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Mediating Role of Artificial Intelligence on Talent Retention

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Abstract

Background and Objectives: Human resources today plays a vital role in defining the success of any business unit. This article aims at devising a SE Model depicting the mediating role of Artificial Intelligence on employee recruitment, onboarding, engagement and talent retention. The paper investigates the impact of AI on talent retention among employees from IT sectors which applies AI/HR analytics from Chennai and Bangalore. The study is conducted with a structured questionnaire. Primary data was collected from HR managers working in IT Sector in Chennai and Bangalore from organizations which applied Artificial Intelligence for their HR processes. Secondary data also has been used. AI is used to augment business results and HR capabilities. The mediating role of artificial intelligence plays a vital role on HR processes like Employee recruitment, onboarding, engagement and talent retention. This study focused on studying the mediating role of AI on HR processes. Structural equation modeling is used to test this hypothesis. The results outline areas where AI is delivering value in HR practices like, recruiting, onboarding and talent retention. The findings indicated that usage of AI on recruitment and placing employees on the basis of skills, motivating factors and engagement drives has a significant role in talent retention.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, HR Analytics, Engagement drives, Employee recruitment onboarding and placements.

JEL classifications: MO, O31,

1. Introduction:

HR has its greatest impact at the crossroads of workforce and businesses. Traditionally HR interaction with employees was limited to performance assessments and other process-related cross-examinations. It is only through these minimal interactions that employers managed to glean insights into what skills employees are good at, what motivates an employee and what are the engagement drives that drives performance. Today HR managers are required to move their focus from operational tasks to leadership roles. Thus, HR cannot rely on intuition or casual corridor discussions when it comes to important decisions on either engaging talent or retaining talent. AI serves as a productive HR tool to address these issues in real time. AI helps in getting the right people faster by assessing skills that match the roles. It further, helps in aiding employers right from the onboarding process to handling their records till they exit the organization, AI is prepped to aid HR to retain valuable talent and pave the way for both on-site and remote employees to streamline the employee journey into a positive employee experience. AI as a part



of HR analytics plays a central role in talent acquisitions, development and operations. Today HR can boast that any investment in technology can prove that ROI analytics can bring about. Lydia Wu director HR strategy and technology division, states that HR analytics can help organizations to make smarter decisions in areas such as, will the new hires be high performers, should they be shifted into fast-track programs, identify factors that drives their performance etc.,

2. Theoretical Background and literature survey

AI today, is considered as a strategic tool for organization's success due to the ensuing reasons: Firstly, Fraij, Jihad & Várallyai, László. (2021) highlights in his study that, AI is said to improve recruiting efficiency and effectiveness both in terms of quality candidates recruited within a short span of time at limited cost. With the growth of online recruitment portals, today prospective employers take a glimpse at the resumes and use AI to identify the success of the prospective candidate if hired. This enables recruiters to take data driven decisions coupled with their gut feeling. Secondly, David Windley, President IQ Talent partners, rightly puts in that AI and ML can be leveraged to aid in the process of recruiting by probing the data pool to ascertain the right candidate.

Thirdly, Niehueser and Boak, 2020 lays emphasis on automation as it helps in finding the right candidates before a competitor grabs them up.

Fourthly, Cara Heilmann, 2018 & Tandon, L. Joshi, P. Rastogi, R. (2017) stresses on automated screening processes, as it often reduces personal bias.

Fifthly, Graham, J. T declares explicitly that, AI will be the great savior of HR's time, resulting in HR leaders, practitioners and people managers having that time back, to re-focus on the people interactions that focuses in providing a smooth onboarding experience for new recruits, administration and learning even in case of virtual offices.

Sixthly, Akshay Bhardwaj 2020 proclaims that digital onboarding that, are driven by integration among the onboarding app, employee service portal, and other digital tools can help employees to understand the functions of the company, culture, and their own role, effectively.

