

Assessing the Adoption of Artificial Intelligence on Employees' Work Behaviours in the Hospitality Sector: The COVID-19 Influence

Dr. Soujata Rughoobur-Seetah

Charles Telfair Institute, Mauritius

Abstract

COVID-19 has disturbed the functioning of diverse businesses. The hospitality sector has been one of the most affected sectors as businesses in this particular sector were forced to either close down or lay off employees. The present study analyzed the impact of adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on employees' level of motivation, job security satisfaction and organizational commitment when the COVID-19 pandemic was hitting the world. Employees working in the hospitality sector were targeted to participate in the online survey. A response rate of (N=159) was obtained. The data was analyzed through the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The study revealed a positive relationship between AI and motivation and between AI and job security satisfaction. This study also supported the positive relationship between job security satisfaction and motivation and between motivation and organizational commitment. Yet, this study also revealed a non-significant relationship between AI and organizational commitment and between job security satisfaction and organizational commitment. By evaluating the impact of AI on motivation, level of organizational commitment and job security satisfaction in the hospitality sector is expected to add to the existing body of knowledge. Very few studies have evaluated the adoption of AI from an employee viewpoint which will help both scholars and practitioners to better manage this shift. The Psychological Contract Theory (PCT) has been used to better understand the processes and perceptions of employees.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), motivation, organizational commitment, job security satisfaction, COVID-19

Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic has left the whole world perplexed when airlines, hotels and other hospitality related activities were forced to shut down. Numberless sectors have been affected, thus disturbing the financial economy of the world. Countries were obliged to take short-term actions as very few details were available with regards to the virus and the whole management of the pandemic. The hospitality sector was one of the most affected sectors. Employees started losing their jobs. Hotels were forced to close down, and some practitioners are even thinking that the hospitality sector might never become like it was before. Industries were forced towards the fourth industrial revolution, that is, the acceptance and adoption of digital technologies. Artificial intelligence (AI) can be said to be one of those technologies. Both developed and developing economies believe in its capability to make work more productive and also as a competitive tool that they need to invest in. Many authors believed that we are now witnessing another industrial revolution with AI (Prisecaru, 2016; Schwab, 2017). Coming from the industrial age, to the digital arena and now the AI revolution (Makridakis, 2017) has been a long way which resulted in a drastic change in the functioning of organisations and impacted heavily on human resources (Murphy, 1997; McDonough & Braungart, 1998). It is believed that the way the industrial impact revolutionized the operations of the manufacturing and agricultural firms, the digital age gave rise to more service sectors to be blooming and now the AI revolution to automate mental tasks (Makridakis, 2017). AI can be said to be having a significant impact on not only the functioning of organisations, but depending on its adoption and evolution in the coming years, it can be said to be facilitating a lot of functions in organisations. Very few have imagined that AI can be one such tool that even the hospitality sector might consider adopting with the impact of COVID-19.

It has to be acknowledged that any revolution happening in organisations, the employees are the first ones to be influenced/affected. AI has been reported to bring countless of advantages to the work itself and mostly to organization. It is expected that a lot of jobs will no longer exist, and massive job losses have also been forecasted. Therefore, it becomes necessary for more research to be done in the field so as to examine the impact that AI might have on employees work behaviours. Both scholars and practitioners have to handle this transition well so as to avoid job losses and to re-skill the employees. Various studies have been done to analyze the impact that AI will have on organisations where aspects like customer service (Prentice, Dominique Lopes, & Wang, 2020) were evaluated, nevertheless very little has been done so as to assess how AI might affect employee work behaviours in the hospitality sector taking into consideration the pandemic. This paper will attempt to analyze the perception of employees with respect to AI, their level of motivation, job security satisfaction and organizational commitment. This study believes that these factors are crucial to be researched and well understood so as the transition between the use of computers and AI is being done smoothly in organisations. This paper will provide both scholars and practitioners with a better

overview of the likelihood of adoption of the new phenomenon (AI) and how employees are reacting to the new business revolution. Below is the proposed model of the study. It is very important for scholars and practitioners to understand the complexity of the introduction of this new feature in the workplace and its impact on human resources. Employees believe that AI can put various jobs at risk (Deloitte, 2019) and employees will have to adapt and uplift their skills so as to embrace the change. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that AI is here to facilitate tasks of employees and it can never be perceived as a substitute of the human resources (Deloitte, 2019).

