

Empathic Ai for Hr: the Promise of Well-being or the Risk of Ethical Drift?

Dihya Hexas , Marie-Ève Dufour , Julie Dextras-Gauthier

Laval University, Canada

Abstract

Digital transformation, accelerated by the rise of artificial intelligence, big data and machine learning, is profoundly reshaping organizations and human resource management (HRM). In this context, empathic artificial intelligence, designed to recognize, interpret and respond to human emotions through natural language processing, facial expression analysis and voice recognition, represents a major innovation. It promises to personalize interactions, improve employee well-being and prevent psychosocial risks. Its applications in recruitment, training, performance evaluation and organizational support reflect a desire to optimize HRM.

However, the use of emotional data raises significant ethical challenges: respect for confidentiality, obtaining informed consent and ensuring data security. The limits of algorithms, marked by bias, stereotypes and culturally situated interpretations, expose organizations to risks of discrimination, manipulation and loss of autonomy. Empathic artificial intelligence thus highlights a fundamental tension between technological innovation and human values: tool for well-being or instrument of control.

This research, based on a scoping review of recent academic literature (2018–2025), underlines the ambivalence of these technologies. It emphasizes the need for ethical governance integrating transparency, inclusion, equity, diversity and stakeholder participation. The future of empathic artificial intelligence in HRM will depend on its capacity to promote responsible innovation centered on the human being.

Keywords: Empathic Artificial Intelligence, Human Resource Management, Workplace Well-Being, Ethics, Digital Transformation