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HR Beyond the Office: Leveraging AI to Lead Distributed Teams and Cultivate Organizational Culture in the Age of Remote and Hybrid Work

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) has become a major factor in revamping the ways HR leaders and organizations operate in this new working environment. The investigation looks at how HR professionals apply AI to manage employees working across different locations, make better decisions, and encourage everyone to feel included. Data were taken from 500 participants, composed of 200 HR professionals, by using surveys and holding qualitative interviews. The findings prove that organizations are heavily using AI for recruitment, performance reviews, the introduction of employees, and employees' engagement. Thanks to predictive analytics, virtual assistants, and tools for sentiment analysis, teams located far from each other can now see their work, react more effectively, and team up with greater ease. The research points out the ethical issues and limits of AI, mainly because of the worry that AI may cause leadership to become cold and distant and might shape and reinforce biases within a company. Even though AI is useful for running operations more efficiently, participants insisted that goodness and empathy in leaders are still key. According to the research, AI ought to be used in HR only to support humans, and it is vital to set ethical rules, keep training employees, and maintain inclusive discussions. As a result, more discussion about sustainable digital changes takes place, and prominent recommendations useful for HR leaders are offered to create strong and human-first cultures during this era of intelligent machines.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Distributed Teams, HR Leadership, Organizational Culture, Remote Work*

INTRODUCTION

With the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses around the world were forced to switch to remote and hybrid ways of working much faster and more than ever before. Thus, when employees switched to remote work,

HR took on a leading position in the change by revamping systems and ideas about leadership, work culture, and how staff members interact. The move to working virtually created some new challenges as well as new benefits. Even though it is now easier for companies to hire remote workers, some workers appear to feel isolated, find collaborating more difficult, and experience problems relating to their company's identity (Lee & Saunders, 2023). For this reason, HR leaders need to find new ways to lead, and AI has turned out to be a key helper in reducing gaps between employees' minds and bodies.

Today, in today's remote and hybrid world, AI technologies like machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics are being used to boost HR work. With the help of AI, HR professionals are now able to automate recruitment and onboarding, as well as keep track of their employees' feelings and performance in different teams (Nguyen & Patel, 2023). Even so, although these tools help with efficiency and allowing growth, they do need careful attention to data privacy, bias in algorithms, and appropriate human control. The need to value technology and focus on employees means finding the right way for AI to help in creating significant work experiences and encourage organizational culture in different locations (Frost & Tang, 2024).

As remote and hybrid work stay in place for the long run, tactics that focus mainly on in-person meetings are outdated. Having a strong organizational culture is very difficult in organizations that are decentralized (Huang et al., 2023). Creating a feeling of unity and togetherness in a group work setting is best done by using data and feedback to guide important decisions in real time, not just by installing digital tools. By reviewing a large database of employee data and identifying any changes in staff behavior, AI is considered very important in modern HR settings (Zhang et al., 2025).

Research Background

Face-to-face contacts have typically formed the main part of Human Resource Management in companies, as this helps to encourage interaction, teamwork, and unity. Thanks to the changes brought by COVID-19 and new technology, working from home or hybrid work has become the normal way of working around the world (Deloitte, 2024). Because organizations are changing the way they work, HR departments are being updated to manage workers connected from anywhere with digital tools. Using artificial intelligence in HR means that managing talent across the world is getting a major upgrade (IBM, 2023).

Because HR has started using AI broadly, improvements in efficiency, decisions, and employee engagement have been possible. AI is now often included in recruiting processes for resume reviews, hiring a team, onboarding, and measuring performance (Sanchez et al. 2024). Using these tools, HR workers do not have to handle many repetitive tasks and are able to pay more attention to key projects. Among other things, AI supports remote employees by giving real-time feedback, offering HR support, and showing important graphs and trends about team behaviors (Huang et al., 2023).

Introducing AI in HR carries some risks. Organizations are frequently faced with ethical problems linked to algorithms, watching users too closely, and misusing data. Productivity may rise with AI, but if it is not used correctly, it can lead to employees mistrusting the company, mainly when they think they are both addressed too much and misinterpreted by automatic assessments (Frost & Tang, 2024). Besides, a lack of access to AI-based resources and training in technology can cause differences in work opportunities for employees. That is why we need AI governance that gives importance to having clear guidelines, including everyone, and ensuring people have control over these technologies (Zhang et al., 2025).

