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Chair of Managerial Decision Making

How self-verification and body-related shame jointly influence job applicants' acceptance of AI

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**HOW SELF-VERIFICATION AND BODY-RELATED
SHAME JOINTLY INFLUENCE JOB APPLICANTS'
ACCEPTANCE OF AI**

Dedico questo traguardo, il mio percorso, la mia crescita

Alle parole calde e alla voce eterna di mia madre,

Allo sguardo fermo ma sempre vigile di mio padre,

Alle incalzanti ma dolci morse di mia sorella Alessia.

Solida, soffice trama che per sempre ci unisce,

L'amore.

Ed in fine,

Al dubbio, all'incertezza,

fonte di progresso, non di sterile volubilità

Che sempre possano condurmi oltre la confortante ma arida stasi.

Che il dubbio possa esplodere con urgente irrequietezza,

gridando nel silenzio sordo dell'abitudine.

Che la confusione critica e il pensiero guidino il mio percorso,

senza però lasciare che implodano in me, inerme.

Si realizzi la forza degli opposti,

che vicendevolmente si definiscono

l'ordine dal caos, l'amore dal dolore.

Il futuro dispieghi con fervore le sue virtù.

Valentina

*I dedicate this achievement, my journey, my growth
To the warm words and eternal voice of my mother,
To the steady but ever watchful gaze of my father,
To my sister Alessia's pressing but gentle bites.
Solid, soft weave that forever unites us,
Love.*

*And finally,
To doubt, to uncertainty,
Source of progress, not of sterile fickleness
May they always lead me beyond the comforting but barren stasis.
May doubt burst forth with urgent restlessness,
crying out in the dull silence of habit.
May critical confusion and thought guide my path,
without letting them implode in me, helpless.
Let the power of opposites that mutually define,
Be always realized;
Order from chaos, love from pain.
Let the future fervently unfold its virtues.*

Valentina

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INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary corporate environment, Human Resource management represents a critical field which drives the strategic alignment of the human capital competences with the organizational objectives and desired performances. Therefore, in this context it is important to state that people are conceived as the main asset of a company since their soft and hard knowledge are difficult to imitate by competing firms. This phenomenon contributes to sustaining the business competitive advantage in the long term (Biles et al., 1980). For that reason, it is necessary for companies to put their efforts and meticulous attention in selecting new human resources that are most suitable in fitting into their organizational context. Consequently, building strong employer branding and outlining hiring processes that meet the needs and expectations of job seekers represent two of the pivotal elements of HR Management (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Furthermore, in the current era, the digital revolution is encompassing several organizational areas. Recruitment and selection process is also undergoing digital transformation and disruptive innovation. Indeed, the massive insertion of innovative technologies within Human Resource Management also includes the development of AI tools capable of automating many of the selection activities, streamlining the hiring methods as a direct consequence. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate job applicants' perceptions toward such new recruitment processes, identifying possible obstacles and limitations to the adoption of such tools. Indeed, despite the benefits brought in terms of time and cost savings (Black & van Esch, 2021), candidates often demonstrate a particular reluctance to be evaluated by AI agents during an online asynchronous interview (Stone et al., 2024).

In this context, the present dissertation aims at exploring in the first two chapters the theoretical frameworks which shape the conceptual foundation of the empirical study subsequently elaborated in Chapter Three.

Notably, the first section of the thesis delves into the historical evolution of Human Resource Management explaining how it stands apart from the previously more common discipline of personnel management and clarifying the core purposes of modern Human Resource Management procedures (Guest, 1987). Moreover, this section, is followed by a detailed analysis of the hiring procedures which play a critical role in shaping the business performances (Biles et al., 1980). In detail, it should be pointed out that it is currently essential to identify the possible biases and prejudices characterizing recruiting activities, in order to limit them, making these processes as meritocratic and fair as possible (Jost et al., 2015). This objective will foster the alignment of hiring

practices with the principles of corporate social responsibility (Du et al., 2010), contributing to the promotion of opportunities for inclusion and empowerment of diversity in workplace environments.

Furthermore, the second chapter entails with an extensive investigation into the realm of Artificial Intelligence (Jain, 2018), exploring its theoretical basis and analysing its wider range of applications across different organizational fields. Being more precise, the growing digitalization era signals a paradigm change in Recruitment and Selection Process, showing a revolutionary potential and realistic benefits (Pan & Froese, 2023). However, implementing AI enabled tools within the hiring methods fosters the spread of ethical concerns and reluctance among job applicants (Lee, 2018; McIntyre, 2019). Clearly, this phenomenon involves as a natural consequence, the essential need of analysing the features and the effect of these technologies, with the final purpose of promoting a mutually beneficial interplay of AI And HRM practices.

Lastly, the third section embarks on a quantitative analysis which intend to reduce the gap in the existing literature (Mirowska, 2020). It means that the present study aims at contributing to the current knowledge about the implementation of AI embedded tools within the recruitment and selection process. Notably, through a synthesis of theoretical frameworks, it is made an attempt to identify explanatory mechanisms for the phenomenon which predicts that job applicants are less willing to accept a job offer when an artificial intelligence mechanism is included in the evaluation process. Indeed, the applicants themselves perceive lower self-verification in such a circumstance, thus they think that technological algorithms are unable to understand their most authentic nature (referred to self-verification perception) (Swann, 1983). Moreover, this evidence seems to be reinforced in the presence of applicants' low level of body-related shame. Indeed, people's individual characteristics tend to influence their perceptions and behaviours enough to determine different outcomes in terms of choices and decision-making processes (Klotz et al., 2013).

Therefore, this study is of paramount relevance for companies intending to use artificial intelligence to streamline their evaluation processes. In this way, they can identify potential obstacles in that path, engaging in their minimization in order to make the enterprise as inclusive as possible for all workers and future employees.

CHAPTER 1: An Overview on Human Resource Management

1.1. Evolution of Human Resource Management

The concept of human resource management has evolved over time, changing connotation depending on the historical stages it has gone through.

Briefly analysing the historical development of this discipline, it is possible to state that before the Industrial Revolution, labour relations were based solely on physical force, considering that the economy was based mainly on agriculture and on the presence of small family businesses. With the emergence of the Industrial Revolution, which began in the 1850s, the new master-servant approach began to take hold. This relationship between workers and owners often fostered conflict and dissatisfaction, such that it contributed to the emergence of the so-called trade unions, workers' associations established to defend and protect workers' rights. In the 20th century, scientific management spread, whose founding father Taylor sought to identify, with engineer's eyes, the best and most efficient way to manage workers in order to significantly reduce production time and maximize productivity (Taylor, 1914).

It was also discovered that, the latter could be increased not only by high monetary compensation that workers would receive, but also by several other factors such as lighting, working conditions, environment, and climate among workers (Friedman, 1946). For this reason, the inadequacy of the scientific management approach, which did not take the human factor into account, relegating it rather to the role of a machine executing a task, was immediately visible. Indeed, in this context, human tasks tended to become appendages of the machine, *"the worker is not required to think but only to obey by performing tasks reduced to a few gestures to be obsessively repeated thousands of times a day"* (Braverman, 1974).

In controversy with the engineering conception of work typical of rational models, the School of Human Relations defined the so-called *"Hawthorne Effect,"* according to which the degree of overall productivity of the enterprise would change more than favourably as a result of the attention paid to internal people. The *"Hawthorne Effect,"* named after the Western Electric factory in Chicago, thus highlighted the importance of how much each person *"needs to feel that he or she is considered and that consequently he or she must be prepared to consider others"* (McKee, 1970).

So, the increased attention to the psychology of workers has enabled the creation of personnel management departments within the major organizations. However, human capital management, as

we understand it today, is not comparable to typical personnel management methodologies and approaches.

1.1.1. Personnel Management vs Human Resource Management

Delving into the concept of personnel management, it is possible to state that it is characterized by an administrative and transactional nature. It means that it concerns the technical aspects of recruiting, training, assessing, and compensating the employees within an organization, handling with their absence, complaints, and queries.

In 1930s, only the big companies operating in the innovative sectors such as engineering and shipbuilding, had the opportunity to develop this department. The latter's role consisted of bureaucratically implementing the rules used to provide and manage the human capital needed within the firm at the operational and administrative level. Being more precise, ensuring workers' legal adherence and compliance to the rules was the main task of this department which tend to enforce all the regulations needed to maintain order and fairness in the workplace. Over the years, in 1970s, Personnel Management began to evolve thanks to the expanded managers' training. This gradual change, implemented by approaching the social sciences on employees' motivation, satisfaction, and organizational behaviour, led to a distinction between all the different duties of a personnel manager. For instance, it means that resourcing, training, and compensation were handled separately.

In this context, the concept of human resource management first appeared in the 1980s and this term's usage grew in the 1990s without representing only a matter of conventional practice (Legge, 1978). Indeed, this new discipline consisted of a complete revisitation and reorganization of personnel roles, offering an innovative approach to resource management.

Hence, it is possible to state that *“the term “human resources” is a fascinating one: it seemed to suggest that employees were an asset or resource-like machines, but at the same time, HR also appeared to emphasise employee commitment and motivation”* (Ahammad, 2017, pp. 414). The above sentence is intended to specify that the major difference between the two disciplines is based on the consideration of workers, who are no longer conceived of as tools in the hands of the organization, but as strategic assets, on which it is necessary to invest in such a way that their increased satisfaction and competence can be translated into a stronger competitive advantage for the enterprise.

Therefore, it means that it is important for Human Resource Management (HRM) to orient its efforts and attention towards aligning with the overall corporate strategy, thus becoming an integral part of the decision-making process of the organization. Being more precise, HRM should work as a strategic partner, actively offering valuable insights which can influence the enterprise's success and direction, rather than just working as a simple administrative area of the company.

Moreover, the spread of integrated policies and a new form of communication allow the firm to be always consistent and coherent with the company's values and culture.

The graph below, could be helpful to summarize the main features of the two approaches, highlighting the differences which mark them out.

	Personnel Management	Human Resource Management
Time and Planning Perspective	Short-term Reactive ad hoc marginal	Long-term Proactive Strategic integrated
Psychological Contract	Compliance	Commitment
Control Systems	External Controls	Self-Control
Employee Relations Perspective	Pluralist collective low trust	Unitarist Individual high trust
Preferred Structure/Systems	Bureaucratic/Mechanistic centralized formal defined roles	Organic devolved flexible roles
Roles	Specialist/ Professional	Largely Integrated into line management
Evaluation Criteria	Cost-minimization	Maximum Utilization

Table 1: Stereotypes of personnel Management and Human resource Management
Guest, D.E. (1987)

Thus, a clear distinction emerges between a hard approach to worker management and a soft approach. The former in fact implies that human resources are acquired and used according to business needs. Little emphasis is placed on their qualities, their skills; instead, only the quantitative side is looked at, which translates into efficiency and productivity for the organization. On the contrary, the soft approach is focused on nurturing and developing all the potential that exists within each person with the final aim of taking care of the behavioural aspects of the human capital (Truss et al., 1997).

Considering that the major differences have been taken into account, a clear definition of the term HRM can be outlined. Over time, multiple scholars have formulated the definition they thought best. Among them, it is urgent to mention Peter Drucker's one: "*Management is about human beings. Its task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant*" (Drucker, 1988). This is what HCM is all about, maximize collective performance while remaining in line with the corporate values, with the purpose of achieving the company's strategic goals, in a context where the commitment and value of the individual can make up for the shortcomings of others, in a congenial and prolific melting pot of people.

In other words, an organization's success is influenced not just by its investors and shareholders but also by other individuals who have a direct stake in its achievement.

1.1.2. HR Functions

Human resource managers deal with a huge variety of challenges and tasks and for this reason it could be challenging to exactly forecast what this department would entail with in any given company.

Indeed, providing the adequate number of qualified employees with the right skills and capabilities, in the proper role, at the correct moment is not enough to fulfil the corporate goals. As a result, the Human resource department has also the responsibility to deal with regulatory constraints, performance evaluation, employees' training and career development, people compensation and benefits. All these fields should be aligned between one another in order to guarantee a consistent coordination between the corporate operations and strategy.

The following sections will briefly review the most important areas of that department, placing emphasis not only on their main responsibilities, but also on the relative importance of their presence within the company.

- **Recruitment and Selection**

Recruitment and Selection are crucial functions within the HR department since they entail with the attraction, identification and hiring of the most qualified and suitable candidates to fill specific job vacancies. In this context, it is fundamental to provide guidance to the talent acquisition specialists involved in the resource acquisition process. Indeed, they should draw on experienced people who can meet the business needs,

representing a right fit within the organization. Being more specific, the recruitment and selection process involves different stages, such as writing a proper job advertisement, fishing potential candidates internally or externally, gathering as much information as possible from them during the selection phase, forecasting their future performances.

Moreover, according to the CIPD, 2022, “*Labour market figures show there is strong competition for talent and that many organisations are facing skills shortages, meaning employers need to pay attention to staff retention as well as recruitment*” (CIPD, 2022, pp. 4). It means that the record of job vacancies could be explained by the fact that people are not attracted by companies which don’t value their individual person, nor in a potential cognitive interview, nor once they are hired by the company. However, to overcome this issue, it is necessary to build a valid employment brand. According to Backhaus and Tikoo “*the employment brand highlights the unique aspects of the firm’s employment offerings or environment [. . .] and is a concept of the firm that differentiates it from its competitors [. . .] by attracting, motivating, and retaining the firm’s current and potential employees*” (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, pp. 502). Being more precise and deepening in the study of “*employer brand equity*”, also called as “*recruitment equity*” in a pre-employment phase, the described functions has also the responsibility to create a distinctive identity as an employer, promoting an appealing image of the company thanks to the usage of tangible and intangible marketing activities which contribute to increase candidates’ awareness of some company’s desirable attributes (Collins & Stevens, 2002).

