International Journal of Social and Education (INJOSEDU) https://languar.net/index.php/INJOSEDU
Vol. 3 No. 4 July 2026, hal., 543-559 e-ISSN: 3047-6151

HUMAN-CENTERED HRM IN THE AGE OF AI: BALANCING AUTOMATION AND EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze how a human-centered HRM approach can be a strategy for balancing the benefits of AI automation with improved employee experience in the modern workplace. The study employed a literature review method, examining various scientific articles, books, proceedings, and research reports published in reputable databases on the implementation of AI in HRM. Data were analyzed through a process of identification, selection, synthesis, and interpretation of findings to gain a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and strategies for implementing human-centered AI. The study's results indicate that AI can optimize HRM process efficiency through the automation of administrative tasks, predictive analytics, and personalized employee development. However, the effectiveness of AI implementation depends heavily on the integration of human-centered values, such as algorithm transparency, data privacy protection, bias reduction, strengthening leadership roles, and active employee engagement in the digital transformation process. This approach enables organizations not only to improve operational performance but also to strengthen employee well-being, trust, job satisfaction, and positive employee experiences. Therefore, the success of HRM in the AI era is determined not only by technological sophistication but also by the organization's ability to place humans at the center of every digital innovation.

Keywords: Human-Centered HRM, Artificial Intelligence, Automation, Employee Experience.

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INTRODUCTION

The massive digital transformation that has taken place over the past few decades has transformed various aspects of organizational management, including Human Resource Management (HRM). One of the most significant technological developments is the emergence of artificial intelligence, capable of automating various work activities, analyzing large amounts of data, and supporting faster and more accurate decision-making (Fenwick et al., 2024a). In the context of human resource management, AI has been applied to various functions, from recruitment and selection processes, performance management, competency development, to workforce planning. The use of this technology provides organizations with opportunities to improve operational efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and generate more data-driven decisions.

The increasing adoption of AI in HRM is driven by the need for organizations to respond to rapidly changing work environments resulting from globalization, digitalization, and the development of a knowledge-based economy. Modern organizations are required to manage human resources more adaptively and responsively to business needs (Pudjiarti, 2025a). In this context, AI offers various solutions that enable more efficient and scalable HR processes. AI-based systems can automatically screen candidates, identify employee performance patterns, predict employee retention rates, and recommend training programs tailored to individual needs. These capabilities provide significant added value to organizations by enabling more objective and faster decision-making compared to conventional approaches (Krishnan et al., 2024a).

However, the increasing use of AI in HRM also presents several challenges that cannot be ignored. One key issue that is often raised is the diminished human aspect of human resource management. Essentially, HRM is a field that focuses on people as the organization's primary asset (Wadhwa et al., 2024a). Therefore, decisions and policies should not only consider efficiency but also address employees' psychological, social, emotional, and professional needs. As HR processes increasingly rely on algorithms and automated systems, there is a risk that employee experience will become less valued. Employees may feel treated as mere data objects, rather than as individuals with diverse characteristics, aspirations, and needs. This situation has the potential to reduce engagement, job satisfaction, and trust in the organization (Zhang, 2025a).

Furthermore, the use of AI in HRM also raises various ethical issues related to transparency, data privacy, and the potential for algorithmic bias. AI systems operate based on available data and patterns learned from that data. If the data used contains historical biases or inequities, then AI-generated decisions have the potential to reproduce those same biases. In the recruitment process, for example, algorithms can inadvertently discriminate against certain groups if the training data used is not representative. Furthermore, the collection and analysis of large amounts of employee data raises concerns regarding the protection of privacy and the security of personal information. This situation suggests that the implementation of AI in HRM requires an approach that is not solely oriented toward technological efficiency but also considers ethical principles and human values (Srivastava et al., 2025a).

In addressing these challenges, the concept of human-centered HRM is gaining increasing attention from academics and practitioners. This approach emphasizes that technology should function as a tool to support and empower people, not replace them entirely. Human-centered HRM places the needs, well-being, and experience of employees at the center of every human resource management policy and practice. In the context of AI use, this approach encourages organizations to integrate technology with values such as empathy, inclusivity, fairness, transparency, and participation. Thus, AI is used not only to increase organizational productivity but also to create a more positive work environment and support individual development.

