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Managing Employees Well-Being through AI- Enabled Chatbots Examining the Roles of User Trust and Perceived Support

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ABSTRACT

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in organizational settings has transformed employee support systems, with AI-enabled chatbots emerging as accessible tools for enhancing workplace well-being. This study investigates the impact of AI-enabled chatbot usage on employee well-being, focusing on the mediating role of user trust and the moderating influence of perceived organizational support (POS). A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed, and data were collected from 450 employees across multiple industries who regularly interact with AI chatbots. Reliable and validated measures were used to assess chatbot usage, trust, POS, and well-being. The results indicated that AI-enabled chatbot usage significantly predicts employee well-being, with user trust partially mediating this relationship. Additionally, perceived organizational support moderated the effect, such that employees perceiving higher organizational support derived greater psychological benefits from chatbot interactions. Descriptive statistics revealed generally positive perceptions of chatbots, while correlation and regression analyses confirmed strong associations between key variables. Mediation and moderation analyses, conducted using PROCESS macro, demonstrated that the combined effects of trust and organizational support are critical for maximizing the benefits of AI interventions. These findings highlight the importance of trust-building, managerial endorsement, and clear communication in deploying AI-enabled chatbots effectively. The study provides theoretical insights into human-AI interaction and practical guidance for organizations aiming to enhance employee well-being through digital tools. Limitations include cross-sectional design, self-reported data, and convenience sampling, suggesting avenues for future research through longitudinal studies and exploration of AI design features.

Introduction

The digital transformation of workplaces has led to the widespread adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including AI-enabled chatbots, which serve as intermediaries in employee support systems. Organizations are increasingly leveraging these chatbots to provide HR-related assistance, mental health support, and guidance on organizational policies. Chatbots offer round-the-clock accessibility, immediate responses, and personalized interactions, creating opportunities to enhance employee well-being and engagement. However, the successful integration of AI-enabled systems depends not only on their technical capabilities but also on the psychological responses of employees. Employees' willingness to interact with AI tools, trust in their accuracy, and perception of organizational support can significantly influence outcomes. In this context, AI chatbots are not merely technological tools but represent a novel managerial strategy for improving mental health, reducing stress, and fostering a supportive workplace culture.

Employee Well-Being Challenges

Employee well-being is a multifaceted construct encompassing physical, emotional, and psychological health. Workplace stress, high workloads, and inadequate organizational support can compromise well-being, resulting in decreased engagement, lower productivity, and increased turnover. Recent trends in remote and hybrid work have intensified these challenges, as employees navigate digital communication, isolation, and fluctuating expectations. Traditional support mechanisms, such as in-person counseling and HR consultations, are often limited by time, cost, or accessibility constraints. AI-enabled chatbots have emerged as a scalable solution, offering immediate guidance, wellness reminders, and mental health resources. While technological interventions show promise, their efficacy depends on employee perceptions and attitudes, particularly trust in AI systems and the extent to which they perceive organizational endorsement of these tools. Understanding these psychological dimensions is critical for designing AI systems that positively impact well-being.

AI-Enabled Chatbots in Organizations

AI-enabled chatbots utilize natural language processing, machine learning, and automated workflows to interact with employees in a personalized manner. These systems can handle routine queries, provide real-time feedback, and offer guidance on stress management or organizational policies. By automating repetitive tasks, chatbots reduce administrative burden on HR personnel, enabling human professionals to focus on complex employee issues. Research has suggested that the adoption of AI chatbots can enhance efficiency and employee satisfaction. However, human-computer interaction dynamics play a pivotal role in determining outcomes. Employees may experience anxiety or hesitation when interacting with AI if they perceive it as impersonal, unreliable, or intrusive. Therefore, user trust and perceived support emerge as critical moderators in the relationship between chatbot use and employee well-being. Organizations must not only deploy technology but also cultivate confidence and perceived endorsement to maximize engagement.

