

The Journal of Behavioral Science (TJBS)

Qualitative Article

Utilizing Artificial Intelligence in Human Resources: A Qualitative Study in the Philippines

Jaimee Felice Caringal-Go^{1*}, Mendiola Teng-Calleja¹, Mark Vincent Gutib², Jhio Jan Navarro³, and Alexander Dereck Cabangon⁴

Abstract

Background/ problem: Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly being utilized in human resource management (HRM), thereby transforming its practice. However, nuanced literature on its use in developing contexts remains limited.

Objective/ purpose: This exploratory study examined how human resources (HR) practitioners in the Philippines perceive and experience the utilization of AI in their work.

Design and Methodology: Guided by the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT), it adopted a qualitative research design. Eleven practitioners from diverse industries were interviewed, and data were analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis.

Findings: Reflexive thematic analysis identified specific themes across four UTAUT dimensions: (1) social influences (leadership influence, workforce openness/resistance, institutional influences); (2) facilitating conditions (structural barriers, change management, AI-friendly ecosystem); (3) effort expectancy (perceived tool flexibility, competency gaps, output unreliability); and (4) performance expectancy (operational efficiency, functional efficiency, strategic capacity). Findings highlight how social and organizational drivers enable AI usability to elevate HR’s strategic role.

Conclusion and Implications: This study highlights the interdisciplinary nature of technology adoption in HRM by bridging topics in work psychology, management, organization development, and AI. It demonstrates that the utilization of AI’s transformative potential depends not only on technical capacity but also on addressing psychological and social barriers. Implications point to the need for greater structural support from organizations in the use of AI in HR as well as resources to develop the AI capabilities of HR practitioners.

Author Affiliation

¹ Department of Psychology, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines.
² Department of Psychology, University of San Carlos, Philippines.
³ Division of Social Sciences, University of the Philippines Visayas, Philippines.
⁴ Department of Anthropology, Sociology, and Psychology, University of the Philippines Baguio, Philippines.

*Corresponding author e-mail: jfgo@ateneo.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8728-9358

Article Information

Received: 21.05.26
Revised: 10.06.26
Accepted for Review: 10.06.26

Keywords

Artificial intelligence, human resource management, Philippines, technology

There has been increased interest in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in the field of human resource management (HRM) in the past years (Koştı & Kayadibi, 2025). In particular, studies have been conducted on its benefits as well as its applications in different human resources (HR) systems (Budhwar et al., 2022). AI is thus expected to have significant implications on scholars and practitioners of work psychology, organization development, and management (Asfahani, 2022; Csaszar et al., 2026; Park et al., 2025), necessitating continuous research on the topic.

The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT; Venkatesh et al., 2003), a widely adopted framework to analyze factors that shape the utilization of technology, was used as a lens in this study. Specifically, UTAUT focuses on individuals’ perceptions of how new technology in the workplace will impact performance, the amount of effort required to use the technology, social influences, and the

organizational factors that facilitate use. However, gaps in literature exist. Majority of studies on AI use in HRM have been conducted in developed countries or those with large economies, and there is a need for broader research to consider underrepresented contexts (Koştı & Kayadibi, 2025; Palos-Sánchez et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the majority of studies using the UTAUT are quantitative (Williams et al., 2015), which may not be able to provide nuanced examinations of individuals' experiences and behaviors. The consideration of context, such as culture, may be necessary for a deeper understanding of technology use (Lee & Joshi, 2020). This study contributes to nuanced literature on AI utilization by focusing on the Philippines, a country considered part of the global south. AI is expected to have a large impact on the country given the size of its service sector (Cucio & Hennig, 2025), but challenges to digital infrastructure continue to exist (World Bank, 2024). Thus, this study utilizes a qualitative approach to examine the experiences and perceptions of HR practitioners in the Philippines of factors that shape their use of AI at work.

Literature Review

This section first describes the context of the study. This is followed by the theory that guides this research: the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology, as well as a review of literature on the use of AI at work in relation to the theory's constructs. Finally, the significance of the study is presented together with the research question.

Research Setting: The Philippines

The Philippines is a developing country in Southeast Asia. Culturally, it is said to be collectivist (Hofstede, 1980) where relationships among members of an in-group are valued. AI is expected to have a significant impact on the country's workforce, given the large service sector, and particularly, business process outsourcing (BPO) industry (Cucio & Hennig, 2025). As regards AI preparedness, the Philippines appears to score well in terms of the human capital dimension, but relatively lower in digital infrastructure compared to other ASEAN countries and emerging economies in Asia (Cucio & Hennig, 2025).

Challenges in terms of the cost, speed, and ease of internet access persist (World Bank, 2024). Nonetheless, there have been efforts by the government to support AI preparedness such as the development of the Center for AI Research, the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy Roadmap, and the Digital Workforce Competitiveness Act (World Bank, 2024). Nascent work has looked into the use of AI in Philippine organizations, such as employee perceptions of AI (Presbitero & Teng-Calleja, 2023). However, there appears to be limited scholarly work examining the use of AI in HR in the Philippines.

Theoretical Background: The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

The UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003) draws on various theories such as the theory of planned behavior and theory of reasoned action to understand technology adoption in organizations. In the model, four main constructs shape the intention to use new technology: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions.

Performance expectancy refers to the belief that the specific technology will help improve job performance. This includes the perceived usefulness of the technology, the relative advantage of the technology compared to old systems, and how usage can enhance job performance and bring about valued outcomes. Effort expectancy reflects ease or complexity of use. Social influence is the extent to which individuals perceive that important others believe they should use the new technology. Important others in the workplace may include coworkers, supervisors and senior management. Facilitating conditions refer to the organizational and technical infrastructures that support the use of the new technology. These may include resources, guidance/instruction on how to use the system, and the compatibility of the system with other processes at work (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

It may be noted that the original UTAUT model examined individuals' technology adoption intentions and usage, incorporating moderators such as age, gender, user experience, and perceptions of

voluntariness. Since the present study examines the use of AI in HR in Philippine organizations, rather than individual/employee-level adoption, these demographic and experiential variables were excluded from the scope.