- **Training and Development**

Employees should be prepared to handle future advancements and higher responsibilities within the organization. For this reason, training and development functions have been built to improve the workforce’s technical capabilities and soft skills with the aim of enhancing the overall job performance and organizational success. Such a logic assumes that everyone has a potential that can be trained and developed, a key talent which distinguishes the individual from the rest of the workers. This means, as previously mentioned in Drucker's definition¹, that each person must do his best, implementing his own capabilities, utilizing them to fill others' weaknesses. Indeed, learning implies a process of personal and professional growth that can trigger a virtuous circle of development of all the human resources, a boomerang effect of improvement and growth,

¹ See definition in paragraph 1.1.1.1. Personnel Management vs Human Resource Management

which affects the results and success of the entire organization. For this reason, it is possible to extol the importance of this area, which at the same time represents a source of motivation for employees who perceive themselves as increasingly responsible for their work, aspiring for an ever-higher future.

Furthermore, training and development can be conceived not only as a mean for enhancement but also as a way to sustain change within the organization (Ribeaux & Poppleton, 1978). It implies that employees should be able to think out of the box, being creative and innovative. This mechanism leads to a “*personal transformation*” (Mezirow, 1977) which involves an increasing people’s autonomy in term of operational activities and decision-making.

- **Performance Appraisal**

Performance management is a shared process which involves managers, employees and teams agreeing on goals and results which should be fulfilled within a specific period of time. In this context, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of the term "shared," which subsumes a necessary participation of the employee in the assessment process in order to ensure an ethical appraisal system, capable of increasing the worker’s motivation (Levy & Williams, 2004). One of the tools used by performance management is performance appraisal which consists of evaluating the quality of employees’ work through a mechanism of periodic feedback. Practically, this process entails the usage of regular assessments with respect to individual or team achievements and development needs. Hence, the final aim is to ensure that the company chooses how to fairly allocate rewards and bonuses and to strategically plan future goals while maintaining an equitable workload. Being more specific, there can be different types of performance evaluation processes. Considering the 360-degree appraisal where the appraisee will be judged by several actors such as colleagues, subordinates, clients, or managers, it will require a large amount of time, but it can generate a deeper analysis of the selected employee. On the other hand, the most typical method used to assess the employees ‘work is the personal development review which consists of one-to-one sessions which are held frequently to discuss and control the work progress. Regardless of the method of evaluation, it is important to examine not only the results, analysing the achievement of the set targets, but also people’s behaviour, thus how workers used their skills and abilities to achieve the desired goal. In this process, however, it is crucial to make sure that feedback is offered in

a constructive and nonjudgmental way, avoiding a focus on negative aspects, but instead placing more emphasis on potential pattern of future growth and development.

- **Compensation and Benefits**

Pay and reward schemes can be helpful not only to attract new potential talents to be hired within the company, but also to retain the current workforce. However, it is important to notice that compensation and benefits should be aligned with the firm's strategic goals, ensuring to everyone a fair pay which can be subjected changes in term of potential career progression. Moreover, the payment system depends not only on the firm's availability of money, but also on the wage competitors are used to pay and on the movement in the national and international market rates.

In addition, it is fundamental to mention that there are different types of payment systems. Among them, the most typical one is based on time rates where people are paid according to the hours they spend at work. However, according to Herzberg, a fair financial reward is not a sufficient factor to increase workers' job satisfaction and motivation. Indeed, salary and good conditions in the workplace can only and exclusively be regarded as hygiene factors, which, once obtained, do not guarantee lasting satisfaction. Indeed, the latter could be achieved making employees more responsible and entrusting them with challenging and innovative tasks (Herzberg, 2015).

On the other side, the incremental pay scale involves giving an extra amount of money to people for each year they work at the same company, thus fostering a greater trust toward the firm. It is also possible to mention the individual payment by result which although it is very expensive, it provides a wage directly proportional to the amount produced by the worker. However, this model should not be confused with the merit rating, which instead does not care for the quantity of work but rewards people accordingly to their individual skill level. Conversely, in order to positively influence teamwork, it would also be possible to apply a group incentives system, which, however, could generate problems of free riding among individuals. There are also more flexible compensation mechanisms which include nonmonetary rewards such as the cafeteria style payments and the total reward. The former involves the fact that the employees have the possibility to periodically choose the benefits they prefer, while the latter offer more freedom to each person in terms of choice of working conditions. This means that the employee can choose to manage his working time independently, trying to equally balance his personal and professional life.

- **Legal Compliance**

The Human Resource department has the responsibility to ensure the compliance with all the employment regulations, labour laws and taxation. Indeed, these norms pertain to the current hiring procedures and workplace practices which are binding in a specific geographical area and in a specific historical moment. Being more precise, they refer to clear provisions in term of legal working hours, potential minimum wage, and fair treatment of the employees. If such regulations established by the state were not adhered to, the company would be subject to significant fines and penalties, impacting not only the company's finances but also its reputation. Consequently, this could affect the company's brand image and overall business results.

- **Equality and Diversity**

Nowadays, the “*firm as a property view*” has been substituted by the “firm as a social entity”. It means that the idea according to which the company should only be focuses on the shareholders’ interests, has been overcome. Indeed, the firm is inserted into a wide environment where it should build a strong network of relationship and dependencies. To do so, it is crucial to be committed to answer to all the stakeholders’ desires. Hence, the corporate social responsibility could be beneficial for the enterprise, fostering a strong brand reputation and legitimizing the company to sustainably operate in the market.

Hence, several scholars tend to state that “*CSR has moved from ideology to reality, and many consider it necessary for organization to define their roles in society and apply social and ethical standards to their businesses*” (Lindgreen & Swaen, 2010, pp. 1).

Indeed, this discipline includes the responsibility to take care about the inclusion of all the employees within the company., regardless their differences in term of age, disability, sex, civil partnership, gender reassignment, religion and belief, race, sexual orientation, and maternity status. These characteristics, protected by the Equality Act 2010², can often generate various types of discrimination. According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission³, direct discrimination involves that an individual receives a less favourable treatment due to a direct correlation with a specific characteristic; even If is irrelevant

² In the United Kingdom, prior anti-discrimination rules have been revised, improved, and harmonised under the Equality Act 2010. It was designed to give individuals a legal foundation to protect themselves against discrimination and advance equal chances in a variety of spheres of life, such as employment, instruction, and the accessibility of products and services.

³ In the United Kingdom, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is a statutory agency that was created by the Equality Act 2006 and given further authority by the Equality Act 2010.

whether the person exhibits this particular trait. On the contrary, when an individual suffers unjust treatments because of a rule that would be detrimental to the group to which he belongs, it is possible to state that indirect discrimination exists. The latter cannot be confused with harassment which involves the violation of people's dignity through offensive acts that humiliate and intimidate.

In this context, it is an HR department's responsibility to guarantee and promote fairness and inclusion within the organization, preventing discriminatory acts from damaging the employee's dignity.

1.2. Recruitment and Selection Process

As already stated in the previous sections, recruitment and selection process is one of the most important areas used in Human Resource Management to attract the most suitable candidates and to develop their capabilities with the final aim of fulfilling personal and professional goals (Selase, 2018). In this context, acquiring qualified staff should be conceived as a process closely linked to the presence of available job vacancies within the company. It means that the latter needs to fill those positions in order to ensure the achievement of a high level of work fluidity, with the right number of people in the best place, at the right moment (Armstrong, 2009). Indeed, building a talented pool of human resources who can work to strategically enhance the company's outcome represent a fundamental need, especially in the latest years, when global competition and market unpredictably dominate uncontested. This idea depends on the fact that people constitute the most crucial asset for an organization since their contributions add a significant value to the firm's competitive advantage.

More precisely, the first step useful for the candidate search involves writing a specific job advertisement, posting it in the most suitable channel where the likelihood of finding qualified and experienced people is higher (Russo et al., 2000). The job advertisement should contain the organisation's name, the job title and the major duties, skills and competencies required, opportunities and challenges, salary, benefits, and sufficient information about how to apply. Sometimes, it is also possible to rely on headwaters or recruitment agencies which are able to produce a short list of different proper candidates to be proposed to their client companies. On the other side, employee referral is useful to save time and costs used to recruit people. Indeed, it can happen that one of the current employees recommends a candidate for a specific job position - in exchange for a cash reward - personally making sure that the new resource will prove to achieve high performance results.

Afterward, employee selection consists of choosing the better candidate among a wide pool of applicants which deserve to be hired (Maloney, 2001). This process involves different potential stages such as the CVs evaluation, a telephone interview, an assessment centre, and a deeper technical interview.

In this regard, an assessment centre is a full day group activity which deals with some simulations where a silent recruiter will be able to assess a huge number of candidates' competences in situations which can be compared to the future work tasks. Regardless its high cost, this method is usually adopted by large multinational to evaluate several candidates for an entry position role.

On the contrary, job interview is built to gather as much information as possible through a detailed conversation with the talent. However, the unstructured interview where the recruiters don't follow any set pattern, should be distinguished from the structured or directive interview. The latter consist of a conversation based on a list of preformulated questions which help less talented interviewers to reduce their overall subjectivity during the dialogue. Moreover, candidates could be asked not only job-related questions but also situational and behavioural ones to respectively evaluate their ability to handle hypothetical future situations and the skills they used in the past to react to happened circumstances.

Furthermore, the simple one to one interview can be substituted by a sequential series of individual meetings⁴, by a panel⁵, or a mass interview⁶. However, nowadays, especially after the covid pandemic, it has become very common to use different types of interview techniques which focus on the importance of technology. These approaches include speed dating⁷, phone, computer based or web-based interviews which often make the process of acquiring information from the applicant faster and more efficient. However, such techniques often contribute to making meetings with candidates less professional and motivating than a classic in-person interview.

Summarizing the overall recruitment and selection process, it is fundamental to list all the different phases, being aware that the entire evaluation path could be subjected to potential changes.

⁴ A sequential interview consists of a sequence of one-to-one interview where several recruiters assess the same candidate, making the hiring decision only at the end.

⁵ A panel interview is also called a board interview. It is characterized by the presence of a group of recruiters who interview the candidate at the same time.

⁶ A mass interview deals with a panel interview where more candidates are asked different question at the same time.

⁷ Speed dating process involves the fact that the applicants receive an e-mail for a specific job position where they are invited to a speed dating area. There they will meet the company's employees and they will be chosen to keep on in the recruitment process.

However, these modifications depend on the degree on the specifics of each individual circumstance, meaning job role, time frame, business requirements and individual candidate's needs.

Despite the preferences of the case, it is therefore possible to idealize a generally valid recruitment model by referring to the diagram shown in the following image.

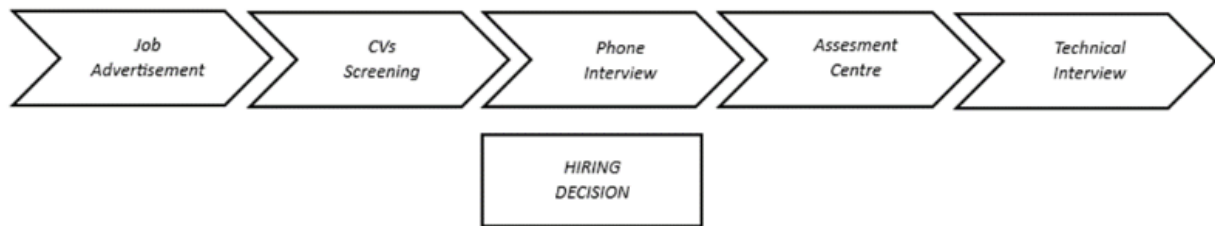


Table 2: Recruitment and Selection Process

1.2.1. Organizational Performance is affected by Recruitment and Selection

As previously mentioned, people are considered the most important asset within an organisation. Indeed, the latter should invest on its human capital, training its capabilities with the final aim of producing a strong and sustainable competitive advantage for the firm. In this regard, Recruitment and Selection functions play a fundamental role in this context, since choosing the best talent could provide an additional value to the work environment. Being more precise, it can be very expensive employing an unsuitable talent or failing to account for changes in the firm's employment needs (Biles et al, 1980). Indeed, this type of failure would result not only in a time and cost waste, but also in a potential misalignment between the candidate's personal goals and the corporate values and needs.

In this regard, it is fundamental to emphasize the importance of the recruiters' effort and responsibility on planning the main phases of the hiring path.

Indeed, the latter should be focused on identifying highly qualified and committed talents whose individual traits and behaviours could be in line with the firm's environment and employment needs.

Being more specific, with the term "performance" it is meant an overall indicator of the amount and caliber of support provided by an individual or a group to the company's production

goals. This definition makes clear the significance of the quality of people's contribution to the organization. In this regard, having and developing the right technical and soft skills represents the key responsibility of a human resource. However, to perform at its best, the latter requires a high level of motivation and curiosity to be involved in the company's processes. To be precise, making the new resource comfortable within the new corporate ecosystem is a recruiters' duty which should be expanded to a responsibility of the entire HR department, and to each employee of the firm. Only in this way, the new candidate will be able to maximize his capabilities, bringing an inimitable competitive advantage to the work landscape in which he is included.

It is therefore confirmed that having a good recruiting process can positively influence overall business performance in terms of effectiveness (whether a company can accomplish its goals), efficiency (whether an organization uses resources properly) and its stakeholders' satisfaction (Gamage, 2014).

