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A Review of Research on the Impact of Workplace AI Awareness on Employees: An IT Mindfulness Perspective

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Abstract

Under the wave of digital-intelligence transformation, AI technology is more and more widely used in enterprises, which has profoundly changed the career model and organizational ecology, promoted the generation of AI awareness among employees, and then had various impacts on employees' psychology and behaviour. This study systematically combs and deeply analyses the existing research results, and comprehensively expounds the impact of employees' AI awareness on employees' psychology and behaviour. At the same time, from the perspective of IT mindfulness, this paper explores the mechanism of IT mindfulness in the relationship between AI awareness and employees' work, and analyses the ways to alleviate the negative impact of AI awareness, aiming to provide theoretical support for the integration of enterprise management employees and AI technology, help employees achieve career development and physical and mental health in the AI era, and point out the direction for follow-up research. For example, mining the deep mechanism of interaction between IT mindfulness and AI awareness, developing effective intervention measures to improve the level of IT mindfulness of employees, etc.

Keywords: AI awareness, IT mindfulness, Employee psychology, Employee behaviour

1. Introduction

Under the background of digital-intelligence transformation, AI and robots are more and more widely used in enterprises, and their role has changed from auxiliary tools to work partners of employees, profoundly changing the current career model and organizational ecology [1]. In this context, many enterprises have carried out artificial intelligence transformation, using artificial technology to empower production and management processes [2]. However, the widespread penetration of AI technology in the workplace has also raised a number of issues. On the one hand, the rapid iteration of AI technology requires employees to constantly learn new skills to adapt to job changes, otherwise they risk being eliminated. On the other hand, the application of AI technology changes the work process and task allocation, and employees may feel increased work pressure and uncertain career development direction. These changes lead to different degrees of AI awareness among employees, and the negative AI awareness of employees makes employees feel anxious, worrying about whether their jobs will be replaced by AI and whether their value will be reduced due to AI technology[3]. The actual and potential impact of such AI awareness on employees in the workplace [4] has made scholars begin to recognize the benefits and risks of using AI in work [5].

Amid such workplace changes, IT mindfulness is gaining traction as a positive state of mind[6]. IT mindfulness emphasizes that when using AI technology, employees can focus on the current task, make full use of technical resources, actively explore innovative application methods, and remain keenly aware of the advantages and limitations of technology[7]. In the face of various changes brought about by employees' AI awareness, employees with a higher level of IT mindfulness are more likely to respond with a positive attitude and see AI as a tool to improve work efficiency and personal ability, rather than a simple threat [8]. They are able to actively learn how to work with AI to better adapt to new working patterns. As a result, IT mindfulness is important in helping employees cope with changes in AI technology in the workplace.

This study aims to systematically sort out and deeply analyze the results of existing studies on the multifaceted impact of workplace AI awareness on employees. Specifically, through the integration and interpretation of relevant literature, the impact of AI awareness on employees' psychology (such as job insecurity, career anxiety, career satisfaction, etc.) [9,10] and behavior (such as active learning behavior, innovation behavior, knowledge hiding behavior, etc.)[9,11,12]. At the same time, from the perspective of IT mindfulness, how to use IT

mindfulness to alleviate the negative effects of AI awareness, such as work pressure, negative emotions and career development concerns, so as to help employees adapt to AI technology changes with a more positive attitude and effective way.

2. Research on AI Awareness

2.1 The Concept and Measurement of AI Awareness

Brougham and Haar (2018) pioneered the concept of artificial intelligence impact awareness (STARA), which was defined as the degree to which employees perceived that artificial intelligence technology posed a threat to their career development [3]. Moreover, this study confirms that it has a positive impact on employees' depression, cynicism and turnover intention, and a negative impact on organizational commitment and career satisfaction. Subsequently, Xu and Wang (2022) found that AI impact awareness would reduce employees' willingness to support change, which further deepened the cognition of the negative impact of AI awareness [2]. Different from the previous research, Ding et al. (2021) proposed the dual attributes of AI awareness. Ding et al. (2021) found that employees not only regarded AI as a threat, but also made a challenging evaluation on the impact of AI on the awareness, so as to improve the level of work participation and organizational commitment. His research finds that job engagement and organizational commitment play a positive mediating role between challenge-obstacle evaluation and innovation behavior, indicating that employees can transform them into innovation motivation[13]. On this basis, Liang et al. (2022) revealed the "double-edged sword" effect of the impact consciousness of artificial intelligence on the service innovation behavior of employees in the service industry [14]. Presbitero and Teng-Calleja (2022) found that it had a positive impact on the career exploration behavior of employees [15]. Chen Huikang (2023) explored its positive effect on employees' breakthrough creativity [16].