Mauritius, being a small developing state, and its rigidity when it comes to job market, it is important for scholars and practitioners to understand the influence of AI on employees, especially the hospitality sector. Being more geared towards the hospitality sector, much relies on the human assets to create the differentiation power. Understanding the perceptions of employees with regards to AI will help practitioners to better manage the transition and have a successful change management. Various factors have been researched with respect to AI and its influence on the behaviours of employees (eg. Prentice, Dominique Lopes & Wang, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2019). Yet, very few research has been able to encompass important variables to assess the effect of the inclusion of AI in the workplace among employees.

This paper will attempt to analyze the perception of employees in Mauritius with respect to AI when employees were working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has indeed accelerated the adoption of digitalization and also trying to limit contacts between human beings. The hospitality sector is forced to revolutionize and also identifying new ways to cater for customer needs. Hospitality and service sectors employees can be said to be skeptical towards the adoption of AI before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, now it is believed that COVID-19 pandemic has provided an 'opportunity' to redesign and relook at the hospitality sector and where AI is being accepted and embraced with open arms. Factors like their level of motivation, job security satisfaction and organizational commitment have been earmarked as important variables to be studied and assess their influence on the phenomenon. Motivation can be said to be one of the most important work-related factors that keeps an employee progressing in his workplace. Assessing the impact of AI on motivation in the hospitality sector is expected to add to the existing body of knowledge. AI, of course brings into limelight the job security aspects from an employee perspective. This study acknowledges that there is quite a few studies on AI in the hospitality sector (Roy et al., 2020; Choudhury, 2021), but very few have analysed AI from an employee perspective in the hospitality sector. By assessing the perception of employees employed in the hospitality sector in Mauritius with respect to job security satisfaction will enable practitioners to better manage this transition period. It is also important to understand and assess the level of organizational commitment of employees as a response to the introduction of AI. If employees experience low commitment, the performance and productivity of the organization will experience a fall. Therefore, this

paper will provide practitioners with a better overview of the likelihood of adoption of the new phenomenon (AI) and how employees are reacting to the new business revolution.

Literature Review

Artificial intelligence can be defined as a set of functions which help in building an intelligent product (Ginsberg, 2012). AI can be said to be machines which will attempt to process and analyze information which can be in terms of visuals, voices, data amongst others and to provide solutions in similar ways that humans do (Ginsberg, 2012). Some believe that AI will be even smarter than human beings. The rapidity, the ability to work non-stop and to be providing better solutions or processing information like human beings somehow trigger the wakeup call for organisations and more specifically the human resource department to facilitate the adoption of the phenomenon without asking for involuntary dismissal of the human resources. AI can be said to be merely the continuation of the industrial arena and digital age. AI might be perceived as a savior to the hospitality sector where employees might have the chance to re-invent themselves and try to cater for their customers remotely through the use of technology. Nevertheless, authors like Barrat (2013) tend to be more skeptical to this invention, believing that AI will literally replace human beings in the workplace as the mental abilities of humans were their unique asset to an organization and even that is fading now. Therefore, this study opens to a more argumentative approach and to understand and analyze employees' perceptions of AI. Yet, this study proposes that AI is here to stay and the employees will be more likely to be motivated to perform.

Theoretical Support

This study will have as foundation the Psychological Contract Theory (PCT) in order to better understand the psychological impact that AI will tend to have on employees. Understanding the proposed framework from the theoretical lens of PCT is expected to contribute immensely in finding the cause and effect relationships amongst the variables and understanding the complexity of the subject matter. In doing so, motivation, job security satisfaction, organizational commitment will be better understood and how AI is influencing the employees' perception on these work related behaviours. PCT has been defined as a set of expectations that an employee forms vis a vis its organization. When the organization is able to fulfill the series of expectations, the employees develop positive psychological contracts and tend to work better (Richard et al., 2009).