The importance of employee experience in modern organizations further strengthens the relevance of a human-centered HRM approach. Employee experience encompasses the entire experience employees experience during their interactions with the organization, from the recruitment process to career development. Positive experiences have been shown to contribute to increased motivation, loyalty, performance, and employee well-being. Conversely, negative work experiences can lead to decreased productivity, increased stress levels, and high employee turnover rates. In the AI era, organizations need to ensure that the implementation of technology does not diminish the quality of human interactions, which are crucial for building a meaningful work experience (Moussi, 2026a). Therefore, the balance between automation and the human touch is a strategic issue that requires serious attention.

Various studies have shown that the success of digital transformation in HRM is determined not only by the capabilities of the technology used, but also by the organization's readiness to manage changes in culture and workplace

relationships. Organizations that successfully integrate AI effectively generally adopt an approach that positions technology as a support for human decision-making, not as a complete replacement. Managers and HR professionals remain essential to provide contextual considerations, understand the organization's social dynamics, and build interpersonal relationships that cannot be replicated by machines (Prasetio & Alfizi, 2025). In other words, collaboration between human and artificial intelligence is a key factor in creating a sustainable and human-centric HRM system.

Based on this description, it is understandable that the development of AI has presented both significant opportunities and complex challenges in HRM practices. On the one hand, AI can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of human resource management, but on the other hand, it has the potential to reduce the quality of the employee experience if not implemented appropriately. This situation requires organizations to develop an approach that balances the need for automation with the importance of maintaining the human dimension of the workplace. Therefore, the study of Human-Centered HRM in the Age of AI: Balancing Automation and Employee Experience is crucial for providing a more comprehensive understanding of AI implementation strategies that focus not only on achieving organizational goals but also on improving employee well-being, engagement, and positive employee experiences as the centerpiece of digital transformation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a literature review with a descriptive-qualitative approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of human-centered Human Resource Management (HRM) in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly in efforts to balance automation with improving employee experience. The selected literature was prioritized from publications within the last ten years to represent the latest developments related to AI implementation in human resource management.

Data analysis was conducted through several stages, including identification, selection, evaluation, synthesis, and interpretation of literature that met relevance criteria. During the identification stage, all obtained references were selected based on their relevance to the topic, publication quality, and contribution to the research discussion. Next, each piece of literature was critically analyzed to identify patterns, similarities, differences, opportunities, challenges, and strategies for implementing AI in human-centered HRM practices. The results of the analysis were then synthesized to

build a conceptual framework that explains the relationship between AI-based automation, human-centered HRM values, and employee experience in the context of organizational digital transformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transforming Human Resource Management through the Implementation of Artificial Intelligence to Improve Organizational Efficiency

The transformation of Human Resource Management (HRM) through the implementation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become one of the most significant changes in human resource governance in the digital era. This change is characterized not only by the use of technology as an administrative tool but also as a strategic instrument capable of improving the quality of decision-making, operational efficiency, and the overall employee experience. The development of AI enables the HRM function to shift from a purely administrative approach to a more strategic, data-driven one. Various routine activities that previously required significant time and effort, such as candidate screening, personnel administration management, attendance recording, and performance evaluation, can now be performed automatically with a higher degree of accuracy. This provides an opportunity for HR practitioners to focus more on activities with high added value, such as competency development, increasing employee engagement, managing organizational culture, and developing long-term talent development strategies (Vrontis et al., 2023).

The application of AI in HRM significantly contributes to improving organizational efficiency through faster, more precise, and more adaptive business process optimization. Machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics technologies enable HR systems to analyze large amounts of data in real time, producing more accurate information than manual analysis (Chowdhury et al., 2024). In the recruitment process, for example, AI can quickly screen thousands of applicant documents based on competency, work experience, and organizational culture fit. This process reduces the administrative burden, a major challenge for HR departments, while accelerating the recruitment process without compromising the quality of candidate selection. Furthermore, the use of AI-based chatbots can provide automated responses to applicant and employee questions regarding administrative procedures, company policies, and personnel services 24/7. This efficiency improves the quality of internal services and accelerates organizational communication (Rismayadi, 2024).

