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Review Paper

Adapting To Stay: A Review of AI In Recruitment, Work–Life Balance, And the Future of HR

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ABSTRACT

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) in recruitment has sparked polarized discourse, on one end, concerns about job displacement and bias, and on the other, optimism about speed and scalability. This review adopts a balanced perspective, exploring how AI technologies, particularly in early-stage hiring tasks, can assist, rather than replace, human decision-making in Human Resource Management (HRM). The goal is to examine whether AI-enabled recruitment processes can enhance work-life balance (WLB) among HR professionals and improve candidate experience without compromising fairness, ethical standards, or autonomy. This article reviews literature on commonly used AI tools in recruitment, such as resume parsers, asynchronous video interviews, gamified assessments, and chatbots. It investigates how these tools reduce administrative burden and cognitive load for recruiters, potentially improving well-being and focus on higher-order, human-centric tasks. Simultaneously, it evaluates candidate perceptions of fairness, stress, and satisfaction with AI-mediated hiring processes. Ethical considerations, including algorithmic bias and the need for human oversight, are critically discussed. The review highlights how AI, when intentionally and ethically deployed, can promote diversity and inclusion. In doing so, it aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), particularly the call for inclusive, adaptive, and responsible innovation in the workplace. Ultimately, this article proposes a model of sustainable HRM where AI supports, not supplants, human judgment. It concludes by identifying current research gaps and suggesting directions for future studies on the long-term implications of AI adoption for both recruiters and job seekers.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Recruitment, Work–Life Balance, Human Resource Management, Fairness, Ethics, Adaptability*

The adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in recruitment has fundamentally reshaped human resource (HR) management practices, sparking a nuanced discourse over the role of technology. Several recent studies recognize that while AI can automate repetitive processes and enhance efficiency, its optimal application lies in assisting HR practitioners rather than wholly replacing them. This shift unlocks new avenues for improving work-life balance, talent acquisition, and organizational responsiveness to rapidly changing labor market demands.

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The implementation of AI-enabled hiring software has broadened candidate pools and streamlined talent sourcing, yet recruiters and HR professionals maintain pivotal roles in overseeing algorithmic recommendations, ensuring validity, and maintaining candidate relationships. Human involvement remains essential in mitigating risks of data inaccuracies and algorithmic bias, as well as validating hiring decisions through collaboration with I/O psychologists and legal teams (Lan Li et al.). Additionally, the literature emphasizes the importance of human-AI collaboration for maintaining trust and transparency in recruitment practice, noting that technology should serve as a complement to professional judgment.

Fairness and bias in algorithmic hiring is an area of extensive scrutiny. Recommendations include diversifying datasets and developing innovative auditing protocols to minimize risks to vulnerable groups such as women and ethnic minorities. Addressing stereotypes, institutional biases, and legal frameworks are integral to constructing equitable and trustworthy AI-driven recruitment systems, particularly within diverse sociopolitical contexts (Fabris et al.). The relationship between fairness and trust is mutually reinforcing: perceptions of algorithmic fairness strongly affect users' trust and acceptance of AI systems, shaping their willingness to engage with such technology (Zhou et al.).

Moreover, studies suggest that AI recruitment tools can benefit work-life balance for HR practitioners and for applicants as well, by reducing administrative burdens and enabling flexible, remote-friendly processes. However, these tools must be carefully designed to support adaptability in HR, offering both increased resources and presenting new challenges that require ongoing learning and policy updates (Chuang et al.; Albaroudi et al.). HR professionals are urged to foster environments where AI systems facilitate improved productivity, efficiency, and well-being, with policy adaptations tailored to employee experience.

To summarize, current literature emphasizes that the future of HR lies in leveraging AI as an assistive tool. Through human oversight, ethical auditing practices, and collaborative policymaking, organizations can harness AI to optimize recruitment processes while safeguarding fairness, trust, and adaptability.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section compares findings from nine studies on AI in recruitment, organizing them as paired contrasts that weigh potential advantages against limitations. Each theme presents a benefit identified in the literature, followed by challenges, to emphasize the conditional nature of AI's impact and set up the case for adaptability as a path forward.

Efficiency, speed and scalability vs risk of biased automation

A core rationale for adopting AI in recruitment is operational: automated résumé parsing, candidate ranking, and sourcing tools dramatically speed early-stage selection and allow employers to process large applicant pools that would otherwise overwhelm human teams (Fabris et al., 2025; Li et al., 2021). Practitioners report clear time savings and the ability to surface candidates they might not have found manually. Some recruiters viewed AI-enabled sourcing software as highly valuable tools. They considered access to them as possessing an added advantage because it allowed them to be time efficient in a highly competitive hiring space. (Li et al., 2021). It is argued that algorithmic pipelines make recruitment tractable at scale and reduce repetitive administrative load (Fabris et al., 2025).

