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Chatbots in Human Resource Management: Enhancing Employee Experience or Creating Barriers? A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

With the explosion in the development and adoption of artificial intelligence that is reshaping businesses, chatbots are also revolutionizing how HR works. This research draws a critical perspective to discuss the dual nature of HR chatbots that can elevate the work life experience or establish new organizational hurdles. Leveraging state-of-the-art literature and empirical work, this review observes chatbot applications within four core HR functions — recruitment, onboarding, employee self-service, and engagement. It is believed that chatbots will enable significant improvements in efficiency, availability and responsiveness, and subsequently positively affects employee satisfaction in routine and transaction-based tasks. Yet, the investigation also reveals serious limitations, including: low emotional intelligence, concerns about data privacy, limited contextual sensitivity, and the potential for digital disempowerment of digitally disadvantaged employees. If left unchecked, both of these concerns are the biggest impact for the employee experience and the trust level from employees. The paper concludes that the space for HR chatbots offers great potential, if carefully architected to consider ethics and if positioned inclusively with a human element.

Keywords: Chatbots, Human Resource, employee experience, barriers.

INTRODUCTION

Employee experience could also benefit with the use of HR chatbots in automating work and making operations run smoothly. They are able to bring great advantages to the organization as long as they are deployed properly, and they are able to be a challenge to the organization as well when decisions to deploy them and maintain them are not put in place. Striking the balance between automation and human contact lies at both the core of productivity and a sense of morale. Delivery of such systems is only possible when confidentiality issues are addressed, privacy expectations of employees are met, sensitive data is handled, and individualized relation is maintained and approach in the service is warm. In 2021 brief overview of a chatbot was given by IBM as an application that used artificial intelligence and natural language processing to retrieve questions with the aim of providing an adequate answer. These bots could socialize with users via text, voice or messaging applications. They have been conditioned to answer questions, schedule meetings, provide simple instructions and simple directions.

Human Resource Management is also referred to as HRM or HR and is associated with duties of managing people in the workplace. These efforts entail abilities including recruitment and choice of their staff as well as in-house processes, lasting in training, motivation, support, health and security as well as employee vests and workplace layout. Enhancement of the HR team contribution to the organization depends on its structure. In some companies, the HR departments deal with strategic functions like transition management and the corporate identity enrichment of the employees. Such variables as the size of the company, the perceived importance of the HR, local traditions and laws, the inner structure of power all contribute to the tasks of the HR team.

A primary objective of HR is to add value to key stakeholders such as employees, supervisors, clients, and shareholders (Ulrich & Dulebohn, 2015). Today, HR is expected to enhance the company's achievements through strategic and quantifiable means, all while maintaining cost-effectiveness. To achieve this, HR divisions concentrate on reducing time spent on administrative duties and increasing involvement in strategic planning and transformations (Wilton, 2016).

Many organizations have started to implement chatbots into performing different HR areas (e.g., Gartner, 2019; Accenture, 2018; IBM, 2018). Several reports and publications present the scopes where chatbots may be useful and the introduced advantages, as well as, onboarding, training, employer branding, and the use of chatbots in the recruitment process. Chatbots help to help with the most frequently asked questions by employees and customers, automation of typical HR operations, and employee interaction (Majumder & Mondal, 2021; Sheth, 2018).

REVOLUTION OF HR CHATBOTS

Human resource (HR) departments have been responsible for management of administrative tasks such as staffing, payroll, training and employee performance appraisal, and employee benefits among others. With the growth of organizations, complexity of such tasks has been increasing, leading to

HR departments suffering from slow response time, information overload and possibility of human error. Emergence of demand for more responsive and flexible HR systems, companies started exploring the aspect of automation. With advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP), Chatbots have been the newfound opportunity in this transformation. Companies can now integrate chatbots with their Human Resource Management Systems (HRMS), to automate time-consuming HR tasks, so that HR professionals can focus on the strategy and growth of employees. Intelligent systems such as these, are also potentially capable of supporting a wide variety of HR-related activities. It can answer employee queries, process leaves, present performance reviews, conduct training sessions, all through a simple conversational interface.