1.2.2. Measuring the Effectiveness of Recruitment and Selection Process

With the ultimate goal of generating high business performance, it is necessary for recruitment and selection processes to be conducted in the best suited manner to achieve high business goals. Therefore, it is planned to use specific indices that measure the effectiveness of each recruitment process's stage. Such instruments and measurement variables have been studied in recent literature (Schmidt, 2016; Mattlar, 2004).

As a first step, it must be assessed the validity of the used methods. This task consists in understanding whether the selection approach can extract from the candidates the most crucial information to determine its suitability for the position which should be filled. Thus, it is an index that measures the ability of the assessment process to hit the target, hiring the right person at the right time and for the position most consistent with his abilities. Being specific, the validity of the methods used often ensures a quick picking rate and a minimal degree of candidates' absenteeism during the several recruitment phases.

In addition, it is also important to monitor the level of reliability of the tools used to evaluate the different profiles. Indeed, this index concerns the results' congruence and coherence when the test is held by the same candidate or by talents with similar background and comparable personal characteristics. This means that the validity of the selection approach includes both the potential good candidates' performance it can predict and the consistency with which it does so. More precisely,

measuring reliability yields correlation coefficients close to 1, which means that repeating the test several times on the same individual, the scores will always give identical results even when the analysis is driven by different recruiters.

In addition to the above measurements, it is important to understand whether the selection processes can be generalizable. This implies assessing whether they are applicable in different conditions than those for which they were designed. Hence, is it possible that a specific evaluative technique can also demonstrate its effectiveness in other business contexts and for a different job position? Some researchers suggest that tests related to cognitive skills can be used on many different occasions, for a wide variety of work occupations. However, their validity tends to be directly proportional to the complexity of the work performed.

Moreover, the assessment of selection techniques' effectiveness does not end there. Indeed, considering that the recruitment function daily consumes financial resources to carry out its tasks and responsibilities, it is a strict requirement of the company to make sure that the costs borne by this business area are lower than the benefits achieved. Therefore, it is a matter of obtaining a high level of utility and a balance between the resources consumed and those produced, in terms of company's ability to onboard top talents.

At the same time, the common benefit of legal compliance of hiring processes is intended to be achieved. In fact, it is crucial for the company to comply with regulations in terms of protection of candidates' personal data, and private information, under penalty of potential sanctions and/or the occurrence of reputational scandals for the organization. On the other hand, it is fundamental for the candidate to be included in a non-discriminatory hiring process, despite possible differences in identity cues manifested in the evaluation path.

1.2.3. Potential Human Biases in Recruitment and Selection

Unconscious bias can be defined as a “*systematic deviation from rational consistency, whereby judgment is influenced by factors irrelevant to the ostensible goal*” (Reynolds et al., 2020). It means that sometimes human brain is driven by some mental shortcuts which guide human action and people's decision-making processes. Those expedited methods can be helpful to simplify and speed up the individual cognitive information processing, producing the formation of biases and prejudices (Jost et al., 2015). The latter are capable of significantly affecting human behaviour, leading to the spread and development of discriminatory practices (Bano & Nadem, 2018). Usually, people are not

aware of their biases since they act tacitly influencing human attitudes and evaluations. In other words, unconscious biases entail with an involuntary manifestation which is difficult to audit and regulate. Indeed, any intentional control over such mental heuristics is not possible since they tend to solve difficult problems through imperfect “*rules of thumb*”.

Given the fact that Recruitment and selection process implies a human decision-making mechanism, it can also be affected by some specific implicit biases.

Stereotyping is only one of the multiple practices which should be avoided during and interview process. Indeed, it consists of defining a person based on the group to which he belongs, presuming that he shares with all the members the same features which establish their common identity. Being more specific, stereotypes are generalizations that represent an individual's expectations and beliefs about someone else (Barlett, 2009). Indeed, in this context, the human mind creates several clusters differentiated on the basis of personal characteristics such as gender, age, race or physical attributes, where individuals are aggregated and associated with all the negative aspects related to the specific group. As easily understandable, this type of bias could lead to a racial form of discrimination which obscure a clear and honest candidate's judgment (Dasgupta et al., 2000). Therefore, this behaviour produces different consequences in term of applicants' attitudes. It means that the stereotype threat phenomenon acts on interviewee's individual performances, whose quality results diminished due to the sense of inferiority and the feeling of anxiety developed in response to the recruiter's biases (Schmader, 2010). Indeed, people are concerned to confirm the stereotypes, meaning an impaired ability to perform at their best. This mechanism could also represent the main cause for individuals' unwillingness to challenge themselves, avoiding embracing new opportunities that could put them in trouble (Steele, 1997).

On the other side, confirmation bias could allow the development to of snap judgments based on the extreme importance of the first impression. In other words, usually happens that before the interview ever started, the recruiters' opinions are already determined. Being more precise, after developing a first assessment according to specific preconceptions, the individual passing judgment has a tendency to ignore any evidence that contradicts the stereotype. Indeed, it is easier to filter and interpret data in a way that is compatible with the preformed bias (Jonas et al., 2001). It means that the first impression can be conceived as an anchor for the final opinion. However, confirmation bias could be strictly linked with the halo and horns effects. The former involves the fact that initial positive impressions favourably affect the interpretation of the following behaviours, while the latter

implies that negative conceptions which are developed at the beginning tends to unfavourably influence the perception of the future circumstances.

Moreover, the contrast effect depends on the pressure to hire. Hence, recruiters' decisions are affected by the order used to assess all the candidates. For instance, compared to an unattractive applicant evaluated earlier, assessors give a higher score to the next ordinary respondent than they would have done otherwise or vice versa in case of an attractive first candidate. This phenomenon is due to the fact that hiring managers unconsciously compare interviewees' performances rather than assessing each of them accordingly only to their individual capabilities.

In addition to all the previously mentioned shortcuts, it is important to emphasize the attention on the in-group bias which "*relates to the implicit tendency to feel a stronger degree of affinity with, and trust of, others who we categorise as similar to ourselves*" (Caven & Nachmias, 2018). As a result, interviews prove to prefer candidates who share their same habits, values, purpose, and lifestyle (Riviera, 2012). Obviously, this mechanism will hurt the degree of diversity present within the organization. It means that it will be favoured the spread of homogeneous ideas and behaviours among the human resources present in the company, preventing in this way the development of the advantages coming from a diverse workforce, even if the conflict rate will be reduced (Gholipour, 2008).

In conclusion, it seems evident that the presence of all those unconscious human biases contribute to significantly erode the perceived fairness of candidates during the selection and recruiting process. On the other side, they promote the occurrence of unpleasant situations and discriminatory actions against specific minorities and certain individuals striving to embark on a new career opportunity. In this regard, it is interesting to explore how such heuristics can be mitigated and ultimately eliminated in order to ensure a fair evaluation process based solely on candidates' meritocracy. For this reason, organizations should be pushed to promote a more objective evaluation process, thereby fostering a work environment which value diversity, inclusivity, and equal opportunity.

1.3. The importance of Corporate Social Responsibility

There are various theories that explain in different ways the primary objectives of a company and how it should be conceived by the actors inside and outside it.

According to the ownership theory, an enterprise is considered as an exclusive possession of its shareholders, and for this reason its primary objective is related to the resolution and satisfaction of their financial interests. Indeed, the ultimate and primary purpose of the organization lies in the wealth creation. This conception is reinforced by the decision of the Michigan Supreme Court, which in 1919 addressed Henry Ford, stating that despite controlling the company's board of directors, he could not suspend the payment of dividends in order to reinvest the money in the purpose of reducing the goods' cost of production and increasing the workers' wages. In fact, a business corporation must necessarily and primarily create profit for its shareholders, thus, all actions must be carried out with this purpose in mind since the shareholders own the company and everything it produces.

Over time, more specifically towards the end of the nineteenth century, an alternative theory took hold based on the "firm as a social entity" view. The latter implies the idea that the company is immersed in a dynamic and multifaceted external context in which there are a multiplicity of actors interacting with it. These actors, also called stakeholders have different interests and they are indispensable within the social network in which the company is embedded. Moreover, the increasing prevalence of dispersed stock ownership and the importance assumed by the securities markets induced common opinion to dethrone shareholders to mere investors. Therefore, this context drives the idea that the company must necessarily engage in the achievement of a social purpose that ensures the creation of added value for the entire social environment. Thus, the promotion of general welfare will no longer be conceived as mere by-products of profit creation.

Therefore, in this scenario, it is possible to affirm the extreme importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR), a current issue in the global corporate environment. Indeed, it is crucial that companies make "*a commitment to improve societal well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources.*" (Du et al., 2010). This effort is justified not only by the willingness of companies to participate in and facilitate social change but also by the interest of organizations to benefit from the effects that CSR generates. First and foremost, it fosters the firm's reputation and consumer loyalty since the main stakeholders tend to reward fair corporate citizens, repudiating those less respectful of the environment and people's rights. This phenomenon thus results not only in a higher degree of sales, but also in an improved brand attractiveness that prompts the creation of positive attitudes toward business activities (Sen et al., 2006). So, when purposely communicated and publicized, CSR initiatives result in an easier legitimization of the brand, which receives from stakeholders a license to operate in the market.

Included within CSR efforts, it is possible to mention not only a focus on society aimed at reducing the negative externalities that the company imposes on the surrounding environment, but also a commitment to maximizing the diversity of the company's internal stakeholders by including them fully in the organization's ecosystem.

1.3.1 Equal opportunities Approach

The goal of making recruiting and selection processes more equitable would ensure the formation of a more inclusive and diverse work environment in terms of people, cultures, traditions, and viewpoints. This phenomenon can be translated into an additional benefit for the company, which will be able not only to attract new talents but also to reflect the multiple tastes of the end-consumer audience, whose needs will be well perceived by the variety of internal workers.

Initially, the discourse of equity was based on the Equal opportunities Approach which is rooted on the principle of sameness. It means that its goal can be described “*in terms of social justice and of redressing past wrongs: to correct an imbalance, an injustice, a mistake*” (Thomas, 1990). With the hope that equal opportunities could provide a fairer work environment, many companies promoted targeted positive actions to help specific ethnic underrepresented groups. Indeed, the latter, were protected by the law since they have some characteristics which can be easily subjected to discrimination. However, it was strongly criticized the limited number of groups protected by the legislation. Indeed, the protection against the unfair work treatment was usually extended only to differences in term of age and sexualities without including invisible ones such as homosexuality, race, religion, and disability (Wilson & Lies, 1999). Furthermore, providing a level playing field involved the spread of several formalized procedures which dictated the right way of behaving within the corporate context. It means that the firms tended to formulate fair criteria to prevent discrimination not only within the organization but in the hiring and dismissing activities. Obviously, the HR managers were responsible for the maintenance, and application of those rules.

However, the equal opportunities approach showed to have significant shortcomings which pushed it to be considered too simplistic while treating the effects rather than the reasons of discrimination. This opinion was exacerbated by the impossibility to formalize all the activities which should be taken within an organization. Indeed, there is a constant rate of changing which prevent a strict standardization of rules to be effective.

1.3.2. The Management of Diversity Approach

Over the years, different demographic conditions, globalization, and the constant need of new skilled human resources determined the sunset of the equal opportunities approach which will be substituted by the Management of Diversity Approach. The latter was built on the principle of difference meaning that it is focused on single individuals which possess unique and unmistakable characteristics that set them apart. Indeed, valuing those differences can sustain the business competitiveness within the overall market, increasing the firm's performances.

From this perspective, it is necessary to recognize the importance of each single employee with its needs and desires, strengths and weaknesses that should be trained and supported to meet the company's goals. Hence, differences should be cultivated since they represent the driving force of the organization. Keeping this in mind, it is fundamental to work on the organizational culture which should promote values of inclusiveness and kindness. Indeed, the spread of the latter should be a responsibility of each employee, it is not only an exclusive HR managers' duty (Kandola & Fullerton, 1994). Therefore, in this context, legislation will not be productive since positive actions - typical of the previously mentioned approach - should be substituted by giving employees the space to express and develop their potential (Ross & Schneider, 1992). It means that the need for change arises from the internal forces of the organization as a response to the corporate requirements.

Therefore, this approach will improve the company-client relationships and market share since the more diverse human capital mirrors the varied customer base. At the same time, a company that enables this method will be able to exploit its better perceived image, meaning a higher level of employees' attraction and retention. Moreover, the mixture of different HR skills will provide problem solving capabilities and a higher degree of flexibility to make the firm able of adapting to the currently changing world. However, by valuing differences it could be possible to accentuate individual stereotypes.

As a result, considering the strengths and weaknesses of both models described, the Equal Opportunities and the Management of Diversity Approaches must coexist, mutually compensating (McDougall, 1996).

CHAPTER 2: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in the present day

2.1 The concept of Artificial Intelligence and its applications

The last half century has been characterized by a digital revolution which has featured the advent of new technologies that have significantly contributed to change the daily lives of people and businesses. The latter in fact can more easily access a vastness of contents, information, and knowledge never before available nor investigated. The vast amount of data is now in the public domain, and it has expanded to include not only numbers and words, but also different forms of media such as photos, video and audio from which information can be extracted and forms of knowledge generated. This paradigm of change, like all revolutions, causes strong repercussions in various areas, resulting in new opportunities and breakthroughs in fields such as Artificial intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Internet of Things (IoT).

In this context, AI stands for computer programs created to emulate human cognitive processes and actions, processing large volumes of data, and identifying among them specific patterns which allow these machines to make judgments and gain experience. The term was created in 1956 by John McCarthy who intended to study the opportunities coming from the developing of intelligent machines (Jain, 2018). In other words, “*artificial intelligence is the study and developments of intelligent machines and software that can reason, learn, gather knowledge, communicate, manipulate and perceive the objects*” (Pannu, 2015). Hence, it is a science of making computer smarter, allowing them to learn from their mistakes (Campbell et al., 2020). It means that AI could substitute human understanding in performing several activities with the final aim of increasing the rate of success (Oosthuizen et al., 2021). Indeed, it is applied within a huge number of fields.