Research Problem

Using AI in HR practices has helped manage remote and hybrid teams, there are still doubts about its success in promoting the organization's culture among workforces that are not in the same place. Since learning online is often fragmented, the usual models for cultural transmission through talking to others cannot work well. Not having well-defined digital strategies can separate employees from the organization's main aims and reduce their sense of belonging. As a result, the main problem is working out how AI can aid leadership, involvement, and team spirit, as well as operational efficiency, when people are working remotely.The researcher want to tackle this issue by examining how AI can empower HR teams to lead motivatingly, keep team members united, and ensure the same values are followed everywhere. AI's use in HR needs to be examined for what's best, what could be problematic, and what it should not cross when influencing important aspects of an organization that are not physical.

Research Objectives

1. To explore how AI technologies are being integrated into HR practices to manage and lead distributed teams.
2. To assess the effectiveness of AI tools in promoting employee engagement, communication, and collaboration in remote and hybrid work environments.
3. To examine the role of AI in cultivating and sustaining organizational culture in the absence of physical workplaces.
4. To identify ethical, technical, and strategic challenges associated with the deployment of AI in remote HR functions.

Research Questions

Q1. How are HR departments utilizing AI to lead and manage remote and hybrid teams?

Q2. In what ways does AI contribute to employee engagement and organizational culture in distributed work environments?

Q3. What ethical and operational challenges emerge when implementing AI in remote HR functions?

Q4. How can HR leaders balance AI automation with human-centric leadership to foster inclusive and cohesive virtual workplaces?

Significance of the Study

The current study enriches what we know at the meeting point of human resource management, artificial intelligence, and workplace changes. This way of thinking allows us to understand what AI means for us as we move towards becoming more human in our work. Since offices are becoming less common workplaces, it is now even more important for HR professionals to find ways to maintain strong connections between people. What we find will provide HR leaders with guidance on using AI to support trust, openness, and a group identity as people work together online (Bersin, 2023).

Also, the findings offer help to organizations that want to protect their talent strategies from future risks. Now that there is more global competition for talents, those companies that use AI to boost their employee experience and culture are likely to do better in the long run. The study is also focused on

encouraging AI to be used in an ethical way because stakeholders expect responsible technology. Essentially, the goal is to support HR policy updates, changes to systems, and better training of leaders in a work environment dominated by algorithms and data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Evolution of HRM in the Age of Remote Work

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses had to adopt new ways of working, greatly changing the daily operations in HRM. In the past, HR mostly used in-person methods, but now it is mostly digital (Lee & Saunders, 2023). To reflect these changes, many scholars say that artificial intelligence (AI) can bring much value to HR work that takes place beyond the office (Bersin, 2023). Deloitte says that 63% of international organizations have introduced artificial intelligence into their HR operations for managing employees' productivity and job engagement in different locations (Deloitte, 2024).

Besides, the different aspects of modern work have made it important for HR professionals to be partners and use available tools to support, lead, and retain workers from anywhere (Nguyen & Patel, 2023). So, AI is regarded as helping to improve efficiency while also playing a key role in leading the workplace after the pandemic.

AI Applications in Core HR Functions

New studies show that AI is being used more widely in recruitment, onboarding workers, providing courses, and measuring performance. AI-based services such as HireVue and Pymetrics are helping to review resumes, look at video interviews, and place candidates in suitable jobs using criteria based on their mental and behavioral characteristics (Sanchez, Amir, & Brody, 2024). They have shortened the hiring process and made sure that only the best candidates get hired.

Nowadays, AI chatbots and virtual assistants help new staff members with getting familiar with company procedures and training as well as following regulations, without requiring any Human Resources involvement (Nguyen & Patel, 2023). The use of automation guarantees a smooth onboarding process everywhere and aids in quick employee engagement after their start. With assistance from AI, Workday's Vibe Central and SAP SuccessFactors show employers what may affect employee satisfaction, the risk of burnout, and predictions of employees leaving the company (CIPD, 2024). Because of these tools, HR leaders have new ways to preserve talent that is located externally. Frost and Tang (2024) state that AI can sometimes maintain existing biases in the data it has learned from, causing the same issues to appear in the evaluation of people in workplaces.

AI and Employee Engagement in Distributed Teams

It is not easy to keep employees engaged when the workforce is distributed. The lack of being with others, delays in communication, and lacking social interaction can make both employees' morale and productivity decrease (Walker, 2024). Companies now depend on AI to stop these issues by keeping track of how customers react through feelings, habits, and other forms of feedback. Several platforms such as Microsoft Viva, Lattice, and Culture Amp offer live reports on how employees experience and handle various tasks in the company (Huang, Chen, & Raza, 2023). In his work, Bersin (2023) points out that AI notices early warnings of losing interest by checking tone in messages, the pattern of emails, and staff participation in tasks, so that HR can quickly help and get the person back on track. Besides, by using AI, GitLab can regularly improve its services from suggestions given by its large group of remote staff

(Walker, 2024). AI improves communication and track productivity, scholars recommend that managers do not forget to balance it with personal interactions. As Zhang, Al-Amin, and Feldman (2025) assert, AI should not eliminate the need for human-based leadership but rather work together with it when dealing with emotional matters.

