

THE ROLE OF AI IN JOB SATISFACTION: A CASE STUDY APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence is transforming the nature of work and increasingly affecting employee job satisfaction, well-being, autonomy, and work design. But the impacts of AI on employees are not all good or all bad, and depend on how the technology is applied and managed. This study investigates the differential effect of AI implementation on employees' job satisfaction with a qualitative multiple case study design. Comparative Study of Four Organizational Cases from Software Engineering, Business Process Services, Financial Services and Industrial Manufacturing was done. The findings suggest that standard artificial intelligence can improve work satisfaction when it helps to reduce administrative burdens, pinpoints sources of employee stress and burnout, removes hazardous tasks, and allows employees to play a role in the development and adaptation of AI. However, surveillance based on AI and algorithmic performance monitoring can increase employee stress, reduce professional autonomy, and adversely affect job satisfaction and engagement. The cross-case analysis suggests that the effect of AI on job satisfaction relies on the intention of AI usage, the level of employee autonomy retained and the level of employee participation in implementation. The study highlights the need of participatory socio-technical design and the use of AI to augment, instead of over-control human work.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Job Satisfaction; AI Surveillance; Job Enrichment; Multiple Case Study

INTRODUCTION

Today, organizations use Artificial Intelligence (AI) in their processes which has completely changed the nature of work. While early technology disruptions were centered on automating physical and routine tasks, the current uses of AI predictive analytics, natural language processing, algorithmic performance evaluation—are directly impacting cognitive, emotional, and managerial aspects. As organizations accelerate their adoption of AI to improve efficiency and reduce friction in operations, a key question is the psychosocial impact on human resources: What is the impact of AI on employee job satisfaction?

Job satisfaction is the affective and cognitive evaluation of the employee on his/her work experience and is affected by job design, level of autonomy, perception of organizational support and psychological strain. AI is not good or bad in itself, but a double-edged sword: it can improve job roles and morale when used to automate administrative tasks, safeguard physical health or listen to the feelings of workers, but it increases work intensity, undermines professional autonomy and causes psychological distress when used as an intrusive surveillance tool.

This paper investigates the differential impact of the implementation of AI on employee job satisfaction, using a comparative multiple case study approach. Four cases of AI implementation in the areas of software engineering, business process services, financial operations, and industrial manufacturing are studied. The study offers insights into the boundary conditions and managerial decisions that can lead to job enrichment or alienation of employees through the use of AI.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Of particular relevance is the study by Schulz et al. (2026) who investigated the relationship between the adoption of AI by firms and their employees' job satisfaction. Drawing on the Job Characteristics Theory, the authors propose that artificial intelligence can serve to enrich and to impair jobs. Using longitudinal data from 509 publicly traded US firms from 2009 to 2020, they found that the level of AI adoption was related to employee job satisfaction in an inverted U-shaped fashion. Satisfaction was highest at the moderate levels of AI adoption; high levels of AI adoption could lead to negative consequences. The researchers explain the positive effects as being due to the automation of routine tasks and the increased opportunity to carry out complex work, while over-automation might result in workload pressure, deskilling, role disorientation, and fear of being displaced.

The fact mentioned here gives a solid theoretical basis for the first and fourth cases referred to in the article; in the first instance, AI eliminated administrative friction by automating the routine tasks which employees normally perform, while in the case from Austria, AI got rid of a hazardous manual activity and enabled the workers to take on more substantial technology-related duties. Hence it seems more likely that AI will increase satisfaction when it enhances and enriches the employees' jobs rather than just replacing human labour.

Zhang and others in 2026 give further support to the argument of a dual effect by means of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory. In their three-wave study of 366 full-time employees it was found that the use of AI can act both as a job resource and as a job demand. It increased workers' well-being indirectly by improving the job autonomy that is supported by AI, but at the same time the use of AI also led to greater job insecurity, which in turn lowered well-being.

The case studies are especially pertinent to this study since it shows that the same technology can lead to different results for employees. In the Austrian case, the employees still had a monitoring role and were involved in the development and adjustment of the AI system which might have increased their sense of autonomy and involvement. In contrast, if AI is seen as a tool of control or surveillance, staff may see it as an additional job demand.