The psychological contract theory can be defined as a set of expectations which an employee has vis a vis his/her organization (Morrison & Robinson, 1997) and the employee expects that

the organization will fulfil all the expectations. It can be said that it is a very interesting mechanism to measure employment relationship in organization (Rousseau, 1989; Pate & Scullion, 2018). According to Herriot & Pemberton (1997, p. 22) PCT refers to “*the perceptions of both parties to the employment relationship – the organization and individual – of the reciprocal promises and obligations implied in that relationship*”. When an organization fails to fulfil these expectations, a psychological contract breach is being formed (Conway & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012) which encourage employees to adopt undesired behaviors in the organization, like absenteeism, job dissatisfaction, demotivation and ultimately contributing in turnover intentions (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Nevertheless, the literature also acknowledges that if an organization is able to meet or surpass the set of the employees’ expectations, the employees will have the obligation to give to the organization, in terms of better performance (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997).

Through the introduction of AI in the workplace, this study will help to assess the employees’ perception of AI, their level of motivation, commitment and also job security satisfaction. AI can be viewed as a blessing in the workplace as employees will have a tool to facilitate their tasks and make them more productive, therefore not breaching their psychological contract. PCT will support all the proposed hypotheses because at the end the human capital should not be lost in the midst of innovation. PCT is expected to support all the proposed hypotheses because at the end the human capital should not be lost in the midst of innovation. Additionally, by using PCT, it will allow the researcher to probe in the internal recessors of the employees and understand the extent to which the employees will welcome this technological innovation without jeopardizing their work.

Artificial intelligence and job security satisfaction

Job security can be defined as the extent to which a company is able to provide its employees with a stable work environment where the employees will not be afraid of losing their jobs (Herzberg, 1968). Job security satisfaction can be referred to the extent to which the employees are satisfied with the stability of the workplace. Job security satisfaction is an emerging concept which helps practitioners and scholars to analyze the degree of contentment with respect to the level of job security. The hospitality sector has always been categorized as a turbulent sector where job security can be quite low and people are usually much concern about this fact (Singh, Bhatia and Nigam, 2021). The literature supports that AI will somehow negatively influence the level of job security satisfaction (Lawler & Elliot, 1996; Tang, Wang & Rong, 2018), because at the end AI will be functioning similarly like a human being which might give rise to job losses. Theoretically speaking, it can be postulated that a decrease in the level of job security satisfaction will trigger a violation of the psychological contracts of employees (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). This breach of contract will definitely contribute to employees adopting undesired organizational behaviors. Therefore, the below hypothesis is being proposed:

H1: AI has a negative relationship with job security satisfaction

Artificial intelligence and motivation

Motivation can be defined as the degree to which an employee effort to perform his/her job better in order to satisfy his/her needs and wants (Lindsley, 1957; Wong, 1976; Geiwitz, 1980). Motivation at work remains one of the necessary pillars determining the success of any organisations. No matter how advanced a company might be in terms of technology, its human capital will be always the driving essence of the organization. Various studies have emphasized on the cultivation of motivation in the workplace as the human capital is the only asset that can bring competitive advantage, innovation and creativity at work (Smithers & Walker, 2000; Ganta, 2014), especially in the hospitality sector (Hazra, Ghosh and Sengupta, 2015). The hospitality sector due to its characteristics a lot of employees do experience low level of motivation. With the introduction and adoption of AI, it is very important for employees to be motivated in the workplace. The adoption and utilization of AI in organisations rely a lot on the reaction of employees to this phenomenon. Human resource managers should be facilitating that change management where the employees will experience that AI is becoming part of their work in order to enhance their work. The literature does not provide evidence for the positive or negative relationship between AI and motivation. If the adoption of AI is correctly done in an organization, the employees will not be experiencing any psychological contract breach. In contrary, the employees will be more motivated to give extra back to the organisations in terms of performance and productivity (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). Thus, this study proposes that:

H2: AI has a positive relationship with motivation at work

Artificial intelligence and organizational commitment

Organisational commitment can be defined as an emotion or behaviour that an employee feels or portrays as results of his/her work situation which help the employee to become either committed or not committed to the organization (Mottaz, 1988). Organisational commitment is becoming very important as commitment in the workplace triggers employees to perform better and to adopt organizationally desired behaviours (Brewer & Hensher, 1998; McDonald & Makin, 2000; Malhotra & Mukherjee, 2004). The researcher does understand that during the pandemic to remain committed to a sector which is experiencing job losses and closures, employees might be finding it difficult to remain committed. The adoption of AI might be a way to help the employees to stay glued and committed to the hospitality sector as they will be having the opportunity to retrain, reskill and reinvent themselves. The literature does not

provide support for either a positive or negative association between AI and organizational commitment generally. Yet, this study believes of a positive relationship between the two variables. With AI, employees' performance will be enhanced and giving more space to employees to be more creative and innovative. AI can be perceived as a mechanism that will only facilitate the task of employees, resulting in an increase in their level of commitment. From a theoretical view, this positive relationship will give rise to positive psychological contracts, thus helping employees to perform better towards the organization (Homans, 1961). Therefore, the below hypothesis is formulated:

H3: AI has a positive relationship with organizational commitment

Job security satisfaction and motivation

Job motivation has been defined as a “*psychological processes that direct, energize, and maintain action toward a job, task, role, or project*” (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976; Kanfer, 1990). Various studies have demonstrated that job security satisfaction impacts positively on the level of motivation of employees (Herzberg, 1976; Purohit & Bandyopadhyay, 2014). Once an employee is satisfied with his job security, the latter will automatically be motivated to perform better. Therefore, it becomes important for organisations to support the job security level as this will result in an increase level of motivation among the staff. Nevertheless, it has to be taken into consideration that this study is being conducted during a pandemic where the hospitality sector is being largely affected. Employees might be experience low job security, thus disturbing their level of motivation. From a theoretical view, the PCT can be said to be supporting this relationship. If the job security satisfaction is reasonable, the employees will be motivated, thus fostering positive psychological contract (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). Nevertheless, it should also be taken into consideration that if the level of job security satisfaction is inadequate, the employees will be exposed to a psychological contract breach (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Based on existing literature the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4 : Jobs security satisfaction is positively related to the level of motivation

Job security satisfaction and organizational commitment

The level of job security satisfaction influences considerably the level of organizational commitment of employees. Various research (for eg. Atkinson, 1984; Jenkins, 2008) articulated that job security satisfaction impacts directly on the level of employees' organizational commitment. From a theoretical basis, job security satisfaction somehow implies the relational contract that an employee witness within an organization (McDonald &

Makin 2000; Smithson & Lewis, 2000). Therefore, having an adequate level of job security satisfaction contributes towards building positive psychological contracts among employees which result in an increased level of organizational commitment. Yet, it should be acknowledged that job security dissatisfaction will definitely lead to violation of the employees' psychological contract (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Based on the above literature, the following hypothesis is derived:

H5 : Job security satisfaction has a positive relationship with organizational commitment

Motivation and organizational commitment

A positive association between motivation and organizational commitment has been noted by various scholars (Srikaningsih & Setyadi, 2015; Voigt & Hirst, 2015). Indeed, this study as well believes that there is a positive relationship between the two variables as the level of motivation of employees tend to guide the level of commitment of employees and vice versa. From a theoretical perspective, it can be reported that high motivation will lead to high a commitment from the employees which will trigger positive psychological contracts among employees. Nevertheless, it should also be recalled that demotivation of employees somehow will contribute violation of the psychological contract of employees, causing them to be lesser committed to the organization (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Thus, the following hypothesis is being proposed:

H6: Motivation is positively related to organizational commitment

Methodology

The proposed model was developed based on available literature and some hypotheses are being firstly tested through this study. The scale for analyzing the perception of AI has been designed through a focus group by a few employees. The AI scale was reliable. For AI, 3 items were retained. Motivation of employees was assessed through the Tremblay *et al.* (2009) scale and 8 items were retained. Job security satisfaction was measured through the scale devised by Probst (2003) and 4 items were retained. Finally, organizational commitment was measured by Allen & Meyer (1990) and 4 items were retained. This study adopted the Likert scale, that is, '1' stands for Strongly Disagree, '2' stands for Disagree, '3' stands for Neutral, '4' stands for Agree and '5' stands for 'Strongly Agree'.

A pilot study was carried out with 15 employees in the hospitality sector to ensure the content reliability and validity. Few amendments were done to the questionnaire. This study made use of the online survey method (Nulty, 2008) to collect data for the main survey bearing into consideration its accessibility, rapidity and compilation of data. This study targeted around 400 employees working the hospitality sector (hotels, accommodations, travel and transportation,

event planners, entertainment people and attraction and recreation) and the questionnaire was distributed using online platforms like emails and social media platforms. The convenience sampling method was used where the researcher sent the questionnaire to various employees so as to ensure the appropriateness to the responses. A response rate of (N=159) was obtained. A reliability and validity check were carried out. This study followed the rule proposed by Nunnally (1978) for reliability test, that is, the Cronbach Alpha score should be greater than 0.7. The existing and proposed scales were reported to be reliable. As proposed by Anderson & Gerbing (1988), a two-step approach to analyze the data from the main survey was carried out. A Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique was used to assess the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model and to test the hypotheses.

For the purpose of this study, the PLS-SEM deemed ideal given the numerous advantages that this approach offers. Hair et al. (2019) opined that PLS-SEM compared to other methods offers robust and reliable results which help the researchers and practitioners to better forecast and take remedial actions much in advance. Scholars like Kock and Hadaya (2018) believed that PLS-SEM caters for small sample sizes where the validity of results are reliable. Results and complex models are better interpreted and understood through PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2019). Social sciences researchers are now making growing use of PLS-SEM given the validity and reliability of the results provide better predictive power to the tested framework (Acosta-Prado et al., 2020). Studies using PLS-SEM in the hospitality sector has started to make use of PLS-SEM and this study will add on to existing research and will also contribute methodologically to the body of knowledge.

Analysis and Discussion

The proposed model was assessed through the CFA. Few items were deleted in order to ensure composite reliability and average variance extracted to be within the proposed guidelines, that is, the composite reliability should lie between 0.70 and 0.90 were accepted and factor loadings > 0.50 were retained (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012). Nunkoo, Ramkissoon & Gursoy (2013) argued that the validity of the CFA is tested through the convergent and discriminant validity. The outer loadings of each items provide the convergent validity of the overall measurement model and each outer loadings of the items has to be greater than 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The convergent validity is also assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The AVE indicates the latent variable through the amount of variance (Nunkoo, Ramkissoon & Gursoy, 2013). As per Hair *et al.* (2010) the values of the AVE should be greater than 0.50 as this indicates that the measurement model is free from errors. Therefore, for this study both the outer loadings and the AVE values were within the prescribed range; that is > 0.70 and 0.50 respectively.

Further to the convergent validity, the common method bias was carried out so as to ensure that the data collected was free from biasness. Therefore, the common bias method was conducted through the Smart PLS and followed the Kock (2015) proposition that the Variance

Inflation Factor (VIF) value should not be greater than 3.3. Table 1 illustrates the results from the CFA.