Natural language processing (NLP) is just one of the several example where AI show its effectiveness. Indeed, it involves conversational AI like chatbots and virtual assistants which usually support customer during their purchase process. NLP also includes tools for language translation or sentiment analysis used to extract and comprehend feelings from paragraphs. Moreover, visual recognition concerning image, facial or video analysis consists of identifying objects or human faces and interpreting their movements and expressions. On the other side, speech recognition synthesis could be helpful to activate voice control or to manage dictation systems. Moreover, the areas affected and transformed by AI are not limited to the presence of simple predictive analysis algorithms useful for studying consumer behaviours and predicting their future actions, but it also extends to gaming, recommendation systems, simulations, and AI-driven training scenarios useful for prepare

professionals in their work. In addition, robotics also plays a key role as it proves necessary to program repetitive tasks that can be easily automated.

Although there are endless definitions of the locution “AI” as it is unclear whether these new discipline aims to mimic human intelligence or to create a new one without the slightest consideration of people's cognitive processes, it is crucial to note how this tool is currently revolutionizing the cognitive landscape of individuals and legal entities, becoming a source of cost and differentiation advantages for the latter.

2.1.1. AI Categories: ANI, AGI, ASI

As can be easily guessed, there are different types of Artificial Intelligence: Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI), Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), and Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI). They are distinguished based on the quality of virtual intelligence measured against the capabilities of the human mind. In fact, humans have limited resources, since they can process and analyse only a small amount of information at a time, and they are only able to remember in detail specific items in the short term.

To minimize this problem by expanding the boundaries of their capabilities, individuals tend to use alternative external tools that widen their cognitive boundary (Wilson, 2002).

In this context, ANI can be defined as a weak form of intelligence, capable of performing and automating a specific task, without going beyond it. These ANI's mechanisms operate without self-awareness, rather they act on the basis of predefined parameters. Current examples of this type of intelligence include tools such as Google translate, Voice assistants or other natural language processing instruments. Such devices, surely, offer the possibility of speeding up many human processes, increasing their productivity and efficiency by preventing people from performing mechanical, repetitive gestures that result in high time consumption and waste of resources.

The development of the above systems led over time, to the creation of AGI, defined as an "*ability of an intelligent agent to understand or learn any intellectual task that a human being can*" (Kuusi & Heinonen, 2022, pp. 66). This therefore means that the artificial general intelligence has superior capabilities compared to the previously described form of AI. Indeed, thanks to its cognitive computing capabilities, it is able to perform work and achieve results indistinguishable from what the human mind could have created (Strelkova, 2017). Moreover, these tools are characterized by self-

learning capabilities that enable the devices to perform gestures or carry out projects for which they have not been specifically trained. So, AGI can be distinguished from ANI since the former has creative capabilities in multiple domains, sensory perception, and the ability to thoroughly understand the complex meaning of human words, which are often tied to unique and specific contextual situations. An example of AGI can be cited by recalling self-driving cars.

Being more precise, current developments in computer science led people to expect further improvement in artificial intelligence which could be a protagonist in the near future. It is therefore necessary to explain what is meant by Super AI, also called ASI. This term refers to all those tools capable of exceeding human limits, performing significantly better than simple human cognitive abilities. Indeed, through such devices it would be possible to accurately interpret and understand the emotions and desires that often move the human spirit and its actions. As many famous entrepreneurs such as Mark Zuckerberg or Elon Musk suggest, given its immense capabilities, ASI, if not well managed, could pose a threat to humanity. For this reason, regulations, and limits on it must necessarily be proactive rather than reactive, so as to minimize all the potential risks it would bring about (Narain et al., 2019). In other words, this is a landscape that is currently in flux, but it is important to make sure that the benefits it will produce outweigh the possible risks.

However, despite undoubted common concerns, it is important to state that technological progress should drive human progress, without replacing it.

2.1.2. AI-enabled tools' outcomes

The corporate usage of AI-enabled tools result in the development of multiple effects which have an impact not only on the company itself but on the whole stakeholders' group, including the company's employees and the final customers. As will be specified below, high-tech systems can provide a higher efficiency rate in the work processes, allowing individuals to save time and resources. This benefit can be translated into greater employee satisfaction, since workers become freer from the more purely mechanical and repetitive tasks of their jobs (Maedche et al., 2019).

At the same time, however, the sudden and poorly planned insertion of technology-based devices could cause the spread of strong feelings of job insecurity, especially if the workforce is not flexible and open to job changes (Castellacci & Viñas-Bardolet, 2019). Hence, this effect is produced by the increasing stress feelings caused by an aversive approach to technology, typical of the older generations. On the other hand, however, it should be noted that the adoption of AI tools usually

allows a growing rate of business productivity. Indeed, it is a matter of developing a gradual cost reduction capable of producing a higher operational efficiency. The latter can be achieved thanks to the scalability and flexibility that AI tools allow to spread in the work environment (Prentice & Nguyen, 2020), driving the company toward an increasingly higher return on investment (Torres & Mejia, 2017).

Moreover, the benefits do not end there. Indeed, technological innovation in every sphere, produces an increasing attention to the end consumer who is attracted by the improved customer experience. The latter is linked to a higher quality of the service offered by the firm (Wirtz, 2019), which tries to adapt its services to meet the personal needs of the customer, previously studied thanks to facial and voice recognition systems tools.

On the contrary, it is urgent to be able to also recognize the drawbacks that technology produces. Being more specific, AI often lacks creative spirit, individual initiative and emotional intelligence, usually needed to complete complex tasks. In this circumstance, therefore, it appears clear the urgency of human activity to which AI can only play a supplementary role of simple assistance. Hence, it is obvious how technological systems can often be a source of competitive advantage only in the short and medium term (Wirtz, 2019). Therefore, this clarification is based on the idea that the process of developing AI-enabled tools must necessarily progress in order to solve any remaining deficits.

2.2. AI in Human Resource Management

Even though research related to the usage of AI in HRM has been expanding rapidly in the last few years, this field is still in its early stages (Pan & Froese, 2023). However, the emergence of specific technologies and the refinement of studies in this area hint at a future expansion of the importance of this combination: artificial intelligence and human resource management.

Therefore, adopting specific tools will bring about a radical transformation in the way many workers in domestic and international enterprises work. Indeed, the numerous sub functional HR domains will all undergo remarkable changes that will result in varied effects not only for employees, but for the organizations themselves.

The present literature argues that AI tools can support employee **development and training** more effectively. In detail, thanks to technological systems, it is possible to collect all the workers'

CVs, identifying through their careful and accurate screening, potential gaps, or skill shortages that the company needs to fill in the short time. In this way, the organization will be able to expand its level of awareness about the experience, soft skills, and technical capabilities of its workforce. By doing so, the company will be able to provide in real time special training programs and support courses to the employees who need it. Furthermore, it will also be possible to assign the right tasks to the right people, so that their skills can more easily match the requirements for the task at hand. In addition, within the same context, it is crucial to implement the usage of Virtual Reality tools capable of simulating immersive experiences for the worker who will be able to learn in a more interactive and stimulating way (Sitzmann & Weinhardt, 2019).

Keeping on analysing the HRM revolution, it is also useful to dwell on the area of **Compensation and Benefits**, which is currently seeing deep automation of payroll systems. Indeed, the latter HR domain is undergoing a major digital transformation that involves the ability to assist managers in formulating pay and compensation that are appropriate for everyone, depending on the work they do (Mehrabad & Brojeny, 2007). In addition, the ability to obtain information regarding workers' skills, competencies and details concerning their family situation allows the company to exploit the consequent opportunity to tailor the offered benefits to the needs and qualities of the individuals (Bussler & Davis, 2002; Pessach et al., 2020). Obviously, it is necessary that AI ensures precision and effectiveness when managing intricate payroll computations and regulatory obligations. On the other side, predictive analytics can be helpful to periodically estimate the labour expenses of the company, comparing it with the overall market data, with the intention to offer a competitive salary.

Furthermore, focusing on **Performance evaluation management**, proper digital tools can show their ability to strengthen employers and employees' awareness of the workforce's weaknesses, recommending proper actions to improve each type of vulnerability (Manoharan et al., 2011). Moreover, based on the performance metrics evaluated and, on the data collected, AI might offer workers real time feedback and instructions to enhance their capabilities, tracking their progress over time.

The latter could be rewarded by the AI powered talent management systems. Indeed, they can suggest a proper job marching, guarantying a strong **career development**, also favoured by internal mobility programs. In this context, AI makes it possible for workers to pursue new career paths, discovering new suitable and challenging roles which allow people to grow, increasing their level of responsibilities.

It is also necessary to mention how the area of **recruitment and selection** has also evolved digitally in recent years. Although this topic will be discussed in more depth in the following paragraphs, it is important to point out that technology can provide support for decision making process. It means that AI- enabled tools can process a huger amount of candidates' data than humans do (Torres & Mejia, 2017), selecting the talent who represents the best match for the company. Obviously, following in the selection process, AI algorithms can be also used to maximize the effectiveness of the asynchronous job interviews which allow to capture specific details, invisible to the naked eye. However, we will delve into the benefits and drawbacks of this approach in the following sections, focusing on the perception of job seekers and their ability to feel valued and included in the organizational system for which they apply.

All these changes, although very recent, have produced their effects on workers, fostering the development of high employee engagement and satisfaction. The latter are currently easier to measure thanks to sentiment analysis tools that capture individuals' concrete opinions and degree of motivation. In this view, higher job contentment results in an increasing degree of employee' retention that follows a lower turnover rate.

2.2.1. Digitalization era of Recruitment

After having briefly defined the general areas of application of AI, discussing its significant impact in the digital age, it is necessary to insist on the area of interest of this research. Hence, in the recent years, recruitment and selection process have undergone a radical transformation since companies have realized that the right people represent the most strategic asset for the company. In fact, a McKinsey study proves that skilled talent produces a significantly more positive impact on business performance than average workers (Keller & Meaney, 2017). Therefore, hiring the most suitable candidate become an imperative. In this context, AI technology is conceived as the key tool used to substitute the traditional recruitment methods. Obviously, the path was not so instantaneous; indeed, there were several stages in the process of digitizing that HR area.

- **Analog Recruiting**

Traditionally, organizations' recruitment process was characterized by analog and physical processes, considering both: employers, and employees' side. It means that once candidates bought newspapers to search for new job opportunities, they should physically go to the company, filling manually the job application. However, this method tended to

exclude multiple potential workers, not allowing companies to reach as much talent as possible. It was also very costly for organizations to maximize the detail of the information contained in the job advertisement. Indeed, the latter would have been useful in capturing the attention and interest of many candidates. It was therefore necessary for the company to aspire to find a trade-off between the breadth of the analog reach and the message richness. Indeed, the graph below shows the maximum trade-off frontier that companies could aspire to reach. Hence, to maximize the degree of richness and detail of the job advertisement, it was possible to rely on employees 'referrals capable of describing to friends and relatives the soundness of the company and suggesting all the potential open job positions. On the other hand, referrals did not guarantee the opportunity to reach the masses that relied instead on national print ads.

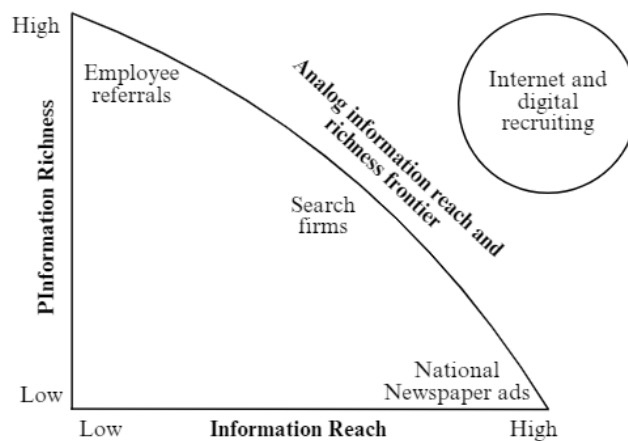


Table 3: Analog information reach and richness frontier
Black & Van Esch, 2020

- **Digital Recruiting 1.0**

The advent of the Internet has enabled companies to break the frontier mentioned above, reaching previously unexplored areas of the labour market. In 1994, a digital platform called Monster.com was created, it was capable of advertising endless job postings, making them reachable to a vast number of candidates. Such a job board made it unnecessary for firms to waste time and money on printing job ads and disseminating them. It was also easier, less time-consuming, and less expensive for workers to go through the process of finding the position that best stood out and suited their skills. Indeed, they had access to a higher number of opportunities which were explained in

detail, offering a deeper view of the labour market. On the other side, considering low-experience roles, this new era favoured the access to job offers from candidates from multiple universities, as it was no longer as difficult to build relationships between companies and campuses. Therefore, the success of Digital Recruiting 1.0 led to the proliferation of numerous job platforms that helped to accelerate the process of transforming recruiting practices.

- **Digital Recruiting 2.0**

A decade later, it arose the need to aggregate all the job offers dispersed across the various online platforms in a single space (Black & Van Esch, 2020). Therefore, digital recruiting 2.0 was born with the final aim of curbing all the possible inefficiencies of the previous system. From this perspective, together with Facebook, the first social networks entirely dedicated to the creation of highly professional networks emerged. Indeed, the still currently used LinkedIn was officially built in 2002; it contributed to guaranteeing companies a unique space to show their offers, collect and evaluate potential applications, creating a close grid of relationships capable of creating real communities of interest.

