

AI Awareness as a Workplace Stressor: Examining Emotional Exhaustion Through Job Insecurity and Work–Family Interference

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Abstract

As the use of artificial intelligence (AI) gradually becomes an integral part of contemporary work settings, the awareness of AI, which can be defined as the extent to which employees feel that their jobs can be replaced by the automated systems, has proven to be a potentially influential factor of affective and psychosocial consequences, such as affective states, work-family balance, and emotional well-being on the whole. The present investigation aims to clarify the mediating variables that relate AI awareness to emotional exhaustion, in particular, the mediating role of perceived job insecurity, work demands, and family obligations. The study used a convenience sample of 303 employees (49.8% men) and conducted hierarchical regression models with bootstrap resampling to investigate mediation. The analytic approach included direct effect, indirect paths of AI awareness to emotional exhaustion and their serial mediation, and then the indirect path of the same to work insecurity and through work-family interference. The results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion. Moreover, AI awareness was positively related to perceived job insecurity, which, in turn, was positively related to emotional exhaustion. Parallel analyses indicated that AI awareness was also associated with increased work-family interference, which in turn was associated with increased emotional exhaustion. More importantly, job insecurity and work-family interference sequentially mediated the relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion, suggesting a compounded negative pathway. Such findings highlight the urgent need for organizational leaders to address the twin issues of maintaining job security and achieving a balanced work-life environment, given that AI is being introduced as a source of workplace stress. In practice, it will entail open discussion of AI implementation, the design of overall reskilling programs, and the introduction of flexible working models to help reduce AI-related stressors and protect employees' psychological well-being.

Keywords: *AI awareness; emotional exhaustion; job insecurity; work interference with family*

1. Introduction

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has affected various industries and significantly altered labor-market processes (Anthony, 2021; Brougham and Haar, 2018; Glikson and Woolley, 2020). In this changing environment, the impact of AI technologies on employees' emotional states at the workplace has become one of the most critical academic issues. Although the concept of AI promotes increased efficiency and productivity, it also raises the fear of job displacement (Kong et al., 2021), technostress (Maier et al., 2022), and biases in digitalization (Bouncken et al., 2023). These concerns are likely to have a positive relationship with the emotional states of the employees, which are represented in the form of stress and burnout exerted to a higher extent (Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion is one of the fundamental elements of job burnout; it refers to the depletion of a person's emotional resources due to constant exposure to stressors (Wright and Cropanzano, 1998). With the growing integration of AI technologies in the organisational environment, a worker might face the intensified emotional burnout (Liang et al., 2022). In the environment of AI integration, employees can be worn out attempting to address doubts concerning employment security and adjustment to novel AI-driven operations, thus, resolving these necessities with family needs (Teng et al., 2024). To take an example, the area of conflict or overlapping tasks of the employees and the AI systems is not only within the professional domain, but it may also extend to the personal family of the employee (Tang et al., 2023).

The AI awareness is also about the level at which the employee feels that they are vulnerable to being reduced by AI (Brougham and Haar, 2018). Empirical studies demonstrate that the greater people are aware of AI or think machines may take their jobs, the more they experience emotional exhaustion (workers fear the prospect of losing their jobs to the machine) increasing job doubts and stress (Teng et al., 2024). Whereas the impact of AI awareness on career instability and job insecurity has been studied in the antecedent literature (Kong et al., 2021; Liang et al., 2022; Teng et al., 2024), less academic work has been devoted to the problem of how AI-related stress can diffuse beyond the workplace and impact the family life. In turn, family life affected by work should be considered an AI integration outcome, but the mechanisms of mediation through job insecurity and work-family interference are under-researched (Lingmont, D. N., & Alexiou, A., 2020). The proposed study aims at exploring the connexion between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion, as well as clarifying the mediating mechanisms that take place in the study. The investigation of this intersection will help eliminate an apparent gap in the existing literature on the implications of AI and answer practical questions to organisations interested in the optimal implementation of AI technologies in a way that makes the process of their implementation safer to the emotional well-being of the employees.