Importance of User Trust

User trust is a key determinant of technology adoption and effective utilization. Trust in AI-enabled chatbots involves confidence in their ability to provide accurate information, maintain confidentiality, and respond appropriately to employee needs. Without sufficient trust, employees may avoid interacting with chatbots, limiting potential benefits. Research in organizational

psychology and information systems highlights that trust fosters engagement, satisfaction, and perceived utility of technological tools. For AI-enabled interventions targeting well-being, trust is particularly critical, as employees must feel secure in sharing personal or sensitive information. Establishing trust requires transparent communication about chatbot capabilities, consistent performance, and assurance of data privacy. Therefore, understanding the role of trust is essential for organizations seeking to leverage AI chatbots as effective instruments for supporting employee mental health.

Role of Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to employees' belief that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. POS has been shown to buffer stress, enhance engagement, and improve overall job satisfaction. When employees perceive that AI-enabled chatbots are endorsed and supported by the organization, they are more likely to use these tools effectively and experience positive well-being outcomes. Conversely, a lack of organizational backing may lead to skepticism and reduced utilization. Thus, POS acts as a critical psychological mechanism, linking technological interventions to meaningful outcomes. Examining POS alongside user trust provides a holistic understanding of how AI chatbots influence employee well-being and ensures that technological strategies align with organizational support frameworks.

Rationale of Study

Despite the increasing prevalence of AI-enabled chatbots in workplaces, research on their psychological impact remains limited. Most studies focus on operational efficiency, leaving a gap in understanding employee well-being outcomes. This study addresses this gap by examining how user trust and perceived organizational support shape the relationship between AI chatbot use and employee mental health. By investigating these factors, the study provides insights for managers and HR professionals on designing AI-enabled interventions that enhance engagement, promote psychological well-being, and foster a supportive digital workplace. The findings aim to inform both theoretical frameworks on technology adoption and practical strategies for integrating AI in employee support systems.

Research Questions

1. How does the use of AI-enabled chatbots influence employees' psychological well-being?
2. What is the role of user trust in mediating the relationship between chatbot usage and employee well-being?
3. How does perceived organizational support moderate the impact of AI-enabled chatbots on employee well-being?
4. What is the combined effect of user trust and perceived organizational support on the effectiveness of AI-enabled chatbots in promoting well-being?
5. Which factors (e.g., reliability, transparency, responsiveness) contribute most to building trust and enhancing perceived support in AI chatbot interactions?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of AI-enabled chatbots on employees' psychological well-being.

2. To investigate the mediating role of user trust in the relationship between chatbot usage and employee well-being.
3. To analyze the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between AI-enabled chatbot usage and employee well-being.
4. To explore the combined influence of user trust and perceived organizational support in maximizing the effectiveness of AI-enabled chatbots.
5. To identify key factors contributing to user trust and perceived support in AI chatbot interactions.

Literature Review

AI-enabled chatbots have emerged as innovative tools for managing employee well-being, offering real-time support, guidance, and information through automated interactions. These systems utilize natural language processing and machine learning to simulate human-like conversations, providing assistance on HR-related queries, mental health, and task management. Prior studies suggest that chatbots can reduce workload, improve accessibility to support resources, and enhance overall employee satisfaction (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Day et al., 2012). However, the psychological impact of chatbot interaction is influenced by employees' perception of its usefulness, reliability, and responsiveness. Employees who perceive chatbots as effective are more likely to engage with them, thereby deriving mental health benefits such as reduced stress and improved emotional well-being. Conversely, perceptions of AI as impersonal, inaccurate, or intrusive may increase anxiety and reduce engagement. This underscores the importance of understanding how and why AI-enabled chatbots affect employee well-being, highlighting the need to examine mediating psychological factors. Although technological efficiency has been well-documented, the literature reveals a significant gap in exploring employee-centered outcomes, particularly mental health, engagement, and trust. This study builds on existing research by investigating the relationship between AI-enabled chatbots and employee well-being while considering psychological moderators, providing empirical evidence for organizational adoption strategies that prioritize both operational and human-centered outcomes.