- **Digital Recruiting 3.0**

In 2015, the introduction of AI makes possible the transition to the Digital Recruiting 3.0 which represents Recruiting and Selection as we currently perceive it (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2018). Since it was easier and less expensive to apply for multiple positions, it seemed convenient for many talented people to try to get hired for positions for which they were not even remotely qualified. In fact, the exponential increase in applications did not always coincide with a qualitative implementation of the recruiting process. This circumstance disadvantages companies that require further internal efforts or external contributions to skim the vast pool of candidates reached. Furthermore, it is important to consider that *“when people were just cogs in the wheel, selecting the best cogs made a marginal difference, but once people became the engines, effective recruiting became mission critical”* (Black & Van Esch, 2020). It means that it was necessary and urgent to intervene with a tool that could solve the problems caused by the previous eras. Therefore, the AI-enabled recruiting proved to be an indispensable mechanism for maximizing the effectiveness and quality of the recruitment and selection process.

2.2.2. AI in Recruitment and Selection process

AI technologies can be applied at different stages of the recruitment process in order to reduce manual burden and to streamline and enhance the entire experience, from both the candidate and employer perspectives.

The **recruitment promotion stage** which is the first step in the process of finding the ideal candidates, can be implemented in several ways. First, AI can collect data from many online platforms, trying to independently identify the most suitable talents (Cambell et al., 2020). In doing so, it can propose to them specific opportunities in a way that would be attractive in their eyes. This means that appropriate forms and channels of advertisement need to be used for each talent, meaning a careful usage of banners, popups or emails depending on the candidate's habits and preferences. In addition, it is critically important to adapt the language of the message to the type of audience to which it refers. In this sense, it is possible to proceed by a mechanism of trial and error, analysing the impact of textual changes on the number of candidates reached. Thus, it is a matter of implementing a target recruiting defined on the basis of the needs of individuals. In addition, it is shown how AI is capable of intensifying competition among talent seeking a specific job position. Such technology in fact proposes a more diverse pool of candidates, managing to also target all those passive job candidates, which in this way contributes to increasing the competition within the labour market (Black & Van Esch, 2021). The same argument applies to any candidates who have applied to positions that have now closed but they may be suitable for current opportunities. In that case, AI tools can help consider such individuals even without their direct application, avoiding wasted time and money for the company.

The **screening phase** is guided by the intention to identify the most suitable candidates who are better aligned with the job vacancy. Hence, in the wide pool of talents reached by the job advertisement, it is necessary to select only the ones who meets the requirements, filtering their resumes and analysing their past professional and academy experiences. Thus, it is possible to simplify this process using a Resume Scorer or an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to evaluate people's soft capabilities and technical skills in a smoother way, understanding if they could represent an optimal fit with the organization's values. (Leong, 2018; Dickson et al., 2010). It means that AI-enabled devices look for specific keywords and correlated synonymous which even if not directly mentioned, could be able to forecast the employee's future performances.

As it is easily assumable, the advent of these technological tools determines not only a higher degree of efficiency in terms of hiring time, but also an advantage in strategic terms as the most

technologically advanced companies emerge victorious in the battle of finding the best talent, especially in industries where turnover rate is higher.

On the other side, the **assessing moment** could be enhanced thanks to the introduction of gamification tests or video recorded interviews. With the common aim of narrowing the number of candidates screened, the former consists of proposing gamified situations to the pre-selected talents to evaluate their strategic movements in achieving the desired goals. Doing so, the applicants could be helpful to elicit specific behavioural patterns, proving to be a simple way to analyse the individual in realistic contexts comparable to work circumstances. Moreover, gamification represents an opportunity to improve candidates' perceptions about the assessment experience, resulting in a significant advantage in term of brand image. On the other hand, video recorded interviews are based on talent's registered responses which are carefully studied by a machine which identify people's features able to drive success. Indeed, these tools typically compare applicants' words to high-performance employees within the organization. This type of analysis is implemented not only through the study of the content of the message but also through the review of the tone of voice, microfacial expressions and language choices. However, usually candidates perceive this assessment procedure as more comfortable since they believe to have a higher degree of control over the recruitment process. Indeed, they can autonomously choose the most convenient time and location where to record their video, without considering any type of restrictions in term of dress code or schedule.

As previously mentioned, it is necessary leverage on the intention of providing to candidates an experience which as much positive as possible, since even if rejected, applicants could contribute to the spread of a positive word-of mouth about the firm.

In any case, in order to ensure a fast and effective recruitment process at every stage, AI chatbots can be included to respond to any candidate's concerns at any time.

2.2.3 Issues and Benefits of using AI in Recruitment

Incorporating AI tools into the recruitment and selection process should represent an opportunity not only for companies but also for candidates. As explained in the previous paragraphs, AI helps to respectively reduce time and costs involved in the search for the right talent and the identification of ideal job opportunities. In addition, regarding the applicant side, sophisticated mechanisms manage to provide suggestions, support, and feedback before and after the selection process. Indeed, it is

possible to automate the process of filling the application forms present in many of the corporate websites which also make available sections dedicated to talent support through the presence of virtual assistants. In this way, the company tends to treat the potential future worker with the same attention and care that should be given to a customer (Chen, 2023). Thus, this mechanism results in a better perception of the organization, making candidates more favourable to accept the final job offer (Jarrahi, 2018).

However, even though these factors lead people to think that AI can only and exclusively represent an opportunity for people and businesses, actually several ethical concerns often arise.

First, recruiters may often perceive AI as a threat to their jobs in term of a potential future **job replacement** of technology for human work.

Furthermore, it often happens that AI tools break the limits dictated by regulations on individual **privacy**. These devices, in fact, obtain private data from multiple applicants' platforms and social networks, violating their fundamental rights. Looking deeper into the problem, it is also possible to note that job seekers are enormously disadvantaged compared to companies since if the former do not accept the privacy conditions decided by the system, they will not be able to continue in the selection process in any way. There is therefore a power imbalance that weighs on the candidates' shoulders (Sánchez-Monedero et al., 2020).

On the other hand, there are also issues of **accuracy and validity**. Indeed, although technological mechanisms contribute to strengthen consistency in candidate evaluation - considering that all talents are evaluated on the basis of the same schemes - it emerges that these AI enabled devices have not been scientifically evaluated with accuracy (Raghavan et al., 2020). This problem affects the final hiring decision, which is often made based on unexplained factors that influence the candidate's future job performance.

Furthermore, the speed achieved in making such strategic decisions sometimes lacks **transparency**. This means that machines are unlikely to provide reasons for their selection criteria. Indeed, it would be very useful for candidates to receive insights related to their interviews or assessments in order to improve their skills in future hiring processes. However, often candidates do not even know that they are exchanging their private information with automated systems which evaluate their skills, nor they will be able to receive concrete explanations regarding the reason for their rejection (Sánchez-Monedero et al., 2020). Being more specific, often not even the AI tools programmers know in detail the mechanisms underlying each decision. In this context, a problem of

accountability also emerges. This depends on the fact that it is still uncertain to understand who must necessarily take responsibility for the choices made by AI tools: the companies that use these tools, the programmers, or the AI vendors? The responsibility is certainly collective, indeed multiple human agents contribute to the creation, usage, and implementation of these digital instruments (Lin et al., 2020). Human autonomy, therefore, must not be obscured or violated by technology.

Finally, it is necessary to deal with all the problems relating to algorithmic biases and the resulting **fairness** perception of candidates. Commonly it can be said that human biases can be easily perpetrated in AI enabled tools. Indeed, the latter are trained on specific data collected in the past, based on the hiring decisions of human agents. If these ancient choices contain errors or specific tendencies to prefer some candidates over others, such flaws will be passed on and amplified in AI-machines as well. However, there are mutually contradictory literatures on perceived recruiting fairness while using such digital tools. Indeed, some research show that AI is flawed, lacking human intuition, gentle approach, and relying exclusively on objective analysis of quantifiable data (Lee, 2018). Thus, algorithms seem to dehumanize the relationship between individuals, even if this perception is not confirmed by all those job seekers who have a computer science background (Langer et al., 2018). However, in any case, the use of technological systems may affect the candidates' perception of uniqueness since they may feel devalued and underestimated. Thus, a question regarding the problem of moral agency arises, that is, whether AI can show moral or ethical considerations.

Therefore, these are still open questions that nevertheless make one simple answer clear. Certainly, AI will not replace human intelligence in decision making processes. However, it will take care of making these procedures smoother and simpler, ensuring the automation of repetitive procedural tasks, only providing support to corporate human recruiters.

2.3 Approaches to Mitigate AI Ethical Risks

The emergence of AI technology raises several challenges in term of laws and regulations since governments should minimize the ethical concerns which commonly spread as a direct consequence of the AI novelty. Indeed, as previously mentioned, those innovative tools rely on technological algorithms which usually present some risks.

Governmental regulation could be helpful in this context to limit the likelihood of the risks' realizations, preventing the spread of their effects. It means that there should be proper figures capable of tracking the companies' compliance with the fundamental human rights legislation or regulations pertaining to employment (Fernández-Martínez and Fernández, 2020). However, nowadays existing regulations do not fully cover the subject matter, leaving room for possible unethical actions, breaking workers' rights. For this reason, mitigating AI ethical risks cannot be a unique governmental responsibility since companies must necessarily make up for legislative shortcomings (Bogen, 2019). In this regard, the firms should guarantee to the job seekers and to the hired employees the protection of their private information shared during the job interview.

Moreover, companies must commit to openly and transparently disclose the dynamics of the entire recruiting and selection process so that the candidate can autonomously and consciously consent to it. Therefore, it is a transparent approach that allows the enterprise to create a relationship of mutual trust with the candidates who will always know with whom they are dealing, whether human or artificial intelligence (Simbeck, 2019). In the latter case, moreover, the mechanisms underlying the decision-making processes will be made public. However, some researchers suggest developing only hybrid approaches where human recruiters cannot be substituted by AI, but only assisted by technology. It means that if the entire candidates' evaluation process is held by algorithms, it should be supervised by human beings, assessing the approach's compliance with the public regulations and firms' code of ethics.

Furthermore, it should be convenient to build an AI ethics board within each company, including members of pertinent parties who discuss the moral implications and the real consequences of AI algorithms' usage in the recruitment process. Hence, academics have urged corporations to form diverse teams of data scientists in order to promote inclusion and equity in developing AI-enabled tools.

In addition to legislative and organizational solutions, it is also crucial to consider using due diligence techniques that involve greater data literacy of software programmers based on their broader knowledge of hiring processes. At the same time, it is required an ongoing effort to train recruiters in the proper usage of such innovative technological tools. Therefore, it would be necessary to implement professional testing that assesses the reliability of such devices, especially if they are not made in-house but rather purchased from third-party companies (Oswald et al., 2020). This approach also includes the opportunity to use specific open-source tools capable of testing whether the algorithms turn out to mitigate many of the common biases in hiring processes. (Mujtaba &

Mahapatra, 2019). Thus, the goal involves enhancing the robustness of AI-enabled tools by trying to make clear and public the mechanisms which determine the final choice in selecting one candidate over another.

Hence, it is crucial not to rely on black-box systems, but rather to implement tools whose decisions are interpretable and transparent (Lin et al., 2020). In this regard, ethical risks could be prevented working on employees' awareness of the AI potential shortcomings which can be covered by a conscious usage and a responsible development of those devices.

CHAPTER 3: An Empirical Study about an Organization and its Selection Process

3.1. Introduction

Nowadays, the inclusion of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the hiring practices represents a crucial phenomenon that is gaining momentum in most organizations seeking to streamline their decision-making processes (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023). Indeed, artificial intelligence mechanisms were created to emulate human cognitive processes and behaviors (Strelkova, 2017). For this reason, AI is often able to help and replace humans in several decision-making processes; in particular, such tools can be applied to perform tasks typically related to the activities of a company's human resources department.

Focusing on Recruitment and Selection area, the increasing war for talent is justified by the development of the AI-enabled tools which usually lead companies to speed up their hiring procedure, reducing time and costs related to this activity (Black & van Esch, 2021). Being more specific, the automation of such practices implies the creation of productivity gains and operational efficiencies for the enterprise (Prikshtat et al., 2023). For instance, one of the best examples of technical progress consists of asynchronous video interviews which can provide a high degree of flexibility in term of time and place constraints. Moreover, it is possible to implement in this context the usage of AI mechanisms, as the recorded video interviews can be evaluated by a human hiring manager or by an AI agent.

Furthermore, the adoption of AI within the selection process could benefit not only the organization as has been already mentioned, but also the candidates themselves, thanks to the higher level of accuracy it can produce (McDonald et al., 2017).

The benefits listed above have prompted several large companies to include artificial intelligence mechanisms within their business operations. Among them, it is possible to mention Microsoft and Google, which currently collect and use data on HR practices in order to gain greater insights into their employees, with the ultimate goal of predicting the potential performance of new job applicants (Meijerink & Bondarouk, 2023; Davenport et al., 2010). Therefore, this circumstance is contributing to spread deep discussions within academic and corporate environments. Indeed, in the recent years, AI is becoming a subject of special interest, warranting a more extensive analysis (Malik et al., 2020).

However, previous research suggests that job applicants may show a certain degree of scepticism toward AI usage in hiring procedures (McIntyre, 2019). For this reason, it is of paramount relevance for the employers to investigate thoroughly the explanatory mechanisms of applicants' reluctance toward such a technology. Indeed, firms' final purpose consists of more effectively implementing the AI enabled tools within their corporate context, by increasing fundamental hiring outcomes such as the candidates' job acceptance intention, which in turn illustrates whether firms end up addressing their staffing requirements (Harold et al., 2016). Indeed, it is crucial for organizations to understand the extent to which a potential future employee might accept a job offer, considering his perceptions regarding the evaluation agent of their video interview.