2. Literature Review

The workload and performance pressures at the workplace are the high-intensity workloads and job demands, which are conceptualized as high job demands according to the job demand resource model (JD-R), deplete the resources of employees thus fostering negative affective states (Demerouti et al., 2004; 2001). The efficiency of artificial intelligence, in its turn, can speed up the working process and, at the same time, increase the level of technostress and the workload, in general (Chen et al., 2024; Maier et al., 2022; Zheng, J., & Zhang, T. 2023). Empirical studies have shown a positive correlation between AI awareness and job burnout (Kong et al., 2021). The threat of AI replacing the human workforce and changing professional paths will lead to the loss of personal achievements; since such cuts are also associated with increased burnout, the effects of AI cannot be overlooked (Yam et al., 2023).

Job burnout is an important aspect that is made up of emotional exhaustion. Those with high AI awareness can consequently view their career futures as uncertain and their jobs as unstable, and they are more likely to experience emotional exhaustion (Teng et al., 2024). Considering these points, I put forward the following hypothesis:

H1: The awareness of AI has a positive correlation with emotional exhaustion

This is because, as a subjective evaluation of the perceived persistent risk of loss of job and its stability (Shoss, 2017), job insecurity has become a topical psychological stressor in modern workplaces. With further growing pace of the development of generative artificial intelligence, the issues of possible job displacement and the dynamics of the spectrum of necessary skills have become more prominent, which has led to an increase in job insecurity among the employees (Brougham and Haar, 2018). Heightened understanding of the potentials of AI and its disruptive effect on the known job roles can also contribute to these concerns since workers must deal with the need to change and reskill in an increasingly AI-centric workplace setting (Ding, 2021). The awareness of AI and job insecurity may be positively related. The theory by Lazarus, (1984) notes that the source of stress is not the event but it is the cognitive appraisal of the event by an individual. Regarding the idea of AI, workers who will be more vigilant about it and what its use can bring about might view it as a source of loss of employment, especially when they think that they may lose their jobs or that their skills will become irrelevant (Zhang and Jin, 2023).

It is through this appraisal process that AI awareness becomes a source of job insecurity, as employees see AI as a threat to their employment security (Zhao et al., 2023). In line with the JD-R model, emotional exhaustion occurs when the employees are exposed to a long-term stress, which depletes their psychological resources (Liang et al., 2022). When employees feel insecure in their job, they go through a transactional process of stress, during which the perceived risk of losing their job triggers the continuous negative affective conditions of depression, anxiety, and helplessness (He et al., 2023). This prolonged stress burns them emotionally leaving them vulnerable to emotional burnout in the long-run (Yu, 2017). This strain is increased by the fear of losing a job. Given the cognitive appraisal framework, highly AI-conscious employees might also view this technology as a potential killer of their employment-related duties, a view, which is associated with an increased sense of job insecurity and, accordingly, emotional exhaustion (Lazarus, 1984). In line with this, I hereby assume the following hypothesis:

H2: Job insecurity is positively related to AI awareness, and in its turn, to emotional exhaustion.

Family interference with work is one of the aspects of work-family conflict, which implies the degree of perceived invasion of employees into their family life by their professional duties (Netemeyer et al., 1996). The second dimension of work-family conflict is the family interference at work. In the context of AI implementation, the professional-personal boundary for employees may become blurred due to work-related stress associated with AI use (Tang et al., 2023). The spread of telecommuting and instant-messaging technology has exposed the personal time of the employees to greater consumption by work requirements, thus affecting their family life (Basu et al., 2023). In this case, the work-family interference is more likely to occur than the family-work interference. The awareness of AI might have spillovers in the family life of employees (Zheng, J., & Zhang, T. (2023). The growing need of AI technology to improve the efficiency of the workplace can have an adverse correlation with the motivation of employees and consequently affect the behaviours beyond the working environment, including higher work-family interference (Basu et al., 2023). When interacting with AI at work, one can develop social disconnection with employees (Tang et al., 2023). This can lead to an increased anxiety level and, in turn, cause maladaptive behaviours, such as problematic video gaming, alcohol abuse, and insomnia (Shen et al., 2023). Therefore, the level of AI awareness of the employees can result in increased work-family life interference. Work-family can be explained by the JD-R model as the lack of personal resources, including time (Yu, 2017). The model assumes that emotional exhaustion is experienced in situations when high job demands are not compensated with adequate resources (Liang et al., 2022). In instances when work demands mentally exhaust an individual and extend to his or her personal life, this leads to stress therefore adding to the emotional exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). On the basis of this theoretical background, I came up with the following hypothesis:

H3: The awareness of AI is positively correlated with the interference of work with family that is positively correlated with emotional exhaustion.