Recent research has pointed to the relevance of the UTAUT framework in understanding the use of AI in HR research. For example, Revillod (2025) studied this in the Swiss context, with findings pointing to significant positive effects of performance expectancy, effort expectancy and social influence on the acceptability of AI tools. Similarly, a study in Thailand highlighted perceived value, perceived autonomy, effort expectancy, and facilitating conditions as factors that influence intention to adopt AI in recruitment (Tanantong & Wongras, 2024). Indeed, extant literature on AI in the workplace provides insight on how organizational and strategic factors, technological and operation factors, human-centric factors, environmental and economic factors, and other challenges and opportunities relate to the adoption of AI in HR (Pedrami & Vaezi, 2025). These are discussed more in the subsequent sections.

Performance Expectancy: Benefits and Gains of Artificial Intelligence in Human Resources

In relation to performance expectancy, the utility of AI in HR work lies in its ability to automate repetitive tasks, optimize the use of HR data, and reduce fatigue and errors (Pedrami & Vaezi, 2025). Additionally, its adaptability and capacity for personalization and facilitating data-driven decisions can enhance the cost effectiveness and efficiency of HR services (Ekuma, 2023). Reviews have pointed out how AI can improve HR service delivery in specific functions such as workforce planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, performance management, and knowledge management (Budhwar et al., 2022; Ekuma, 2023). AI has also been used in initiatives to enhance well-being among employees (García-Madurga et al., 2024). However, despite the acknowledgement that AI could help improve job performance and productivity, challenges still exist and intent to use among some HR practitioners may still be low (Nankervis et al., 2021).

Effort Expectancy: Complexity and Ease of Artificial Intelligence Use

Decisions to adopt AI may also be related to the extent to which it is easy or difficult to use. Because the use of this technology is relatively new, it is important to develop technical, human, and conceptual skills to be able to navigate the adoption of AI in the workplace (Zirar et al., 2023). Examples of such skills include data analysis, digital, complex cognitive, decision-making, and continuous learning skills (Jaiswal et al., 2022).

Beyond the need for technical skills, unique challenges related to AI also make its utilization more complex. These include lack of transparency on how AI systems are used to make decisions, as well as ethical and legal considerations that may need to be navigated (Budhwar et al., 2022; Pedrami & Vaezi, 2025). Such considerations may shape the effort expectancy of HR practitioners regarding AI use.

Social Influences: Organizational Stakeholders

In collectivist countries such as the Philippines (Hofstede, 1980), social influences may be especially relevant. Key internal stakeholders for HR practitioners include the organizations' leaders and employees. Indeed, leadership factors such as senior management support and commitment are key towards AI adoption (Pedrami & Vaezi, 2025; Vongurai, 2025). As regards employees, attitudes towards the use of AI at work may be mixed, such that although people prefer to collaborate and work with other humans, they may be open to AI upon seeing the benefits it provides (Lichtenthaler, 2020). Another common finding about employees' attitudes towards AI relates to how perceptions of technological disruptions or AI taking over their jobs may lead to job insecurity, distress, turnover intentions and career exploration behavior (Brougham & Haar, 2020; Presbitero & Teng-Calleja, 2023).

Facilitating Conditions: Organizational and Technical Infrastructures

Adoption of AI is also influenced by the readiness and resources of the organization (Vongurai, 2025). That is, organizations that are digitally mature – have the adopted IT infrastructure, have trained their

workforce, and have a culture of innovation and digital literacy can be more successful in adopting AI technologies (Ekuma, 2023). Moreover, organizational facilitators such as supervisor support, user training, and technical user support shape the antecedents of AI-augmented HRM acceptance (Prikshat et al., 2025).

Significance of Study and Research Questions

Cultural contexts such as collectivism/individualism or uncertainty avoidance can shape adoption and use of AI systems (Lee & Joshi, 2020), highlighting the need to examine the use of AI in different countries and cultures. However, it has been noted that the countries with the highest numbers of published studies of AI in HR are from larger economies such as the US, India and China or other developed countries (Palos-Sánchez et al., 2022). As such, Koştı and Kayadibi (2025, p. 17) point out that “broadening the research focus to include underrepresented countries and institutions would also contribute to a more equitable and globally relevant understanding of the field.” Findings from recent research using the UTAUT model, such as Tanantong and Wongras (2024) in Thailand, and Revillod (2025) in Switzerland, also suggest some differences in factors that directly shape AI use in HR.

Furthermore, the majority of the studies that utilize UTAUT are quantitative, often using cross-sectional survey instruments (Williams et al., 2015). The dominance of quantitative studies suggests that there is space for alternative methodologies that allow for context-related research for UTAUT. Conducting qualitative studies with the UTAUT lens can provide more contextualized and in-depth understanding of people’s perceptions and experiences in relation to technology (Xue et al., 2024). By conducting a qualitative inquiry among Filipino HR practitioners, the study contributes to nuanced literature by providing insight on key factors that shape their intention to use and behaviors towards AI in HR work. Given these, the objective of this research is to examine the perceptions and experiences of HR practitioners in the Philippines about the use of AI in HR. In particular, four research questions were identified:

1. How do social influences affect the decision to utilize AI in HR?
2. How do organizational and technical infrastructures shape support for AI use?
3. How do perceptions of complexity and ease of use shape the utilization of AI in HR?
4. How does the use of AI generate benefits and gains in HR?

Method

Design

A qualitative research design was employed in the study as it is concerned with the quality of experiences and perceptions surrounding AI adoption and utilization in HR systems and processes (Willig, 2021). Data were obtained through in-depth, semi-structured, online interviews among HR practitioners. Themes were derived from the collected data and interpreted using the UTAUT.

Sampling Procedures

Purposive and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants who can provide rich accounts of AI integration in HR. HR practitioners with relevant experience and background were sought out and invited to participate in the study. Invitations were sent out through the personal networks of and referrals from the members of the research team. Social media postings via Facebook and LinkedIn were also utilized in the recruitment to reach a wide range of HR practitioners from varying industries.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The participants of the study met the following inclusion criteria: (1) individuals working as HR practitioners in the Philippines; (2) have been working with an organization for at least 1 year, and (3) works in a company where AI is either used in the creation and implementation of HR services or is not yet fully embedded in the official systems and processes but used personally. HR practitioners who were not based in the Philippines, had less than one year of HR work experience, and did not utilize AI in official systems or for personal work-related purposes were excluded from the study.