Seventhly, Zachariah 2020 affirms that, voicebots can assist in handling queries on policies and other mundane tasks of onboarding like, providing checklist of documents, filling out forms, providing updates on their joining formalities etc., or in simple terms the entire pre-onboarding engagement exercise can be done effectively.

Eightly, Jyotsna, 2018 Artificial intelligence, has boosted the scope of employee engagement through advanced sentiment analysis. Natural language processing, text analysis and other allied AI innovations, is making it easier to gather deep and accurate understanding of employee behavior. Through deeper analysis of email conversation, biometric data, companies are finding it easier to promote a sense of belonging, identify alarming signs and create an engaging environment around. Moreover, Polisetty, Aruna & Sheela, Paluri. (2023). In their article titled Will AI Replace Humans from Human Resources? A Case Analysis explores to uncover ways in which AI can be roped to provide enhanced services, leading to improved organizational success and also throws light on the challenges faced by HR managers. Lastly, Malathi states that ML and AI are to ideal for compiling data in HR Systems is useful in verifying information, resolving task-specific problems in HR functions. Thus, when a candidate is sourced, whether it be from job boards, LinkedIn, or social media, chatbots can pre-screen candidates with pre-defined



customizable conditions so that only qualified candidates are shortlisted, selected candidates are on boarded, engaged and thus aid in retaining talent.

3. Research Analysis

3.1 Research Gaps

A thorough analysis of review of literature indicates, there is wide scope for research in the domain of employee recruitment, onboarding, engagement, talent retention and AI. Thus, the research gaps are:

- Relationships between the employee recruitment, on boarding, employee engagement and AI
- Lack of integrated framework of the two major constructs AI and talent retention.
- To test the theoretical framework

3.2 Research Questions

Does AI have an impact on the employee recruitment, on boarding and engagement in selected IT companies in Bangalore and Chennai city? The research aims to contribute to understand of the impact of AI technologies on the employee recruitment, on boarding and engagement and also to know its impact on talent retention.

3.3 Primary Objectives

- 1. To identify the factors of employee recruitment & on boarding, employee engagement, AI and talent retention
- 2. To examine the impact of application of artificial intelligence in employee recruitment, onboarding and engagement.
- 3. To examine the impact of artificial intelligence on talent retention.
- 4. To test the theoretical framework.

3.4 Conceptual framework

Figure 1- Conceptual framework



The conceptual model of the research is developed based on the review of literature in which two main factors, mediating factor and their components are brought together to form a SEM model as shown in the figure 1. Each path between the theories and the components represents the hypothetical relationship to be verified using structural equation model.

3.5 Research methodology: Data for the research was collected primarily from HR managers working with organization's that apply AI for its HR functions and Managers working with organization's that offer tailor made HR consultancy services. Secondary data is also used.

3.6 Research instrument: The survey method of data collection was implemented to gather the primary data through a structured questionnaire from the sample of 100 HR managers.



3.7 Sampling Details: The sample for this study comprises 100 HR managers from the city of Chennai and Bangalore. The respondents for the study were selected using convenience method of sampling. The population of the study included HR managers working with organization's that apply AI for its HR functions and Managers working with organization's that offer tailor made HR consultancy services. Data for the study was collected from Dec 2022 till March 2023.

3.8 Limitations of the study

The study is a cross sectional study and restricted to only 100 respondents and time constraint.

3.9 Statistical Tools: Second order structural equation modeling was used to test the hypothesis. The relationship between the components of employee recruitment, on boarding, engagement, talent retention and AI is explored using SEM model. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) is used to analyze the data. Exploratory factor analysis was applied to identify the factors. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to authenticate the emergent factors, CFA was carried out to measure the relationship between dormant variable and experimental measure. Structural equation modeling technique was used, to analyze a structural theory. In EFA, KMO and Bartlett's test, was used for employee recruitment, on boarding, engagement, talent retention and AI. CFA resulted in two factor models for employee recruitment and onboarding, employee engagement, artificial intelligence and talent retention. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling. Four constructs and eight factors were used to run the SEM.

