

Job-Related Anxiety in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: A Systematic Review of Workplace Dynamics

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a major driver of transformation in various industrial sectors and the world of work. AI is known for its efficiency, innovation, and productivity, which make human work easier. Behind these benefits, AI has the potential to hinder careers, such as job loss due to role changes and job insecurity. This condition can trigger psychosocial stress among workers and employees, such as job-related anxiety. This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, guided by the PRISMA framework, to identify, extract data, analyze, and synthesize results to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of work-related anxiety in the AI era. Literature searches were conducted through Google Scholar, PubMed, and Scopus between 2020 and 2025, yielding 32 articles that met the inclusion criteria. The analysis results indicate that AI presents complex psychosocial challenges for workers and employees, particularly work-related anxiety manifested in various forms, such as technology anxiety, artificial intelligence anxiety, job replacement anxiety, job insecurity, and future anxiety. Collaborative efforts between employees, managers, and organizations or companies can be undertaken to minimize the negative impacts of AI implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) has developed into a dominant trend in various industrial sectors. AI is defined as a social and cognitive phenomenon that enables machines to integrate socially into society, performing competitive tasks that require cognitive processes (On, 2021). AI significantly transforms conventional practices and introduces innovative benefits that were previously considered out of reach (Yaşar & Karagucuk, 2025). Questions such as “Will humanity become extinct?” or “Will robots replace human labor?” have emerged in the public consciousness alongside the rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology (Yazıcı, 2023). AI has garnered significant attention due to its complexity and sophistication, with most studies predicting that AI will eliminate certain types of jobs while creating or transforming others (Li et al., 2025).

AI's ability to make autonomous decisions, operate independently, and continuously evolve, coupled with its potential for rapid development, will present various unexpected challenges that could significantly impact work management (Chen et al., 2024; Jarota, 2023). In the workplace, advancements in AI technology have the potential to create career barriers, such as job loss and job insecurity, as AI has the capability to replace human roles in performing various operational functions and tasks (Cheng et al., 2023; Kaya & Ates, 2024; Yam et al., 2022). According to the World Economic Forum (2020), it is estimated that by 2025, the proportion of task completion between humans and machines will be balanced. For example, industrial robots and AI technology significantly influence business production and marketing processes through labor replacement and technological updates (Erdogan et al., 2025). Jobs involving routine and structured tasks, such as lawyers, financial analysts, and accountants, are highly vulnerable to automation by artificial intelligence (Wong, 2024).

Job losses due to AI tend to be more prevalent among older workers, women, and younger generations than among highly educated workers (Wong, 2024). This is because the development of AI in the workplace requires high cognitive abilities in order for humans to maintain their roles in a balanced manner (Wong, 2024). As a result, workers may experience various negative impacts, such as role changes, skill degradation, loss of power, and reduced well-being as employees (Gausen, 2024). Additionally, artificial intelligence creates new risks in workplace dynamics, such as workplace accidents, time pressure, or excessive workloads due to AI-driven work management, as well as psychosocial risks like burnout, stress, depression, and anxiety (Jarota, 2023). Automation by AI, virtual reality, and dangerous robots have the potential to exacerbate inequality and anxiety, especially among workers with limited access to technology (Katz et al., 2021; Wong, 2024). Such anxiety may stem from the possibility of future unemployment spikes, which have already been reflected in various cases of layoffs due to the efficiency and convenience offered by technology (Rhee & Jin, 2021).