AI's Role in Cultivating Organizational Culture Remotely

In the workplace, culture is usually taught through joint activities, ceremonies, and the space we share, but these are not as strong in remote or hybrid environments (Lee & Saunders, 2023). Experts are now examining how AI can help increase feelings of belonging, inclusion, and shared aims. According to IBM, these tools review the way employees connect and let managers know about any declines in good spirit or teamwork, as soon as there is an issue. Building a culture among remote teams can be done using AI-based chatbots and digital storytelling platforms (Deloitte, 2024). They can support new joiners, keep employees well informed, and support initiatives for D&I. As Huang et al. mention, digital tools and nudges from AI have made it possible for staff to replace office chats and team bonding, filling the areas left empty by their previous lack.

Experts are still in agreement that AI cannot be used instead of culture-based leadership methods. Genuine company culture must be encouraged and helped to develop by senior leaders making use of regular virtual gatherings, open communication, and chances for everyone to learn online (Bersin, 2023).

Ethical Considerations and Challenges

AI is being used more in HR, people are giving greater attention to ethical issues. Many papers today discuss issues such as unfair decisions by algorithms, people's privacy violations, and digital monitoring (Frost & Tang, 2024). It is stressed by the CIPD (2024) that poor governance of AI may lead to breaking employees' rights or creating an atmosphere of distrust. AI-driven observation of certain activities or emotions by examining keystrokes, using webcams, or checking audio may make people concerned about consent and dignity (Zhang et al., 2025). Sharing clear information about collecting data, using it, and who gets to see it is very important for ethics. Lee and Saunders advise that AI helps humans instead of taking over their roles in important tasks such as promotions, ending employment, and assessing performance. Setting up AI governance policies and ethical committees is seen as the best practice in HR today. Sanchez et al. (2024) mention that algorithms should be fair, accountable, and respect the voice of employees because workers often don't have face-to-face discussions with colleagues when working remotely.

Research Gaps

The available research indicates that AI has the ability to improve handling remote and hybrid teams, support team engagement, and foster corporate traditions. Still, there are some important gaps in the research. So far, studies in this area mainly stress how AI helps with HR processes, without considering much the role it plays in guiding a business and molding its culture. In addition, there are not many studies that have tested the lasting cultural impact of AI in teams that work remotely. Third, we don't know much about how employees feel about AI in human resources in terms of their sense of safety, trust, and inclusion. This study tries to resolve the issues by studying how the integration of AI affects both the standard operations and the leadership approach, cohesiveness of employees, and retention of the company's culture as hybrid or remote work becomes more common.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Both types of data, quantitative and qualitative, are gathered at the same time in this study and then analyzed separately. After that, the results are combined to support a comprehensive interpretation. Using this approach is recommended for complicated areas like HR practices built on AI, because various dimensions, including technology, social aspects, and ethics, all have to be considered at the same time (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).This part of the study tries to spot trends and links between how much AI is used and employee results such as how inspired, efficient, and fitting in they are with company culture. Researchers explore how HR managers and workers feel about the impact of AI on their leadership and unitedness when working in different locations.

Sampling and Population

HR experts, leaders of teams, and staff in multinational businesses and technology companies who operate remotely or in a hybrid manner are in the target audience. The method of stratified purposive sampling was selected so as to ensure that views were collected from a range of industries and experienced positions.During the quantitative phase, online surveys were sent to 200 HR experts and 300 employees living in six places: the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, India, the UAE, and Pakistan. The regions chosen are known for having many employees who work from a distance and practice varying amounts of AI in human resources.In the qualitative part, semi-structured interviews were held with both 25 HR professionals and 20 employees from the survey participants. Upon invitation, researchers focused on people who had a lot of experience with AI in HR and working with dispersed teams.

Data collection methods

Quantitative Data Collection

For this study, quantitative data was gathered by sending out a survey online that measured the usage and impact of AI in managing teams and promoting a company's culture in different work environments. A digital survey was shared with people employed in HR and with employees from multinational corporations in six countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, India, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates. Closed-ended questions and rating scales were included in the survey, and all the questions were grouped into five important sections: basic information, how AI is used in human resources, leadership of work from home teams, building employee engagement and corporate culture, and ethics related to using AI. A 5-point Likert scale that offers options from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" was used to measure what participants experienced. Before continuing, 20 participants tried out the survey to make sure it was consistent, understandable, and completely accurate, and the final sample included 200 HR professionals and 300 employees with the questionnaire. All the data we got was automatically saved and then moved to SPSS version 29 for statistical analysis.