However, nowadays, the reasons supporting a higher willingness to accept the job is lacking specific attention from researchers (Mirowska, 2020). Hence, with the purpose of reducing the gap present in the current literature, this study aims at identifying a potential mechanism that could explain applicants' reluctance toward an AI evaluation agent (McIntyre, 2019).

Specifically, previous studies on this topic suggest that self-verification, defined as individuals' desire to find circumstances and interlocutors who can confirm their own self-conception (Swann, 1983), is a crucial variable in the organizational settings (Cable & Kay, 2012; Swann et al., 2003). However, to the best of the current knowledge, previous theoretical research on job applicants' reaction to AI usage has overlooked this valuable factor. In this context, it is possible to state that during a job interview selection process, job applicants may perceive a lower degree of self-verification when assessed by an AI enable tool (vs a human hiring manager), since technology is less conducive to the development of such feeling. In other words, AI cannot always predict human intentions, neither recognize the authentic essence of individuals (Riedl, 2019). Furthermore, self-verification has been shown to enhance positive outcomes in business environments since it contributes to diminish frictions and misunderstandings among employees in the workplace (Swann et al., 2004) and to foster team creativity and optimal individual performances, producing a positive psychological comfort (Polzer et al, 2002, Schafer et al., 1996). Therefore, it is possible to predict that self-verification could affect applicants' job acceptance intentions, thus, mediating the relationship between the different type of evaluation agent and applicants' job offer acceptance intentions.

Moreover, previous inquiries assert that individual differences may play a key role in influencing job applicants' responses in hiring practices (Powell et al., 2015; Campos-Velazques & Gonzales, 2020), so that they can moderate such hiring outcomes by affecting candidates' perceptions

(e.g. perceived self-verification) throughout the recruitment and selection process. In this regard, previous experimental studies suggest that an algorithm's capacity to assess an individual's distinctive characteristics is a necessary component of a fruitful human–AI interaction (e.g. Longoni et al., 2019). For this reason, the present study focusses on understanding whether individual differences related to the applicant's identity can strengthen or weaken candidates' attitudes and behaviours during the hiring procedure. Being more specific, it is possible to assume that a unique personal trait of an individual could lie in his varying perceptions of body-related shame. The latter consists of a sense of embarrassment created by a perceived social prejudice on the personal body shape and appearance (Higgins et al., 2015; Leary, 2007). Indeed, according to Weingarden et al., body related embarrassment have been shown to influence people's reactions in a range of interpersonal and professional contexts. For instance, people will be more likely to experience depressive symptoms, functional impairment that will cause them to ask for many more days off from work (Weingarden et al., 2016). However, to the best of the current knowledge, body related shame has never been studied in the context of job applicants' reactions to AI usage in hiring practices. As a result, this topic can be expanded to investigate the interaction between people and non-human agent.

Therefore, it is possible to predict that applicants who score low in body-related shame, will perceive the AI evaluation agent as less suitable in recognizing their physical appearance (especially when applicants have a positive opinion about it) and in self-verifying in general their own person. Hence, low body related shame applicants will perceive a reduced level of self-verification which in turn will be translated in a lower job acceptance intention. On the other hand, as applicants 'scoring high on body related shame should have no interest neither intention to seek verification of their personal physical appearance (toward which they have a negative opinion), it is expected that they will perceive similar levels of self-verification during a job video interview with both types of evaluation agents.

With the final aim of testing the above mentioned hypothesises, it has been carried out an experimental study where specific scenarios have been developed. Indeed, applicants were told to imagine performing a job video interview, being evaluated by an AI agent or a human hiring manager. Elaborating further, it is necessary to explain what it is meant by the locution “*asynchronous video interviews*”, indeed, these tools generally involve candidates recording videos of themselves responding to pre-planned questions which will be subsequently assessed (Mirowska & Mesnet, 2021).

The present research shows three main contributions to the existing literature.

At first, previous scientific inquiries explored how organizational procedures rather than job seekers' opinions, shape the approach to the AI-based selection process. On the contrary, this study aims at enlarging the current evidence on applicants' perceptions. As a consequence, by examining self-verification as a driver of job acceptance, this work contributes to the body of knowledge already available, providing fresh theoretical perspectives on how job seekers' attitudes towards AI-enabled recruitment tools may influence their attraction toward the company and their job acceptance intention (Budhwar et al., 2022). With this purpose, it was used a particular study design capable of increasing the validity of the findings, bringing new insights to the small body of research on how individuals and groups react to asynchronous video interviews (Roulin et al., 2023).

Second, while previous research focused mainly on the role of specific explanatory mechanism such as trust (Deriu et al., 2024) and fairness toward technology (Lee, 2018), the present study considers self-verification as one of the most relevant antecedents of job acceptance intention.

Third, although in this context, the tendency in the literature is to investigate the role of individual differences insisting on personal extroversion traits assimilated as moderators of the entire conceptual model (Kaya et al., 2024), with the present study, it has shed light on the role of body-related shame in shaping applicants' perceptions and job acceptance intention when evaluated by an AI agent during a hiring procedure.

In other words, considering that still many candidates look with suspicion at the AI assessment agent (McIntyre, 2019), it was necessary to identify the potential barriers and limitations encountered by job applicants in the usage of these tools with the ultimate goal of enabling companies to maximize the benefits produced by AI while limiting its negative impacts.

Finally, by exploring the role of job applicants' perceptions and individual differences simultaneously (Klotz et al., 2013; McCarthy et al., 2017), the present research improves hiring organizations' knowledge about the factors which shape job applicants' acceptance of AI, offering valid and actionable insights for companies that are interested in relying on AI evaluation agents in their hiring procedures.

3.2. Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Building

3.2.1 The role of Self-verification

A growing trend in recruitment and selection process is the adoption of AI-based solutions to assess job applicants (Mirowska & Mesnet, 2021). Indeed, according to recent studies, the number of companies that are adopting such AI tools in recruiting will double in the next few years (Oracle, 2019). In this context, asynchronous video interviews are even more used since their effectiveness is strengthened by the AI evaluation agents. Being more specific, in those circumstances, candidates realize videos of themselves responding to pre-planned interview questions (Roulin et al., 2022). Then, assessing facial expressions and eye contact, AI agents examine candidates' spoken and nonverbal cues (Leicht-Deobald et al., 2019). Therefore, considering the rapid spread of AI in the organizational setting, managers must comprehend the psychological factors behind applicants' reactions to AI evaluation agents versus human hiring manager. Notably, employers want to increase candidates' willingness to accept a job offer (Harold et al., 2016). Hence, it is important for managers to identify the drivers that can foster applicants' job acceptance intentions.

Past studies suggest that perceived self-verification could be conceived as an important factor in organizational settings (Leary, 2007; Tatcher & Greer, 2008). Specifically, it refers to the strong desire of individuals "*to create a social reality that verifies and confirms their self-conceptions*" (Swann, 1983, pp.33). Being more specific, to self-verify their self-conceptions, individuals seek verification from the society around them so that multiple interlocutors can mutually confirm their existing self-view (Swann, 1990). In this sense, one's self-concept works as a lens through which the individual interfaces with the world, managing situations, circumstances, and relationships according to the attitudes and behaviours he deems most suitable (Swann et al., 2003). This means that certain people do not hide from the judgment of others, but they authentically represent themselves for who they truly are, showing their body shape, cultures, habits, and occupations, while acting in line with them (Brooks et al., 2009). In organizational settings, where social interactions and human relationships between individuals are crucial to achieve common goals, employees' self-verification allows for a decline of mutual misunderstandings (Cable & Kay, 2012), thereby enhancing work related outcomes (Polzer et al., 2002). Furthermore, in group- tasks, self-verification has been shown to increase team members' commitment, willingness to cooperate and group belonging, consequently the performance of the whole group (Swann et al., 2003).

In sum, considering that self-verification generates positive outcomes for both the individuals and the organizations in which it is embedded; there is a need for managers to use this perception to

their advantage in such a way as to provide benefits for the enterprise. With this in mind, research is currently making strides in determining under which circumstances self-verification is most intensely perceived. According to Wiesenfeld et al., individuals who score high in self-esteem perceive a greater degree of self-verification under procedurally fair treatment events (Wiesenfeld et al., 2007). On the other side, Grant et al. discovered that customized job titles foster a higher employees' confirmation of their self-concept (Grant et al., 2014).

Therefore, although the literature in management is shedding light on the importance of self-verification in determining people's responses in organizational settings (Cable & Kay, 2012), previous research aiming at examining job applicants' responses to selection procedures has overlooked this variable. This gap has been filled by studying the role that self-verification plays in explaining job applicants' responses (i.e., job acceptance intention) to AI (vs human) evaluation agents' adoption in assessing video job interviews.

At first, it was simple to believe that when evaluated by AI technology, it would be difficult for job applicants to develop a relationship based on common sense and shared knowledge (Everitt et al., 2017), especially considering that intelligent systems are often conceived as black boxes, since their actions lack transparency. Furthermore, compared to humans, AI agents do not always provide personalized experiences, operating sometimes in a standardized manner (Longoni et al., 2019; Haslam, 2006). Hence, it is clear that "*the more committed one is to an evaluator, the more verification is sought*" (Chen et al., 2006, pp. 2). This statement reinforces the idea that the more an individual cares about the social relationship to be established with the counterpart, the more he seeks to perceive self-verification.

As previously mentioned, self-verification has been demonstrated to positively influence specific outcomes such as employees' interpersonal congruence (London, 2003) and individual job performance (Kim et al., 2019). Thereby, it seems possible to predict that self-verification could also affect job applicants' intentions, and thus, mediate the relationship between the different types of evaluation agents and applicants' willingness to accept the job offer. More in depth, AI evaluation agents should not be able to recognize the authentic essence of job applicants (Riedl, 2019). Consequently, it is possible to assume that job applicants will perceive a lower self-verification when evaluated by an artificial intelligence algorithm as compared to a human evaluation agent (e.g., a hiring manager) in a job interview selection context.

Therefore, formally:

- H1: *Job applicants will perceive a lower self-verification with an AI (vs human) evaluation agent, which in turn will decrease job acceptance intentions.*

3.2.2. The role of Body related Shame

Over time, organizational psychology studies are heading in addressing even more topics related to the impact of feelings and perceptions in the work environment (Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000). Indeed, it is possible to state that there is a relationship between personality traits, workers' feelings, and their behaviours and outcomes within the professional landscape (Xing et al., 2021). Notably, any organizational context is a favourable place to shape workers' identity (Burton & Vu, 2021). Indeed, it is often the judgments and evaluations of others that assist individuals in confirming their self-view and self-concept.

Therefore, it is possible to state that according to earlier research, individual differences and feelings may influence job applicants' behavioural intentions toward specific hiring procedures by affecting their perceptions (Klotz et al., 2013; McCarthy et al., 2017). Indeed, such perceptions related to personal differences could affect selection outcomes (such as job acceptance intention) by making applicants more likely to be perceived authentic (i.e., perceived self-verification) by the evaluation agent.

In this context, one such individual difference could be the feeling of body related shame. Indeed, the latter deserves specific attention, since it is often under-studied in the literature, despite the strong repercussions it can cause on individuals' behaviour.

In general, the term shame refers to "*a painful emotion that arises when an employee evaluates a threat to the self when he or she has fallen short of an important standard*" (Daniels & Robinson, 2019, pp. 2450). In other words, this perception takes hold in the human soul when there is a failure related to the inability to live up to a standard imposed by oneself or by the society. Thus, such a feeling of inadequacy generates strong self-criticism, and it produces a disproportionate sense of inferiority (Keltner, 1996). Moreover, it is often closely linked to feelings of guilt and embarrassment as individuals think they do not fit certain acceptance criteria which are object of public scrutiny. Therefore, violating such social conventions means eliciting negative evaluation from interlocutors (Leary, 2007).

Notably, delving into the analysis of body related shame, it's fundamental to specify that people tend to create cognitive reference models in their mind that, if not respected, generate prejudice, discontent, and dissatisfaction. As a result, individuals experience a feeling of shame related to their appearance. Being more precise, this mechanism is prevalent in women belonging to Western culture (Higgins et al., 2015) since they fall victim to the pressure of social media. Indeed, the latter set increasingly utopic and unattainable standards of beauty for the majority of the female audience⁸.

Furthermore, body related shame perception plays a key role in different contexts. For instance, previous studies demonstrate that overweight employees are considered to be less successful in the work environment, thus experiencing a high level of discrimination (Flint et al., 2016). Moreover, body related shame has been shown to influence people's reactions to human-technology interactions. For instance, it has been studied that customized forms of communication based on homophily may have negative consequences during consumer-Artificial Intelligence interactions, especially when the messages are directed to stigmatized individuals (Mende et al., 2024). In addition, technology and more specifically social media, very often influence the perceptions of users, especially those who do not have a good relationship with their body shape (Gioia et al., 2020).

However, despite the above discussed evidence that body related shame can produce different people's responses in organizational settings (Levay, 2014), past research focusing on understanding job applicants' behaviours within the selection processes has overlooked this crucial factor.

Filling the gap, the present work aims at exploring the role of body related shame in influencing applicants' self-verification perceptions when assessed by an AI (vs human) evaluation agent during the video interview selection procedure.

Grounded on the evidence that people scoring low in body-related shame are comfortable with their body shapes since they are sure to be considered attractive by others (Gilbert, 2002), it is possible to assume that they will perceive greater self-verification during an interaction with a specific agent. On the contrary, candidates who score high in body-related shame believe that they are positioned in a vulnerable and undesirable social rank, which can prompt them to avoid social contexts and mutual confrontation with other individuals (Duarte et al., 2015). This means that lower feelings of self-verification of these individuals can be expected.