Participants

The study centered on 11 HR practitioners representing organizations where AI has been institutionalized, and organizations that have yet to officially integrate AI. The practitioners came from diverse industry backgrounds. They have worked with both local companies/organizations and multinational corporations. They occupy a wide range of positions under the HR unit, and have varying lengths of tenure as HR practitioners. The data derived from the participants was sufficient to “tell a rich, complex and multi-faceted story” about the use of AI in HR (Braun & Clarke, 2021b, p. 211). With this, it was determined that the sample size, with the depth of data generated by each participant and the analytic focus of the study, was adequate in addressing the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2021b).

Interview Questions/Tools

To capture the participants’ perceptions of and experiences with AI integration in HR systems and processes, the researchers designed a semi-structured interview guide consistent with the steps prescribed by Kallio et al. (2016). The process began with identifying the need for a flexible instrument suited for eliciting experiences with AI integration, followed by constructing initial questions from the UTAUT framework and existing literature on AI adoption in HR. The preliminary interview guide was pilot tested with 1 HR practitioner who met the inclusion criteria, leading to minor revisions in question wording and sequencing. The research team reviewed the final interview guide for content relevance and bias reduction. Among those who had officially integrated AI, interview questions included items such as “What are the drivers/barriers/enablers for HR’s adoption of AI in HR systems and processes?” and “Has the use of AI impacted the role of HR in the organization? How so?” Alternatively, among those whose organizations had not yet officially integrated AI, a sample question was, “In which HR systems and processes would you like AI to be embedded in? How do you imagine AI would be used in these systems and processes?” This structured process, as guided by Kallio et al. (2016), was iteratively done to ensure the objectivity and trustworthiness of data while also preserving the flexibility necessary to elicit nuanced, context-specific insights from the Philippine HR landscape.

Data Analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview transcripts. Reflexive thematic analysis captures patterns of meaning across a data set while emphasizing “the importance of the researcher’s subjectivity as analytic resource, and their reflexive engagement with theory, data and interpretation” (Braun & Clarke, 2021a, p. 330). The researchers followed Braun and Clarke’s (2021a) six-phase process in doing reflexive thematic analysis: 1) data familiarization and writing familiarization notes; 2) systematic data coding; 3) generating initial themes from coded and collated data; 4) developing and reviewing themes; 5) refining, defining and naming themes; and 6) writing the report. These steps were observed in this study’s analysis of qualitative data to come up with themes that reflect and summarize participants’ perception of and experiences with integrating AI in HR systems and processes.

Data Rigor

Rigor was maintained using the four criteria for trustworthiness identified by Guba and Lincoln (1994). Credibility was observed through a three-stage analysis process. Independent coding was conducted by a pair of analysts who thereafter convened to finalize a coded transcript. The coded transcripts were then further analyzed to derive themes. Dependability was upheld by formulating and adhering to detailed data collection and analysis protocols vetted by subject matter experts. Confirmability was established by keeping trails of the analysis iterations and by presenting verbatim quotes to demonstrate that abstractions remained faithful to the data. Transferability was assured through the detailed description of the methods and clear exposition of the findings within specified contexts.

Ethics

Voluntary participation and confidentiality were the ethical priorities of the study. Recruitment commenced after the release of the ethics clearance. An informed consent form detailing the terms of

voluntary participation was sent to interested individuals. They were notified that the data will only be used for research purposes and that anonymity will be maintained in any publications arising from the data. The participants sent their confirmation on consent through electronic mail prior to the interview. These ethical measures were reiterated during the interview sessions.

Results

Demographics Data

Participants were 11 HR practitioners holding various roles and leadership positions across diverse industries. The majority of participants were female ($n = 7$, 63.6%), while four were male ($n = 4$, 36.4%). In line with the Sex and Gender Equity in Research guidelines, we distinguish between biological ‘sex’ (e.g., anatomical traits) and ‘gender’ (socially constructed roles and identities) to prevent conceptual conflation (Kaufman et al., 2023). In this study, we specifically utilize ‘sex’ based on observed phenotypic characteristics (male or female). Participants’ HR experience ranged from 1.75 years (1 year and 9 months) to 13.0 years, with an average length of service of 6.80 years ($SD = 4.21$). In terms of organizational scope, six participants (54.5%) worked in multinational corporations (MNCs), and five (45.5%) worked in local organizations. Table 1 provides the detailed individual profiles along with summary demographic statistics. Participants were anonymized using alphabetical codes (A–K), which are used for in-text quotations.

Table 1

Participant Information

Pax Code	Industry/Type of Organization	Position/Role	Sex	Scope of Operations	Length of HR Work
A	Utilities	L&D Head	Female	Local	12 years
B	Finance	HR Head	Female	Local	1.75 years
C	Banking	HR People Operations & Employee Engagement Head	Male	Local	5 years
D	Microfinancing	Head Performance Management	Female	Local	8 years
E	Service Provider for IT and Consulting	HR Business Partner Manager	Female	MNC	13 years
F	Distribution and Sales	HR Data Analytics Specialist	Male	Local	8 years
G	Manufacturing	Researcher (Corporate Planning Office) & Human Resource Officer	Female	MNC	3 years
H	Non-government Organization	HR and OD Officer	Male	MNC	3 years
I	Business Process Outsourcing	HR Specialist	Female	MNC	4 years
J	Food and Beverages	HR Knowledge Management	Male	MNC	4 years
K	Banking	HR Delivery Partner	Female	MNC	13 years
Total	11 Organizations	11 Roles	Female = 7 (63.6%) Male = 4 (36.4%)	Local = 5 (45.5%) MNC = 6 (54.5%)	$M = 6.80$ years $SD = 4.21$

Research Findings

The results are presented according to the study’s research questions and aligned with the core constructs of the UTAUT. The findings offer contextually grounded insights into how Filipino HR practitioners perceive and experience AI in HR, contributing evidence from an underrepresented developing country context.

The interviews revealed that HR practitioners' use of AI is a dynamic and reciprocal process, shaped by an interplay of social influences, organizational and technical infrastructure (facilitating conditions), and the complexity and ease of AI use (effort expectancy), ultimately leading to benefits and gains (performance expectancy). This process is not strictly linear, rather, each component interacts bidirectionally with the others, creating feedback loops that reinforce or adjust behaviors and organizational practices. The section below elaborates on each component of the model.