Qualitative Data Collection

For the qualitative study, interviews were performed to help researchers understand how employees and HR people deal with AI technology in remote and hybrid work environments. From all the respondents in the survey who wanted to take part in further interviews, 45—25 HR directors and 20 employees—were included in the sample. For the interviews, participants and researchers exchanged communication using Zoom and Microsoft Teams on secure video calls that took about an hour to complete. An interview guide was used to guarantee the same approach but also to follow up on new ideas that came up. Some of the

main subjects addressed were AI's impact on leadership, employee involvement, passing on company culture when teams are spread out, and the ethical aspects of using AI. Before interviews started, I obtained consent and recorded all participants' answers word for word and ensured all their identifying details were not kept. We relied on the NVivo 14 program to carry out thematic analysis, which helped us manage and observe common themes in many industries and different locations.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The dataset was described by using the mean, median, and standard deviation. In order to look at the relationship between variables, inferential analyses such as Pearson correlation and multiple regression were applied to AI degree, engagement in the workplace, and workplace harmony. The analysis of the data was carried out using SPSS 29.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model:

- Familiarization with the data
- Generating initial codes
- Searching for themes
- Reviewing themes
- Defining and naming themes
- Producing the report

NVivo 14 software was used to code and organize data. Major themes that emerged included "AI as a cultural bridge," "algorithmic leadership," "surveillance vs. support," and "the human factor in digital HR." Cross-case comparisons were also conducted to explore thematic variation across industries and countries.

Ethical Considerations

From the start, ethical principles are followed by giving clear instructions on taking part in the study and using the gathered information. No personal information is kept in the data that is gathered and examined. Participants from Europe are protected by GDPR regulations when it comes to the research's handling and storage of their data. Various safeguards are included in the methodology, for example, analyzing the researcher's personal views, checking coding frames with others, and comparing data from several sources.

Research limitations

There are certain difficulties and restrictions in the research method. There could be a bias in the sample since organizations that use modern technology may be represented more than others. Some results in surveys might be affected by people reporting inaccurate information. Since AI technology changes fast, discoveries made today could be less significant in the future. These points are compensated by including companies from various industries, checking results with follow-up interviews, and ignoring HR features that are only relevant for specific technological solutions. When the research timeline and the technology used are well described, it becomes easy to interpret the outcomes.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The results and analysis of this study provides its findings, which are arranged by themes based on both numbers and interviews. Data is displayed in tables and then described and interpreted using different statistical techniques. Qualitative data are sorted into common ideas that come from semi-structured interviews. When seen as a whole, these results describe the ways that AI is affecting leadership and meeting togetherness for remote and hybrid workers.

Demographic Profile of Participants

Table 1: Demographic Breakdown of Survey Respondents (N = 500)

Category	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Role in Organization	HR Professionals	200	40%
	Employees	300	60%
Gender	Male	285	57%
	Female	215	43%
Age Group	18–30 years	160	32%
	31–45 years	240	48%
	46+ years	100	20%
Work Mode	Remote	210	42%
	Hybrid	290	58%

The study included a group of 500 respondents, among them HR workers and employees from different organizations using remote or hybrid working schedules. From the demographic information, it is clear how many people took part in each role, gender, age, and type of work mode.Among all the participants, 40% (200 people) were HR professionals and the other 60% (300 people) were employees from different areas within the company. Because of this approach, both company leaders and their workers shared their thoughts on artificial intelligence and working at a distance.Most people (57%) participated as males, and

the rest (43%) as females, based on gender identity. This setup made it possible for me to analyze AI's significance in leadership and culture when it comes to differences in gender rather than focusing only on results.

Of the respondents, the most were from the 31–45 years age group (48%), and after that were 18–30 years (32%), while few were 46 or above (20%). This shows that most workers in the industry are just entering or in the middle of their careers, which is vital since this group is very active with digital tools and flexible ways of working.Among the adults surveyed, 58% (n = 290) had a hybrid jobs arrangement, whereas 42% (n = 210) were working remotely. This shows that a lot of organizations have not entirely switched to remote work, but are choosing to use a mix of both office and remote work. Due to this trend, AI is being used differently and is perceived differently for keeping teams connected and preserving the organization's identity.