⁸ Based on this evidence, the present study conducted its analysis based on an all-female audience of women from the U.S.

Furthermore, it could be interesting to analyse whether such perceptions change when different types of evaluation agents are involved within the interaction. For instance, it is possible to predict that candidates with low body-related shame will sense less self-verification when assessed by an AI evaluation agent (vs a human hiring manager) which will have a detrimental effect on their job acceptance intentions. On the other hand, due to their low self-confidence, high body-related shame applicants will not perceive significant differential rate of self-verification toward the two different types of evaluation agent.

Hence, formally it is possible to assume that:

- *H2: Job applicants scoring low on body related shame will perceive lower self-verification with an AI (vs human) evaluation agent, which in turn will lead to lower job acceptance intentions.*

3.2.3. The present Research

Given the assumption explained in the previous sections of the study, it is possible to assert that, overall, the employment of an AI evaluation agent (as opposed to a human hiring manager) in asynchronous video interviews should lower candidates' willingness to accept a job offer by diminishing their perceived level of self-verification. Furthermore, it possible to hypothesize that the detrimental impact of employing AI depends on the applicants' body-related shame level.

With this purpose in mind, the researchers conduct some experimental studies using simulated job interviews to test the above-mentioned predictions.

According to what has been said, the hypotheses already mentioned in the previous paragraphs are listed below:

- *H1: Job applicants will perceive a lower self-verification with AI (vs human) evaluation agent, which in turn will decrease job acceptance intentions.*
- *H2: Job applicants scoring low on body related shame will perceive lower self-verification with an AI (vs human) evaluation agent, which in turn will lead to lower job acceptance intentions.*

The graph below briefly summarizes the conceptual model whose significance and validity will be tested, detailing the relationships between the different variables.

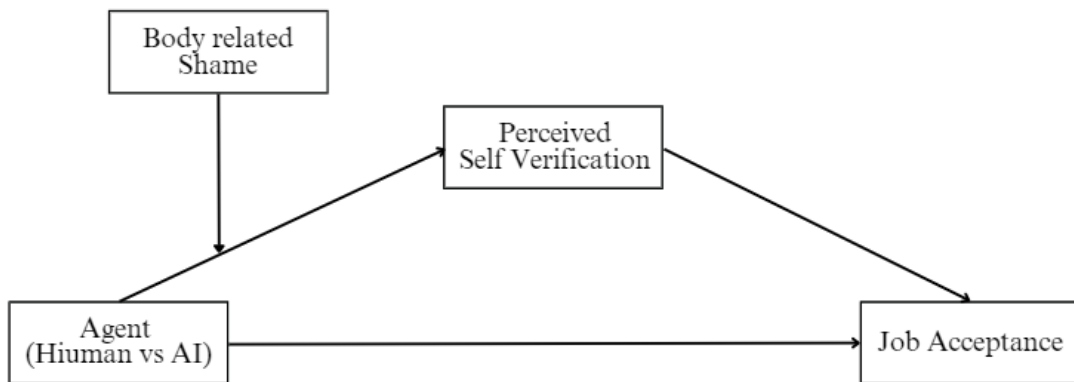


Table 4: Conceptual Model

3.3. Study design

3.3.1. Sample and Participants

The data for the present study were collected through an online survey, which was prepared to analyse an evaluation process. Notably, the survey was spread among respondents using Prolific which allowed the researchers to reach the American female population more easily. It was guaranteed the participants' anonymity, obtaining 200 individual responses. Every participant has provided informed consent to take part in the study.

It was decided to select a sample of women since it appears from the existing literature that they are more sensitive to their own outward appearance (Pliner et al., 1990).

Being more precise, the sample was selected based on 2 simple criteria. It was required that the respondents be female American nationals and native English speakers. The latter element was required simply to benefit people in the fruition of the questionnaire to avoid possible misunderstanding of the text.

Describing the participants demographically, it appears clear that the sample is on average 43 years old, with a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 77.

3.3.2. Study Procedure

Participants had to imagine that they were looking for a new job position that suited their tastes and aspirations. Moreover, they had to envision to complete an online video interview that would be evaluated by the company⁹.

Thereafter, the selected sample was randomly subjected to only one of the following two scenarios representing different experimental conditions.

In the first case, the agent who would evaluate and analyse the video interview would be a human hiring manager with extensive experience in the present field.

In the second case, the job interview would have been analysed by the company's artificial intelligence algorithms, equally well trained over the years.

With the purpose of understanding whether the respondents understood well the scenario in which they were placed, a question was included at the end of the questionnaire to function as a manipulation check.

In this context, the objective of the study is to analyse the perceptions of candidates following the selection process; thus, investigating possible preferences for a certain type of agent and searching for factors that could explain this preference and/or elements that may strengthen or weaken it. In detail, the research is intended to understand whether the physical characteristics of the candidate and one's own perception in relation to them may be a moderator of the whole framework.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was submitted for evaluation by an experienced researcher prior to its publication, in order to avoid and eliminate ambiguous and vague variables and subsequent misinterpretation by respondents.

3.3.3. Measures

The questionnaire was divided into several blocks, each of which was customized according to the reference scenario and thus the specific assessment agent.

⁹ See Appendix A below.

Within each block were included the scales useful for assessing the different variables, all measured based on a 7-point Likert type scale, where 1 was assigned to "Strongly disagree" and 7 to "Strongly agree." A 7-point Likert type scale was chosen in order to avoid and reduce the likelihood that respondents would select the neutral option, giving little added value to the study.

The first block included a mirror related to the informed consent and the participants' identification, since candidates were asked to insert their Prolific ID. On the other side, the second section was dedicated to the description of the specific scenario assigned to each respondent.

Moreover, in the following blocks of the survey where it was displayed the heartbeat of the analysis, it has been decided to test the moderator using a 6 items scale to measure candidates' 'shame about their appearance. This construct represents the Body Related Shame subscale taken from the WEB-SG Scale. Being more specific, an example item for such a construct is as follows: "*When I am in a situation where others can see my body, I feel ashamed*". (Forbes & Donovan, 2019). Being more specific, the Cronbach's alpha of the scale was 0.921, thus very reliable, which means that the items within the scale are highly intercorrelated.

Furthermore, the third section involved the analysis of the mediators which should explain the direct effect of the independent variable on the job acceptance which consists of the dependent variable. As specified in more detail in the preceding paragraphs, it was hypothesized that the respondent's perceived self-verification could be an important element in the analysis of the framework. Indeed, it was decided to use a 3-items scale repurposed from Amarnani et al., 2022 to study this variable. To better understand this construct which has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.868, it is important to mention an example of item: "*The hiring manager/AI agent would see me in the same way I see myself*".

Lastly, the fourth construct explored in the questionnaire was related to the dependent variable which is Job acceptance. The scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.947 and it was taken from Highhouse et al., 2003. It consists of 4 items such as: "*I would accept a job offer from this organization*".

Once obtained all the data needed, it was possible to proceed in the analysis through the usage of a deductive approach that consist of the hypothesis's tests used to verify whether the data can confirm the existed theory.

3.4 Findings

Different types of analysis have been conducted in order to test the hypothesis above mentioned.

Job Acceptance. During the selection process, compared to a human hiring manager, an AI evaluation agent decrease applicants' job acceptance. Hence, the values of the ANOVA confirm this statement: ($M_{human} = 5.01, SD_{human} = 1.17$ vs. $M_{AI} = 4.36, SD_{AI} = 1.61, F(1, 200) = 10.83, p = 0.001$)¹⁰.

Perceived self-verification. Moreover, it was found that compared to a human hiring manager, an AI evaluation agent reduced perceived self-verification. Therefore, it is reported what emerges from the one-way ANOVA: ($M_{human} = 4.52, SD_{human} = 1.23$ vs. $M_{AI} = 3.42, SD_{AI} = 1.59, F(1, 200) = 28.67, p < .001$)¹¹. As a result, it seems clear that in the event that AI served as the evaluative agent, the mean for perceived self-verification would be significantly lower than in the alternative scenario.

		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	P Value	F
Job Acceptance	Human	101	5.01	1.17	.001	10.83
	AI	101	4.36	1.61		
Self Verification	Human	101	4.52	1.23	<.001	28.67
	AI	101	3.42	1.59		

Table 5: ANOVA

Moderated Mediation. To examine the moderating role of body related shame on the effect of the evaluation agent (human = 0; AI = 1) on job acceptance intentions, it was used a moderated mediation analysis (PROCESS model 7; Hayes, 2017). Hence, the results prove what has been hypothesized. It means that the evaluation agent and body related shame had a significant interaction effect on perceived self-verification ($b = 0.31, t = 2.90, p = 0.0041$). Indeed, these figures show the

¹⁰ See Table 5

¹¹ See Table 5

effect of the simple moderation. Being more precise, when assessed by an AI agent as opposed to a human hiring manager, respondents with low body related shame felt less self-verification. However, there were no notable group differences among individuals with high body shame scores. In other words, this means that in the case where candidates are assessed by an AI evaluation agent, participants who perceive greater body shame do not experience particularly different self-verification than in the circumstance where they are assessed by a human hiring manager. Notably, those who have fewer problems and embarrassment about their bodies are able to feel lower self-verification when assessed by an AI evaluation agent, rather than a hiring manager. It is possible to better investigate such a result looking at the figure below¹². Being more specific, those evidence were confirmed by the Johnson-Neyman analysis for significant regions. The latter showed that the cut-off value for Body related shame was equal to 5.2764.

Additionally, a significant moderated mediation on job acceptance intentions was revealed by the study ($b = 0.20$, 95% CI = $+0.05$; $+0.36$). So, it is possible to assert that low values of body related shame reinforced the positive effect that self-verification has on job acceptance when the evaluation agent was a human hiring manager. Being more specific, the mediator explains this effect ($b = -0.68$, 95% CI = -0.99 ; -0.41). This means that as self-verification increases, job acceptance will also grow.

Moreover, employing an AI evaluation agent reduced applicants' perceived self-verification ($b = -2.20$, SE = 0.43, $t = -5.07$, $p = 0.0000$) which in turn lowered job acceptance intentions ($b = 0.6408$, SE = 0.06, $t = 10.34$, $p = 0.00$). Indeed, those result were corroborated by the Johnson Neyman analysis which prove that applicants who scored above 3.66 in body related shame perceived similar level of self-verification in both cases, when evaluated by an AI or a human evaluation agent. On the other side, participants who were below the previous mentioned threshold showed that the indirect effect was more negative as body related shame declined ($b = 0.66$; LCI = -0.95 ; UCI = -0.40 for 50th percentile of body related shame scores; $b = -1.07$; LCI = -1.52 ; UCI = -0.66 for 16th percentile of body related shame scores).

Therefore, the present research shows that applicants experiencing low body related shame perceived the AI evaluation agent as less capable of verifying who they really are (e.g. Body shape), as compared to a human hiring manager, which in turn reduces their willingness to accept the job offer. By doing so, the present study validates the suggested theoretical model by confirming the previously hypothesized relationships.

¹² See Table 6

In a nutshell, the following table summarize what has been already stated.

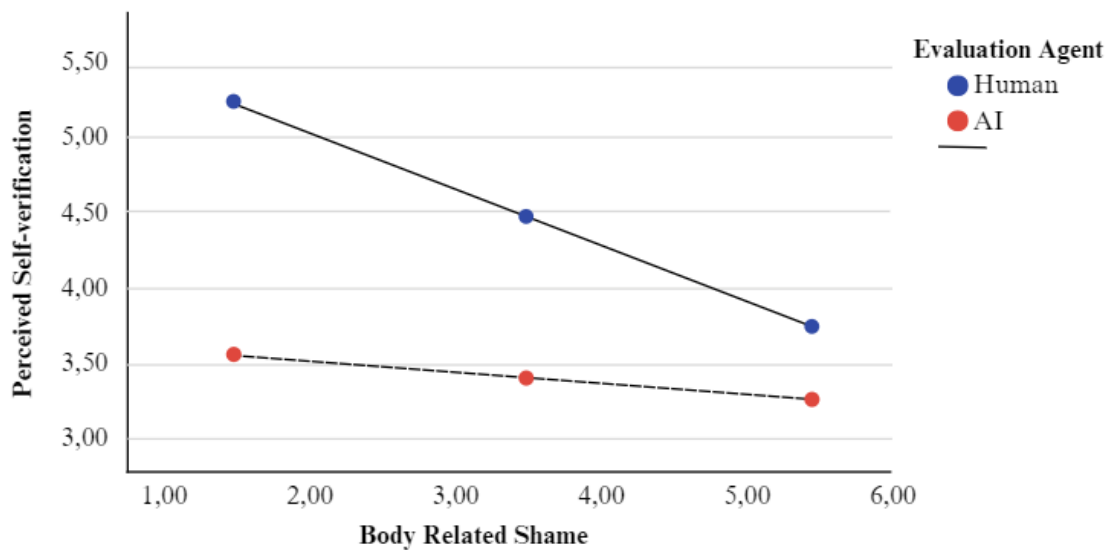


Table 6: Interactive effect of Type of Evaluation Agents and Body related Shame on Participant Perceived Self Verification

3.5 General discussion

As has been previously stated, AI enabled tools are reshaping the world of Recruitment and Selection process, bringing benefits in terms of time and cost saved (Black & van Esch, 2021). However, it turns out that not all applicants are in favour of accepting this type of agent in hiring procedures. Indeed, some individuals show a high degree of reluctance in accepting the automation of job interviews (Stone et al., 2024). Therefore, by introducing asynchronous video interview scenarios, the present study undertakes to analyse the reasons and conditions that make applicants decrease their intention to accept a job offer when their video interview is assessed by an AI (vs. Human) evaluation agent.