3.10 Pilot Study

A preliminary investigation is conducted to check the reliability of the statements (Permanent, dependent variables). In Likert's five-point scale. The reliability is measured through Cronbach's Alpha tool to validate the variance for all the variables regarding employee recruitment, on boarding, employee engagement, AI and talent retention. At the point of inception, the Cronbach alpha revealed are presented in the table 1. The scores are above the bench mark values of .80 therefore it can be concluded that the statements are very clear for the respondents to express their insight.

Measure	No. of	Range	Cronbach Alpha	Variance
	statements			
Employee recruitment and on	7	1-5	.879	87.9%
boarding through AI application				
Employee engagement through	5	1-5	.807	80.7%
AI application				
Artificial Intelligence	4	1-5	.829	82.9%
Talent Retention	7	1-5		80.7%
			.807	

Table 1 - Cronbach Alpha' Reliability Table

Source Computed Data

4. Findings:

4.1 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a tool in which numerous variables are analyzed such that it can be explained in a single factor. (De Groot et al., 1982) states that factor analysis is used to reduce a number of variables into groups based on related statements.



Factors of employee recruitment, on boarding, employee engagement, AI and talent retention

Exploratory factor analysis using a Varimax rotation was used in the analysis. All the factor loadings of 0.6 or above were identified under principal component analysis method.

		Employee	Employee	AI	Talent
		Recruitment &	Engagement		Retention
		On Boarding			
Kaiser-Meyer-O	lkin Measure of	.789	.890	.866	.810
Sampling Adequ	iacy				
Bartlett's Test	Approx.Chi-	172.33	343.353	319.268	277.087
of Sphericity	Square				
	Df	21	10	9	21
	Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000

Table 2: Kaiser - Meyer - Olkin and Bartlett's Test

Source: Computed Data

The Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin Measure of sampling adequacy value is 0.789, 0.890, 0.866 and 0.810 as in table 2 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with approximate Chi – Square value is 172.33, 343.353, 319.26 and 277.087 respectively. These values are statistically significant at 5% level. It is found that 7 variables pertaining to Employee recruitment and on boarding are reduced into 2 prime factors with total variance of 65.196. The individual variances possessed by these factors are 38.561 & 26.635 %. The Eigen values were above 1 for the factors. Variable loadings for the factors are measured using Rotated Component Matrix and the abbreviations as used in the figure 2-CFA employee recruitment and onboarding are explained in table 3 with their corresponding variables. Only those factors which had a loading more than .60 was considered.

F.No	Variable	Shown as in	Factor	Name Given
		Figure 2	Loading	to the Factor
F1	Automated application tracking system	VAR0001	.777	Efficacious
	Screening	VAR0002	.761	Employee
	Scheduling and designing digital	VAR0004	.688	Profiling
	interviews			
	E Assessment's	VAR0006	.666	
F2	Automated ticketing systems	VAR0005	.879	Auto
	Chat bots and Voice bots	VAR0007	.701	resolving
				issues

Table 3. Factor Analysis : Employee Recruitment & onboarding

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

The table 3 above clearly indicates that, Use of chat bots and voice bots, results in a more tailored application process for job seekers. The more quality information applicants receive results in turn to a stronger fit of the applicants to their respective roles.





Figure 2 CFA Employee recruitment and onboarding

Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Employee Recruitment & onboarding

AMOS was used in the context of scale validation. The data were selected for assumptions the employee recruitment and onboarding scale, CFA results unveiled the 2-factor model. AMOS has been used to estimate the parameters and assess the model fit. Unidirectional arrows indicate the casual relationships between the linear dependents. Double headed arrows also referred as bidirectional arrows Indicates or estimates the correlation or the covariance's between efficacious employee profiling and auto resolving onboarding issues. HR chat bots and Voice bots are vital in reducing the devastating screening part of the onboarding process. It helps to identify issues with unsatisfied employees, and address them to improve employee experiences. Chatbots, an AI technology has the broadest application to HR and they have been deployed in most areas of HR. Chatbots are inexpensive to design, available 24/7 and once properly programmed, they don't require any extensive training and can be handled by non-technical HR staff due to its easy-to-use application programming interfaces (APIs). Thus, chatbots are a natural starting point for organizations wanting to build AI into their HR function. HR process that generates a lot of questions from employees, you can deploy a chatbot based on a well-developed FAQ's and this reduces the average handling time per query. The CFA provided a satisfactory fit to the data as indicated in the recruiting and onboarding table 4. All estimated loadings were significant.