Social Influences on Artificial Intelligence Use: Organizational Stakeholders

HR professionals identified social influences as key factors shaping AI use, reflecting expectations from leaders, employees, and external institutions. These influences function as both drivers and barriers and are organized into four themes: leadership influence, workforce openness, workforce resistance, and institutional influences.

Leadership Driven Influence. Leaders played a central role in shaping AI use in HR by aligning it with organizational strategy and efficiency goals. One participant shared, "It really started because of the global strategy of efficiency...I think that's one of the main objectives of management" (K). This direction was reinforced through regular communication, such as integrating AI into organizational discussions including how it can be used in HR: "Leaders talk to us about business updates...they also include AI...how they're using it at work to help enable HR" (E).

Beyond strategic direction, leaders fostered a supportive environment that increased HR practitioners' confidence in using AI. One participant noted, "We actually are encouraged to utilize AI to make our work more efficient" (B). Such visible support increased employees' confidence and willingness to integrate AI into their work.

Workforce Openness as Social Enablers. HR professionals highlighted workforce receptiveness, especially among younger employees, as a key enabler of AI use: "They are actually more accepting, and they want to learn if it's going to make their work easier. They're excited about how they can use AI at work" (D). They also emphasized that workforce openness was reinforced by stakeholders' positive feedback on HR deliverables as supported by AI: "They see us differently, based on what our stakeholders say, especially when they express their satisfaction with how we deliver things here in HR" (A).

The widespread use of accessible tools further normalized use. As one participant noted, "People are more open-minded because ChatGPT has been here for quite a bit...In my team, there are people using ChatGPT because it really shortens the time specifically for templates" (K). Overall, openness was driven by familiarity with AI tools and recognition of their practical benefits.

Workforce Resistance as Social Barriers. Despite growing openness, HR professionals encountered workforce resistance that limited the use of AI in HR-related processes. Older employees were perceived as less receptive, particularly in multi-generational workplaces: "Because there are different kinds of generations already in the BPO...mostly...baby boomers...they are not really into AI" (I). This generational resistance also manifested through reliance on established practices: "They don't have that openness yet to integrate AI in our operations because they are stuck with what is known to them" (G).

Concerns about job displacement further intensified resistance, directly affecting HR's role in managing employee perceptions and engagement. As one participant explained, "It's always the fear that AI would eventually replace you or replace everything that you do. That's why adoption with using AI is...very low" (J). In sum, workforce resistance creates a significant barrier rooted in generational differences and the fear of job displacement.

Institutional Influences. Institutional factors, such as regulatory bodies and professional organizations, both enabled and constrained AI use. Participation in HR seminars helped professionals recognize AI's potential: "They send us to attend HR conferences abroad... We went to Singapore to attend for the first time and we were so amazed and realized, Wow! AI could really help us!" (D). At the same time, evolving regulations created compliance challenges that slowed implementation: "The changing

regulatory mandates... other regulators may not be as fast and they might also have new frameworks, new regulations that we have to embrace and adopt and then eventually apply” (C). Thus, institutional influences simultaneously drove and complicated AI integration.

Facilitating Conditions: Organizational and Technical Infrastructure for Artificial Intelligence

Organizational and technical conditions shaped AI use by creating both barriers and enabling mechanisms. Three themes emerged: structural barriers, change management practices, and AI-friendly ecosystems.

Structural Barriers to Organizational Readiness. One of the key organizational constraints was the absence of formal governance frameworks, which restricted HR’s ability to standardize AI use. One participant noted, “Right now, our AI policy is not yet fully developed...it’s not prioritized as something that should be formally...institutionalized” (H). As a result, AI use within HR often relied on individual initiative rather than structured implementation: “I think it’s more on personal initiative, because we haven’t used any AIs, even our HRIS, it’s not that 100%” (I).

Financial constraints also limited AI use, as the tools were often seen as costly: “The problem is it’s expensive, so we hardly use it” (D). Additionally, concerns over data security and privacy create additional hesitation, as one participant explained, “The security of our information is the biggest challenge in institutionalizing it. Once you input your information in AI, I’m not sure how that information is kept safe” (H). These factors collectively hindered institutionalized AI use.

Effective Change Management Practices. HR played a central role in facilitating AI use, as key agents of change responsible for coordinating initiatives. As one participant shared, “We started with identifying our AI czar...it does not only allow us to fast track the projects of HR...it has also made them more conscious of... how they can support other teams that are supporting the drive for AI” (C). Clear communication was essential in addressing resistance, particularly by framing AI as augmentative rather than replacing human roles: “It’s not going to replace humans. It’s human plus technology... Jobs will not be lost but will be transformed” (E).

Training initiatives also played a critical role in building capability as one participant shared, “There’s a big drive in using AI...there are trainings being done by our digital technologies team” (J). Additionally, phased implementation strategies, such as introducing AI gradually or positioning HR as early adopters, helped reduce disruption and resistance: “HR was an early adopter...even before the rest of the population were required to go through Gen AI training, we already had that” (E).

AI-Friendly Organizational Ecosystem. An AI-friendly organizational ecosystem supported by integrated AI tools enabled its use in HR. As shared by a participant, “The Assist bot, it’s really integrated in the system in a way that all of our documentations...for HR policies... If we have any assistance that we need in terms of... knowledge articles or desktop procedures...that’s what we really use” (K).

This integration was reinforced by organizational culture, as another participant noted, “The organization, its mindset and its culture have been prepared. It’s in the DNA of the organization to just be ready and embrace whatever technology there might be out there” (C). Together, system integration and cultural readiness enabled more sustained AI use in HR practice.

Effort Expectancy: Complexity and Ease of Artificial Intelligence Use

Supported by leadership, change management, and an AI-driven ecosystem, employees now engage directly with AI tools. This component captures HR professionals’ experiences with AI in terms of usability and challenges, across three themes: flexibility, competency gaps, and reliability concerns.

Facilitators of Use: Perceived Flexibility of AI Tools. A primary facilitator of AI use among HR professionals was the perceived flexibility and intuitiveness of AI tools, which made them accessible even to those with basic technical skills: “With the age of gen AI, you don’t even need to learn how to code for you to use it or understand it... it’s just bare minimum” (E). Prompting is the key skill, enabling users to

guide AI effectively, as one participant shared, “I just prompted what I wanted to say, and then I let the app do its wonders...I just prompt it on my style” (G).