Anxiety about job replacement by AI not only affects economic aspects but also impacts employees' mental health and job satisfaction. Changes in work

dynamics due to the introduction of artificial intelligence in the digitalization era increase the need to continuously develop new skills, creating psychological pressure and job anxiety (Faliza et al., 2025). This anxiety is triggered by a lack of training, unfamiliarity with new technologies, and fear of the unknown (Bulut et al., 2024). This situation reflects various interrelated forms of anxiety, such as technological anxiety, anxiety about AI, and anxiety directly related to work (such as career anxiety and work anxiety). Career anxiety encompasses confusion, doubt, difficulty, and concern about future career prospects, including the risk of job loss, intense competition for employment, maintaining existing employment, and the possibility of wage reductions (Mahmud et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study is to review previous research in the literature on career anxiety in the era of artificial intelligence, particularly as experienced by workers or employees in an organization or labor market. This review holds particular significance in providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics of career anxiety in the era of artificial intelligence, which is driven by job uncertainty, concerns about role replacement by AI, and a lack of preparedness to cope with technological transformations in the workplace. Through these dynamics, it is hoped that this review can serve as a foundation for designing interventions or supportive strategies to assist workers and organizations in managing the psychological impacts of AI developments on careers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job-related anxiety refers to the psychological distress, worry, and apprehension experienced by individuals in relation to their work environment, job security, and occupational performance (Spector & Jex, 1998). In the traditional sense, job-related anxiety encompasses concerns about job performance, workplace relationships, career advancement, and employment stability. AI-induced job anxiety represents a specific subset of job-related anxiety characterized by psychological distress directly attributable to the presence, implementation, or anticipated introduction of artificial intelligence technologies in the workplace (Brougham & Haar, 2018).

Job-related anxiety in the context of artificial intelligence represents a complex psychological phenomenon that has emerged as AI technologies become increasingly integrated into workplace environments. This form of anxiety encompasses the psychological distress, worry, and apprehension experienced by individuals in relation to their work when artificial intelligence systems are present, implemented, or anticipated in their occupational setting. Unlike traditional job-related anxiety, which typically focuses on performance concerns, workplace relationships, and career advancement, AI-induced job anxiety specifically addresses the unique stressors created by intelligent technologies that can learn, adapt, and potentially replace human cognitive functions.

The foundational understanding of this phenomenon draws heavily from established psychological theories, particularly Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which conceptualizes stress as resulting from the interaction between environmental demands and individual

appraisal processes. In the context of AI implementation, individuals engage in primary appraisal by evaluating AI as either a threat to their job security and professional identity, a challenge presenting opportunities for growth, or as largely irrelevant to their work experience. This initial assessment then triggers secondary appraisal, where individuals assess their coping resources and options, leading to either problem-focused coping strategies that directly address AI-related challenges, emotion-focused approaches that manage emotional responses, or meaning-focused coping that seeks to find purpose in AI-integrated work environments.

Artificial intelligence in workplace contexts encompasses a broad range of technologies including automation systems that perform routine tasks without human intervention, decision support systems that assist human decision-making processes, predictive analytics that forecast outcomes and trends, natural language processing technologies, and machine learning applications that improve performance through experience. The psychological impact of these technologies manifests through several distinct but interconnected forms of anxiety. Displacement anxiety represents the fear of job loss due to AI automation, while obsolescence anxiety involves concern about existing skills becoming irrelevant in an AI-dominated workplace. Adaptation anxiety emerges from stress related to learning new AI-integrated work processes, performance anxiety develops from worry about meeting AI-enhanced performance standards, and control anxiety stems from distress about reduced human agency in work processes.

The Technology Acceptance Model, originally developed by Davis, provides another crucial theoretical framework for understanding AI-related workplace anxiety. This model explains how individuals form intentions to use technology based on their perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, with anxiety serving as a key factor that can inhibit technology acceptance. When employees perceive AI systems as difficult to use or of questionable benefit to their job performance, their anxiety levels increase, creating resistance to adoption and integration. The model has been extended to incorporate technology anxiety as a negative emotional response that directly influences behavioral intentions regarding AI system engagement.

Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model offers additional insight into how AI integration affects workplace psychology by examining five core job dimensions: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. AI implementation can dramatically alter each of these characteristics, either reducing or enhancing the range of skills required, fragmenting or integrating work processes, changing perceptions of work importance, increasing or decreasing worker control, and providing new forms of performance feedback. These changes directly impact critical psychological states including experienced meaningfulness of work, experienced responsibility for work outcomes, and knowledge of actual results of work activities, all of which influence overall job satisfaction and anxiety levels.

Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources Theory provides another lens through which to understand AI-induced workplace anxiety, explaining stress

as resulting from threatened or actual loss of valued resources. In AI contexts, employees may perceive threats to object resources such as job security, income, and benefits; personal resources including skills, knowledge, and professional identity; condition resources like employment status and workplace relationships; and energy resources such as time, motivation, and physical and mental energy. The theory's concept of resource loss spirals is particularly relevant, as initial resource threats can trigger cascading losses that intensify anxiety and stress responses over time.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to identify, extract data, analyze, and synthesize results in order to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of work-related anxiety in the era of artificial intelligence. The analysis technique was guided by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The PRISMA method is designed to assist researchers in compiling systematic reviews with transparent reporting, covering the background, procedures applied by researchers, and findings obtained from the process (Page et al., 2021).

The literature search was conducted through electronic databases such as Scopus, PubMed, and Google Scholar using the keywords "career anxiety," "job anxiety," "artificial intelligence," "technology," and "employee." This review focused on quantitative empirical articles published between 2020 and 2025, written in English, and involving a working population. The search was conducted logically and limited to scientific articles in the fields of psychology, artificial intelligence, and career, following the PRISMA methodology. The selection process included four stages in accordance with the PRISMA guidelines: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

Studies were considered eligible for analysis if they met the following inclusion criteria: 1) Articles written in English, 2) Published between 2020 and 2025, 3) Using a quantitative research design, 4) The research population and sample consisted of workers or employees of various age ranges, 5) The study was conducted in the context of work, organizations, or the labor market, 6) Not in the context of COVID-19. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria are established to exclude irrelevant studies, including: 1) Articles not written in English, 2) Publication date outside the 2020-2025 range, 3) Qualitative studies, literature reviews, or non-empirical studies, 4) Research populations and samples consisting of school students or university students, 5) Studies conducted in the context of primary, secondary, and higher education not related to the labor market, 6) Studies related to the context of COVID-19.