HRM transformation through AI also strengthens organizations' ability to manage talent more measurably. AI systems can identify individual competencies, map skills gaps, and recommend training programs tailored to each employee's needs. This approach creates a more personalized learning process, thereby increasing the effectiveness of organizational investments in human resource development. AI can analyze learning patterns, training outcomes, and ongoing competency development, providing companies with a comprehensive picture of their workforce's readiness to face changes in the business environment. Thus, organizations not only increase individual productivity but also strengthen institutional competitiveness through talent development oriented toward future needs (Krishnan et al., 2024b).

The use of AI also supports the implementation of more objective and transparent performance management. In conventional evaluation systems, performance appraisals are often influenced by assessor subjectivity, data limitations, and personal bias. The implementation of AI enables the collection of performance data from various sources, such as target achievement, daily productivity, team collaboration, and work behavior indicators, which can be processed into comprehensive information. The results of this analysis help managers provide more accurate, evidence-based feedback, making the evaluation process fairer. Furthermore, AI can detect trends in declining productivity and the risk of burnout through work pattern analysis, allowing organizations to take preventative action before problems escalate. This predictive approach demonstrates that the HR function is no longer reactive but rather proactive in maintaining the organization's continued performance (Krishnan et al., 2024b).

Organizational efficiency is also increased through AI's ability to support strategic, analytics-based decision-making. AI systems can process data related to employee retention rates, absenteeism, productivity, and job satisfaction to generate predictions about the likelihood of turnover. This information enables organizations to design more targeted retention strategies through improved well-being, career development, and improved work environments. Furthermore, AI's ability to simulate various workforce demand scenarios helps companies develop human resource plans that are more adaptive to market changes, technological developments, and economic dynamics. Thus, HRM is no longer merely an administrative function but is transforming into a strategic partner in supporting organizational sustainability (Stone et al., 2024).

However, the implementation of AI in HRM also presents a number of challenges that require serious attention. One major challenge is the potential

for algorithmic bias if the data used in the system training process is unrepresentative or contains historical discrimination. This can result in unfair recruitment and promotion decisions, thus contradicting the principle of equality in human resource management. Furthermore, the increasing use of AI raises issues regarding the security of employee personal data, given that the system handles a variety of sensitive information that must be protected from misuse and cyber threats. Therefore, organizations need to implement responsible AI governance through data protection policies, regular algorithm audits, transparency of decision-making processes, and compliance with applicable regulations. Ethical aspects are crucial for AI implementation to not only generate efficiency but also maintain employee trust in the organization.

AI-based HRM transformation also demands changes in the competencies of human resources managing the HR function itself. HR professionals are no longer simply required to master aspects of personnel administration; they are also required to possess digital literacy, data analysis skills, an understanding of AI technology, and the ability to translate analytical results into strategic policies. This competency shift demonstrates that the success of AI implementation depends not only on technological sophistication but also on the organization's readiness to build a culture of learning, innovation, and collaboration between humans and technology. A human-centered HRM approach is becoming increasingly relevant because AI should function as a decision-making support, not a complete replacement for humans. The combination of artificial intelligence and human competencies enables organizations to make more objective decisions while still considering empathy, organizational values, and individual needs (Stone et al., 2024).

Challenges of Implementing Artificial Intelligence for the Employee Experience from a Human-Centered HRM Perspective

The human-centered HRM perspective places humans at the center of every human resource management process. Therefore, the success of AI implementation is measured not only by increased productivity but also by its ability to create a meaningful, inclusive, and well-being-oriented work experience for employees (Madancian & Taherdoost, 2024).

One major challenge is the perception of reduced human interaction in various HR processes. The presence of AI allows for the automation of many activities, such as candidate screening, interview scheduling, performance report preparation, and career development recommendations. While this automation can reduce administrative burdens, the dominance of technology

in decision-making processes has the potential to diminish the quality of interpersonal relationships between employees and managers and HR practitioners. Positive social relationships are a crucial factor in building a quality employee experience. When communication is mediated primarily by digital systems rather than face-to-face interactions, employees can feel less valued as individuals and more like data objects processed by algorithms. This situation has the potential to diminish the sense of belonging to the organization and reduce the emotional attachment that has long been the foundation for building organizational commitment (Fenwick et al., 2024b).