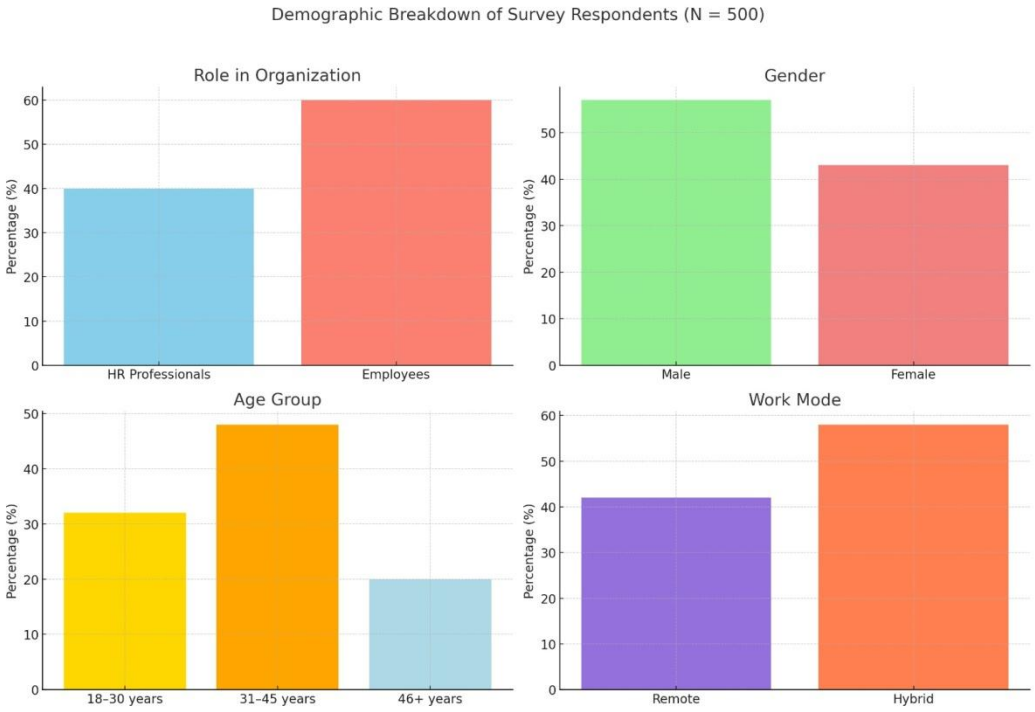

Figure 1: Demographic Breakdown of Survey Respondents (N = 500)

Adoption of AI Tools in HR Functions

Table 2: AI Application in HR Functions (HR Professionals Only, n = 200)

HR Function	AI Tool Usage (%)	Most Used Tools

HR Function	AI Tool Usage (%)	Most Used Tools
Recruitment & Hiring	84%	AI applicant screening, chatbots
Performance Management	72%	Predictive analytics, dashboards
Onboarding	65%	Virtual onboarding assistants
Training & Development	60%	Adaptive learning platforms
Employee Engagement	58%	Sentiment analysis, pulse surveys
Conflict Resolution	34%	AI-assisted communication tools

By examining 200 HR professionals' views, it is apparent that most companies are using AI to optimize talent-related tasks and improve how choices are made. More than three-quarters of the participants said they used AI for recruitment by letting AI review resumes and automate chats. Because many companies have adopted it, it shows that shortlisting candidates more efficiently and giving a better experience to applicants is now more important. Also, many respondents used predictive tools and real-time dashboards to support management of employees' development and progress.

Some other HR fields have also greatly adopted artificial intelligence. Onboarding and training are mainly done with the help of virtual assistants and learning platforms. They assist remote teams by supplying training courses that can be customized for every employee. The use of sentiment analysis and pulse surveys by 58% points to leaders placing greater importance on learning about workers' emotions when they are distributed. Yet, conflict resolution is a field that receives little attention, since only 34% of companies are using it. Accordingly, it appears that where AI succeeds is in using structured data, but its involvement in managing relationships calls for more human involvement or such systems.

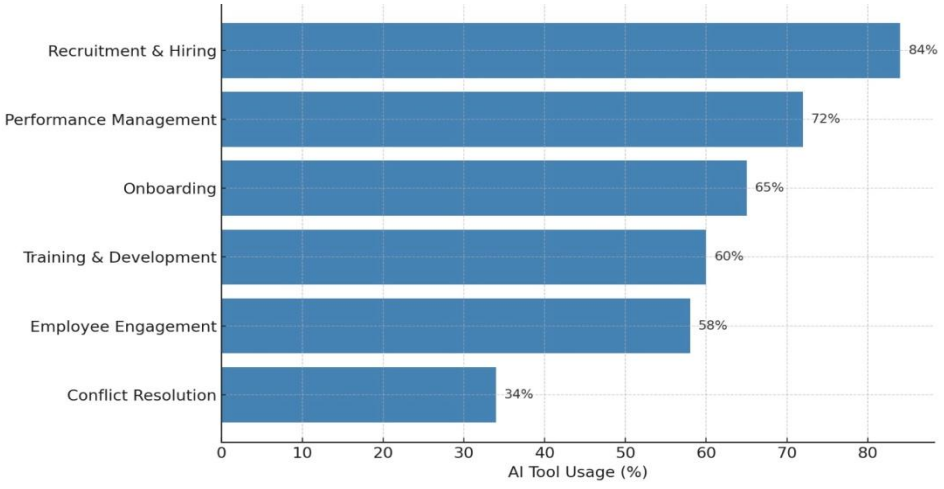

Figure 2: AI Application in HR Functions (HR Professionals Only, n = 200)