When applied to the workplace setting, the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that employees with abundant resources tend to gain more resources, and those with fewer resources are more likely to lose their resources, in addition, employees who have few resources will tend to adopt defence mechanisms in order to protect the remaining resources. Among the factors that undermine supply of resources are job insecurity and interference of family by work (Hayes, A. F. 2018). Following the COR theory, the high job insecurity would not only be associated with the health of individuals but would also make it difficult to plan the family finances (Nauman et al., 2020). Work provides the family with the means of living; the threat of losing employment due to the impossibility of a person to intervene poses a great risk to the disposable income of the family (Jiang and Lavaysse, 2018). Employees might also be afraid of losing the position and status that they have in the family, in the case when they can no longer support it financially (Nauman et al., 2020; Voydanoff, 2004). The job insecurity experienced in the work sphere may be transferred to the family sphere (Lee et al., 2018). In particular, job insecurity exhausts the existing resources, which means having less to improve the well-being of a family (Hu et al., 2021).

This loss can be attributed to work interruptions with family, which refers to the subjective experience of work interfering with the non-work sphere (Yu, 2017). The connexion between the job insecurity as a work stressor and the non-work sphere is confirmed in the empirical research (Petitta et al., 2024). Richter et al. (2010) reported that job insecurity has a positive relationship with working families and using longitudinal data, they established the association between work insecurity and work-family conflict. This is also supported in a meta-review that suggested that work factors, such as job insecurity, have a stronger relationship with work interference with family than non-work factors, which have a stronger relationship with family interference with work (Byron, 2005). Since work family conflict has two dimensions, that is, work interference with family and family interference with work, the two variables may be positively related as job insecurity and work interference with family. With AI technology invading the workplace, employees' perceptions of AI development have been associated with increasing levels of apprehension about job loss and decreased job security (Zhang and Jin, 2023). Such awareness is a factor that leads to high job insecurity. Job insecurity, in its turn, is associated with a negative effect on the well-being of employees, as it cultivates a sense of uncertainty and stress regarding staying in the workplace (Kong et al., 2021). Job insecurity can also contribute to the work-family interference and personal relationship and commitment (Nauman et al., 2020). The family sphere is further strained by the invasion of work-related anxiety, where people do not cope with the workload, also being unable to provide appropriate attention to the family (Yu, 2017).

The perception of work intrusion into family by the workers is also known to further weaken emotional health. Unless the employees can balance the two spheres, they can feel more stressed and emotionally drained (Hayes, A. F. (2018). Job insecurity combined with the work interference with family can act as a serial mediator between the relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion. A more aware employee to AI developments will probably develop increased job insecurity since he/she will expect possible interruptions of his/her job or skill sets (Lingmont and Alexiou, 2020). Such an insecurity may subsequently raise the risk of family interference with work, since employees will be driven to put more hours and effort into retaining their jobs, training to meet the new requirements of a skill, or to adapt to changes introduced by AI (Nauman et al., 2020). Emotional exhaustion is aggravated by the cumulative impact of the said techno stressors; they are the result of job-related uncertainties that manifest through family financial problems (Yam et al., 2023). Existence of serial mediator role of job insecurity and work interference with family in the relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion may be true. As such, we are going to suggest a theoretical assumption:

H4: Job insecurity and work-family interference has a serial mediating effect between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion.