AI tools are also highly accessible, often free and requiring no complex installations: “I think tools are very accessible. It’s just a matter of exploring...I often search for tools online and then most of the tools that I see online are AI” (F). Their interfaces also resemble familiar search engines which encouraged experimentation with the tools. Together, these factors make AI user-friendly, lower barriers to use, and streamline work processes.

Barriers to Ease of Use: Workforce Competency Gaps. Despite the relative ease of use, HR professionals identified gaps in AI literacy that limited more advanced and effective utilization within HR function: “AI tool literacy is very low...There’s still a lot of things to be discovered on how AI can actually help HR” (J). This highlights the ongoing need to educate employees on AI, as literacy remains low despite its significant potential.

Another key challenge was prompting skills, with one participant comparing AI to a child needing step-by-step instructions: “It’s like you’re giving an instruction to a kid if you’ll be using AI... But what I can see right now, people... are not very specific with the instructions. So they get the wrong results from AI” (I). These gaps highlight the need for continued capability development.

Unreliability of AI Generated Information as added Complexity. HR professionals identified unreliable AI outputs, including nonsensical and inaccurate results, as a major challenge in fulfilling tasks: “Sometimes it throws or releases something where...it seems really off, I will have it repeated, if it’s far from my expectation” (B). These instances, where AI produces nonsensical information, are referred to as AI hallucinations, which pose serious risks. As another participant explained, “Another is the false hallucinations of AI. So that’s a danger that the content generated...is not factual. That’s also something that we have to really think about” (H).

As a result, users emphasized the need for verification: “We research again just to verify because we don’t take AI 100%. We verify everything before presenting it to our boss” (D). In summary, this component illustrates that while the flexibility of AI tools allows them to be used by almost anyone, challenges such as competency gaps and the unreliability of AI generated information remain.

Performance Expectancy: Benefits and Gains of using Artificial Intelligence in Human Resources

After engaging with AI tools, alongside their ease, complexity, and surrounding social and organizational factors, HR professionals recognized key advantages. This component captures the perceived benefits to job functions and overall performance, comprising three themes: operational efficiency, functional efficiency, and strategic capacity.

Increased HR Operational Efficiency. AI improved operational efficiency by reducing manual workload and accelerating routine tasks like drafting emails and responding to inquiries: “It’s very productive with the use of AI. We can easily draft those emails and then respond right away to the people who need our expertise or need our answer to their inquiries” (A). Automation also accelerated complex processes, such as developing employee health programs. As mentioned by a participant, “When you’re dealing with more than 5,000 employees...it’s a headache... it might even take months before you get results. But now, it can be done in hours” (D).

With faster processes and reduced administrative burden, HR professionals can now make more informed and higher quality decisions: “Maybe the biggest benefit is in terms of decision-making, it’s easy to create decisions because of AI, because we don’t really need long brainstorming” (F). This participant’s reflection sums up the preceding insights on how AI can help with HR operations: “For HR in general, I think one of the benefits of AI is again taking the monotonous task off our shoulders” (G).

Enhanced HR Functional Efficiency. By improving operational efficiency, AI also enhances core HR functions, including learning and development, talent acquisition, performance management, and employee support. Learning and development involves creating training programs which are streamlined

through AI: “With the utilization of AI, creating materials became much easier. At the same time, producing them also became faster. Turn the material into a video and then you can easily upload it” (A).

Another participant shared how AI can help in various aspects of talent acquisition:

From generating the job description to identifying the competencies of a job...to generating the questions, to having a rating scale. All that could be automated or generated by AI. Instead of doing it for 3 hours, you could just do revisions of 30 minutes to 1 hour. I think that’s a big thing. (H)

For performance management, AI enables real-time feedback and access to key metrics through dashboards, improving transparency for both supervisors and employees:

Having AI in HR would make us come up with a dashboard where we can see all our key metrics in real time, not just for the benefit of our performance evaluations or for the superior side. Us, having a rank below them, would also be able to see how we perform in real time. (G)

AI also helped HR develop more targeted employee well-being programs: “We have our insurance then we can see what the common illnesses are, then we can create programs for preventive healthcare... So, our programs become more targeted. Our approaches become more targeted as well, based on what we’ve learned” (D).

Increased HR Strategic Capacity. AI improved HR efficiency, enabling a shift from administrative work to strategic partnership. By leveraging data, HR is now more involved in business discussions traditionally led by other functions:

Since we are revolutionizing how the business looks at us... We are trying to get a seat now at the table with the other business leaders... So we are using data, we are not just relying on our experiences. So, I think the executives will now appreciate the value of HR as a business partner. (F)

AI is also reshaping HR into a problem-solving function, shifting its focus from data governance to true business partnership. One participant shared:

So from an HR standpoint... it has helped us transform our role to being strategic business partners in the realist sense that we really dabble into what the business does... It’s really transforming the kinds of partnership that we have with the business. It’s really now becoming more business partnership than just data governance. (E)

With AI freeing HR from repetitive tasks, HR professionals are now able to think more strategically about the future: “So adapting AI gradually also helps us imagine the possibilities...It’s not just one future now. You think of different possibilities, different possible futures for HR” (C). In summary, AI augmented HR capabilities by reducing administrative tasks, improving operational and functional efficiency, and enabling HR to shift from administrative to more strategic roles.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

Figure 1 presents the model illustrating how HR practitioners in the Philippines experience and navigate AI integration through the lens of UTAUT. Rather than representing a static or linear adoption model, the qualitative findings reveal a dynamic, reciprocal process.