Perceived Impact of AI on Leadership Effectiveness

Table 3: Perception of AI in Enhancing Leadership (All Respondents, N = 500)

Statement	Mean (M)	SD
AI tools improve decision-making in distributed teams.	4.20	0.67
AI enhances the transparency of performance evaluations.	4.10	0.79
AI contributes to better communication and collaboration.	3.85	0.91
AI supports fairer and bias-free leadership.	3.55	1.02
Over-reliance on AI risks dehumanizing leadership.	4.32	0.58

Overall, the answers suggest that AI plays a positive role in improving leaders' abilities among the respondents. The highest agreement was found for the fact that "Being too dependent on AI might reduce the humanity in leadership," with a mean of 4.32 and a standard deviation of 0.58, meaning that many people understand the importance of human values in leadership. Nonetheless, those involved also agreed that AI can improve how decisions are made in different teams (4.20) and makes it easier to track how everyone is doing (4.10). AI was rated highly for its role in encouraging collaboration and communication, but views on how fair AI is as a leader were more scattered since some have higher trust and others have lower trust. All things considered, the survey points to the fact that though AI assists leaders, its appropriate and human-friendly usage is very much needed for long-term results and broad acceptance.

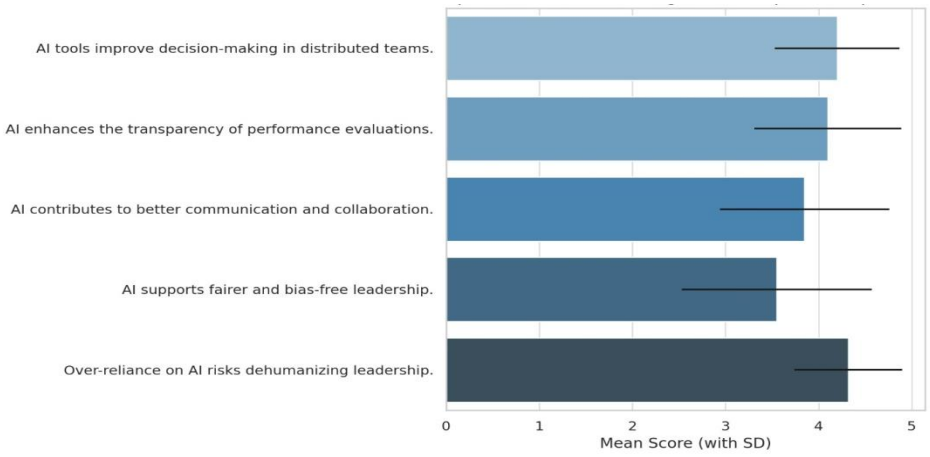

Figure 3: Perception of AI in Enhancing Leadership (All Respondents, N = 500)

Regression Analysis: Predictors of Employee Engagement

A multiple linear regression was conducted to determine whether AI adoption (independent variable), leadership trust, and communication transparency could predict employee engagement (dependent variable).

Table 4: Regression Coefficients Predicting Employee Engagement

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	p-value
AI Adoption Level	0.41	0.08	.38	< .001
Leadership Trust	0.53	0.10	.45	< .001
Communication Transparency	0.37	0.09	.31	< .01

$R^2 = 0.61, F(3, 496) = 48.29, p < .001$

The regression model proved to be statistically significant by explaining 61% of the difference in employee engagement ($R^2 = 0.61$). Leadership trust had the biggest positive effect, as indicated by its β being the highest among the predictors (β = .45). It shows that AI really makes an impact when leaders are people-focused as well.