User trust is a pivotal factor in determining the adoption and effectiveness of AI-enabled chatbots in organizational settings. Trust refers to the belief that the system will perform as expected, maintain data security, and respond reliably to employee needs (Tarafdar et al., 2015). Research in information systems emphasizes that technology adoption is significantly influenced by users' confidence in system accuracy and dependability. In workplace applications, trust is critical because chatbots often handle sensitive information related to employee mental health or performance. Studies indicate that trust fosters engagement, satisfaction, and consistent utilization, thereby enhancing the benefits of technological interventions. Low trust, however, can lead to avoidance behavior, reduced interaction, and underutilization, limiting the positive impact on employee well-being. Developing trust involves clear communication about chatbot capabilities, transparency regarding data usage, and demonstrable accuracy in task execution. Therefore, examining user trust is essential for understanding the psychological mechanisms through which AI-enabled chatbots influence employee mental health outcomes. This study situates user trust as a central variable, positing that employees who trust the system are more likely to experience improved well-being, reduced stress, and greater satisfaction with organizational support tools.

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to employees' belief that their organization values their contributions and is concerned about their well-being. POS has been widely studied as a key

determinant of job satisfaction, engagement, and stress reduction (Eisenberger et al., 1986). When employees perceive that the organization endorses and supports AI-enabled chatbots, they are more likely to use these systems effectively, resulting in positive mental health outcomes. Organizational support enhances the perceived credibility and utility of technological tools, reinforcing employees' willingness to engage. Literature also suggests that POS can buffer workplace stress, acting as a psychological mechanism linking technology use to well-being outcomes. In the context of AI-enabled chatbots, POS signals that the organization prioritizes employee mental health and technological integration as a supportive measure rather than merely a cost-saving tool. By examining POS alongside user trust, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the conditions under which AI interventions are most effective, highlighting the interplay between individual perceptions and organizational climate.

AI interventions in workplaces have been associated with a range of psychological outcomes, including stress reduction, emotional support, and improved cognitive functioning. Research shows that employees interacting with AI tools for mental health support report lower levels of anxiety, greater accessibility to guidance, and increased feelings of being valued (Molino et al., 2023). The effectiveness of these interventions, however, is contingent upon the quality of interaction, responsiveness, and perceived reliability. Chatbots that provide consistent, accurate, and contextually appropriate support contribute to enhanced well-being by reducing uncertainty and cognitive load. Conversely, poorly designed AI systems can exacerbate stress, create confusion, and undermine employees' confidence in organizational support structures. Therefore, the psychological impact of AI-enabled chatbots is not automatic; it depends on the interplay between technological design, user trust, and organizational support, emphasizing the importance of integrating human-centered design principles in AI deployment.

Several studies highlight the role of mediators and moderators in the relationship between AI adoption and employee outcomes. User trust and perceived organizational support are two critical psychological constructs that determine the effectiveness of AI-enabled interventions (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Tarafdar et al., 2015). Trust mediates the extent to which employees engage with chatbots, while POS moderates their willingness to utilize these tools. Research in organizational behavior suggests that supportive climates and perceived endorsement enhance engagement with technology, fostering improved mental health outcomes. Additionally, individual differences, such as prior experience with AI, openness to technology, and perceived self-efficacy, may influence interactions with chatbots. By considering these variables, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how technological and organizational factors jointly contribute to employee well-being. The literature suggests that integrating trust-building strategies, transparent communication, and visible organizational support can maximize the psychological benefits of AI-enabled chatbots.

Research Hypotheses

H1: AI-enabled chatbot usage has a significant positive impact on employees' psychological well-being.

H2: User trust mediates the relationship between AI-enabled chatbot usage and employee well-being.

H3: Perceived organizational support moderates the relationship between AI-enabled chatbot usage and employee well-being, such that the effect is stronger when perceived support is high.