With the growing penetration of AI into the workplace setting, workers get to recognise the convenience that the AI tools bring (Brougham & Haar, 2018). In this respect, they might get the fear of being substituted that could trigger unfavourable psychological consequences, including emotional burnout (Kong et al., 2021; Yam et al., 2023). However, there is a limited amount of knowledge regarding the correlation between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion in the relationship between work and family balance (Lingmont, D. N., & Alexiou, A. 2020). It is in this line of thought that this research performs mediation tests to reveal the possible mechanisms upon which the relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion exists, both individually and in a serial manner through job insecurity and work interference with family. Figure 1 represents the particular research framework.

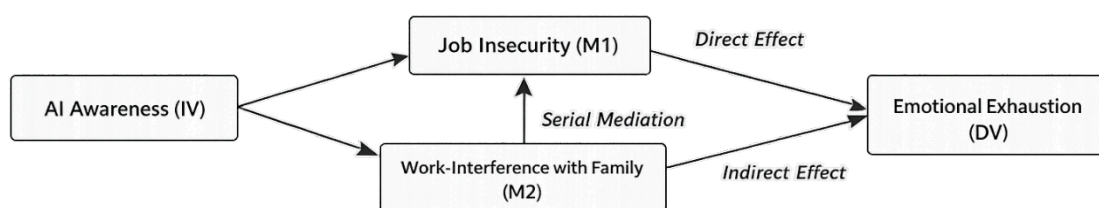


Figure 1. Conceptual framework
(Author's work)

3. Methods

3.1. Sampling and Procedure

These data were collected via an online questionnaire platform in August 2025. A strategic sampling technique was used; participants were asked to provide informed consent and complete the survey. The survey was distributed to workers at various private-sector firms in Chennai. Of the 330 volunteers, the data were filtered based on the completeness of demographics and the time of completion. Some of the exclusions were respondents with straight-line patterns of responses, omission of items, or shorter than 52s to respond to the 26 items in the instrument (26 items) and thus requiring about 2s per item (Shneiderman, 1984). As a result, a final analytic sample was obtained having 303 employees.

3.2. Software and Modeling

The analyses were performed with the SPSS 22.0 and a Process macro by Hayes (2018). To test the relationship between AI awareness and work, job insecurity, work and family relationships, and emotional exhaustion, the descriptive statistics, correlation matrices, and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression were used to analyse the relationships. There were 95% confidence intervals of mediation effects using a bootstrap approach with 5,000 resamples.

3.3. Measure

Emotional exhaustion (EE) was measured by using the Maslach Burnout Inventory subscale (Maslach et al., 2001), in which five items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1= totally disagree, 5= totally agree). One of them says, I am emotionally exhausted with my job. An increase in scores indicates greater exhaustion. A 4-item scale created by Brougham and Haar (2018) was

used to measure AI awareness (AIA) again on a 5-point Likert scale (1= totally disagree, 5= totally agree). One such product: “I believe that AI may take my job. The high scores indicate an increased awareness of AI. Job insecurity (JI) was the next item after Hellgren et al. (1999) with seven items on a 5-point Likert scale (1= not at all, 5= completely). Items 4–7 were reverse-scored. Examples of the sample items are; I am worried about losing my job in future and I am worried that I will be forced to leave my job. Increased aggregate scores will imply insecurity. The measurement of work interference with family (WIF) was done through the work-family conflict sub-scale (Netemeyer et al., 1996), that is, five items on a 5-point scale (1= not at all, 5= completely). Exemplary words: The responsibilities of my career conflict with my family life and The working times do not allow me to perform my duties as a member of the family. The higher the score the stronger is the interference. To consider demographic effects on emotional conditions (Kong et al., 2021; Liang et al., 2022; Teng et al., 2024; Yam et al., 2023; Zheng and Shen, 2025; Zheng and Zhang, 2023), a number of covariates were factored in. Gender was male= 1, female= 0; hukou was urban= 1, rural=0. The continuous variables included age, education level as well as income. Education was given an ordinal code 1 (no education) to 8 (doctorate). The income was measured on a scale from 1 (less than 5,000 ₹) to 17 (more than 300,000 ₹).

4. Discussion and Conclusions

Results: Categorical Reliability and Validity Test. Internal consistency was confirmed by the Cronbach's alpha of 0.851, 0.804, 0.817, and 0.860. Each one exceeded the 0.80 threshold (Van Griethuijsen et al., 2015), indicating quality measurement. The item loadings were more than 0.50 in favor of construct validity (Hair et al., 2009).