Faiyaz Md. Iqbal's study from 2018 noted that in the case of human resources, artificial intelligence (AI) technology is relatively new, only coming to prominence in 2017. However, it has already had a profound impact on human resource management by transforming the functions of recruitment, training, and employee retention (Sexton-Brown, 2018). The Deloitte Human Capital Trends Report (Erickson, 2018) cites that 38% of US companies use AI in managing HR functions and 62% intended to do so by the end of 2018. There is also no doubt that the integration of AI in HR processes represents a shift that comes with profound dangers and disadvantages as is true with any other change. Still, this shift toward algorithm-driven systems has the potential to improve productivity and employee engagement greatly. The hiring processes of organizations have been fundamentally transformed by artificial intelligence. Sadly, the global recruitment landscape did not notably evolve before the onset of AI in HR—after six decades of traditional hiring practices that involved businesses paying to register with recruitment agencies, along with more than 15 years post-LinkedIn's founding.

The job application process is also improved by the increasing level of AI use – Gartner (2019) report that by 2022, 35% of firms will utilise AI, including conversational user experience and natural language processing (NLP) minimising time wasted on job applications. This makes the chatbot applications more straightforward for users in real-time to communicate with them (Srimathi & Krishnamoorthy, 2019). This systematic review was guided by following three research questions as stated below:

RQ1. *How do HR chatbots impact employee experience across several human resource functions such as recruitment, onboarding, and performance management?*

RQ2. *What are the observed barriers and risks associated with the adoption of chatbots in human resource management, particularly concerning data privacy, emotional intelligence, and employee trust?*

RQ3. *To what extent can the employment of AI-powered chatbots in HR departments increase efficiency, employee engagement, and compliance while maintaining ethical and human-centered practices?*

TYPES OF CHATBOTS USED IN HUMAN RESOURCE

Recruitment Chatbots

Job Chatbots are one of the first and most popular types of chatbots in HR. They help the client to communicate when it comes to making first contact with candidates, conducting prescreens, and arranging calls with recruiters. Mya and Olivia are two such recruitment chatbots which provide instant messaging with job candidates and ensure speedier response and hiring. These chatbots are very important not only to ease the workload of recruiters by filtering unqualified candidates, but to also improve the candidate experience, as introduced by Upadhyay & Khandelwal (2018).

Onboarding Chatbots

These are onboarding chatbots that guide employees through their orientation, help them upload documents, help them sign up for benefits, and provide answers to popular questions about company policies. These bots are essentially virtual guides, helping to smooth the experience of growing from a candidate to an employee. Tanwar et al. (2022), onboarding bots such as Talla and IBM's Watson increased the retention and satisfaction level of new employees as they would have a dependable, on-the-spot support.

Employee Self-Service (ESS) Chatbots

Employee Self-Service chatbots are designed to handle common employee inquiries such as remaining leave days, salary information, policy clarifications, and benefits. These automated assistants reduce the workload for HR staff and encourage employees to find answers independently. According to Margherita and Braccini (2021), ESS chatbots have a significant impact on enabling a more adaptable HR service delivery approach, especially in large, dispersed work environments.

Learning and Development Chatbots

These chatbots are integrated into corporate Learning Management Systems (LMS) to recommend personalized training modules, monitor learner progress, and assess learning outcomes. For example, CoachBot is employed in leadership training to provide feedback and simulate coaching interactions. As highlighted by Sengupta and Suryanarayana (2021), these chatbots support bite-sized learning and boost learner involvement through instant feedback and cues.

Chatbots for Employee Engagement

These automated assistants are created to boost employee involvement in the workplace by carrying out quick surveys, monitoring emotions, and enabling health check-ins. They frequently utilize sentiment analysis to keep an eye on staff morale. Examples like Leena AI and Nudge.ai actively gather input