Measure	Threshold
Chi-square/df (CMIN/DF)	2.987
P-value for the model	.000
Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (GFI)	.964
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (AGFI)	.924
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.962

Table 4: Employee recruitment and onboarding



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Normed-Fit Index (NFI)	.927
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	.904
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.964
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	.066
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation RMSEA	.070

Source Computed Data

Factor Analysis -: Employee Engagement

It is found that employee engagement variables are condensed to two prime factors with a total variance of 87.807 and individual variances of 48.546 and 39.262. The Eigen values were above 1 for the 2 factors. Rotated Component Matrix was used to measure the variable loadings for each factor and the acronyms as used in the figure3 are explained below in employee engagement factor table 5 with their corresponding variables.

Table 5 Employee Engagement factors

F.No	Variable	Shown as in	Factor	Name Given
		Figure 2	Loading	to the Factor
F1	Internal social media content monitoring	VAR0008	.911	Capture
				Employees'
	Chat bots to address basic queries to	VAR0009	.909	Experiences
	mentoring			
	AI powered Sentiment Analysis and	VAR0012	.832	
	pulse surveys			
F2	Capability assessment and learning	VAR0010	.951	Create
	recommendations using AI			succession
	Using predictive analysis to fill	VAR0011	.914	pipelines
	leadership positions			

Source Computed Data

Figure 3 CFA Employee Engagement





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Confirmatory Factor Analysis -: Employee engagement

In the context of scale validation AMOS was used. The data were selected for assumptions of CFA. For the employee engagement, CFA results revealed 2-factor model. Single directional arrows represent linear dependents. bidirectional arrows represent the idea that Capture Employees' Experiences and Creating succession pipelines using machine learning are related and influence each other mutually. This helps in creating a succession pipeline with the traits and skills needed for the role and enables finding those attributes in candidates without bias through AI backed capability assessments. The CFA provided a satisfactory fit to the data as indicated in the table 6 . All estimated loadings like, GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI, RMA and RMSEA were

Measure	Thres
Chi-square/df (CMIN/DF)	1.582
P-value for the model	.000
Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (GFI)	.981
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (AGFI)	.906
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.995
Normed-Fit Index (NFI)	.987
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	.983
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.995
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	.062
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA	2.987

Table 6: Employee engagement

Source Computed Data

Factor Analysis -: Artificial Intelligence

It is found that Artificial Intelligence variables are condensed to two prime factors with a total variance of 82.033 and individual variances of 41.296 and 40.738. The Eigen values were above 1 for the 2 factors. Rotated Component Matrix was used to measure the variable loadings for each factor and the abbreviations as used in the figure 4 are explained below in table 7 with their corresponding variables.

	Table 7. At the at Intelligence				
F.No	Variable	Shown as in	Factor	Name Given	
		Figure 2	Loading	to the Factor	
F1	Automation	VAR0013	.815	Delivering	
	Augmentation	VAR0014	.871	Values	
F2	Natural language processing for	VAR0015	.813	Personalized	
	understanding employee career goals			development	
	and succession planning			programs	
	Machine Learning for personalized	VAR0016	.903		
	development				