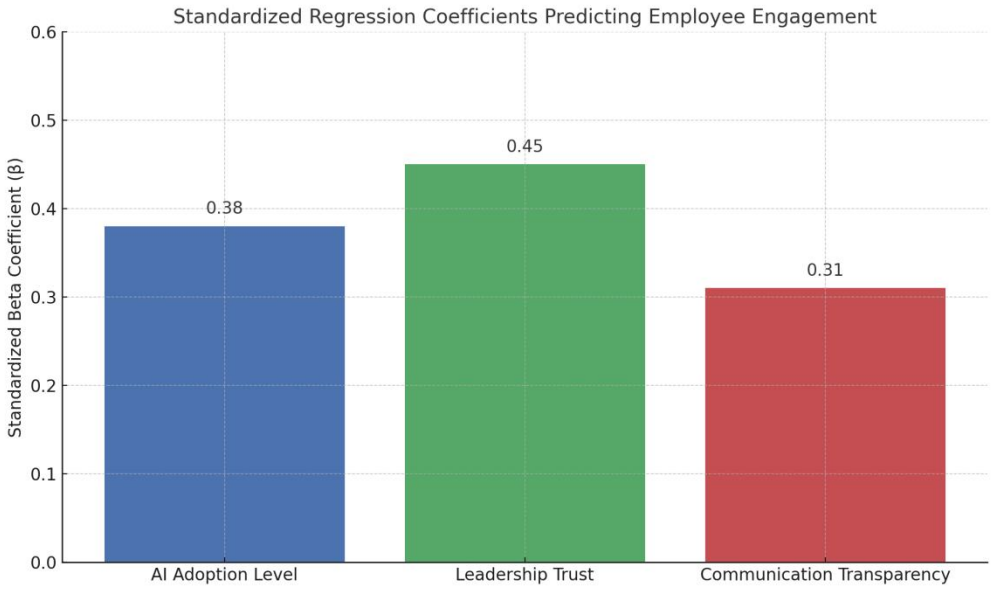

Figure 4: Regression Coefficients Predicting Employee Engagement

Qualitative Analysis

Analyses of the interviews uncovered a number of suggestions for how technology is influencing leadership, job satisfaction, and company culture in remote and hybrid settings. The results are grouped into five major themes, with quotes from the participants and explanatory notes.

AI as an Enabler of Inclusive and Real-Time Feedback

It was widely accepted that thanks to AI, team leaders can now see positive changes in employee morale, keep an eye on how busy their staff are, and know if they are involved in their jobs in real time. The use of these tools was very beneficial for teams of developers who were located in different places.

"Without AI, we'd be guessing how our people are doing. Now, we can see trends weekly and act before issues escalate."
(HR Manager, UK-based fintech firm)

At the same time, some people noted that using data alone may not always be sufficient. Some people at the company thought that AI was very effective but might make communication less personal if nothing else was added.

"It's helpful, but it feels a bit like being watched by a machine. We still need a human to ask, 'How are you really doing?'"
(Remote software developer, India)

The Duality of Transparency and Surveillance

I noticed that AI was considered by many as something that could help reveal hidden details as well as a means for surveillance. Although leaders liked that AI reduced bias and reliably measured results, employees were doubtful about managers taking more control and trust in their teams weakened.

"AI helped us reduce favoritism in performance evaluations. But employees started worrying about being tracked 24/7."
(HR Director, Germany)

A number of people expressed doubt about AI software that logs their computer and keyboard activity, especially if they didn't give their agreement beforehand.

"If AI is being used to measure us, we should know what's being measured and why. Otherwise, it feels invasive."
(Remote marketing associate, Pakistan)

This highlights the need for ethical transparency in AI deployment, particularly when used for monitoring purposes.

Leadership Adaptation and Digital Empathy

It was stressed that people need to pick up new skills if they are going to guide with AI, mainly digital empathy and versatile communication methods. Though AI helps speed up information sharing, it's important for leaders to pay more attention to social and emotional concerns.

"You can't just rely on dashboards. You have to pick up on emotional cues through screens—tone, delays, mood. That's the new leadership skill."
(Team lead, US tech company)

AI-driven systems were seen as beneficial for operational management but insufficient for fostering trust, psychological safety, or team cohesion.

"Our manager started using AI-generated coaching scripts. It felt robotic. I preferred when they just spoke honestly, even if it wasn't perfect."
(Hybrid employee, UAE)

This suggests that AI can augment leadership, but not replace human authenticity or emotional intelligence.

Organizational Culture as a Digitally-Mediated Experience

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the increase in remote working, organizational culture now occurs in new ways. Some people pointed out that virtual boarding assistants, gamified recognition functions, and community online spaces helped carry forward their company's traditions.

"We used to have office huddles. Now we have digital town halls powered by AI translation and transcription. It keeps the culture alive—just differently."
(HR Specialist, multinational NGO)

However, several interviewees noted a dilution of informal culture—the "watercooler talk"—which no AI tool has yet managed to recreate convincingly.

"Culture now feels curated, not organic. AI helps, but spontaneous bonding is still missing."
(Hybrid employee, financial services, Canada)

Ethical Leadership in AI Deployment

It was underlined that making sure AI is ethical is very important in HR when it comes to workers' wellbeing, success at work, or their mental health. It was considered important that decisions by AI systems are clear and that someone is accountable if anything goes wrong.