First, the main objective of the research is to understand whether applicants perceived self-verification, a fundamental element in social relationships (Cable & Kay, 2012), can influence the outcome of selection processes by determining greater intentions to accept the job offer. It has been verified, as already stated in the existing literature, that the use of AI decreases the job acceptance by negatively impacting job applicants' perceived self-verification.

Second, it has been hypothesized that some specific individual traits may determine consequences on people's perception and need to be understood and known for who they really are (perceived self-verification) (Brooks et al., 2009).

Among the aforementioned individual differences, the impact of body related shame was chosen to be analysed as a moderator of the relationships among the studied variables. In detail, it appears clear that applicants who scores low in body related shame perceive a higher level of self-verification which in turn will lead to greater job acceptance intention. On the other side, job applicants who feel ashamed of their appearance showed a lower difference in their self-verification perceptions regardless of the type of evaluation agent.

In this way, it will be possible to contribute to the literature currently available in the hiring field by bringing new insights capable of positively influencing corporate business effectiveness.

3.6. Theoretical Implications

Based on the knowledge developed so far, this study aims to extend the research on the use of Artificial Intelligence mechanisms in hiring practices. Indeed, until now, the existing literature has focused on possible methods and strategies used by companies to digitize the recruitment and selection process (*Black & Van Esch, 2020*). However, it is also necessary to analyse the perceptions and feelings that pervade the job applicants when they interact with an AI enabled tool. Indeed, such mood stages could generate different attitudes and behaviours, impacting the final outcome of the hiring procedure (*Budhwar et al., 2022*).

In detail, another contribution of the study is related to the fact that it fits within the currently scarce literature on asynchronous video interviews (*Roulin et al., 2022*). Indeed, this is a new methodology, currently used by firms to streamline their hiring processes. However, it usually arouses particular reluctance among job seekers.

Moreover, going beyond the previously studied explanatory mechanisms that identified trust as the main mediator of job acceptance intention (*Lee, 2018; Deriu et al., 2024*), a new antecedent has been introduced, with the aim to exalts the importance individuals place on being perceived as more authentic (referred to perceived self-verification). Indeed, applicants who experience greater self-verification are more likely to accept the job offer. However, the presence of an AI (vs. human)

evaluation agent implies a decrease in self-verification and thus a consequent decline in job acceptance intention.

Furthermore, analysing this study in more detail, it is possible to mention another crucial contribution it provided. Indeed, it has been explored more in depth, the idea that individual differences (such as body related shame) may explain applicants' perceptions and behaviours during the hiring procedure (Klotz et al., 2013). Indeed, it is clear that body-related shame influences the relationships among the aforementioned variables. This means that the negative effect of using artificial intelligence in the selection process is conditioned by people's feelings of discomfort and inappropriateness about their bodies. In detail, in a context dominated by an AI (vs. human) evaluation agent, a reduced degree of body-related shame involves a lower perceived self-verification which will subsequently produce a negative effect on the final outcome of the selection process, resulting in a lower job acceptance intention.

3.7. Managerial Implications

As explained in the previous paragraphs, nowadays the use of AI within recruitment and selection processes has resulted in the advent of Digital recruiting 3.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2018). Hence, it is possible to assert that already in many business environments, traditional recruiting systems have been replaced by innovative methods capable of reducing recruitment time and selection personnel's costs (Black & van Esch, 2021).

Therefore, it is crucial for companies and responsible managers to analyse the circumstances under which it makes sense to adopt such new technological processes with the ultimate purpose of generating business benefits. Indeed, the present research moves from the actionable goal of producing and offering to firms interesting insights on how to segment job applicants' pool based on their perceptions, preferences and individual differences. As a result, it would be useful to tailor hiring processes to the characteristics of each applicant segment, so as to ensure a more efficient and productive selection process. With this in mind, companies could distinguish the entire applicant pool based on their perceptions of body-related shame (Higgins et al., 2015). In this way, people's individual differences could be managed in a consistent way. It means that the firm should adapt its communication style, the chosen evaluation agent to the various applicants' needs, trying in any case to make the assessment process as fair and equitable as possible. Indeed, this concept moves from the assumption that companies should make an effort to seek out the human resource that is best suited

to their business environment in terms of technical and soft skills in order not to negatively impact corporate business (Mathews & Redman, 2001).

In addition, it would be appropriate for firms to spread awareness and greater knowledge with respect to the benefits of introducing AI mechanisms. Indeed, the belief that they can reduce stereotypes and biases of human recruiters could improve job seekers' perceptions of AI evaluation agents (Bendick & Nunes, 2012).

3.8. Limitations and Future Research

All the limitations that characterize the present study can provide avenues for further analysis and future contributions.

To this end, the role of the AI evaluation agent could be further investigated with additional studies. Indeed, in the present work, the tool used to assess the asynchronous video interview is not described in detail, nor precisely defined in its characteristics which can vary from tool to tool, leading to a different impact on the feelings and intentions perceived by job applicants.

In addition, it would be interesting to investigate how the use of Artificial Intelligence might affect different stages of the selection process, such as CV screening which is an activity where technology should be useful in making a repetitive and time-consuming task more efficient (Huang & Rust, 2020).

Furthermore, although the existing literature specifies that women are more influenced by perceptions related to their body shape (Higgins et al., 2015), it might be interesting to extend the present study to a male audience as well. Indeed, it would be interesting to assess the impact that body-related shame may have on this wider audience, analysing whether the results obtained in the present study are confirmed or rejected. Indeed, the male population as well often perceive feelings of shame related to their appearance, especially in relation with their stature and height (Duarte & Ferreira, 2022).

In addition, the results obtained from such a study could be discarded if a more specific landscape is chosen for the same analysis. By this, it is meant the possibility of specifying the type of work for which the candidate decides to apply. Such an element in fact could represent an opportunity to obtain more insights that could be shared with companies.

The same reasoning can be applied to the variables analysed. To be more precise, additional mediators capable of explaining the direct effect between the dependent and independent variable could be involved. For instance, the researchers propose to analyse the perceived self-efficacy, in turn explained by Perceived appreciation. Similarly, based on the literature that individual characteristics of applicants can influence their preferences and perceptions during the selection process (Klotz et al., 2013), it is suggested that additional moderators belonging to the sphere of individual characteristics be evaluated.

Therefore, these insights represent unique and interesting opportunities to further the present study, with the goal of keeping on contributing to the existing literature in this area.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary scenario is characterized by disruptive innovation, immediate progress, and technology that with varying shades of intensity influences multiple spheres, sectors, and industries, to the point of revolutionizing even the private life of the individuals. Hence, it is an evolution that touches the entire society, thus producing wide-ranging effects even on the organizational landscape of countless businesses. It is impossible to arrest the overwhelming momentum of such a revolution; however, its energy must be properly directed so that it can generate real benefits for businesses and workers.

As the previous chapters explain in depth, technological progress has in fact initiated a process of digitization and innovation in the discipline of Human Resource Management, encompassing the entire spectrum of its functions. In relation to Recruitment and Selection activities, artificial intelligence algorithms are capable of generating cost and time savings. However, it is imperative to ensure that the streamlining of recruitment processes can at the same time result in a greater willingness of people to fit into new organizational contexts, capable of promoting principles of inclusion, equality, and valuing diversity.

In this context, it appears clear the crucial importance of the concept of self-verification and related authenticity, on which this study places particular emphasis. Indeed, all individuals should show themselves for who they really are, with their merits and flaws, aspiring at the same time to be perceived by others in their truest nature.

Inspiration should be taken from the Socratic motto “*γνῶθι σεαυτόν*” (*know yourself*), which invites people to reach an ever-higher state of self-awareness. With this locution, which falls within the literary strand related to the search for truth, it is suggested that people recognize their limitations and appreciate their virtues, without hiding behind multiple Pirandellian masks. Therefore, the concepts of being and appearing should coincide, eroding the facades that cover our true selves both as individuals and organizations.

Just as an Italian poet of the 20th century E. Montale expressed his gratitude to his wife Mosca for helping him to understand that reality is often not just what is seen¹³, similarly we are all united

¹³ These words refer to the following composition: Montale, E. (1966). “Ho sceso dandoti il braccio almeno un milione di scale.” *Satura*. In such a poem dedicated to his wife Drusilla Tanzi, the author explores the complexity of human relationships; thanking his beloved who can always see beyond the flat surface of the world.

by the desire and the unceasing need to be perceived for who we authentically are, since appearances often hide some deceptions.

In conclusion, the complexity of organizational dynamics and the intriguing maze of technological innovations drive us to a strenuous search for truth, capable of producing genuine and authentic relationships, inclusive environments, and meaningful change. Therefore, as we move toward a new horizon where technology and innovation take centre stage, we must constantly commit ourselves to our path of authenticity and self-discovery since such commitment produces the transformative power to transcend the limits of artifice and embrace new horizons where technology can effectively permeate human life, producing benefits and added value.

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APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix A – Experimental Design

INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for participating in our study!

- Your personal information will remain confidential and that the team will make every effort to ensure that you cannot be identified.
- The data will be stored anonymously and used for future research.

Do you understand and consent to participate in our study?

- Yes
- No

PROLIFIC ID

What is your Prolific ID?

Please note that this response should auto-fill with the correct ID.

INSTRUCTIONS

CONDITION 1

Imagine that you are seeking a new job. While you are surfing on the web, you see that a company has a job opening for a position which fit your degree well. As part of the organization selection process, you are requested to complete an **online video interview**. Then, you will evaluate how you feel about it. Please look at the information below:

EVALUATION AGENT:

HIRING MANAGER

Your video interview will be **scored and analyzed solely by our company's hiring manager**. The hiring manager has over 10 years of experience with hiring job candidates who applied for this type of role.

CONDITION 2

Imagine that you are seeking a new job. While you are surfing on the web, you see that a company has a job opening for a position which fit your degree well. As part of the organization selection process, you are requested to complete an **online video interview**. Then, you will evaluate how you feel about it. Please look at the information below:

EVALUATION AGENT:

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Your video interview will be **scored and analyzed solely by our company's artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms**. The AI was trained using over 10 years' worth of data from job candidates who applied for this type of role.

MODERATOR:

Body Related Shame:

1. When I am in a situation where others can see my body (e.g., pool, changing room), I feel ashamed.
2. The appearance of my body is embarrassing for me in front of others.
3. When I think of the possibility that others can see my naked body, I would rather hide somewhere.
4. I am ashamed of myself when others get to know how much I really weigh.
5. I avoid exerting myself physically in front of others since I feel embarrassed.
6. Since the size of my clothes is embarrassing for me, I would rather avoid shopping for new clothes.

MEDIATOR:

Perceived self-verification:

Considering the hiring manager/AI agent assessing your video interview, how would you feel?

1. The hiring manager/AI agent would see me in the same way I see myself.
2. I feel that the hiring manager/AI agent would understand what kind of person I am.
3. The hiring manager/AI agent would treat me the way I deserve to be treated.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Job Acceptance:

1. I would accept a job offer from this organization.
2. I would make this organization one of my first choices as an employer.
3. I would exert a great deal of effort to work for this organization.
4. I would recommend this organization to a friend looking for a job.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Manipulation Check:

Based on what you read, your job interview will be evaluated by:

1. A hiring Manager
2. Artificial Intelligence
3. None of the above

Age:

What is your age?

5.2 Appendix B - Measurement scales

Scales

Construct/variable	Source	Scale
1. Self-verification (adapted)	Amarnani, R. K., Restubog, S. L. D., Shao, R., Cheng, D. C., & Bordia, P. (2022). A self-verification perspective on customer mistreatment and customer-directed organizational citizenship behaviors. <i>Journal of</i>	Considering the hiring manager/AI agent assessing your video interview, how would you feel? (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”) Q1: <i>The hiring manager/AI agent would see me in the same way I see myself.</i>

	<p><i>Organizational Behavior</i>, 43(5), 912–931.</p>	<p>Q2: <i>I feel that the hiring manager/AI agent would understand what kind of person I am.</i></p> <p>Q3: <i>The hiring manager/AI agent would treat me the way I deserve to be treated.</i></p>
<p>2. Job acceptance intentions (adapted)</p>	<p>Highhouse, S., Lievens, F., & Sinar, E. F. (2003). <i>Measuring Attraction to Organizations. Educational and Psychological Measurement</i>, 63(6), 986-1001.</p>	<p>Please rate the following items:(1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”)</p> <p>Q1: <i>I would accept a job offer from this organization.</i></p> <p>Q2: <i>I would make this organization one of my first choices as an employer.</i></p> <p>Q3: <i>I would exert a great deal of effort to work for this organization.</i></p> <p>Q4: <i>I would recommend this organization to a friend looking for a job.</i></p>
<p>3. Body related Shame</p>	<p>Forbes, Y., & Donovan, C. (2019). The role of internalised weight stigma and self-compassion in the psychological well-being of overweight and obese women. <i>Australian Psychologist</i>, 54(6), 471-482.</p>	<p>Please rate the following items about you: (1 = “strongly disagree”, 7 = “strongly agree”)</p> <p>Q1: <i>When I am in a situation where others can see my body (e.g., pool, changing room), I feel ashamed.</i></p>

Q2: The appearance of my body is embarrassing for me in front of others.

Q3: When I think of the possibility that others can see my naked body, I would rather hide somewhere.

Q4: I am ashamed of myself when others get to know how much I really weigh.

Q5: I avoid exerting myself physically in front of others since I feel embarrassed.

Q6: Since the size of my clothes is embarrassing for me, I would rather avoid shopping for new clothes.