RESEARCH RESULTS

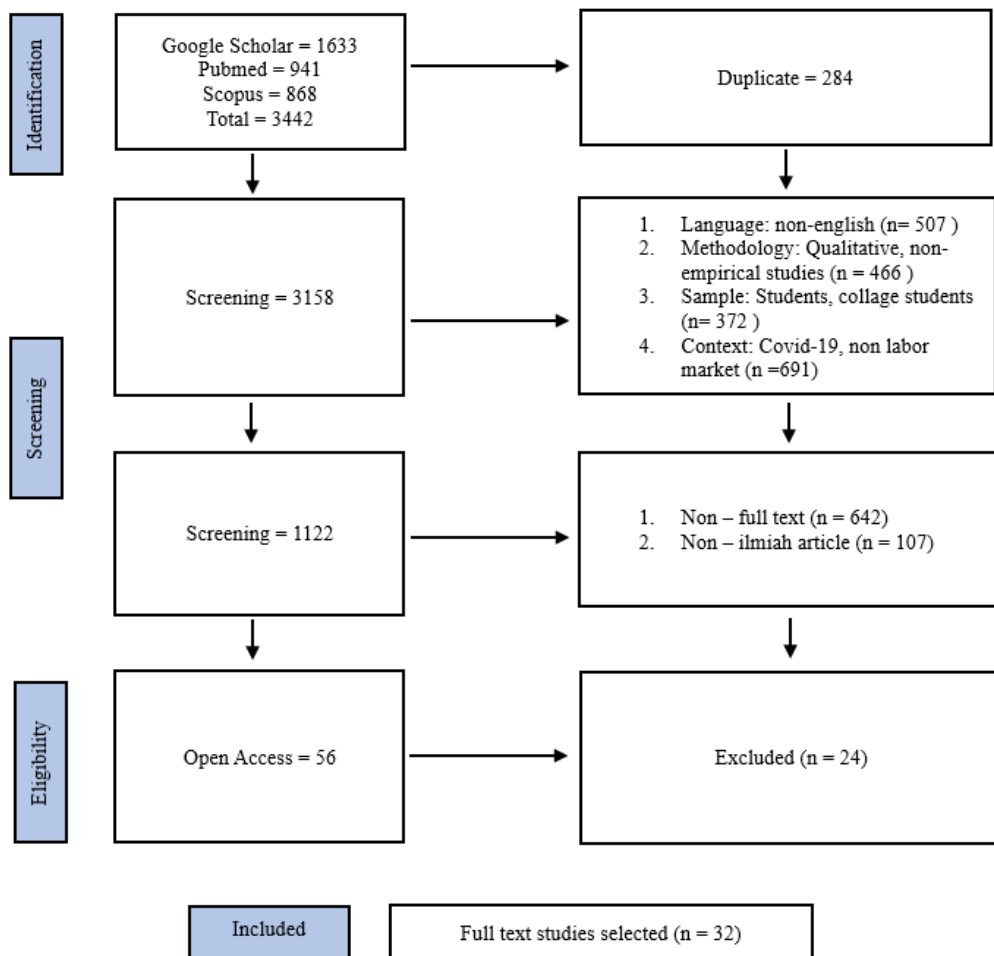


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

In the initial stage of the article identification process, a systematic and holistic literature search was conducted using keywords that represent the main issues related to career anxiety and artificial intelligence in the dynamics of the world of work. The keywords used include “career anxiety,” “artificial intelligence,” “technology,” and “employee.” This search was conducted through Google Scholar, PubMed, and Scopus, which yielded articles. The next step was to conduct an initial screening based on exclusion criteria to exclude irrelevant studies. In the first screening process, a total of articles was obtained. These selected articles were then analyzed to identify thematic patterns, methodologies, and contributions to understanding the impact of artificial intelligence on psychosocial conditions, particularly anxiety in the workplace.

The identification, screening, and eligibility process resulted in 32 articles that met the inclusion criteria. All of these articles used quantitative research methods to empirically identify patterns, relationships, and artificial intelligence in relation to employees' psychosocial concepts, particularly in the concept of work-related anxiety. This quantitative approach will help generalize the findings to a broader population statistically. Various instruments or scales were used to determine empirical results representing the concept of anxiety caused

by artificial intelligence in the workplace, such as the AI Awareness Scale by Brougham and Haar (2018) used in Liu et al.'s (2025) study, the AI Anxiety Scale by Wang and Wang (2022) in Russo et al.'s (2025) study, the DASS-21R by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) in Liřan's (2025) study, the Job Anxiety of Replacement Scale by Hahm (2017) in Rhee & Jin's (2021) study, the Technological Unemployment Anxiety Scale (Civelek & Pehlivanoglu, 2020), and others.

Based on 32 articles, it was found that artificial intelligence has been widely integrated into various sectors of the workforce, including healthcare, accounting and economics, hospitality, education, and media (Badawy & Badawy, 2024; Fan et al., 2025; Gültekin & Kavak, 2025; Köse, 2025; W. Li & Liu, 2025; Noor & Adwan, 2024; Piercy & Gist-mackey, 2021; Tarsuslu et al., 2025). The application of AI in various sectors not only changes work processes but also triggers certain psychological responses. Employees in organizational and corporate environments experience anxiety due to the introduction of artificial intelligence into work dynamics. Advancements in artificial intelligence technology and increasingly sophisticated automation systems have the potential to threaten job losses, triggering feelings of anxiety and job insecurity (Chakraborty, 2024). This dynamic will be analyzed more comprehensively in the discussion section.