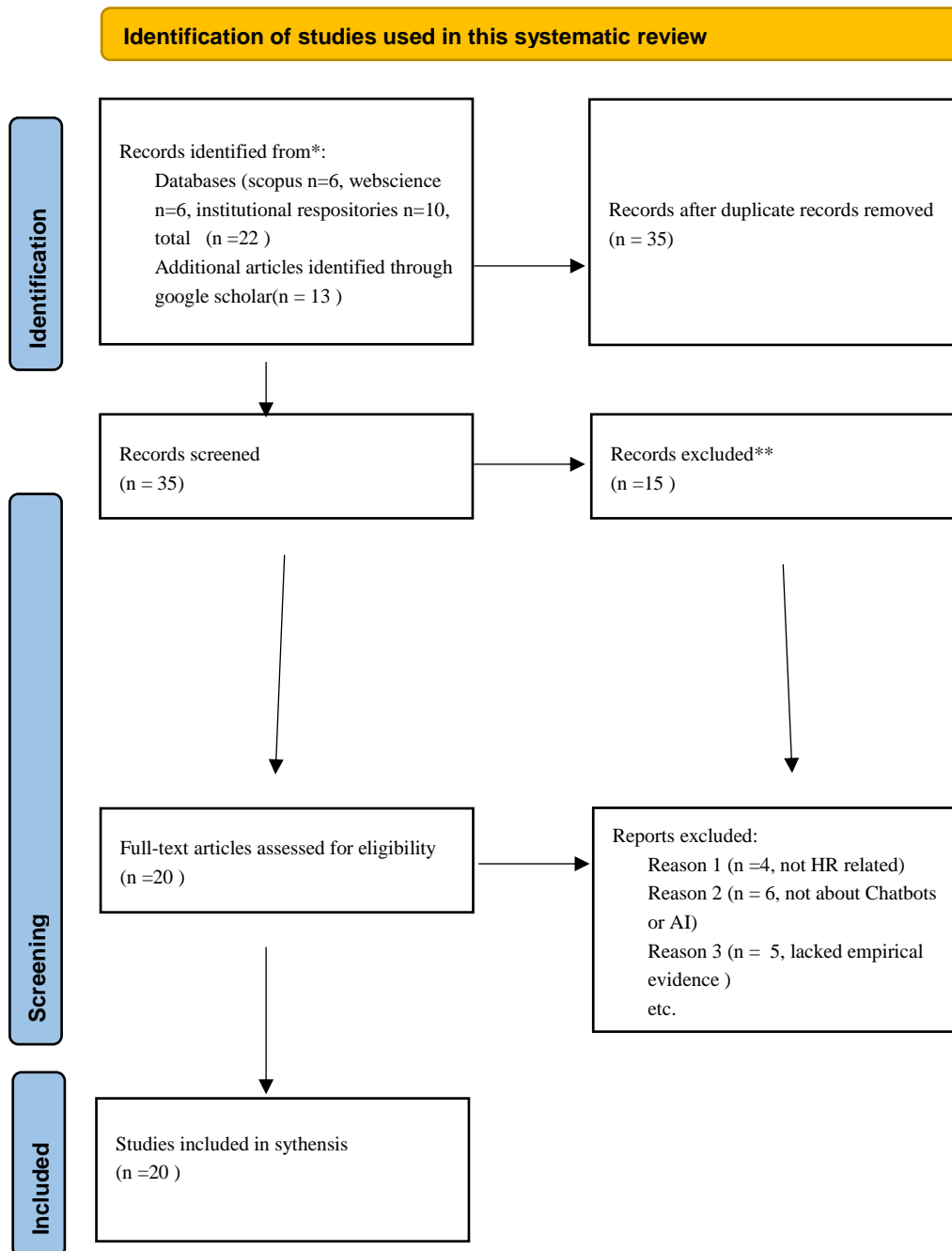
from employees and encourage interactive communication. Mehrotra et al. (2022) proposed that these chatbots support comprehensive engagement tactics, especially in remote and hybrid work environments.

Chatbots for Performance Management

Chatbots developed for the purpose of performance management play a pivotal role in the establishment of objectives, the facilitation of comprehensive feedback, and the monitoring of performance metrics. These digital tools significantly enhance transparency and consistency within performance evaluations. According to Tambe et al. (2019), the implementation of automated performance tracking has the potential to mitigate biases exhibited by supervisors, thereby promoting a more regular and uniform feedback process.

METHODOLOGY

This systematic review followed the flow diagram stages of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analysis. As shown in the diagram below, PRISMA shows the criteria for inclusion and exclusion of the literature to report only relevant and informative literature within the topic being reviewed (BMJ 2021;372).



Source: Author (2025), Figure courtesy of BMJ 2021;372:n71

This study has made use of key research terms such as human resource, chatbots, automation and management practices and organization.

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria were based on the following parameters:

- Studies with sufficient topic coverage about chatbots in human resource management were considered.
- Literature was based on studies above 2015 and any articles below 2015 were excluded.
- Journal databases /Institutional digital repositories. From the screening process , only 20 articles emanating from Scopus, Webscience , institutional repositories and google scholar were deemed relevant for the literature review after the exclusion criteria.

SYNTHESIS: BALANCING EXPERIENCE AND BARRIERS

IMPROVING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE: FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH

The first research question examined from literature how the Chatbots can be of significance in human resources management and below is the discussion.

In their 2025 study, Benabou and Touhami assert that the integration of artificial intelligence in Human Resource Management (HRM) signifies a transformative shift towards more efficient and effective methodologies, with substantial implications for performance evaluation, recruitment, training, and overall employee management.

