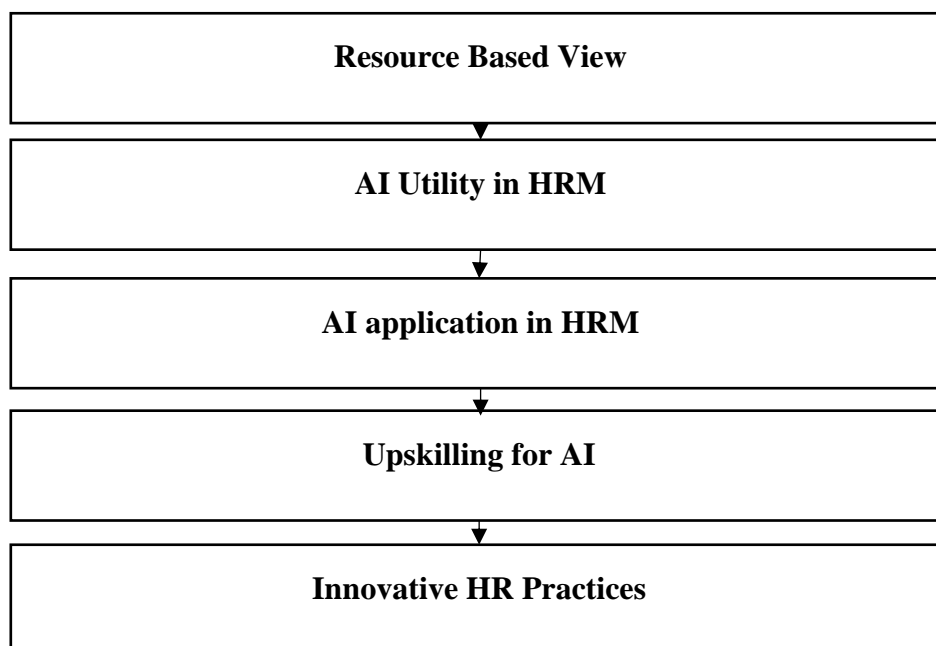
The theoretical framework for understanding AI adoption and integration in HRM consists of several interconnected dimensions that influence one another. RBV serves as the foundational theory that influences the entire framework. "Perception of AI Utility" represents how HR professionals perceive the usefulness of AI in HR functions. "AI Application in HRM" focuses on the practical aspects of AI integration in HRM. "Upskilling for AI" indicates the need for HR professionals to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for effective AI adoption. Lastly, "Innovative HR Practices" highlights how AI can lead to the development of innovative HR approaches. This visual representation provides a clear overview of the theoretical framework and the relationships and interactions between these dimensions, emphasizing their interconnectedness.

REFERENCES

[1] Agarwal, P., Swami, S., & Malhotra, S. K. (2022). Artificial intelligence adoption in the post COVID-19 new-normal and role of smart technologies in transforming business: A review. *Journal of Science and Technology Policy Management*. https://doi.org/10.1108/jstpm-08-2021-0122

[2] Barney, J. B. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. Journal of Management, 17(1), 99-120.

[3] Benoot, C., Hannes, K., & Bilsen, J. (2016). The use of purposeful sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example on sexual adjustment to a cancer trajectory. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *16*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-016-0114-6

[4] Brown, A., Johnson, L., & Parker, R. (2019). Artificial Intelligence in HRM: An Empirical Study of Perceptions and Adoption. Human Resource Management Journal, 25(3), 275-292.

[5] Brown, C., Miller, L., & Davis, R. (2019). Artificial Intelligence in Human Resource Management: Opportunities and Challenges. HR Management Journal, 24(4), 312-328.

[6] Budhwar, P., Chowdhury, S., Wood, G., Aguinis, H., Bamber, G. J., Beltran, J. R., ... & Varma, A. (2023). Human resource management in the age of generative artificial intelligence: Perspectives and research directions on ChatGPT. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *33*(3), 606-659. https://doi.org /10.1111/1748-8583.12531

[7] Chatterjee, S., Rana, N. P., Tamilmani, K., & Sharma, A. (2021). The effect of AI-based CRM on organization performance and competitive advantage: An empirical analysis in the B2B context. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *97*, 205–219. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2021.07.013

[8] Chowdhury, S., Dey, P., Joel-Edgar, S., Bhattacharya, S., Rodriguez-Espindola, O., Abadie, A., & Truong, L. (2023). Unlocking the value of artificial intelligence in human resource management through AI capability framework. *Human Resource Management Review*, *33*(1), 100899. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2022.100899

[9] Collis, J., & Hussey, R. (2013). *Business research: A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. Red Globe Press. 0230301835.

[10] Davenport, T. H., & Kalakota, R. (2019). The potential for artificial intelligence in healthcare. Future Healthcare Journal, 6(2), 94-98

[11] Davenport, T. H., Harris, J., & Shapiro, J. (2010). Competing on talent analytics. Harvard Business Review, 88(10), 52-58.

[12] DeJonckheere, M., & Vaughn, L. M. (2019). Semistructured interviewing in primary care research: A balance of relationship and rigour. *Family Medicine and Community Health*, *7*(2), e000057. https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2018-000057

[13] Faqihi, A., & Miah, S. J. (2023). Artificial intelligence-driven talent management system: Exploring the risks and options for constructing a theoretical foundation. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, *16*(1), 31. https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm16010031

[14] Garcia, M., & Patel, S. (2021). Chatbots in HR: Enhancing Employee Engagement and Support. HR Technology Trends, 12(2), 101-116.