On the contrary, multiple studies document how these same systems can reproduce and amplify historical inequities when trained on biased data or built with unexamined assumptions (Bogen & Rieke, 2018; Chen, 2023; Fabris et al., 2025). Reviews and empirical analyses show that sourcing and screening components often inherit skewed patterns from prior hiring records, leading to automated exclusions rather than objective selection (Bogen & Rieke, 2018; Albaroudi et al., 2024). Another concern relates to the unintended reinforcement of stereotypes through algorithmic decision-making. Bigman et al. (2023) argue that when algorithms discriminate, people tend to view them as less motivated by prejudice than humans, which paradoxically makes them more likely to endorse harmful stereotypes. This suggests that outsourcing recruitment to AI may not only reproduce bias but, in some cases, amplify it. While initial findings showed consistent effects, more recent studies suggest the pattern may vary, emphasizing the importance of continued research as generative AI changes perceptions of algorithmic decision-making. Thus, speed and scale can come at the cost of systematically filtering out qualified but underrepresented applicants.

Standardization and consistency vs loss of human nuance and candidate trust

AI tools promise standardized assessments that reduce individual recruiter variability and the subjective noise of human judgment (Li et al., 2021; Fabris et al., 2025). Standard scoring, uniform questionnaires, and automated workflows can create repeatable criteria applied across candidates, which proponents say supports fairness in principle (Fabris et al., 2025).

Yet standardization also risks stripping contextual nuance from decisions. Candidates and HR professionals express concern that algorithmic outputs are "black-box" scores lacking meaningful explanations, undermining trust and leaving applicants feeling unfairly assessed (Zhou et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021). Empirical work on perceived fairness shows that lack of transparency reduces trust in algorithmic decisions even when models are technically performant (Zhou et al., 2021). In practice, rigid, decontextualized criteria may degrade candidate experience and obscure the human judgment needed for complex hires (Leicht-Deobald et al., 2019).

Reduced cognitive load & improved work-life balance for HR vs technostress, role disruption and integrity concerns

Several studies indicate a potential wellbeing benefit for HR workers: automation of transactional tasks (scheduling, basic screening) can free time and cognitive capacity for higher-value, relational work, which supports work-life balance and reduces burnout risk when implemented thoughtfully (Li et al., 2021; Chuang et al., 2025). Chuang et al.'s JD–R framed study finds that AI efficacy can enhance engagement and productivity, with generative tools sometimes mitigating negative effects (Chuang et al., 2025).

On the flip side, algorithm adoption can introduce technostress, job-security anxiety, and moral tensions that harm well-being (Chuang et al., 2025; Leicht-Deobald et al., 2019). Leicht-Deobald et al. argue that algorithmic reliance may tilt organizational priorities toward compliance and measurable outputs, eroding personal integrity and human moral sense-making. In many contexts, HR professionals report mistrust in data quality and discomfort with ceding control to opaque systems (Li et al., 2021; Chen, 2023). Thus, automation can improve work-life balance for some tasks while simultaneously creating psychological strains and ethical burdens that challenge those gains.

Potential for fairness improvements vs persistent technical & institutional challenges

A recurring theme in reviews is conditional optimism: algorithmic systems can improve equity relative to biased human baselines if they are designed with appropriate fairness constraints, auditing, and governance (Fabris et al., 2025; Albaroudi et al., 2024). Technical interventions (data augmentation, debiasing, fairness-aware training) coupled with organizational oversight are repeatedly proposed as means to reduce discriminatory outcomes (Albaroudi et al., 2024; Fabris et al., 2025).

Yet the literature emphasizes that technical fixes alone are insufficient. Institutional factors, hiring practices, incentive structures, sourcing channels, and limited transparency around commercial vendor methods often negate purely algorithmic remedies (Bogen & Rieke, 2018; Chen, 2023). Reviews emphasize that absence of vendor transparency and weak regulatory frameworks leave employers unable to validate fairness claims, and that fairness metrics may conflict with one another in real settings (Fabris et al., 2025; Albaroudi et al., 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

User perceptions matter: explainability, trust and adoption

Across empirical and experimental studies, candidate and recruiter perceptions shape whether AI delivers intended benefits. Zhou et al. (2021) demonstrate that perceived fairness is tightly linked to trust in algorithmic outputs; when users perceive higher fairness (or receive explanations), acceptance increases. Li et al. (2021) show recruiters selectively rely on AI outputs when they trust data quality and retain control. Thus, social acceptance is just as essential as technical accuracy for the successful adoption of AI in recruitment.