The existing literature further elucidates a broader trend whereby HRM is progressively embracing intelligent technologies capable of executing instantaneous, data-driven decisions. This encompasses a range of tools, including automated recruitment systems, CV screening programs, tailored training initiatives, and virtual educational resources (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025).

Girlovan, Horobet, Botorga, Belascu, and Lucian (2024), as cited by Rosario (2025), suggest that the advancement of digital transformation and artificial intelligence is redefining conventional HR responsibilities through the automation of repetitive tasks and the implementation of predictive analytics to anticipate workforce requirements. This evolution fosters the concept of 'smart work,' which amalgamates technological efficiency with the strategic enhancement of human resources (Girlovan et al., 2024, as cited in Rosario, 2025).

The progression of digital transformation has profoundly altered the landscape of HR departments, shifting their focus from primarily administrative roles to more strategic, data-informed functions bolstered by emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence. This transition is closely linked to the advancement of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) and the assimilation of intelligent solutions that streamline operations, personalize employee interactions, and augment the analytical capabilities inherent to HR processes (Benabou & Touhami, 2025).

The digital revolution within the Human Resources sector commenced with the automation of routine tasks and has since expanded to encompass strategic domains such as recruitment, training, performance evaluation, talent management, and decision-making support. With the advent of artificial intelligence, these processes have been further strengthened—ranging from tools designed to predict employee turnover to individualized learning aids—thus empowering organizations to operate with increased efficiency and precision, while simultaneously better aligning with overarching business objectives. According to Benabou and Touhami (2025), the incorporation of AI into HR is yielding three principal transformations: the automation of routine tasks, the enhancement of collaboration between human and machine, and a shift in decision-making processes. Automation enables HR professionals to concentrate on strategic endeavors, collaboration necessitates the development of novel working methodologies, and data-driven decision-making facilitates insights grounded in empirical evidence, transcending mere intuition.

Chowdhury, Budhwar, and Wood (2024) have introduced a pioneering strategic framework in HR management that champions innovation while adhering to fundamental principles such as fairness, transparency, and respect for employees.

CREATION OF BARRIERS: COUNTERPOINTS FROM LITERATURE

The second research question examined the barriers of the Chatbots as discussed below.

Chatbots usually experience a shallow understanding of the context and fail to comprehend complicated queries, which may cause dissatisfaction among the users (McTear, 2020). They might not be able to deal with subtle issues concerning employees, particularly in the areas of emotional issues or policy interpretations. Chatbots are a major concern to data privacy, consent, and ethical use since they collect confidential employee information (Tursunbayeva et al., 2019). This might lead to the creation of a high level of risks in surveillance and low trust due to the lack of openness. Automation of human resource practices raises issues of severity of jobs of those in administrative human resource applications.

Although this is supposed to help, 77 percent of those surveyed revealed that they are wary of chatbots, fearing that they will make HR professionals dispensable (Nawaz et al., 2020). Many employees respond to HR communications that are personal responses and empathetic. In many cases, chatbots cannot follow the emotional perception and decision-making skills present in human HR personnel (De Keyser et al., 2021). An example of what this means is that although AI has the potential to enhance the work of HRM, Venugopal, Madhavan, Prasad, and Raman (2024) recommend creating

governance mechanisms that will promote transparency, fairness, and inclusion in automated systems. On the other hand, integration of AI also includes culture, technology and organizational issues.

As Madanchian & Taherdoost (2025) note, resistance to such changes, privacy and integration difficulties are still the key factors to be dealt with when it comes to the implementation of AI in organizational settings. The review of the bibliometrics trends shows that the researches in this discipline are developed very fast, especially with the emphasis on the practical application of AI to such spheres as employee recruitment, education, performance measurement, and the retrieval of talent (Wijaya & Qamari, 2024; Bouhsaien & Azmani, 2024). Therefore, the introduction of AI to the workplace does not only imply technological progress but the dramatic change in human resource management policies, and the emergence of new skills, flexible organizations structures and the assessment of the social and ethical effects of such technologies .

Madanchian & Taherdoost (2025) argues that the adoption of AI faces significant hurdles, including organizational opposition, technological infrastructure constraints, privacy worries, and a lack of digital leadership. Overcoming these obstacles demands a strategic approach that stresses cultural change, continuous training, and adjusting internal policies to achieve lasting digital transformation (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025).