The next challenge relates to the issue of trust in AI systems (Gupta et al., 2025). In practice, many AI algorithms operate as black boxes, generating recommendations without providing easily understandable explanations for users. This situation can raise doubts when AI is used to support strategic decisions such as promotions, performance evaluations, or compensation. Employees will have a harder time accepting decisions if they don't understand the basis for the system's reasoning. A lack of algorithmic transparency can create perceptions of unfairness, even when the decisions are statistically accurate. From a human-centered HRM perspective, transparency and accountability are crucial for maintaining employee trust in the organization (Lan & Quan, 2023). Therefore, AI implementation requires explainable AI mechanisms that enable users to understand the underlying logic behind system recommendations so that decisions remain ethically and professionally accountable.

In addition to transparency issues, algorithmic bias is also a significant challenge that can impact the quality of the employee experience. AI learns from historical data available within an organization (The Challenges and Role of AI in HRM: Opportunities and Ethical Challenges on HR Digitalization. | EBSCOhost, n.d.). If this data contains biases related to gender, age, educational background, or other characteristics, the system has the potential to replicate or even reinforce pre-existing inequalities. Algorithmic bias can lead to some groups of employees receiving fewer career development opportunities, receiving less objective evaluations, or experiencing indirect discrimination. The impact not only harms certain individuals but also creates the perception that the organization does not uphold the principles of fairness and equality. Within the framework of human-centered HRM, technology should be used to strengthen inclusive HR practices, not widen social inequalities in the workplace (Krishnan et al., 2024c). Therefore, organizations

need to conduct regular algorithm audits, ensure the quality of the data used, and involve various stakeholders in the validation process of AI models.

Another challenge is increasing employee concerns about job security. The implementation of AI is often associated with the automation of jobs previously performed by humans. The perception that technology will replace the workforce can trigger anxiety, decrease motivation, and reduce job satisfaction. These concerns are exacerbated if organizations do not clearly communicate the goals of AI implementation. In a human-centered HRM approach, AI should be positioned as a technology that supports human capabilities, not as a complete replacement for humans. Organizations need to build a narrative that AI is used to reduce routine work, giving employees greater opportunities to develop creativity, analytical skills, and interpersonal skills that cannot be fully replaced by technology (Chitraju, 2024).

The implementation of AI also presents challenges in managing employee data privacy and security. AI systems require large amounts of data to generate accurate analyses and predictions. This data can include information on productivity, work behavior, internal communications, and even digital device usage patterns. Excessive data collection without clear boundaries can create feelings of constant surveillance, leading to psychological distress for employees. When organizations lack transparent data protection policies, trust in digital HR systems can erode. The human-centered HRM perspective emphasizes that data use must consider individual privacy rights, obtain adequate consent, and ensure that data is only used for purposes that provide tangible benefits to both employees and the organization (Chitraju, 2024).

On the other hand, the challenge of adapting digital competencies is also a significant factor influencing employee experience. Not all employees have the same level of digital literacy. Differences in ability to understand and utilize AI technology can create gaps in work experience between employees. Some individuals are able to adapt quickly and benefit from AI systems, while others struggle and feel left behind in an increasingly digitalized work environment. If organizations do not provide adequate training, AI implementation can actually increase work stress levels and reduce employee self-confidence (Zinke-Wehlmann & Friedrich, 2024). Therefore, developing digital competencies must be an integral part of an AI implementation strategy to ensure all employees have equal opportunities to utilize new technologies.

Organizational culture change is also a challenge that cannot be ignored. AI integration often requires changes to work patterns, collaboration mechanisms, and decision-making processes. These changes can generate

resistance if employees feel excluded from the transformation process. A human-centered HRM approach emphasizes the importance of active employee participation in every stage of technology implementation, from needs identification and system design to testing and evaluation. This involvement not only increases technology acceptance but also results in AI systems that better align with users' actual needs (Bentler et al., 2026). Thus, AI develops as a tool that supports the work experience, rather than a source of additional stress.