Why is adaptability the pragmatic path forward?

Taken together, the paired contrasts reveal a recurring pattern: AI's potential benefits are real but conditional, they depend on careful design choices, human oversight, institutional governance, transparency, and attention to worker well-being (Fabris et al., 2025; Albaroudi et al., 2024; Chuang et al., 2025). Technical mitigation must be coupled with managerial practices (audit regimes, participatory design, reskilling) to unlock gains while containing harms (Bogen & Rieke, 2018; Leicht-Deobald et al., 2019; Chen, 2023).

Consequently, adaptability, the capacity of organizations and HR professionals to redesign workflows, adopt fairness-centered practices, and integrate human-in-the-loop oversight, emerges as the pragmatic strategy. Adaptability aligns with empirical findings that trust, perceived fairness, and well-being mediate successful AI adoption (Zhou et al., 2021; Chuang et al., 2025; Li et al., 2021). The literature therefore points away from binary "replace or resist" frames toward an adaptive model: preserve human judgment where it matters, automate where it helps, and institute governance that continually monitors outcomes.

Across all the studies reviewed, a clear pattern emerges: the debate is not a binary of *"AI is good"* versus *"AI is bad."* Instead, the literature consistently shows that context, system design, and ongoing oversight are the decisive factors shaping whether AI in recruitment produces ethical, effective outcomes (Fabris et al., 2025; Albaroudi et al., 2024; Chuang et al., 2025).

The conditions for effective and ethical use of AI rely on adaptability at the organizational level. This includes policy adaptability,i.e.,updating recruitment policies to integrate fairness audits, explainability requirements, and clear governance; process adaptability, i.e., embedding participatory design and reskilling to align AI tools with human expertise and

cultural adaptability, i.e., cultivating a workplace culture where AI outputs are questioned, discussed, and refined rather than blindly accepted.

Patterns of Adaptation and Success

Several papers highlight cases where *adaptation strategies* improved both fairness and practical value.

- **Human-in-the-loop oversight:** Li et al. (2021) document recruiter practices where AI scores are treated as a decision aid rather than an absolute verdict, allowing human judgment to consider contextual factors and override automated rejections when warranted. This hybrid approach preserved efficiency while reducing inappropriate exclusions.
- **Fairness audits:** Fabris et al. (2025) and Albaroudi et al. (2024) describe organizational processes where periodic algorithmic audits detect disparities in hiring recommendations. In some cases, retraining models on more representative data or adjusting weighting criteria reduced bias without sacrificing speed.
- **Candidate communication and transparency:** Zhou et al. (2021) show that when candidates are given explanations for automated scores, even basic ones, perceptions of fairness and trust increase significantly. Transparent communication mitigates the "black box" effect and improves applicant engagement.

Limitations and Scope for Future Research

This review is subject to three key limitations.

1. **Scope of available literature.** The nine studies analyzed span different geographies and industries, but most focus on large, well-resourced organizations. This limits the applicability of findings to small businesses or low-resource contexts. Moreover, although some participants were drawn from multiple regions, the studies did not examine cultural differences in AI adoption. As a result, cross-cultural variations in trust, fairness expectations, and candidate experiences remain underexplored.
2. **Review boundaries.** This synthesis deliberately restricted itself to nine sources chosen for their depth and relevance. While this selective approach enabled focused analysis, it does not constitute an exhaustive systematic review.
3. **Generalizability.** Given these constraints, the findings should be interpreted as illustrative rather than definitive. Future research should broaden the evidence base by incorporating larger and more diverse samples and cross-cultural comparisons to capture the complex realities of AI in recruitment.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence in recruitment is no longer a speculative trend but an established reality. The question facing organizations is not whether to adopt AI, but how to integrate it responsibly. As the studies reviewed here demonstrate, outcomes are shaped less by the technology itself and more by the choices organizations make in implementation, oversight, and culture.

If left unchecked, AI systems risk amplifying existing inequities, eroding trust, and reducing human judgment to a secondary role. Yet, when embedded within adaptive structures, fairness audits, human-in-the-loop decision-making, transparent candidate communication, and reskilling initiatives, AI can enhance both efficiency and equity.

The enduring lesson is that AI is here to stay, but its role is still ours to define. By treating adaptability as a guiding principle, organizations can transform AI from a source of risk into a tool that supports inclusion, work–life balance, and more sustainable recruitment practices. The future of hiring, then, will not be determined by algorithms alone, but by how well we prepare people and policies to work alongside them.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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