Giuntella, König and Stella (2025) examined the relationship between exposure to AI and workers' well-being using longitudinal German data for the period 2000-2020. The researchers employed an event-study and difference-in-differences analysis to compare workers with different degrees of occupational exposure to AI. That's an important study because it's not just conceptual discussion, it actually looks at the relationship of AI exposure and the real wellbeing and health of workers over time.

This point is consistent with the case of Genpact mentioned in the article. Instead of using AI to automate work, Genpact used its AI-enabled chatbot to detect employee sentiment and to identify the types of workload and work-life boundary issues that were leading to burnout.

As a result, the company set up a mental well-being programme. The Genpact case thus shows an important alternative function of AI: it can be used to identify the causes of

employee dissatisfaction and to help bring about organizational interventions, not just for the purpose of automating employees' tasks.

Peiris (2026) recently conducted a systematic literature review synthesizing 23 empirical studies published between 2015 and 2025, examining the relationship between AI and employee well-being through the JD-R model. It finds five main themes: tech-related stress, AI-powered success, mental resilience, digital boundaries and mental health. The authors importantly state that empirical research on AI and employee well-being is still rather underdeveloped.

The relevance of the study to the Genpact case lies in the fact that workload, blurred boundaries between work and private life, stress, and emotional well-being are key mechanisms by which AI can affect employees. Moreover, it backs the claim that AI's impact on job satisfaction should not be evaluated merely in terms of productivity or efficiency, since psychological and emotional outcomes must also be taken into account.

The evidence for the negative point in your document is strongly backed by research into electronic monitoring. A meta-analysis carried out in 2022 looked at 70 separate samples and 233 effect sizes relating to electronic employee monitoring. It found that electronic monitoring was linked to a slight reduction in job satisfaction ($r = -0.10$) and a slight rise in employee stress ($r = .11$).

This gives especially strong support to the UK financial-services example. In that instance, AI was employed not only for providing customer support but also for monitoring the duration of employees' calls and chats, the number of chats taking place at the same time, waiting times, and the files accessed. The case found that there had been increased stress and negative effects on job satisfaction and engagement.

The literature indicates that the purpose of AI is important since AI employed to eliminate boring tasks can improve employees' experiences, while AI mainly used for surveillance and control can decrease autonomy and lead to higher stress.

Another important source to consider in the negative case is the work by Parent-Rochelleau and Parker (2022/2023). It understands algorithmic management as a data-driven management approach using algorithms and AI. It investigates the relationship with workplace well-being, job autonomy, and rewards. The authors acknowledge that algorithmic systems may offer benefits, but they can also erode perceived justice and job autonomy, both of which are important for workplace well-being.

This gives a good explanation of why even when AI monitoring improves the efficiency of the organization, it can be bad for the satisfaction of the employees. The close supervision of employees may make employees feel that they have lost the freedom to act independently and control their work. As a result, the advantages that an organization gains from using AI do not automatically lead to benefits for employees.

The review carried out by Makarius et al. and the relevant literature considered in HRM research stresses that AI can have a number of effects throughout HR functions and at various levels of an organisation. A review of 60 papers spanning 25 years identified opportunities and challenges of AI for work-related outcomes, and suggested that research should be conducted on AI from a variety of levels and theoretical perspectives.

This statement is confirmed by more recent evidence. A systematic review of 74 articles from 2026 showed that the effect of AI on employees' well-being depends to a large extent on the way in which employees assess and evaluate AI. HR practices that consider employees'

ability, motivation and opportunity can help organizations reap the benefits of AI while protecting employees' well-being, the review says.

This situation is especially applicable to the example of manufacturing in Austria. The workers had not only been exposed to an AI system; they had also taken part in its development and adaptation and had been able to draw on their practical experience. It follows that employee involvement may be an important organizational factor in determining whether AI is perceived as leading to job enrichment or as causing job displacement or control.

The existing body of literature now tends to offer a balanced view. A recent systematic review of 25 studies found that AI could enable employees to get away from boring and repetitive tasks and instead concentrate on more strategic and reflective types of work, even as it raised worries regarding job losses and employment instability. In a similar way, a systematic review from 2026 on AI and workers' mental health indicated that AI could lead to advantages such as greater efficiency, improved performance, higher accuracy, and increased job satisfaction, but it could also give rise to risks relating to the loss of autonomy, privacy concerns, problems in workplace relationships, and other psychosocial pressures.