Chatbots need regular updates to stay relevant and ensure the accuracy of the information they offer. As regulations, procedures, and policies evolve, it is crucial to update chatbots accordingly, which can be labor-intensive (Chi, 2019). Introducing a chatbot may involve substantial initial expenses related to development, integration, and training. Evaluating the return on investment and verifying that the long-term benefits of chatbots outweigh the initial costs can be a challenging endeavor (Oracle, 2022).

USING CHATBOTS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The third research question examined the literature on Chatbots and their implications for human resource management and below is the discussion. The strategic positioning of chatbots in HR offers several benefits and these include the following:

Increased Efficiency and Productivity

Chatbots will be able to process numerous HR requests and queries effectively and correctly, without the participation of a human operator (Nawaaz and Gomes, 2019). Such a feature allows the HR professionals to work more on strategic activities such as talent management and organizational development. Additionally, chatbots could supply 24/7 alternatives to personnel support, whereby the HR personnel would not be required to offer assignments beyond standard business hours (Nawaaz and Gomes, 2019, as cited by Sharma, 2023).

Enhanced Employee Experience

The involvement of chatbots allows increasing the level of HR service due to its personalization and enhancing its timeliness, contributing to a better employee experience (Alshamis and Sarker, 2019, as cited in Sharma, 2023). The employees will be able to seek the help of HR and locate several pieces of information at any time using any device without accommodation and waiting time from the human representative. Moreover, chatbots have the potential to provide training and development any time it is needed, so employees could acquire new skills and knowledge when it fits them best (Alshamis and Sarker, 2019, as mentioned in Sharma, 2023).

Financial Savings

Daugherty and Wilson (2018) confirmed by Sharma (2023) believe that the chatbots can also be used to save the expenses incurred in HR activities, dealing with queries, arranging interviews, and maintaining the records of employees. Automation of these processes helps organization to save time and resources and increase the quality and effectiveness of the HR services (Daugherty and Wilson, 2018).

Data and Insights

According to Singh (2019) as cited in Sharma (2023), the chatbots will be able to give real-time information and analytics into employee queries and requests, thus enabling an organization to determine the trend and pattern and aspects to work on in their HR procedures. The feature can support the organizations in making better decisions regarding their HR strategy and resources allocation (Singh, 2019, cited in Sharma, 2023).

Enhanced Compliance

In a similar manner, Adam, Wessel and Benlian (2021) as cited in Sharma (2023) also believe that chat bots can play an important role in ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory standards in HR processes and procedures. Standardizing responses and approaches through chatbots reduces the likelihood of errors and non-compliance (Adam, Wessel and Benlian, 2021, cited by Sharma, 2023).

In addition, chatbots will help Human Resources in a variety of ways. You will be more efficient, and employees will be more satisfied. It will also save you money. You will gather real-time data and insights. Ultimately, you will achieve compliance more easily. As technology develops, chatbots are expected to become more important in the future of HR (Adam et al., 2021, cited in Sharma, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The acceptance of chatbots in HRM is a noteworthy change in the way services are delivered to the employees and a relationship with the work force. In this study, we examine the two-sided effect of chatbots. They enhance the experience of employees on the one hand, and also a cause of disengagement or exclusion on the other hand.

Chatbots are very efficient, accessible, and personalized in terms of HR service delivery on the one hand. Chatbots make HR tasks reactive and staff-oriented, automating such routine tasks as assistance in finding the necessary details in a real-time environment and on a 24-hour basis. By their introduction into the recruitment, onboarding, training, and support of employees, they have a potential to facilitate the process and encourage continuous employment activities.

However, the introduction of the chatbot technologies is followed by drawbacks. The relative lack of emotional sensitivity, overreliance on automation, fear of their data being divided or leaked, and little acceptance on part of the employees could make mistakes of their benefits. Chatbots may not be sufficient to meet human needs, especially where a delicate comprehension or compassion is required like in case of grievance processing or mental health assistance. Conclusions have shown that the impact of HR chatbots is conditioned by the way they are designed, the context of their use, and whether they are perceived as those that would empower (as opposed to substitute) human communication.

To organizations that want their employee experience to be enhanced with the help of chatbots, the human-centered approach is one that should be considered human-friendly in the sense of supporting transparency, inclusion, and ethical use of... Future research should seek further insights into the perceptions of employees on the use of chatbots to create interactions in any organization or in any kind of culture as well as assessing the long term impact on HR functions and organizational dynamics. As the bridge between human and machine interaction continues to be blurred it will be necessary to create a balance between the technological efficiency and the perceived human understanding which will ensure that the chatbots are not disruptive but beneficial to the employee experience.

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