[15] Gill, P., Stewart K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in Qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. British dental journal, 204(6), 291-295

[16] Grensing-Pophal, L. (2022, July 5). *The role of AI in retaining top talent*. SHRM. https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/technology/pages/the-role-of-ai-in-retaining-top-talent.aspx

[17] Guenole, N., Ferrar, J., & Feinzig, S. (2017). Reinventing jobs: A 4-step approach for applying automation to work. Harvard Business Review, 95(5), 27-31.

[18] HR Insights. (2021). AI in HR: Perceptions and Trends. HR Insights Quarterly, 8(4), 12-25.

[19] Jaiswal, A., Arun, C. J., & Varma, A. (2022). Rebooting employees: Upskilling for artificial intelligence in multinational corporations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *33*(6), 1179-1208.

[20] Kaushal, N., Kaurav, R. P. S., Sivathanu, B., & Kaushik, N. (2021). Artificial intelligence and HRM: Identifying future research Agenda using systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis. *Management Review Quarterly*, *73*(2), 455–493. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11301-021-00249-2

[21] Lee, M. C. M., Scheepers, H., Lui, A. K. H., & Ngai, E. W. T. (2023). The implementation of artificial intelligence in organizations: A systematic literature review. *Information & Management*, *60*(5), 103816. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2023.103816

[22] Lee, S., & Kim, Y. (2019). Leveraging artificial intelligence in human resource management: Opportunities and challenges. *International Journal of Human Resource Management, 30*(13), 1965-1986.

[23] Makridakis, S. (2017). The forthcoming Artificial Intelligence (AI) revolution: Its impact on society and firms. *Futures*, *90*, 46–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.futures.2017.03.006

[24] Marler, J. H., & Boudreau, J. W. (2017). An evidence-based review of HR Analytics. The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 28(1), 3-26.

[25] Mer, A., & Srivastava, A. (2023). Employee engagement in the new normal: Artificial intelligence as a buzzword or a game changer? In *The Adoption and Effect of Artificial Intelligence on Human Resources Management, Part A* (pp. 15–46). Emerald Publishing Limited. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80382-027-920231002

[26] Minbaeva, D. (2021). Disrupted HR? *Human Resource Management Review*, *31*(4), 100820. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2020.100820

[27] Pandey, A., Balusamy, B., & Chilamkurti, N. (2023). *Disruptive artificial intelligence and sustainable human resource management: Impacts and innovations : The future of HR*. CRC press.

[28] Pavlou, C. (2022, May 18). *Ai in HR: Benefits, limitations, and challenges of artificial intelligence in the Workplace*. eFront Blog. https://www.efrontlearning.com/blog/2022/05/ai-in-hr.html/

[29] Prikshat, V., Islam, M., Patel, P., Malik, A., Budhwar, P., & Gupta, S. (2023). AI-Augmented HRM: Literature review and a proposed multilevel framework for future research. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, *193*, 122645. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2023.122645

[30] Prikshat, V., Malik, A., & Budhwar, P. (2023). AI-augmented HRM: Antecedents, assimilation and multilevel consequences. *Human Resource Management Review*, *33*(1), 100860. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100860 .

[31] Rasmussen, T., Bjoern, P., Goldstein, J., & Graepel, T. (2018). Trust in AI agents. In Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (pp. 1-12).

[32] Smith, A., & Johnson, B. (2020). The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Human Resource Management. Journal of HR Technology, 16(3), 78-92.

[33] Smith, J. (2020). Artificial Intelligence in Human Resource Management: Perceptions and Challenges. Journal of HR Technology, 15(2), 45-60.

[34] Strohm, L., Hehakaya, C., Ranschaert, E. R., Boon, W. P. C., & Moors, E. H. M. (2020). Implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) applications in radiology: Hindering and facilitating factors. *European Radiology*, *30*(10), 5525–5532. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00330-020-06946-y

[35] Trisca, L. (2023, September 22). *AI in performance management: Key applications for HR SUCCESS: zavvy*. RSS. https://www.zavvy.io/blog/ai-performance-management

[36] Van den Heuvel, S., & Bondarouk, T. (2017). The rise (and fall?) of HR analytics: A study into the future application, value, structure, system support, and system design. Employee Relations, 39(2), 147-162.

[37] White, S., & Lee, K. (2018). Artificial Intelligence Applications in Human Resource Management. Personnel Quarterly, 40(1), 54-67

[38] White, S., & Lee, K. (2018). Human Resource Management in the Age of AI: Insights from Practitioners. Personnel Quarterly, 41(2), 123-138.

[39] Williams, M., & Moser, T. (2019). *The art of coding and thematic exploration in qualitative research*. International Management Review, 15(1), 45-55.

[40] Pradhan, I. P., & Saxena, P. (2023). Reskilling workforce for the Artificial Intelligence Age: Challenges and the way forward. *The Adoption and Effect of Artificial Intelligence on Human Resources Management, Part B*, 181–197. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80455-662-720230011

[41] Pillai, R., & Sivathanu, B. (2020). Adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) for talent acquisition in IT/Ites Organizations. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, *27*(9), 2599–2629. https://doi.org/10.1108/bij-04-2020-0186