OBJECTIVES

1. Examining the effect of administrative de-burdening on workplace satisfaction.
2. Examine the role of AI sentiment diagnostics in managing employee well-being
3. Evaluate the harmful effects of algorithmic surveillance and performance tracking
4. Evaluate the two main benefits: removing hazards and including people in AI design.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employs a qualitative, multiple-case study method in order to look at the effect that different arrangements of AI implementation have on job satisfaction. The comparative case study approach is particularly suitable for addressing 'how' and 'why' questions in complex real-world organizational contexts, where the distinction between technology and the human experience is not always clear.

CASE SELECTION

The study investigates four different organizational cases drawn from different industries, operational settings and technology deployments:

1. AI-powered HR assistant — Global design & engineering software company

Problem statement:

A worldwide company with about 16,000 employees that developed design and engineering software had fragmented systems in human resources, information technology, legal issues and procurement. There were many different portals that employees had to access to get answers to common questions, which resulted in inefficiencies, poor information discovery and excessive support ticket volume.

AI solution:

The company launched an AI virtual assistant across the whole organization bringing all the employee support services into one interface. The assistant automated frequently asked employee questions and linked employees to the company's internal systems.

Result:

In this case, there were 80% tasks automated, 90% employee satisfaction, and 60 automation flows. This suggests that AI can lead to higher job satisfaction by reducing administrative burdens and enabling employees to access workplace support more quickly.

2. Genpact – the AI chatbot is able to identify the workload and detect burnout

Problem statement:

To find out about employee experiences, Genpact used a chatbot that was enabled by artificial intelligence. The system showed that both a heavy workload and blurred boundaries between work and private life were causing employees to become burnt out.

AI solution:

Rather than using AI to automate the jobs of its employees, Genpact employed the chatbot to gather and analyse employee sentiment, after which it created a mental well-being programme concentrating on self-care and organizational support.

Result:

The diagnosis, which was supported by AI, allowed the organisation to spot the main sources of employee dissatisfaction and then introduced specific well-being programmes. The aim mentioned was to produce a happier and healthier workplace as well as to improve job satisfaction and retention.

3. A financial-services provider in the UK — the use of AI for monitoring has led to a decrease in job satisfaction

It is a very useful example of a negative case since it shows that AI does not lead to an automatic improvement in job satisfaction.

Problem statement:

A chatbot was introduced by a financial-services company based in the UK to assist customers in getting answers to their frequently asked questions; the system was also employed for monitoring the activities of customer-service staff, including the length of their calls and chats, the number of chats they handled at the same time, their waiting times and the files they accessed.

AI solution:

The AI was used for customer self-service as well as for monitoring and performance tracking of employees.

Result:

As stated in the OECD case study from the point of view of the workers and the union, greater monitoring led to higher levels of employee stress and had a negative impact on their job satisfaction and engagement.

4. A manufacturing company from Austria — the use of AI enhances safety and makes the work more interesting

Problem statement:

Previously, workers at a manufacturing company in Austria had to manually straighten steel rods in order to correct their concentricity. Because the handling was done by hand there was a risk of accidents should the materials be mishandled. Moreover, the workers also had fairly limited chances to take part in technology-development projects.

AI solution:

To control the straightening machine, the company introduced AI software which automated the straightening process. Workers did not have to carry out the hazardous operation by hand anymore; instead, they watched the machine from behind a protective barrier. The company also got the workers involved in the development and adaptation of the AI systems, enabling the employees to use their practical knowledge.

Result:

Accidents were reduced and there was an improvement in physical safety. Moreover, worker participation in the development of AI was seen as an enrichment of the job since employees were able to take part in the projects and give their input on how the technology was adapted to their work leading to Job Satisfaction.

FINDINGS

What the cross-case analysis shows is that AI does not have a consistent and deterministic effect on job satisfaction; rather, the results regarding satisfaction are determined by the operational intention of the AI system, the extent to which employee autonomy is preserved, and the existence of collaborative implementation mechanisms.

1. Case 1: The Friction-Reduction Mechanism

Organisation stress was a significant concern at the world's leading design software company. Previously staff had to navigate through a variety of departmental portals to get the answers to basic operational queries which was mentally draining. The AI solution solved this problem by offering centralized knowledge access and a way to automatically process 80% of the routine requests with 60 automated processes which free up employee time to concentrate on more important matters. In this case, AI is serving as an administrative assistant, and has made overall job satisfaction more positive (previously set at 90%) by eliminating the bureaucratic obstacles.