This paper believes that AI awareness refers to employees' perception of the impact of AI technology on career development, which has dual attributes: the negative aspect is reflected in employees' psychological and behavioral problems caused by substitution pressure, and the positive aspect is reflected in employees' challenging evaluation of AI and its transformation into innovation motivation.

In the measurement of concepts related to AI awareness, different scholars have adopted different methods. Brougham and Haar (2018) developed an artificial intelligence impact awareness scale, which contains four items to measure AI awareness mainly from the dimension of employees' concern about their jobs being replaced by artificial intelligence, and directly quantify employees' concern about their job security. He Qin et al. (2024) drew on the relative deprivation measurement scale of Callan et al. (2011) to measure employees' relative deprivation (related to AI awareness) from the cognitive and emotional dimensions of employees, focusing on the psychological state of employees in the process of comparison with artificial intelligence. In addition, when measuring technology impact awareness, Xu and Wang (2022) adopted the four-item scale developed by Li et al. (2019) and revised it according to the research scenario [17], which also focuses on employees' perception of the possibility of their job being replaced by artificial intelligence. However, the expression has been adjusted to better fit the research scene and object. These different measurement methods enrich the quantitative assessment of AI awareness and related concepts from multiple perspectives, and contribute to a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of employees' cognitive and psychological states in the AI environment.

2.2 The Impact of AI Awareness on Employee Psychology

The wide application of artificial intelligence technology makes the AI awareness of employees have three effects on employees' psychology. On the one hand, the continuous deepening of AI technology in the workplace, especially the emergence of a large number of intelligent robots replacing manual workers to complete repetitive tasks in the automated production line of the manufacturing industry, makes employees have strong doubts about their job stability, thus forming job insecurity [18]. At the same time, AI awareness has also become a key factor causing employees' career anxiety. Employees worry about their ability being surpassed and their competitiveness declining. Employees are not only worried about the safety of their current job, but also feel confused about their future career direction, which seriously affects their career planning and decision-making. In addition, employees will also have a sense of relative deprivation due to AI awareness [12]. When AI algorithm plays an important role in many aspects, employees feel that the value of work is weakened, causing dissatisfaction and loss, affecting work enthusiasm and organizational identity, consuming positive psychological resources, and having a serious negative effect on occupational mental health. On the other hand, AI awareness also has an important impact on employees' career satisfaction. Xu and Wang (2023) conducted in-depth research to show that the application of AI technology changes the working environment and requirements, and employees will feel worried after they perceive the impact on their careers, thus increasing their work pressure and further affecting career satisfaction.

2.3 The Impact of AI Awareness on Employee Behavior

When employees feel the pressure and threat of AI technology, they may experience emotional exhaustion, inhibit innovation behavior, and even conduct behaviors unfavorable to the organization, such as knowledge hiding. In the face of AI threats, employees may adopt knowledge hiding behavior out of the motivation to protect their own interests [19]. This behavior not only hinders knowledge dissemination and sharing, team collaboration and innovation within the organization, but also leads to a decrease in the overall efficiency of the organization, unable to give full play to the advantages of the combination of AI technology and employee knowledge, which has a negative impact on the development of the organization. However, AI awareness also has positive effects. In terms of active learning behavior, Zou et al. (2023) pointed out that AI awareness is closely linked to employees' active learning behavior [9]. In the face of the impact of AI technology, employees will take the initiative to change their behaviors and learn new knowledge and skills to adapt to career development. When employees perceive that their jobs may be replaced by AI, they will turn this pressure into a motivation to improve themselves, and enhance their ability to cope with potential career crises by participating in training and learning online resources independently. In addition, employees with strong proactive personality are more able to actively respond to the challenges brought by AI, actively seek learning opportunities, and regard them as opportunities to improve their own ability and organizational value, thus stimulating innovation motivation [13,14].