Furthermore, balancing efficiency and empathy is a fundamental challenge in implementing AI in HR functions. AI systems are capable of providing rapid recommendations based on data patterns, but they are not yet able to fully understand the emotional context, organizational cultural values, or personal circumstances that influence employee behavior. In certain situations, such as conflict resolution, feedback, career mentoring, or mental health support, human presence remains irreplaceable (Wadhwa et al., 2024b). Therefore, organizations need to implement a collaborative model between AI and HR professionals, where AI serves as an analytical support, while final decisions still take into account the empathy, intuition, and ethical considerations inherent in humans.

Thus, the challenges of implementing AI for employee experience are not only technical but also encompass the psychological, social, ethical, and cultural dimensions of the organization. The human-centered HRM perspective provides a framework that emphasizes that the success of digital transformation depends on an organization's ability to maintain a balance between technological innovation and human needs. AI needs to be designed as a technology that enhances well-being, improves the quality of work interactions, expands development opportunities, and builds a fair, transparent, and inclusive work environment. When organizations consistently integrate these principles, AI becomes not only a tool for improving operational efficiency but also a catalyst for creating a positive, sustainable, and human-centered employee experience.

Strategies for Achieving Human-Centered HRM: Balancing Automation, Artificial Intelligence Ethics, and Employee Experience

The first strategy for realizing Human-Centered HRM is integrating AI as a decision-making support system, rather than as the primary decision-maker. In practice, AI has the ability to analyze large amounts of data with high speed and accuracy, enabling it to provide recommendations related to candidate

selection processes, identifying training needs, and predicting employee retention rates (Fenwick et al., 2024c). However, final decisions still need to involve human judgment so that aspects that cannot be measured algorithmically, such as empathy, organizational cultural values, individual motivation, and long-term development potential, remain part of the evaluation process. This approach creates a human-in-the-loop mechanism, namely collaboration between artificial intelligence and human intelligence at every stage of decision-making. Thus, organizations can reap the benefits of AI efficiency without eliminating the social and psychological dimensions that are key characteristics of human resource management.

In addition to maintaining human involvement in the decision-making process, organizations also need to establish AI governance based on ethical principles. The implementation of AI in HRM has the potential to pose various risks if algorithms are developed using unrepresentative data or containing historical biases. These biases can influence selection, promotion, and performance evaluation outcomes, resulting in discriminatory decisions against certain groups (Pudjiarti, 2025b). Therefore, a Human-Centered HRM strategy requires organizations to implement the principles of transparency, accountability, fairness, and privacy protection throughout the AI use cycle. Transparency allows employees to understand how their data is collected, processed, and used in the decision-making process. Accountability ensures that organizations remain accountable for every decision made by AI systems. Meanwhile, the principle of fairness requires organizations to conduct regular evaluations of algorithms to identify potential biases and correct them before they impact employees (Lazarenko, 2026).

Employee data management is another integral aspect of the ethical implementation of AI. The more widespread the use of AI, the greater the volume of personal data collected by organizations, ranging from administrative information and performance records to digital activities and learning preferences. While collecting such data can improve the accuracy of analysis, it also increases the risk of privacy breaches if not managed responsibly (Moussi, 2026b). Therefore, organizations need to implement clear data protection policies, including consent mechanisms for data use, restrictions on access to sensitive information, and the implementation of adequate cybersecurity systems. Employees must also receive transparent information about the purposes for which data is used to foster a sense of security and trust in the company's systems. Trust is a crucial foundation for building acceptance of digital transformation in the workplace.

Beyond ethical aspects, Human-Centered HRM strategies must also be directed at improving the employee experience. Employee experience is no longer solely influenced by the physical work environment, but also by the quality of the digital interactions they experience during their work. AI can be leveraged to deliver a more personalized work experience through adaptive learning systems, competency development recommendations, automated administrative services, and virtual assistants that can respond quickly to various employee needs. This personalization allows each individual to experience a work experience tailored to their individual characteristics, competencies, and career goals, thereby increasing job satisfaction and strengthening engagement with the organization (Srivastava et al., 2025b).