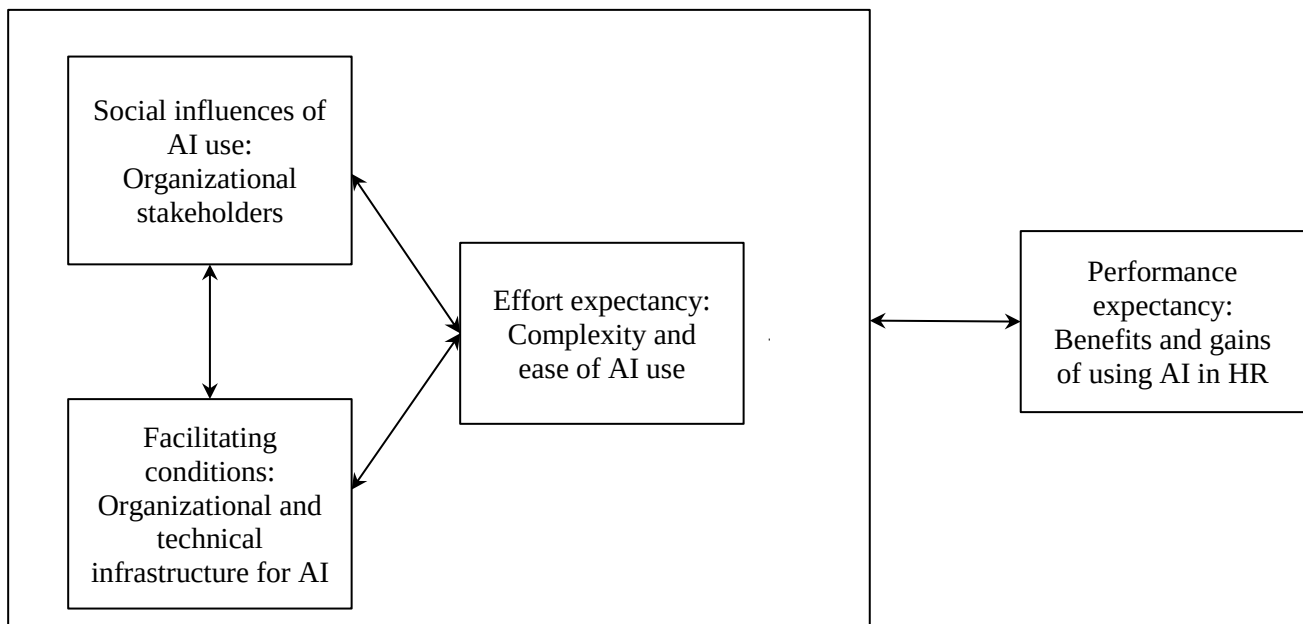
Participant accounts demonstrated that social influences (e.g., leadership mandates) and facilitating conditions (e.g., organizational infrastructure and change management) constantly inform one another. For example, leadership directives (social influence) prompted organizations to establish “AI czars” and digital capability training (facilitating conditions). Conversely, employee resistance and data privacy fears (social influence) signaled critical gaps in organizational readiness, prompting leadership to implement change management protocols and clearer communication strategies (facilitating conditions).

The combined social and organizational infrastructure directly shaped how practitioners experienced the complexity and ease of using AI tools (effort expectancy). When organizations provided integrated systems (facilitating conditions), practitioners reported greater ease of use. However, this relationship was bidirectional. Practitioners' direct hands-on interactions with AI tools continually reshaped their social and organizational environments. For example, users experiencing output errors exacerbated workforce skepticism and prompted demands for stricter verification guidelines. Conversely, positive interactions with AI tools reinforced workforce openness and normalized tool usage across teams.

As practitioners navigated AI's usability, they realized tangible performance gains (performance expectancy), such as accelerated task completion and elevated strategic capacity. These realized benefits fed back into the broader organizational system. Demonstrating efficiency gains reinforced leadership commitment, justified further infrastructural investments, and lessened employee fears of job displacement. In summary, the model represents a continuous process of AI integration in Philippine HR practice.

Figure 1

Experiences of HR Practitioners in the Philippines Regarding AI Use



The summary of the findings presented above illustrates how this study advances knowledge on AI use in the context of human resource management. First, the results show how aspects in the HR practitioners' ecology, including cultural factors, may encourage or discourage AI use. Second, it illustrates how HR practitioners in emerging economies such as the Philippines view AI as an enabler of strategic HR roles despite resource constraints and AI's flaws.

An Ecological Perspective in Understanding HR's Use of Artificial Intelligence

Internal organizational and external environmental factors in the HR practitioners' ecosystem influence their intention to use AI. Interpreting the findings from an ecological systems lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) surfaced the interplay of these meso (organizational) and macro (cultural and infrastructural) factors.

First, organizational leaders within the HR practitioners' organizations push for the use of AI. This reflects previous literature that senior management's commitment to and support of AI use is a critical driving factor for AI adoption (Pedrami & Vaezi, 2025; Vongurai, 2025). The encouragement and support of leaders as a meso-level factor is complemented by the culturally shaped leader-follower dynamics in Philippine society (macro-level factor). Aside from organizational leaders having a strong social influence on employees in collectivist societies (Hofstede, 1980), leaders in the Philippine context are also regarded

as patriarchs who model desirable behavior and guides employees in navigating unfamiliar situations as an expression of genuine concern and care (Caringal-Go et al., 2021). Indeed, studies during COVID-19 showed how Filipino followers viewed their leaders as a guide in navigating the pandemic as an unfamiliar phenomenon, which may also apply in the context of AI adoption (Caringal-Go et al., 2021; Teng-Calleja et al., 2020).

Second, existing literature points to how the organization's digital maturity can drive or hinder AI adoption (see Ekuma, 2023). As seen in the findings, despite the macro-level barriers – challenges in internet access and inadequate digital infrastructures in the Philippines (Cucio & Hennig, 2025; World Bank, 2024); some of the participants expressed how having an AI-friendly ecosystem in their organizations encouraged technological adoption. These ecosystems include access to AI tools and more importantly, an organization culture that encourages openness and maximization of emerging technologies. Nonetheless, this experience was not shared by all participants. The unevenness of experience among HR practitioners seems partly influenced by the lack of guidance on AI use from the country's governance and regulatory bodies.

Artificial Intelligence as an Enabler of Strategic HR Roles

The findings also demonstrate how uncovering the participants' perceptions and experiences of AI use through the UTAUT framework surfaced HR practitioners' perception of AI as an enabler of strategic HR roles. According to Ulrich (1997), these strategic roles are strategic partner, change agent, employee champion, and administrative expert. The first two roles are more strategic and future-oriented, while the last two are more operational covering HR's day-to-day functions (Ulrich, 1997). Teng-Calleja and colleagues (2024) noted how despite the evolution of Ulrich's model for strategic HR, these four roles are the framework still utilized by many organizations and practitioners in the Philippines.