2. The Diagnostic and Wellness Support Mechanism (Second Case)

At Genpact, AI was introduced to gather information on workforce sentiment, not to alter existing production workflows. Throughout, the AI analyzed the answers participants gave in their conversations, picking up on early signals that workers' lines between work and home were blurring and wearing down. Instead of punishing the beleaguered employees, management used this diagnostic insight to create targeted organizational support and mental-health initiatives. The AI served as an amplifier of empathy, helping to strengthen the feeling of perceived organizational support (POS) and reduce the risks of staff attrition.

3. The Punishing Power of the Panopticon: Surveillance Exceeding Its Authority (Case 3)

The UK financial services sector is an example of the negative consequences of coercive algorithmic management. The version of the application provided to the public was an automated customer-service bot, but the internal application served as a panoptic monitoring tool. It kept detailed logs of chat speed, the number of windows that were open, the time that elapsed without activity and access to documents. Customer support became a highly

regulated and stressful environment as a consequence. The employees' professional judgment was taken away and they were constantly under algorithmic suspicion, causing their job satisfaction to drop hard. This showed a direct undermining of psychological safety and worker engagement by a predominantly surveillance-based AI system.

Case 4: Hazard Elimination and Participatory Job Crafting

The Austrian manufacturing company has two advantages: it reduces physical hazards and offers cognitive enrichment. The steel columns had to be straightened by hand and exposed the workers to constant physical strain and the possibility of mechanical injury. The operators were moved behind safety barriers, so that the need for safety anxiety was taken away in the short term with the use of an automated system that is directed by AI. More significantly, the company has engaged in the process of making the system more scalable by involving machinists on the shop floor in adapting the system, testing it and continually fine-tuning the AI models. The project has leveraged the expertise of the workers making them technical co-creators and the project has significantly enhanced the qualitative aspect of their work in Job Satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This evidence from the four organizations shows that AI does not automatically impact employee satisfaction; its influence is entirely dependent on the philosophy behind implementation and management intent, and on the way, work is structured.

Businesses that integrate AI tools to enhance human capabilities (such as streamlining bureaucratic processes, mitigating occupational risks, defining workplace stress sources, or enabling co-design of workplace experience) experience a significant boost in employee satisfaction. In those situations, AI can eliminate the mundane kind of stress, and let all staffers participate in more sophisticated problem-solving and decision-making.

Use of AI as a tool of automated surveillance and control, however, is a far more detrimental for the employment relationship, with the creation of a new layer of algorithmic monitoring, attention to performance indicators, and a lack of autonomy leading to technostress, disengagement and psychological resistance.

The results indicate some clear strategic leadership and HR practice recommendations for organisational leaders and HR specialists:

- Prevent algorithmic micro-surveillance: use AI, not as an automated manager, but as a part of the process.
- Adopt participatory socio-technical design, which engages front-line staff in testing, installs, and governs AI deployments.
- Instead of setting specific productivity targets, leverage AI to understand and address the underlying drivers of workplace challenges and burnout.

Future research should investigate whether worker sentiment in relation to generative and agentic systems will change over time as they become more embedded in work practices.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. Reliance on secondary case data: As the analysis is based on published secondary case studies, rather than primary field observations, surveys or direct interviews with employees, it was not possible to independently probe the subtle contextual dynamics, the unspoken cultural factors and the real-time changes in behavior.

2. The sample size is small and non-probability: only four organizations were assessed so no statistical generalizations can be made to the wider corporate environment. The cases span a variety of sectors (software, financial services, business process outsourcing and heavy manufacturing) and should be considered as typical examples and not as a complete empirical illustration of different types of organizations.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. Further studies will need to continue to monitor employees' job satisfaction, autonomy and levels of burnout over a number of years post-implementation to determine whether the benefits derived from the technology will be enduring or instead result in other forms of increased work demands.
2. Generative and agentic AI workflows. The present examples are predominantly narrow AI (sentiment tracking, chatbots, machine vision, rule-based workflow automation), however, future work should address autonomous agentic workflows and generative AI, where systems can generate, negotiate or take managerial decisions.

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