However, improving the employee experience should not be solely oriented toward the efficiency of digital services. Human interaction still plays a crucial role in building emotional connections in the workplace. Employees need appreciation, interpersonal communication, coaching, and psychological support that cannot be fully replaced by technology. Therefore, organizations need to maintain a balance between AI-based services and direct interactions with leaders and HR teams. This approach allows AI to handle routine administrative tasks, freeing up HR professionals to carry out strategic functions, such as coaching, leadership development, conflict resolution, and improving employee well-being. Thus, AI actually strengthens HR's strategic role as a partner in human resource development (Inoubli, 2025).

The next strategy is to improve the digital competency of all stakeholders within the organization. AI implementation will not run optimally if employees and HR practitioners lack adequate digital literacy. Therefore, organizations need to develop upskilling and reskilling programs that focus not only on technical skills in using AI applications, but also on an understanding of digital ethics, interpreting AI analysis results, data security, and critical thinking skills in evaluating algorithmic recommendations. Developing these competencies is a long-term investment that allows organizations to optimally utilize AI without creating over-dependence on the technology. Furthermore, increasing digital literacy also reduces resistance to change because employees understand both the benefits and limitations of AI in supporting their work (Zhang, 2025b).

An adaptive organizational culture is also a determining factor in the success of Human-Centered HRM. Digital transformation often raises concerns about job losses due to automation. If these concerns are not properly managed, they can lead to resistance to technological innovation. Therefore, organizations need to establish open communication regarding the purpose of

implementing AI as a productivity-enhancing tool, not as an instrument for reducing human roles. Employee involvement from the planning, development, and evaluation stages of an AI system will foster a sense of ownership in the changes being made. This participation also provides an opportunity for the organization to gain input on real-world user needs, ensuring the AI system truly adds value to daily work activities.

Continuous evaluation is the final strategy that must be part of the implementation of Human-Centered HRM. The success of AI is not solely measured by increased business process efficiency; it also needs to be evaluated through indicators reflecting employee well-being, job satisfaction, trust in the organization, decision-making quality, and perceptions of system fairness. A holistic evaluation approach allows organizations to identify both positive impacts and unintended consequences of AI use so that policies can be continuously adjusted. Furthermore, the rapid development of AI technology requires organizations to continuously update internal regulations, ethical standards, and human resource competencies to remain relevant to the dynamic business environment (Abumere, 2025).

Therefore, implementing Human-Centered HRM involves more than simply adopting AI technology in human resource management processes, but also building an organizational ecosystem capable of integrating automation efficiency with human values. AI should function as an enabler that strengthens human decision-making capacity, develops potential, and creates a more meaningful work experience. Organizations that successfully balance automation, AI ethics, and employee experience will have a more sustainable competitive advantage by not only increasing productivity but also building trust, engagement, and the well-being of human resources, key assets in the face of digital transformation.

CONCLUSION

The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has driven a paradigm shift in Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, from administrative human resource management to more data-based, adaptive and efficient management. The results of the literature review show that the use of AI is able to optimize various HRM functions, such as recruitment, selection, performance management, competency development, and talent planning through process automation and predictive analytics. However, digital transformation cannot be separated from the importance of maintaining human aspects in every decision-making process. The human-centered HRM

approach emphasizes that technology should be a means of strengthening the quality of human resource management, not replacing the role of humans in building work relationships based on empathy, fairness and trust.

This study also shows that the balance between automation and employee experience is a key factor in realizing a sustainable organization in the AI era. The implementation of AI which is supported by the principles of transparency, accountability, protecting data privacy, reducing algorithm bias, and active employee involvement in the digital transformation process can increase job satisfaction, organizational engagement, and readiness to face technological change. Therefore, organizations need to develop an HRM strategy that integrates digital innovation with humanistic values so that the benefits of AI can be felt optimally without reducing the quality of employee work experience. By placing people at the center of digital transformation, organizations not only gain increased operational efficiency, but also build a work environment that is more inclusive, ethical, adaptive and competitive in facing the dynamics of the future world of work.

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