H4: The combined effect of high user trust and high perceived organizational support significantly enhances the positive impact of AI-enabled chatbots on employee well-being.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the impact of AI-enabled chatbots on employees' psychological well-being, with a particular focus on the mediating role of user trust and the moderating role of perceived organizational support. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it allows for the measurement of relationships among variables using standardized instruments and facilitates statistical analyses such as correlation, regression, and mediation/moderation analysis. The cross-sectional design was selected to capture employee perceptions at a single point in time, enabling the identification of relationships between chatbot usage, trust, perceived support, and well-being.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included employees working in organizations that have integrated AI-enabled chatbots into their HR or employee support systems. The study targeted employees across diverse industries, including IT, healthcare, finance, and education. A sample size of 450 employees was determined using convenience and purposive sampling, considering participants who had interacted with AI chatbots for at least three months to ensure sufficient exposure. The sample included both male and female employees, aged 22–55 years, with varying educational backgrounds and organizational experience.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was utilized to ensure that only participants with adequate experience using AI chatbots were included. Employees were selected from organizations that actively employ AI-enabled chatbots for HR, mental health support, and workflow management. This technique was appropriate because it focuses on individuals most likely to provide relevant and reliable data regarding chatbot usage and its psychological effects.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into four sections:

1. Demographic Information: Age, gender, education, organizational tenure, and department.
2. AI-Enabled Chatbot Usage Scale: A 10-item scale measuring frequency, interaction quality, and perceived usefulness of chatbots (Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).
3. User Trust Scale: A 12-item scale adapted from Ragu-Nathan et al. (2008) measuring trust, reliability, and confidentiality perceptions regarding AI chatbots.
4. Perceived Organizational Support Scale: An 8-item scale adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986), assessing employees' perception of organizational support toward AI tools.
5. Employee Well-Being Scale: A 12-item scale measuring psychological and emotional well-being, adapted from validated workplace well-being instruments.

All scales demonstrated high reliability (Cronbach's α > .80) in pilot testing.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was administered online using organizational emails and internal communication channels. Participants were informed about the study purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained electronically before participation. Data collection occurred over four weeks, with follow-up reminders sent to improve response rate.

Results

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n= 450)

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	240	53.3
Female	210	46.7
Age (Years)		
22–30	180	40.0
31–40	160	35.6
41–50	70	15.6
51–55	40	8.8
Education		
Bachelor's	210	46.7
Master's	180	40.0
Doctorate	60	13.3
Organizational Tenure		
<3 years	150	33.3
3–5 years	140	31.1
6–10 years	110	24.4
>10 years	50	11.1

In table 1, the sample included a balanced gender distribution and a diverse age range. Most participants held a bachelor's or master's degree and had 3–5 years of organizational experience, indicating the data represents employees with sufficient exposure to AI-enabled chatbots.

Table 2

Reliability Analysis

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
AI-Enabled Chatbot Usage	10	.88
User Trust	12	.91
Perceived Organizational Support	8	.86
Employee Well-Being	12	.90

In table 2, all scales demonstrated high reliability (α > .80), indicating consistent measurement across items and suitability for further analysis.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
AI-Enabled Chatbot Usage	4.12	0.65
User Trust	3.95	0.72
Perceived Organizational Support	4.08	0.68
Employee Well-Being	3.88	0.70

In table 3, participants reported relatively high engagement with AI chatbots (M = 4.12) and perceived organizational support (M = 4.08). User trust and employee well-being scores were also above the midpoint, suggesting positive perceptions and general psychological well-being.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. AI-Enabled Chatbot Usage	-			
2. User Trust	.62**	-		
3. Perceived Organizational Support	.55**	.58**	-	
4. Employee Well-Being	.49**	.65**	.60**	-

Note: **p < .01

In table 4, AI-enabled chatbot usage is positively correlated with employee well-being (r = .49, p < .01). User trust (r = .65) and perceived organizational support (r = .60) also show strong positive correlations with well-being, supporting the premise that trust and support are associated with improved employee psychological outcomes.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Predicting Employee Well-Being

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
AI-Enabled Chatbot Usage	0.28	0.05	.32	5.60	<.001
User Trust	0.35	0.06	.38	6.17	<.001
Perceived Organizational Support	0.25	0.05	.29	5.00	<.001

$R^2 = .55, F(3, 446) = 182.34, p < .001$

In table 5, AI-enabled chatbot usage, user trust, and perceived organizational support significantly predict employee well-being. User trust has the strongest effect (β = .38), indicating that trust plays a critical role in translating chatbot interactions into psychological benefits.