Aligning with UTAUT, it appears that the participants believe that AI helps improve their performance or capacity to achieve valued outcomes (high performance expectancy; Venkatesh et al., 2003). The HR practitioners highlighted how AI increases their operational efficiency and functional efficiency. This reflects the participants' perception that AI enhances HR's role as employee champion and administrative expert. According to them, AI helped reduce time for daily routine tasks such as drafting emails and coming up with decisions on operational matters which makes them more responsive to stakeholders. They are also able to quickly develop ideas for programs that are helpful to employees (like the health program example of HR-D).

Aside from enhancing HR's capacity to support employees, AI also enhances efficiency in performing learning and development, talent acquisition, and performance management functions. The positive impact of using AI in the various HR functions is evidenced by the positive feedback from their stakeholders. These examples illustrate how AI enhanced HR's capacity to design and deliver HR processes as administrative experts as well as respond to the needs and concerns of employees as employee champions (Ulrich, 1997).

Extant literature emphasizes how achieving effectiveness in the employee champion and administrative expert roles is prerequisite before HR can be regarded as/trusted to perform the strategic HR roles of being a change agent and strategic partner (Ulrich, 1997). From the sharing of the participants (i.e. HR-C and HR-F), we can see how their enhanced efficiency in operational roles allowed them to focus on strategic partnership and use data to engage in business discussions that shape the future of their organizations. Indeed, current literature points to how AI has been used in mining, analyzing, and making sense of HR and business data for more informed organizational decisions (Murugesan et al., 2023). One may argue that HR's inputs in business decisions as well as the programs that AI helped them create may reflect their role as change agents.

Nonetheless, how AI enabled or enhanced the HR practitioners' role in helping employees and leaders transform their ways of doing things or adapt new behaviors needed for organizational success was not evident in the data which characterize the change agent role (Ulrich, 1997). The only semblance of this role

in the participants' narratives was in their efforts to support and address resistance to AI use in their respective workplace.

Limitations

This exploratory study has certain limitations. The cross-sectional nature of the study may limit its insights to a particular point in an increasingly progressive AI integration, suggesting more longitudinal approaches in future studies. The participant profile showed diverse industry and HR function representations, yet scholars can also target specific industries and HR functions and may recruit a greater number of practitioners especially from less technologically-forward units to elicit more context-specific perspectives on their behaviors. The qualitative nature of the study may also limit its generalizability to broad HR systems, suggesting the use of mixed methods designs and/or the conduct of systematic reviews with meta-analysis for future research.

Although the study has comprehensively investigated the individual and organizational factors that enable AI use and acceptance, future research may further examine external influences, such as market competition, government regulations, and changing stakeholder preferences that were identified as drivers of technology adoption in organizations (Jibril & Roper, 2025).

Implications for Behavioral Science

The study expands the utility of UTAUT as a framework in exploring HR practitioners' perceptions and experiences of AI in the workplace. The findings uncovered how AI can support HR's performance of its strategic roles as described by Ulrich (1997) amid enabling and hindering factors in its ecosystem. This implies the need for greater structural and material support from organizations in the use of AI in HR and in investing in the HR units capacity development in using AI in their work (Ekuma, 2023; Pedrami & Vaezi, 2025). By doing so, HR may be able to maximize the utility of AI in enabling behavior change where it appears to be currently lacking.

Conclusion

The study explored how HR practitioners in the Philippines perceive and experience the utilization of AI in the various HR systems and initiatives using the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology as a theoretical anchor. Findings highlight how psychological, social, and organizational factors as well as technical infrastructures enable or constrain AI adoption in HR. The results point to the need for greater structural and material support from organizations to fully maximize the use of AI in executing HR's strategic roles.

Authors' Contributions: Conceptualization: J.F.C.-G. and M.T.-C.; methodology: J.J.N. and A.D.C.; formal analysis: M.V.G., J.J.N., and A.D.C.; writing—original draft preparation: J.F.C.-G., M.T.-C., M.V.G., J.J.N. and A.D.C.; writing—review and editing: J.F.C.-G., M.T.-C., M.V.G., J.J.N. and A.D.C.; supervision: J.F.C.-G. and M.T.-C.; project administration: J.F.C.-G. and M.V.G. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Declarations

Funding: This study was supported by a grant from the University Research Council of the Ateneo de Manila University.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Ethical Approval Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the University Research Ethics Committee of the Ateneo de Manila University (protocol code AdMUREC_25_013, August 14, 2025) for studies involving humans.

Declaration of Generative AI: ChatGPT was solely used to assist in correcting grammar and improving language clarity. All ideas, analyses, and conclusions presented in this article were developed by the authors. Turboscribe AI was also used in transcribing the interview recordings into readable formats.

References

- Asfahani, A. M. (2022). The impact of artificial intelligence on industrial-organizational psychology: A systematic review. *The Journal of Behavioral Science*, 17(3), 125–139. <https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/IJBS/article/view/259402>