3. IT Mindfulness

3.1 The Concept and Connotation of IT Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a psychological feature rooted in individual cognitive ability[20], which is not only a simple psychological phenomenon, but also an important part of individual cognitive system, affecting how individuals perceive, understand and cope with the world around them. In the field of information system (IS) research, mindfulness has become a core topic, widely involving several key topics such as IT innovation, IT management, IT use and various results resulting from IT[21]. IT mindfulness is, in essence, a special psychological state exhibited by individuals in the IT environment.

The concept of IT Mindfulness originates from the in-depth exploration of the interactive relationship between information technology (IT) and individual cognition in the information age, and is a relatively new concept [22], Thatcher et al. (2018) defined it as individuals' non-critical attention and awareness of current technological activities and events in the use of information technology, emphasizing the present-oriented psychological trait of openness and acceptance [7]. Thatcher et al. (2018) divided IT mindfulness into four key dimensions based on an in-depth analysis of the process of IT use. (1) Discriminating alertness: Specifically, the ability of an IT-mindful individual to understand an IT application and know in which context the application will prove more effective. This means they can accurately judge the applicability of IT applications in different situations, so as to better leverage their value; (2) Multi-perspective awareness, which means that individuals with IT awareness can identify multiple uses of specific IT applications. When faced with problems, they can develop innovative solutions to problems from different perspectives by relying on this multi-perspective cognitive ability [7,23]; (3) Openness to novelty, which is reflected in the willingness of individuals to explore more potential and novel applications of the deployment system. In the evolving IT field, they proactively seek new application possibilities to adapt to the continuous updating of technology; (4) Present orientation means that IT mindfulness individuals focus on the present moment and the situation they are in.[23]

To sum up, IT mindfulness is a compound concept covering technology cognition, attitude and behavior, and its core is the continuous vigilance state of individuals in the digital environment. Groups with this trait show three significant characteristics: (1) active problem-solving mode, which can systematically deal with technological threats; (2) Dynamic perception: individuals can reduce uncertainty by enhancing their sense of control over the environment; (3) Resource optimization efficiency, which can effectively alleviate work anxiety while improving technology use efficiency.

3.2 IT Mindfulness Measurement

Thatcher et al. (2018) proposed a self-report scale to evaluate IT mindfulness through employees' subjective feedback on their concentration in IT use (such as anti-interference ability in tasks), innovativeness (willingness to try new functions) and exploratory (active learning of technical knowledge) [7].

In the subsequent studies of scholars, although the self-report method is widely used, IT is not the only one. However, after in-depth research, scholars realized the limitations of a single measurement method and called for the development of diversified scales, such as combining objective behavioral data (recording operation behavior pattern, use frequency and duration, etc.) or developing scenario simulation measurement tools, which helped

promote the innovation of measurement methods and provide more abundant and accurate data support for IT mindfulness research. To reveal its nature and influence mechanism.

3.3 The Impact of IT Mindfulness on Employees

(1) IT Mindfulness and Employees Coping with Work Stress

Based on the research of Thatcher et al., many scholars have carried out more in-depth exploration. Wei (2021) research has shown that IT mindfulness help staff to better cope with stress source.IT mindfulness can weaken the excessive positive influence of challenging stressors (such as difficult tasks and tight deadlines) and prevent employees from being tired physically and mentally due to excessive pursuit of challenges. At the same time, it can reduce the negative impact of obstacle stressors (such as resource shortages and technical difficulties) and avoid the situation of employees slowing down or losing confidence due to difficulties. After that, Chen et al. (2022) found that IT mindfulness can negatively regulate the negative impact of technology intrusion on employees' psychology in digital scenes [24]. When non-working hours are continuously disturbed by work information, employees are prone to stress and deviant behaviors due to excessive consumption of self-regulation resources. Ioannou et al. (2024) also studied that IT mindfulness can reduce employees' technical pressure and significantly improve employees' job satisfaction[25]. IT mindfulness can enable employees to face technical problems with a peaceful mind, reduce technical anxiety, and improve job satisfaction.