Table 6

Moderation Analysis

Predictor	B	SE	t	p
Chatbot Usage	0.18	0.04	4.50	<.001
POS	0.22	0.05	4.40	<.001
Chatbot Usage × POS	0.12	0.03	4.00	<.001

In table 6, the interaction term is significant, indicating that perceived organizational support strengthens the positive effect of chatbot usage on well-being. Employees who perceive high organizational support gain more psychological benefits from AI-enabled chatbots.

Discussion

The results indicated a significant positive relationship between AI-enabled chatbot usage and employee well-being. This finding aligns with prior studies suggesting that technological interventions in the workplace can improve accessibility to support resources, reduce stress, and enhance mental health outcomes (Molino et al., 2023; Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). Chatbots offer 24/7 assistance, immediate responses, and confidential interactions, which help employees manage work-related stress and access guidance without delays. These findings support the premise that AI-enabled chatbots are more than operational tools; they serve as psychological support mechanisms that enhance employee engagement and satisfaction. However, the direct effect, while significant, is partially explained by mediating and moderating variables, indicating that technology alone is insufficient without accompanying trust and organizational support.

User trust emerged as a strong mediator between chatbot usage and well-being. Employees who trusted AI-enabled chatbots experienced higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those with lower trust levels. This supports the notion that trust is critical in human-AI interaction (Tarafdar et al., 2015; Day et al., 2012). Trust encompasses beliefs in chatbot reliability, accuracy, confidentiality, and responsiveness. Without trust, employees may avoid interacting with chatbots or may feel anxious sharing sensitive information, reducing the effectiveness of AI interventions. These findings underscore the importance of building trust-enhancing mechanisms in chatbot design, such as clear communication of capabilities, consistent performance, and robust privacy protections. The mediating role of trust demonstrates that employee perceptions are a crucial psychological conduit through which technology translates into well-being benefits.

Perceived organizational support significantly moderated the relationship between AI chatbot usage and employee well-being. Employees perceiving higher organizational support gained more psychological benefits from chatbot interactions, confirming the buffering hypothesis of POS in stress reduction (Eisenberger et al., 1986). POS reinforces employees' belief that the organization values their well-being, legitimizing the use of AI tools as supportive rather than impersonal technological interventions. This highlights the interplay between organizational climate and technology adoption, suggesting that managerial endorsement and visible support for AI initiatives are crucial for maximizing their impact on employee mental health. The findings also align with prior research indicating that supportive organizational environments enhance engagement with workplace technologies (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008).

The combined influence of user trust and POS creates an optimal environment for AI-enabled chatbot effectiveness. Employees who both trust the system and perceive strong organizational backing reported the highest well-being scores. This indicates that technological, individual, and organizational factors interact synergistically to determine psychological outcomes. While chatbots provide functional support, trust ensures effective interaction, and POS amplifies the perceived legitimacy and value of the intervention. This integrated perspective contributes to human-computer interaction literature by emphasizing that technology adoption in the workplace is not solely dependent on functionality but also on psychological and organizational contexts.

Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to technology adoption and organizational psychology literature by validating a model in which AI-enabled chatbots influence employee well-being through trust and POS. The study extends previous research on technostress and AI interventions by demonstrating the mechanisms through which digital tools affect psychological outcomes. Specifically, the partial mediation by trust and moderation by POS highlight the importance of considering both individual and organizational factors in digital workplace interventions. These results offer empirical support for integrating human-centered design principles with organizational support structures to optimize well-being outcomes.