Table 1: Results from the Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Construct measured using a reflective scale	FL	CA	CR	AVE	VIF
Artificial Intelligence		0.867	0.918	0.788	
Artificial intelligence might be a blessing to my work.	0.869				1.959
Artificial intelligence will help me to do my work better.	0.907				3.255
Artificial intelligence will enable more productivity at work.	0.887				2.538
Motivation		0.905	0.922	0.569	
Because I chose this type of work to attain my career goals.	0.79				2.254
For the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges	0.8				2.25
Because it allows me to earn money.	0.69				2.057
Because it is part of the way in which I have chosen to live my life.	0.752				2.508
Because I want to be very good at this work, otherwise I would be very disappointed.	0.709				1.96
Because I want to be a “winner” in life.	0.755				2.399
Because it is the type of work I have chosen to attain certain important objectives.	0.756				2.064
For the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks.	0.797				2.739
Job Security Satisfaction		0.739	0.834	0.558	
My job has never been more secure.	0.744				1.276
There is sufficient amount of job security.	0.787				1.597
The level of job security is acceptable.	0.789				1.645
There is excellent amount of job security.	0.659				1.347
Organisational Commitment		0.716	0.822	0.54	
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.	0.851				1.654
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	0.725				1.415
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	0.746				1.343
This organization deserves my loyalty.	0.594				1.217

From Table 1, it can be depicted that the proposed model was free from biasness. The CFA demonstrated that all the results were reliable and the researcher proceeded to testing the proposed hypotheses through the PLS-SEM. Table 2 presents the results obtained from the discriminant validity and Table 3 presents the results obtained for the structural model.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity

	Artificial Intelligence	Job Security Satisfaction	Motivation	Organisational Commitment
Artificial Intelligence	0.888			
Job Security Satisfaction	0.213	0.747		
Motivation	0.301	0.519	0.754	
Organisational Commitment	0.222	0.351	0.419	0.735

This study made use of the Fornell & Larcker criterion to assess the discriminant validity of the measurement model. From the results obtained from the discriminant validity, all the values were higher than 0.70 which is in line with the prescribed guidelines by Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2014).

Table 3 : Results of the structural model

Path Relationships	β	P-Value	f ²	R ²
Artificial Intelligence and Job Security Satisfaction	0.213	0.035	0.047	
Artificial Intelligence and Motivation	0.2	0.011	0.055	
Artificial Intelligence and Organisational Commitment	0.094	0.364	0.01	
Job Security Satisfaction				0.045
Motivation				0.308
Organisational Commitment				0.208
Job Security Satisfaction and Motivation	0.477	0	0.313	
Job Security Satisfaction and Organisational Commitment	0.176	0.193	0.028	
Motivation and Organisational Commitment	0.299	0.006	0.078	

The Structural Model

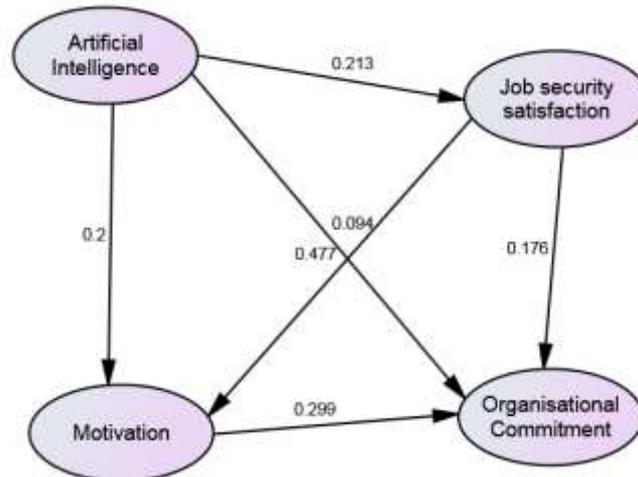


Figure 1: The tested model with path coefficients

A significant relationship was reported between AI and Job Security Satisfaction ($\beta=0.213$, p -value=0.035). A significant positive relationship was reported between AI and motivation ($\beta=0.2$, p -value=0.011). A non-significant relationship was reported between AI and organizational commitment ($\beta=0.094$, p -value=0.364), therefore rejecting the proposed hypothesis. Job security satisfaction and motivation was positively related ($\beta=0.477$, p -value=0). A non-significant relationship was reported between job security satisfaction and organizational commitment ($\beta=0.176$, p -value=0.193), therefore rejecting the proposed hypothesis. Motivation and organizational commitment was positively related ($\beta=0.299$, p -value=0.006).