4.1. *Test for Common Method Bias*

A single factor test by Harman was used to examine all items with five factors, each with an eigenvalue greater than 1. The initial factor explained 39.0% of the variance, which is below the 50 per cent cut-off, indicating no substantive common method bias.

4.2. *Regression Estimations*

Table 1 shows correlation and descriptive statistics. Reports of means and standard deviations were provided in continuous variables (age, education level, income). The categorical variables (gender, hukou) were measured as a proportion of the 1. There existed positive relationships between EI, AIA, JI and WIF. The level of EI and JI was significantly greater in females ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$, respectively). There was no high-end gender correlation with either AIA or WIF. The core variables were not related to hukou and age. Education was shown to be negatively correlated with every four variables. The EI, AIA, and JI had negative relationships with income whereas the relationship between income and WIF was not significant.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. EE	3.6 47	0.8 80								
2. AIA	3.5 64	0.8 54	0.649 ***							
3. JI	2.8 39	0.3 78	0.720 ***	0.659 ***						
4. WIF	3.5 85	0.8 56	0.727 ***	0.681 ***	0.700 ***					
5. Gender (1 = male)	49.8%		-0.178 **	-0.037	-0.140 *	-0.105				
6. Urban/Rural (1 = urban)	55.8%		-0.006	-0.016	0.035	-0.023	0.043			
7. Age	29.5 87	5.8 20	-0.025	0.014	0.018	-0.028	0.025	0.038		
8. Education level	3.6 17	1.6 33	-0.219 ***	-0.249 ***	-0.198 ***	-0.157 **	0.181 **	0.027	0.113	
9. Income	4.3 47	3.8 16	-0.220 ***	-0.228 ***	-0.170 **	-0.106	0.131 *	0.190 ***	0.084	0.321 ***

Notes: i. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ii. $N = 303$; iii. EE represents emotional exhaustion, AIA is AI awareness, JI indicates job insecurity, and WIF is work interference with family. iv. Percentages coded as 1 were reported for the categorical variables, including gender and hukou.

Table 2 shows the regression estimates and the corresponding R^2 , which gives the percentage of variance explained in each dependent variable. In particular, the average R^2 (0.451, 0.583, 0.643, 0.450) indicates that the models can account for a moderate to high percentage of variance, suggesting the practical significance of the predictors used in the analysis. For example, a value of R^2 of 0.643 indicates that about 64.3 percent of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model, which is a relatively high level of explanatory power in behavioral research.

The findings also suggest that emotional exhaustion has a positive correlation with AI awareness ($\beta = 0.648, p < 0.001$), which confirms H1. Once the mediating variables have been taken into consideration, the correlation between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion is positive and statistically significant, but with smaller values ($\beta = 0.159, p = 0.004$), indicating the existence of indirect pathways. Job insecurity also shows a positive correlation with AI awareness and is associated with emotional exhaustion. Likewise, AI awareness is positively related to work-family interference, and the latter is positively correlated with emotional exhaustion. Moreover, there is a positive correlation between job insecurity and work interference with family ($\beta = 0.436, p < 0.001$). Collectively, these results indicate that mediating factors are at work in the relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion.

These results should be taken with caution though. Self-report instruments were administered at one occasion to measure all variables- AI awareness, job insecurity, work-family interference and emotional exhaustion. This design can present common method variance (CMV) that can exaggerate perceived relationships between variables. Even though the associations observed are statistically significant, they might be in part due to shared method bias, and not necessarily due solely to substantive relationships. It is thus recommended that future studies should use longitudinal or multi-source designs in order to confirm these results and minimize possible CMV confounding effects.

Table 2. Regression estimations.