(2) IT Mindfulness and Employee Attitudes and Efficiency in using IT Technology

Qahri-Saremi et al. (2018) found a significant positive relationship between IT mindfulness and the use of IT innovation in their study of electronic health record systems[26]. This means that employees with IT mindfulness are more inclined to carry out innovative practices when using IT technology. They have a deeper understanding of the characteristics and functions of technology, are keenly aware of new application possibilities, and have the courage to experiment with new ways of operating and combinations of functions. Esmaeilzadeh etc. (2022) and Wu (2022) research has shown that IT mindfulness can inspire employees use positive attitude of the IT technology, to promote staff more effectively use IT resources to innovate and work improvement[8,22]. When using IT technology, employees with IT mindfulness explore various functions of IT technology with an open and curious mind, and actively try different modes of operation to explore more application possibilities. At the same time, their openness to novelty motivates them to actively pay attention to new technology dynamics in the industry and think about how to integrate them into their own work to bring innovative solutions to the enterprise.

4. The Role of IT Mindfulness in the Process of AI Awareness Influencing Employees

4.1 The Direct Impact of IT Mindfulness on Employee AI Awareness

In today's digital working environment, the rapid development of AI technology has a profound impact on the psychological state of employees, and IT mindfulness plays an important role in alleviating the negative psychology caused by AI awareness [27]. Based on the self-regulation theory, individuals need to mobilize psychological resources to maintain balance and adaptation in the face of external changes [28]. Under the influence of AI awareness, employees often suffer from job insecurity and occupational anxiety due to fear of being replaced by AI or difficulty in adapting to its changes[29]. Multiple dimensions of IT mindfulness can effectively improve employees' self-regulation ability, thus alleviating these negative psychology.

The discriminating alertness in IT mindfulness enables employees to be keenly aware of the changes in AI awareness at work and its potential impact on their own careers[7]. Chen et al. (2022) showed that when employees perceive changes in their AI awareness in work tasks, they can evaluate the skill gap between themselves and AI through alertness, and then take the initiative to learn new skills to enhance competitiveness[24]. Perspective diversity helps employees view the role of AI awareness in work from various aspects [7]. They will be aware not only of the alternative risks of AI, but also of the new opportunities it creates. Referring to the study of Pereira et al. (2023) on employees' career cognition in AI awareness, employees understand that they can devote themselves to more creative work after improving efficiency with AI, so as to understand the relationship between AI and their career development from a comprehensive perspective, enhance their sense of control and relieve anxiety[5]. Novelty and openness encourage employees to actively explore new applications and trends of AI[7]. Yin et al. (2024) studied employees' exploration of the innovative application of AI. [30]. Present focus enables employees to focus on current tasks and avoid distraction from worrying about the future impact of AI[7]. According to the study of Langer and Landers (2021) on the impact of focused work on employees, employees' dedication to work can improve efficiency and quality, and enhance self-recognition. This kind of dedication will make employees experience a deep sense of satisfaction in their work, and they will focus more on the task itself and reduce the interference caused by AI awareness[31].

4.2 The Positive Effect of IT Mindfulness on the Influence of AI Awareness on Employee Behavior

IT mindfulness connects employees' AI awareness with positive behavioral performance, helping employees actively cope with various complex situations, so as to significantly reduce negative behaviors and comprehensively improve work performance and innovation ability.

Wei et al. (2021) believed that IT mindfulness can further stimulate employees to make challenge evaluations on AI awareness, encourage them to devote themselves more to work, fully tap their own potential, and thus improve individual competitive productivity[13]. Shirish et al. (2021) pointed out that IT mindfulness can motivate employees to take the initiative to learn in an AI-aware environment, enhance their sensitivity to learning opportunities, help them cope with job insecurities more calmly, and further promote active learning behavior[9,32]. Ioannou (2023) believed that IT mindfulness can enable employees to effectively reduce AI awareness, keep them calm and focused under the pressure of high performance, make more efficient use of the help received, optimize the job shaping process, and improve the quality and efficiency of work[33]. In addition, he also proposed that IT mindfulness can effectively reduce technical pressure, enhance employees' self-efficacy in the AI environment, make them more confident to deal with the challenges brought by STARA awareness, enhance work autonomy, and thus improve positive service performance[34]. Kong et al. (2023) found that AI awareness is positively correlated with job burnout of hotel employees, and organizational commitment plays a mediating role. IT mindfulness can help employees adjust their mentality, treat AI awareness with a more positive attitude, and reduce job burnout. Liang et al. (2023) proposed that IT mindfulness promotes employees to maintain open and innovative thinking in the face of AI, strengthen the positive path in service innovation, and improve innovative work behavior [35].