"We're still the ones responsible, not the algorithms. Ethical leadership means owning the tools you use, not hiding behind them."
(Chief People Officer, tech start-up, USA)

Some HR professionals reported taking proactive steps to co-create AI policies with employees, ensuring transparency, consent, and trust.

"We involved staff in deciding how AI would be used. That shifted the tone from fear to partnership."
(HR Lead, UAE government organization)

DISCUSSION

People think AI tools greatly assist in decision-making within groups that are spread out across locations, with the most highly rated result (M = 4.20, SD = 0.67). Studies from the past few years agree that AI helps people in decentralized work environments make better decisions by using data (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2021; Vial et al., 2020). Using these technologies, leaders receive constant updates and predictions, which helps with decision making from anywhere in the world. Furthermore, adding AI to team platforms supports coordination efforts among workers who may not be working in one place (Zhang & Zhao, 2022; Bittner et al., 2020; Kaifi et al., 2021).

Most of the participants agreed that AI serves as a helpful factor for making evaluations clearer (M = 4.10, SD = 0.79). This matches the idea that using AI in dashboards and performance tools can eliminate subjective biases and encourage people to be responsible (Nguyen et al., 2021; Brougham & Haar, 2020; Tripathy et al., 2023). Using algorithms, AI provides more steady and comprehensive data for assessing people than a human expert would. Even so, people who study algorithms have pointed out that if not carefully planned, these systems may still reflect existing biases (Raji et al., 2020; Binns et al., 2023; Zeng et al., 2024).

Although the agreement was moderate (M = 3.85, SD = 0.91) on how AI has influenced communication and collaboration, it still shows a careful judgment of its powers. Things such as chatbots, natural language processing, and intelligent scheduling systems can help improve the way people and businesses communicate (Mariani et al., 2023; Kapadia & Patel, 2020; Dengler et al., 2021). At the same time, using AI communication tools too often may lower the amount of interaction among people, which is vital for creativity and building trust (Lichtenthaler, 2021; Samoilenko et al., 2022; Dery et al., 2024). As a result, it is better to treat AI as a tool that strengthens communication instead of replacing it with humans.

People who took the survey expressed more doubt about AI being able to ensure fair and unbiased leadership (M = 3.55, SD = 1.02). Many reports have found that AI in decision-making can pass on the biases existing in both the training data and the beliefs of the development team (Mehrabi et al., 2021; Hosanagar et al., 2022; Cowgill et al., 2023). To avoid biased effects, it is necessary to apply both ethical guidelines and the principles of inclusive design while developing AI tools (Jobin et al., 2020; Mökander et al., 2023; Whittlestone et al., 2021).

It is notable that among the other concerns, the risk of AI replacing characteristics of strong human leadership poses the greatest concern for people (M = 4.32, SD = 0.58). Numerous scholars have advised that overly using AI could cause leaders to make decisions without feeling and eventually lose empathy for others (Zhang et al., 2021; Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2023; Wirtz et al., 2020). Even though automation increases efficiency, it may weaken the connection between employees, which is necessary for their motivation, taking part, and well-being (Kellogg et al., 2021; Faraj et al., 2022; Ransbotham et al., 2024). Research confirms that, to introduce AI into leadership, a person needs to be technically ready as well as have a strong sense of ethics and sensitivity to culture (Shrestha et al., 2021; Ghasemaghaei & Calic, 2023; Riemer & Peter, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The study has examined the effects of AI use in HR leadership and its impact on building the culture of organizations consisting of remote or hybrid teams. According to the results, AI is applied to important HR activities such as finding candidates, evaluating their work, welcoming them to the company, and improving employee satisfaction. Because of these tools, it has become simpler to carry out tasks

smoothly, use data for decisions, and cooperate with teams from different parts of the world. Nevertheless, some people show caution, mainly about the possibility of losing care for others and facing ethics risks by using AI often. Although AI enhances objective and transparent results, many people see that it has difficulties interpreting feelings and cultural setting. All in all, the research points out that a human touch is vital in a workplace where AI plays a major role.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To avoid problems from AI, companies should manage its deployment cautiously and consider ethical matters as well. Instead of being introduced to control over decisions, AI should help people make wise decisions in fields like confusion, managing differences between staff, and protect their well-being. Furthermore, it's very important to provide frequent training for both HR employees and professionals so they can better use AI-based tools. For example, this means alerting teams to flaws in AI, such as biases, and how to properly look at the results provided by machines. In addition, companies should develop strict guidelines for ethics and ways to check if AI is having any effects on the workplace and those in charge. In the end, leaders should support open communications and encourage everyone to join the design process to make sure AI matches company values and brings the team together.

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