Discussion

From the results obtained after the PLS-SEM, it can be deduced that there is a significant positive relationship between AI and job security satisfaction which rejected the proposed hypothesis of a negative relationship between these two variables. The results can be said to contradict the studies of Lawler & Elliot (1996) and Tang, Wang & Rong (2018). The result can be supported both contextually and theoretically. Taking into consideration the context of Mauritius under the COVID-19 pandemic, the employees are aware that AI is a phenomenon that is here to stay just like the digital arena. Employees in Mauritius have accepted AI as part of their work, and they will tend to upgrade themselves to be able to adapt to this new industrial revolution and also to limit the human contact when dealing with the pandemic. Employees might perceive AI as such a tool to help them retain their work and reinvent themselves, thus keeping the sector active. With the continuous setting up of multinationals in Mauritius can be

said to expose the country to more innovation and features to be able to adapt to change. This positive relationship also demonstrates that the cultivation of the psychological contracts among employees, thus giving rise to high productivity (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). Thus, AI tends to add to the psychological contracts of the employees in the hospitality sector and it can be said that employees will be doing their utmost to keep pace with AI.

The results supported H2 which proposed a positive relationship between AI and motivation. This result demonstrates that in the context of Mauritius, the employees in the hospitality sector are attached to their jobs and believe that AI will be part of their which they have accepted already. It can be said that the employees are aware that AI is a reality and more importantly when COVID-19 struck the world and will help them to do their task better. Therefore, they are motivated to adapt and adopt to this new technology, else they might be redundant to their respective workplaces. Hospitality sector can be said to be one of such sectors that have been greatly affected by COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this level of motivation also demonstrates the extent to which the motivation of doing work properly is important and also the importance of jobs for the Mauritians. Mauritius is a country where the cost of living is high, therefore having a job and to be motivated is very important during a period of pandemic. From a theoretical perspective, it can be said that positive psychological contracts will be formed as the employees are already motivated with the advent of AI and they feel that AI is a technology that will enhance their work and they are motivated to accept this innovation in the workplace. Positive psychological contracts will help the employees to further accept this new tool and they will be performing better (Rousseau, 1989) and helping them to stay marketable even with the impact of COVID-19.

The result obtained for H3 rejected the proposed positive hypothesis between AI and organizational commitment. A non-significant relationship was reported between the two variables. Employees may be viewing organizational commitment as a secondary factor which is not influenced easily by other variables. It can be said that for employees in the hospitality sector in Mauritius, job security satisfaction and motivation are more important compared to commitment in the workplace. They are more geared towards their own satisfaction (job security, motivation, money). Commitment takes a longer time to develop, therefore employees tend not to associate their level of commitment with certain variables. This non-significant relationship also demonstrates that the psychological contracts of employees will not be harmed if they are satisfied with the level of job security which increase their level of motivation. Psychological contracts of employees tend to be more influenced by the level of job security satisfaction and motivation. Thus, employers need to ensure that the employees constantly feel secured in the workplace which then increases their level of motivation.