5. Research Conclusion and Prospect

5.1 Conclusion

From the perspective of IT mindfulness, this study systematically sorted out the research literature related to AI awareness and employees in the workplace, and deeply analyzed the related concepts of AI awareness and IT mindfulness and their impact on employees. This study discusses the evolution process of the concept of AI consciousness, diversified measurement methods, and analyzes its various impacts on employees' psychology and behavior. At the same time, the concept connotation, measurement method and positive effect of IT mindfulness on employees in coping with work stress and using IT technology are discussed. On this basis, this paper deeply explores the role of IT mindfulness in the process of AI awareness affecting employees, including its direct psychological impact on employees' AI awareness and its positive impact on employees' subsequent behaviors.

5.2 Prospsct

(1) Explore the mechanism of IT mindfulness in the working relationship between AI awareness and employees

Although this study has discussed the multifaceted results of AI awareness affecting employees and the mitigating effect of IT mindfulness, there are still many deep mechanisms to be explored. Future research can further focus on the specific mediating path of AI consciousness between IT mindfulness and employees' psychology and behavior. For example, how does IT mindfulness affect the relationship between job insecurity caused by AI awareness and active learning behavior by influencing employees' AI awareness [36]. In addition, the dynamic process of interaction between AI awareness and IT mindfulness can be explored, such as whether the relationship between the two changes at different stages of the introduction of AI technology into the workplace, so as to understand its internal mechanism more comprehensively.

(2) Develop more effective interventions to increase the level of IT mindfulness among employees

Based on the current research, IT is crucial to develop more effective interventions to enhance the level of IT mindfulness among employees. Future research can try to combine different training methods and technical means, such as virtual reality (VR) simulation training, so that employees can conduct mindfulness practice in simulated AI work scenarios and enhance their ability to apply mindfulness in actual work scenarios. At the same time, it is considered to introduce the hybrid training mode combining online and offline into the intervention measures, provide continuous mindfulness learning resources through online platforms, and organize group discussions and practical activities offline, so as to improve the effect and sustainability of the intervention[37]. In addition, differences in the applicability of different interventions to different types of employees (such as different ages and career stages) are studied to achieve personalized customization of interventions.

(3) To explore whether there are differences in the impact of IT mindfulness on employees' AI awareness under different organizational cultures

Under different organizational cultures, there may be significant differences in the moderating effect of IT mindfulness on employees' awareness of coping with AI. Subsequent research can deeply compare the impact of IT mindfulness and AI awareness on employees' working relationships in different organizational culture types (such as innovative culture and hierarchical culture). For example, in an organization with an innovative culture, employees may be more likely to accept AI technology, and IT mindfulness may enhance employees' innovation behavior by promoting their positive cognition of AI[38,39]. In hierarchical cultural organizations, IT mindfulness may focus more on alleviating employees' anxiety caused by changes in power structure brought about by AI. Such research can provide a basis for enterprises to formulate targeted management strategies under different cultural backgrounds.

(4) Interdisciplinary research addresses the negative impact of AI awareness on employees

With the wide application of AI technology in the workplace, the fields involved are becoming more and more complex, and it is difficult to comprehensively solve relevant problems from a single disciplinary perspective. Future research can strengthen interdisciplinary integration and combine multi-disciplinary theories and methods such as psychology, management, and computer science. For example, in cooperation with the field of computer science, AI technology itself is used to develop intelligent mindfulness training tools, so as to realize real-time monitoring and personalized intervention of employees' mental status[40,41]. At the same time, from the perspective of management, this paper combines IT mindfulness with enterprise strategy and organizational structure design, studies how to create an environment conducive to employees' adaptation to AI technology change with the help of IT mindfulness at the enterprise level, and provides more comprehensive theoretical support and practical guidance for enterprises to better manage the integration of employees and AI technology[36,42]. Promote employees to achieve a win-win situation between career development and physical and mental health in the AI era.

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