Practical Implications

From a practical standpoint, organizations seeking to implement AI-enabled chatbots should carefully plan and execute strategies that maximize their benefits for employees' well-being. Building Trust: Trust is the cornerstone of effective human-AI interaction. Organizations should ensure that chatbots are reliable, accurate, and secure, minimizing errors in responses and protecting sensitive employee data. Clear communication regarding the limitations and capabilities of AI systems is essential to manage expectations and reduce uncertainty. By designing AI chatbots with transparency, reliability, and confidentiality in mind, organizations can foster a sense of psychological safety among employees, encouraging frequent and meaningful interactions.

Enhancing Perceived Organizational Support: The study highlights that perceived organizational support (POS) significantly strengthens the positive effect of AI chatbot usage on employee well-being. Organizations should actively demonstrate managerial endorsement of AI-enabled support systems. For example, managers can encourage employees to use chatbots for mental health support, career guidance, or administrative assistance, showing that these tools are valued resources rather than impersonal automation. Integration of AI tools within broader employee support frameworks signals to employees that the organization is committed to their psychological and professional well-being.

Training and Communication: Employees are more likely to benefit from AI-enabled chatbots when they are adequately trained and informed about their functionality. Organizations should provide comprehensive training sessions, step-by-step user guides, and ongoing support channels. Transparent communication about chatbot capabilities, response times, and data privacy policies will enhance user engagement, reduce resistance to AI adoption, and strengthen trust in the system. Promoting chatbot usage as part of the organizational culture encourages employees to adopt these tools effectively, ultimately improving engagement, satisfaction, and overall well-being. In summary, implementing AI-enabled chatbots is not merely a technological upgrade but a strategic organizational initiative that requires deliberate attention to trust-building, managerial support, and employee education. When these factors are prioritized, AI tools can significantly enhance workplace well-being and productivity.

Limitations

- The study used a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point, which limits causal inferences; future research should consider longitudinal or experimental designs.
- Data were self-reported, which may introduce social desirability or response bias; using objective AI usage data or supervisor reports could improve validity.
- Convenience sampling focused on employees with AI chatbots, limiting generalizability; probability sampling or multiple organizational contexts are recommended.

- Cultural differences, organizational norms, and job roles were not examined; cross-cultural studies could provide deeper insights.
- Specific AI chatbot design features (e.g., tone, personalization, interactivity) were not studied; future research should explore which elements enhance trust and engagement.
- The sample size was relatively small, which may reduce statistical power and limit the detection of subtle effects.
- The study did not account for prior experience or familiarity with AI technologies, which could influence responses.
- Potential confounding variables, such as workload, organizational support, or job stress, were not controlled for.
- The study focused mainly on perceived outcomes and did not measure long-term behavioral or performance impacts.
- Technological limitations, such as chatbot accuracy or downtime, were not considered, which may affect employee experiences.

Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that AI-enabled chatbots have a significant positive impact on employee well-being, particularly when employees trust the technology and perceive strong organizational support. User trust acts as a critical mediator, channeling the effects of chatbot interactions into psychological benefits, while perceived organizational support serves as a moderator, amplifying these effects for employees who feel valued and supported by their organization. Importantly, the results highlight the interconnected roles of individual, technological, and organizational factors in shaping workplace well-being. Technology alone is insufficient to improve psychological outcomes; employees must perceive AI tools as trustworthy, and organizations must demonstrate commitment to their welfare. By combining human-centered design with proactive organizational policies, AI-enabled chatbots can serve as effective tools for stress reduction, guidance, and mental health support. Furthermore, these findings provide actionable insights for organizations aiming to integrate AI solutions ethically and effectively. Proper implementation can enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall productivity, while poorly implemented systems risk eroding trust and limiting potential benefits. This study underscores the importance of psychologically informed deployment of AI technology and offers a foundation for future research and practice in AI-assisted workplace well-being initiatives.

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