Dependent Variables	JI		WIF		EE		EE	
	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	β	S.E.
AIA	0.655 ***	0.046	0.413 ***	0.052	0.159 **	0.054	0.648 ***	0.047
JI			0.436 ***	0.050	0.341 ***	0.054		
WIF					0.381 ***	0.056		
Gender (1 = male)	-0.196 *	0.076	-0.070	0.066	-0.129 *	0.063	-0.255 ***	0.077
Urban/Rural (1 = urban)	0.080	0.066	0.008	0.057	-0.009	0.054	0.034	0.067
Age	0.002	0.006	-0.007	0.006	-0.004	0.005	-0.006	0.006
Education level	-0.008	0.025	0.013	0.022	0.010	0.021	-0.008	0.025
Income	-0.003	0.011	0.014	0.009	-0.016	0.009	-0.012	0.011
R^2		0.451		0.583		0.643		0.450
F				58.862 ***		66.186 ***		40.437 ***
		40.48						
	4 ***							

Notes: i. *** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ii. $N = 303$; iii. EE represents emotional exhaustion, AIA is AI awareness, JI indicates job insecurity, and WIF is work interference with family. Table 3 indicates the mediating analyses using the Bootstrap method. The first significant mediation pathway is “AI awareness \rightarrow job insecurity \rightarrow emotional exhaustion”, which accounts for 34.4% of the total effect, in favor of H2. The second significant mediation pathway is “AI awareness \rightarrow work interference with family \rightarrow emotional exhaustion”, which accounts for 24.2% of the total effect. H3 is supported. The serial mediation effect “AI awareness \rightarrow job insecurity \rightarrow work interference with family \rightarrow emotional exhaustion” is significant, as it accounts for 16.8% of the total effect, providing empirical evidence for H4.

Table 3. Mediation effect results.

Paths	Effect Sizes	S.E.	95% Confidence Intervals		Mediation Proportion
			Bootstrap LLCI	Bootstrap ULCI	
Total indirect effects	0.489	0.070	0.348	0.626	75.5%
AIA \rightarrow JI \rightarrow EE	0.223	0.057	0.117	0.345	34.4%
AIA \rightarrow WIF \rightarrow EE	0.157	0.052	0.065	0.268	24.2%
AIA \rightarrow JI \rightarrow WIF \rightarrow	0.109	0.031	0.047	0.170	16.8%

Notes: i. $N = 303$; ii. EE represents emotional exhaustion, AIA is AI awareness, JI indicates job insecurity, and WIF is work interference with family.

Results of our analysis suggest that there is a strong positive relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion among employees. This result is based on and adds to the existing literature that identifies a positive correlation between technological consciousness and emotional burnout (Kong et al., 2021; Teng et al., 2024; Yam et al., 2023). An example is previous studies on digital transformation, which hypothesized that the more individuals are exposed to high-tech devices like automation and AI, the more stress and emotional burnout they might experience, driven by feelings of job insecurity and skill obsolescence (Liang et al., 2022). Likewise, Alhammadi et al. (2024) designed a technological work burnout scale and have discovered that more digitally literate employees are more likely to report higher burnout rates, perhaps as a result of being continually under pressure to stay up-to-date with technological changes. In contrast to previous research, which was mainly concerned with digital literacy or the overall impact of technology, the current research examines the psychological consequences of AI awareness and its potential relationship to emotional exhaustion.

Analysis also reveals that job insecurity is a major mediating factor in the correlation between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion, which aligns with the existing evidence (Kong et al., 2021). With the further development of AI technologies, employees might feel that the threat of being laid off or becoming redundant due to their skills is growing (Lingmont and Alexiou, 2020),

which is also linked to increased emotional exhaustion (Yam et al., 2023). In various work settings, psychological pressure associated with job insecurity, especially regarding AI developments, is seemingly linked to high levels of emotional burnout.

Additionally, work–family interference emerges as another important mediator. As the use of AI systems in organizational processes increases, employees may experience blurred work-life boundaries and concerns about role displacement (Basu et al., 2023). Although Yu (2017) suggested a two-way relationship between work-family interference and emotional exhaustion, the current results indicated a directional relationship: work-family interference was positively associated with emotional exhaustion. Moreover, the correlation between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion appears to be mediated by work-family interference. The trend can be explained by the resource-demand model, which holds that the encroachment of work into family life indicates a limitation of personal resources such as time and energy (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

AI awareness and emotional exhaustion can be explained in terms of a high-demand, low-resource environment (Liang et al., 2022). From this perspective, subjective conflicts arising from work–family interference may function as a pathway through which AI awareness is associated with emotional exhaustion. Moreover, the results support a serial mediation pattern, with job insecurity and work-family interference as the two variables that explain the correlation between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion. This underscores the intricate interrelationship between AI-related perceptions and employee well-being.