Table 7: Artificial Intelligence

Source Computed Data





Figure 4 CFA Artificial Intelligence

Confirmatory Factor Analysis -: Artificial Intelligence

To evaluate the psychometric properties of the scales AMOS was used. The data were selected for assumptions of CFA. Artificial intelligence scale CFA results revealed two factor model. Single headed arrows represent linear dependents. Double headed arrows reveal the covariance between delivering values and personalized development programs. Thus, it can be concluded that automation and NLP helps in identifying the career goals of the employees and providing customized development programs that augments their individual capabilities. This goes with the outcomes of Yano (2017) in enhancing AI capabilities. The CFA provided a satisfactory fit to the data as indicated in the table 8. All estimated loadings like, GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI, RMA and RMSEA were as given below:

Table 8: Artificial Intelligence

Measure	Threshold
Chi-square/df (CMIN/DF)	2.978
P-value for the model	.000
Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (GFI)	.971
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (AGFI)	.901
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.985
Normed-Fit Index (NFI)	.977
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	.973
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.985
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	.071
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA	.058

Source Computed Data

Factor Analysis -: Talent Retention

It is found that Talent Retention variables are condensed to two prime factors with a total variance of



89.003 and individual variances of 47.106 and 41.897. The Eigen values were above 1 for the 2 factors. Rotated Component Matrix was used to measure the variable loadings for each factor and the short forms as used in the figure 5 are explained below in table 9 with their corresponding variables.

F.No	Variable	Shown as in	Factor	Name
		Figure 2	Loading	Given to
				the Factor
F1	I have career progression at workplace	VAR00017	.829	Opportunity
	Mentoring sessions with human touch	VAR00022	.789	to grow
F2	I am happy with the work environment	VAR00018	.911	Intent to
	Links performance to pay	VAR00019	.840	stay
	Compensation in par with similar	VAR00020	.803	
	industries			
	Round the clock interaction with	VAR00021	.784	
	accurate and quick response made			
	available at the click of the mouse.			

Table 9: Talent Retention

Source Computed Data

Figure 5: Confirmatory Factor Analysis -: Talent Retention



Confirmatory Factor Analysis - : Talent retention

To test the validity of the scales AMOS was used. The data were selected for assumptions of CFA. For the Talent retention scale, CFA results revealed that the 2-factor model. Single headed arrows represent linear dependents. Double headed arrows reveals that there is a covariance between opportunity to grow and intent to stay.AI helps firms to track indicators of turnover propensity and address them immediately. This



goes with the study by Rastogi, R. (2017) The CFA provided a satisfactory fit to the talent retention data as indicated in the table 10. All estimated loadings like, GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI, RMA and RMSEA were

Measure	Threshold
Chi-square/df (CMIN/DF)	1.564
P-value for the model	.000
Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (GFI)	.935
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (AGFI)	.891
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.916
Normed-Fit Index (NFI)	.799
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	.893
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.961
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	.052
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA	.60

Table 10: Talent Retention

Source Computed Data

Conceptual Model Fit

The table 11 below shows the model fit summary of the research model

Hypotheses Testing

H1 Employee recruitment and onboarding is positively related to AI

H₂ Employee engagement is positively related to AI

H₃ Employee recruitment and onboarding is positively related to talent retention

H₄ Employee engagement is positively related to talent retention

H₅ AI is positively related to talent retention

The value of comparative fit index is 0.966, which also represents a worthy fit to the model and the value of RMR and RMSEA is 0.039 and 0.070. which specifies that it is also an acceptable model as in table 11. Thus, the hypotheses, artificial intelligence is positively related with talent retention. Thus, for every increase in AI there is an increase in talent retention. The study clearly shows that application of AI provides insights into the attitude of employees, their satisfaction with the workflow, and their relationships with their teams and managers. The smallest challenges employees are face at the workplace can be identified by conducting pulse surveys administered and monitored by AI.