A positive relationship has been reported between job security satisfaction and motivation which validates the studies of Purohit & Bandyopadhyay (2014). The higher the level of job security satisfaction, the more motivated the employees will be. Job security is being perceived as an important aspect in the workplace, especially in small economies where the labour market

is always tight and also when a pandemic is hitting hard on the country's economy. As mentioned earlier, Mauritius being heavily dependent on the hospitality sector has suddenly stopped receiving international customers with the closure of borders. COVID-19 has threatened the existence of this specific sector and job security became the most important factor for many employees in this specific sector. Working in a secured place gives rise to a higher degree of motivation. A positive relationship has also been noted between motivation and organizational commitment which is in line with the studies of Srikaningsih & Setyadi (2015) and Voigt & Hirst (2015). These supporting hypotheses demonstrate that positive psychological contracts will be created through the job security satisfaction, motivation and organizational commitment which will help employees to perform better (Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997). These three factors are essential for both the employers and employees. Employees in the hospitality sector tend to look for secured workplace which directs their level of motivation and commitment. Ultimately, this results in creating positive psychological contracts amongst them and they tend to be more productive.

Nevertheless, the proposed positive relationship between job security satisfaction and organizational commitment was not statistically supported which contradicts the studies of Wong et al. (2002) and Jenkins (2008). This non-significant relationship again demonstrates that it takes a longer time for commitment to be developed among employees. Job security satisfaction is an important variable for the employees, but does not directly influence their level of organizational commitment.

Theoretical Implication

PCT has been beneficial for this study. It appears that the employees in the hospitality sector have an increased level of psychological contracts as they believe that despite the introduction of AI in the workplace, they remain satisfied with the level of job security and remain motivated. This demonstrates that the employers have been in a certain way able to develop a positive relationship between them and the employees where there might be a level of trust. The employees believe that their jobs will remain, and they are motivated to accept to work and upgrade themselves. This can also be the fact that employees are aware that resistance to learn and accept AI might lead to them losing their jobs. So, the ideal way is to embrace this technological innovation and stay motivated in the workplace. A high level of positive psychological contracts has been noted. More so, this can also be related to the impact of COVID-19 on employees in the hospitality sector. Employees believe of safeguarding their jobs by adopting new technologies and also this might be a way to reinvent the hospitality sector.

Practical Implication

This study provides guidelines to practitioners and scholars in terms of handling human resources when adopting AI generally with a close attention to the hospitality sector. It is the responsibility of managers in the hospitality sector to continuously make the level of job security satisfactory when adopting AI in the period of the pandemic. Managers need to emphasize and ensure to the employees that AI will not harm their work and it is a change in the nature of work that will take place. AI is supposed to be another industrial revolution take place, therefore employees will need to feel motivated and engaged in all processes when implementing AI in the workplace. Communication and integration are of fundamental importance. Employees need to feel part of this big industrial revolution which can be viewed as a means to protect the sector under the turbulence of COVID-19. More training and support programmes need to be provided to employees in order to facilitate the adoption of AI. The change management needs to be done in a smooth where both the new generation and past generation will be able to cope.

Limitation of the study

There are few limitations associated with this study. This study has made use of only one theory and future research can make use of more theories to increase the predictive power of the model. This research made use of only online surveys as the researcher took into consideration time and cost and future research can make use of both the traditional and online surveys to reach more respondents. Online survey remained the only mean to reach the target audience as Mauritius were under lockdown. This research has been conducted at a specific time period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research can adopt a longitudinal approach. More factors could have been inserted in the proposed model like job satisfaction, turnover intentions amongst others.

Conclusion

As a conclusive note, it can be said that this piece of work will provide practitioners in the hospitality sector with a better perspective in dealing with the pandemic by adopting AI and bringing that new industrial revolution in a smooth way in the workplace. AI will definitely change the pace of work and managers need to ensure that the level of motivation of employees should be affected. Job security satisfaction is another important variable which managers need to ensure for their human resources. This study has utilized PCT in order to better understand the impact that AI will have on human resources and employers need to ensure that the psychological contracts of employees are not violated, else their level of productivity will be

affected and ultimately the overall functioning of the organization will be disturbed. Employers need to understand that AI needs human intervention, therefore one should not be comprising of the human asset. AI might be the savior of the hospitality sector where they are able to continuously sell their services through limited contact between employees and customers and ensuring that service quality is not compromised. The employees feel that AI will enhance their work and the employers need to continuously ensure this positivity amongst its employees despite the impact of COVID-19.

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