The findings provide valuable information to organizations that are going through the process of integrating AI. Although it is impossible to draw causal conclusions, the findings indicate that addressing employees' concerns about job security and work-life balance can help reduce emotional exhaustion in AI-enabled workplaces (Alhammadi et al., 2024; Yu, 2017). To that end, organizations are recommended to adopt policies that minimize work-family conflict and improve perceptions of job security.

4.3 Theoretical Implications

This research can be added to the knowledge on the impact of AI awareness on employee well-being, namely, emotional exhaustion, via the mediating roles of job insecurity and work-family interference, through the prism of resource-based theories. The findings contribute to the literature on AI by demonstrating that AI is a contemporary employment threat linked to poor emotional conditions and by emphasizing AI's role in work-life tension. The serial mediation model explains the relationship between job insecurity and family mediation, and work with AI awareness and emotional exhaustion as the key aspects of job burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). The study's contribution to burnout theory is that AI is an important workplace stressor with extensive psychological consequences.

4.4 Practical Implications

The implications of the research include the need for organizations to be cautious to ensure AI awareness does not negatively impact their employees' well-being. Since AI awareness is positively correlated with job insecurity, which leads to work-family interference and emotional exhaustion, employers ought to step in and clarify the AI-related issues through clear communication about AI implementation and its possible impact on employment. Social support at the organizational level can help reduce job insecurity by providing interventions, including reskilling programs and counseling (He et al., 2023). In addition, organizations should encourage work-life balance by providing flexible working and wellness programs that could assist in mitigating work-family interference (Yu, 2017). By doing so, organisations can be in a better position to address the emotional stress that can come with AI awareness to create a healthier and more productive workforce (Alhammadi et al., 2024). Although these results offer valuable practical implications, it is important to treat them as indicative rather than causal.

4.5 Limitations

There are a number of drawbacks of this research that should be noted. To begin with, the study used self-report data gathered at a single time point, despite procedural remedies, which is subject to common method variance (CMV). Although the Harman single-factor test was conducted, previous studies (e.g., Scott B. MacKenzie and Philip M. Podsakoff, 2012) suggest that this method is insufficient to eliminate CMV. Thus, the results must be viewed with a grain of salt, as not all observed correlations can be explained by common method variance. It is advised that future studies include more valid methods, such as marker-variable designs or multi-source methodologies, to better capture CMV and improve research validity.

Second, the sample was also limited to employees in Chennai, and this could question the external validity of the results to other cultures and organizations. The study can be expanded in the future to a cross-national or cross-cultural research to improve external validity.

Third, the cross-sectional nature of the data does not allow the researcher to make causal inferences. Though the outcomes suggest that AI awareness is linked to emotional exhaustion and other variables, longitudinal or experimental designs would offer a more in-depth understanding of the temporal dynamics and possible causal mechanisms underlying these associations.

Fourth, other dimensions of AI perceptions, such as AI awareness (Horowitz et al., 2024) and AI trust (Glikson and Woolley, 2020), should be further investigated. Future studies may focus on the interactions and effects of these constructs, and their effects on employee performance in AI-enabled offices.

Lastly, the study is exploratory, and the sample is relatively small ($N = 303$), indicating that the results should be viewed as preliminary. Despite these shortcomings, the research adds to the body of knowledge by identifying the mechanisms underlying the relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion, particularly through the mediating variables of job insecurity and work-family interference. Using the resource-based theories, including the job demands-resources theory and the conservation of resources theory, the results suggest that AI awareness is positively related to emotional exhaustion, job insecurity, and work-family interference. In addition, the findings indicate a sequential mediation effect, with job insecurity and work-family interference mediating the relationship between AI awareness and emotional exhaustion.

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