Measure	Threshold
Chi-square/df (CMIN/DF)	1.971
P-value for the model	.000
Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (GFI)	.953
Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Statistic (AGFI)	.899
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.966
Normed-Fit Index (NFI)	.935
Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)	.936

Table 11 Model fit



Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.967
Root Mean Square Residual (RMR)	.039
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA	.070

Source Computed Data





Table	12	Structural	equation	model for	• testing	the	framewoi	rk
I unic	14	Suucuiui	equation	mouchion	counts	unc	II ame wo	

Constructs and measures	Standardized	Unstandardized	P- sig	
			value	
Employee recruitment and onboarding - AI	.65	.43	.000	
Employee engagement - AI	.72	.49	.002	
AI – Talent Retention	1.32	2.08	.000	
Employee recruitment and onboarding-Talent retention	.81	.85	.000	
Employee engagement - Talent Retention	.31	.25	.000	
Employee recruitment and onboarding				
Efficacious Employee Profiling	.95	1.95	.000	
Auto resolving issues	.48	1.00	NA	
Employee engagement		-		
Capture Employees' Experiences	.70	.82	.000	
Create succession pipelines	.63	1.00	NA	



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Artificial Intelligence					
Delivering values	.68	1.66	.000		
Personalized development programs	.53	1.00	NA		
Talent Retention					
Opportunity to grow	.69	1.00	NA		
Intent to Stay	.86	1.16	.000		

Table 12 summarizes the effect of employee recruitment & onboarding and employee engagement on artificial intelligence and artificial intelligence on talent retention with standardized and unstandardized estimates. It is observed that the unstandardized regression coefficient of artificial intelligence is 2.08 which signifies the partial effect over talent retention by considering that other variables do not have an influence over talent retention.

The results denotes that Talent retention will increase by 1.32 for every rise in usage of artificial intelligence at the given level of significance. The unstandardized coefficient value of employee profiling using AI is 1.95 which represents the effect of AI which does in-depth analysis and not only matches the employee profile with the right attitude and skills but also offers predictive insights into employee behavior patterns as to their intention or desire to quit or continue. This goes with the findings of Wilfred D 2018 and Pickup O.

Managerial Implications

Today there have four different generations working under one roof thus, there is no way that one size fit it all can be applied. Organisations need to have a personalized approach which requires application of AI to enable offering different training programs for different needs. ATS tracking systems an AI based application helps in skill matching, interactive e-training aids in talent retention. Creating a talent acquisition strategy that leverages today's powerful technology with experienced human talent acquisition professionals will prove to be the most successful way to hire the best talent in the future. Once we get the right talent engaging them and getting them contribute to organizational growth is the next challenge. Employee retention is a point of concern for business leaders. Prioritising employee experience and addressing the needs of young talent fosters employee engagement, loyalty and retaining talent. The younger generation expects regular feedback and recognition mechanisms from their senior and reporting management. Recognising their efforts and providing support in terms of understanding their challenges and offering them assistance will enhance employee experience. As the expectations of the workforce evolves, companies need to rework on their approach by using AI-based tools that provides an employee experience that is enriching, enabling and empowering.

Conclusion

Talent Management and Retention is one of the universal HR challenges thus, this is the right time to integrate AI into HR processes to connect with employees, get their feedback, and use this feedback to create a meaningful HR strategy that will give dividends far into the future. Digital transformation needs to be integrated into HR functions. Technologies like HCM software, WCM & video conferencing are to be embraced as this will provide a better experience for employees.

In today's competitive economy, managing the talent upheaval with classic strategies decides the growth of the organization. Success completely depends on attracting and retaining exceptional employees by improving their employee experience levels. The digital age comes with infinite possibilities, and



embracing AI to the fullest is inevitable now for HR leaders who want their companies to stand apart in their markets. Organisations which are able to understand the impact of AI on HR dynamics will transform the ways in which HR contributes to the growth of competitive advantage.

Author's contribution Srividya Prathiba C.S has contributed to the design and implementation of the research, in terms of analysis, writing and editing of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interests there is no conflict of interest for this study it has been done purely for academic purpose only.

Scope for further research A structural equation model of artificial intelligence has a positive impact on employee experience can be done. A structural equation model of artificial intelligence and talent retention on various sectors like banking and manufacturing sectors can be done. This study focuses on HR professional working with organizations that apply AI in their HR practices.

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