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021a). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 328–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021b). To saturate or not to saturate? Questioning data saturation as a useful concept for thematic analysis and sample-size rationales. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 13(2), 201–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1704846>
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen, G. H. Elder, Jr., & K. Luscher (Eds.), *Examining lives in context* (pp. 619–647). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10176-018>
- Brougham, D., & Haar, J. (2020). Technological disruption and employment: The influence on job insecurity and turnover intentions: A multi-country study. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 161, 120276. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2020.120276>
- Budhwar, P., Malik, A., De Silva, M. T. T., & Thevisuthan, P. (2022). Artificial intelligence – challenges and opportunities for international HRM: A review and research agenda. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33(6), 1065–1097. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2022.2035161>
- Caringal-Go, J. F., Teng-Calleja, M., Franco, E. P., Manaois, J. O. & Zantua, R. M. S. (2021). Crisis leadership from the perspective of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 42(4), 630–643. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LODJ-07-2020-0284>
- Csaszar, F. A., Jacobides, M. G., & Zemsky, P. (2026). The effects of artificial intelligence on management education. *Strategic Organization*, 24(2), 440–462. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14761270251385484>
- Cucio, M., & Hennig, T. (2025). *Artificial intelligence and the Philippine labor market: Mapping occupational exposure and complementarity (IMF Working Paper No. 2025/043)*. International Monetary Fund. <https://doi.org/10.5089/9798229001977.001>
- Ekuma, K. (2023). Artificial intelligence and automation in human resource development: A systematic review. *Human Resource Development Review*, 23(2), 199–229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15344843231224009>
- García-Madurga, M. Á., Gil-Lacruz, A. I., Saz-Gil, I., & Gil-Lacruz, M. (2024). The role of artificial intelligence in improving workplace well-being: A systematic review. *Businesses*, 4(3), 389–410. <https://doi.org/10.3390/businesses4030024>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). SAGE Publications.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). Motivation, leadership, and organization: Do American theories apply abroad? *Organizational Dynamics*, 9(1), 42–63. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616\(80\)90013-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0090-2616(80)90013-3)
- Jaiswal, A., Arun, C. J., & Varma, A. (2022). Rebooting employees: Upskilling for artificial intelligence in multinational corporations. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 33(6), 1179–1208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2021.1891114>
- Jibril, H., & Roper, S. (2025). *Factors influencing firms' adoption of advanced technologies: A rapid evidence review* (Research report). Department for Science, Innovation & Technology. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/barriers-and-enablers-to-advanced-technology-adoption-for-uk-businesses/factors-influencing-firms-adoption-of-advanced-technologies-a-rapid-evidence-review>
- Kaufman, M. R., Eschliman, E. L., & Karver, T. S. (2023). Differentiating sex and gender in health research to achieve gender equity. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 101(10), 666–671. <https://doi.org/10.2471/BLT.22.289310>
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: developing framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.13031>
- Koştı, G., & Kayadibi, İ. (2025). A bibliometric analysis of artificial intelligence and machine learning applications for human resource management. *Future Business Journal*, 11, 179. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-025-00602-x>

- Lee, K., & Joshi, K. (2020). Understanding the role of cultural context and user interaction in artificial intelligence based systems. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, 23(3), 171–175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1097198X.2020.1794131>
- Lichtenthaler, U. (2020). Extremes of acceptance: Employee attitudes toward artificial intelligence. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 41(5), 39–45. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JBS-12-2018-0204>
- Murugesan, U., Subramanian, P., Srivastava, S., & Dwivedi, A. (2023). A study of artificial intelligence impacts on human resource digitalization in Industry 4.0. *Decision Analytics Journal*, 7, 100249. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dajour.2023.100249>
- Nankervis, A., Connell, J., Cameron, R., Montague, A., & Prikshat, V. (2021). ‘Are we there yet?’ Australian HR professionals and the fourth industrial revolution. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 59(1), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12245>
- Palos-Sánchez, P. R., Baena-Luna, P., Badicu, A., & Infante-Moro, J. C. (2022). Artificial intelligence and human resources management: A bibliometric analysis. *Applied Artificial Intelligence*, 36(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/08839514.2022.2145631>
- Park, S., Chai, D. S., Park, J. J., & Oh, J. (2025). Exploring opportunities for artificial intelligence in organization development. *Human Resource Development Review*, 24(1), 3–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15344843241273231>
- Pedrami, M., & Vaezi, S.K. (2025). Factors influencing artificial intelligence adoption in human resource management: A meta-synthesis and systematic review of multidimensional considerations. *Journal of Work-Applied Management*, 18(1), 47–64. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JWAM-10-2024-0158>
- Presbitero, A., & Teng-Calleja, M. (2023). Job attitudes and career behaviors relating to employees’ perceived incorporation of artificial intelligence in the workplace: A career self-management perspective. *Personnel Review*, 52(4), 1169–1187. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-02-2021-0103>
- Prikshat, V., Kumar, S., Patel, P., & Varma, A. (2025). Impact of organisational facilitators and perceived HR effectiveness on acceptance of AI-augmented HRM: An integrated TAM and TPB perspective. *Personnel Review*, 54(3), 879–912. <https://doi.org/10.1108/PR-04-2023-0303>
- Revillod, G. (2025). Exploring the acceptability of artificial intelligence in human resources management: Insights from Swiss organizations. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 42(4), 1061–1084. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sres.3140>
- Tanantong, T., & Wongras, P. (2024). A UTAUT-based framework for analyzing users’ intention to adopt artificial intelligence in human resource recruitment: A case study of Thailand. *Systems*, 12(1), 28. <https://doi.org/10.3390/systems12010028>
- Teng-Calleja, M., Caringal-Go, J. F., Manaois, J. O., Isidro, M. Q. Y., & Zantua, R. M. S. (2020). Examining organizational response and employee coping behaviors amid the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Journal of Behavioral Science*, 15(3), 34–50. <https://so06.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/IJBS/article/view/242518>
- Teng-Calleja, M., Presbitero, A., & Franco, E. P. (2024). Strategic human resource management. In M. Teng-Calleja, J. F. Caringal-Go, M. T. D. Mactal, & M. R. M. Hechanova (Eds.), *Evolving HR: Knowledge and stories from Philippine organizations*. Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Williams, M. D., Rana, N. P., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2015). The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT): A literature review. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 28(3), 443–488. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEIM-09-2014-0088>
- Willig, C. (2021). From recipes to adventures. In C. Willig (Ed.), *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and method* (4th ed., pp. 3–16). Open University Press.
- World Bank (2024). *World Bank East Asia and the Pacific economic update, October 2024: Jobs and technology*. World Bank. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/41998>
- Ulrich, D. (1997). *Human resource champions: The next agenda for adding value and delivering results*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B. & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view, *MIS Quarterly*, 27(3), 425–478. <https://doi.org/10.2307/30036540>

- Vongurai, R. (2025). Examining organizational and human drivers of artificial intelligence adoption for enhancing operational performance in Thai technology enterprises. *The Journal of Behavioral Science*, 20(2), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.69523/tjbs.2025.282283>
- Xue, L., Rashid, A. M., & Ouyang, S. (2024). The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) in higher education: A systematic review. *Sage Open*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241229570>
- Zirar, A., Ali, S. I. & Islam, N. (2023). Worker and workplace artificial intelligence (AI) coexistence: Emerging themes and research agenda. *Technovation*, 124, 102747. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.technovation.2023.102747>