DISCUSSION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is seen as a catalyst for modern-day transformation, driving innovation, reshaping various industrial sectors, and significantly impacting the global workforce (Preeth & Bapu, 2024). In the workplace, AI will perform more tasks currently done by humans, complement human work, and even carry out tasks beyond human capabilities (Maria et al., 2023). Moreover, AI contributes to expanding capacity and improving product quality, supporting product sustainability, simplifying machine maintenance, optimizing sales channels, enhancing customer service, and striving to reduce employee workload (Rořman et al., 2023). Behind these benefits, AI also presents new challenges, particularly regarding job uncertainty and anxiety among the workforce (Pektas, 2024; Rhee & Jin, 2021; Tong et al., 2025).

Anxiety among the workforce often stems from concerns about job loss, limited technological proficiency, and unpreparedness to cope with rapid changes in the workplace (Gull et al., 2023; Shen & Zhou, 2025; Wu et al., 2024). Employees who wish to remain employed and work effectively with AI must possess advanced skills and capabilities, which ultimately trigger their anxiety (Wu et al., 2024). This anxiety is exacerbated by uncertainty about future roles, pressure to continuously learn new technologies, and increasing organizational or corporate demands for digital productivity. In this context, various phenomena are felt by employees, such as technology anxiety, artificial intelligence anxiety, job replacement anxiety, job insecurity, and future anxiety (Beirat et al., 2025; Oztirak, 2023; Preeth & Bapu, 2024; Rhee & Jin, 2021; Russo et al., 2025).

Technology anxiety encompasses fear and resistance to the use of AI technology due to ongoing uncertainty about job security and role changes following AI integration (Preeth & Bapu, 2024). Meanwhile, artificial intelligent anxiety refers to concerns arising from interactions with AI-based systems. The next concept is job replacement anxiety, which is anxiety caused by the possibility of human roles being replaced by AI systems (Rhee & Jin, 2021). Finally, job insecurity relates to feelings of insecurity in the workplace due to the introduction of AI technology into the work dynamic. These concepts are interrelated and contribute to increased psychological pressure among workers due to the development of artificial intelligence.

Various sectors of the workforce, such as healthcare, accounting and economics, hospitality, education, and media, are undergoing changes due to the implementation of artificial intelligence (Badawy & Badawy, 2024; Fan et al., 2025; Gültekin & Kavak, 2025; Köse, 2025; W. Li & Liu, 2025; Noor & Adwan, 2024; Piercy & Gist-mackey, 2021; Tarsuslu et al., 2025). In the healthcare sector, AI is widely used by doctors, nurses, and pharmacists for diagnosis, patient monitoring, and medical record analysis. The accounting and economics sectors are also impacted by AI developments, such as audit process automation, market prediction, and big data decision-making. The hospitality sector has widely adopted AI to improve customer service and automate reservation systems. In education, AI is applied for student assessment automation, classroom management, and adaptive learning systems. Meanwhile, in the media sector, AI plays a role in automated content production, audience trend analysis, and faster information dissemination. The efficiency and productivity offered by AI raise concerns about the sustainability of human roles in their jobs, which could potentially eliminate human roles (Piercy & Gist-Mackey, 2021).

The imbalance between the roles of humans and AI reflects the growing anxiety felt by workers. In many cases, AI integration not only changes work patterns but also alters organizational structures and requires continuous skill updates. Workers are required to be able to collaborate with AI systems, understand automation processes, and develop high-level cognitive skills to maintain their roles in the workplace. However, not all individuals have adequate access to technology, particularly older individuals (Guglielmi et al., 2021). This will continue to exacerbate role disparities in the workplace.

Work-related anxiety arising in the AI era can be minimized through various collaborative efforts. Liğan's (2025) study explains that active engagement and cohesion between employees, managers, and organizations are crucial in responding to AI technological developments. Employees are expected to increase their awareness of the psychosocial impacts caused by AI, enabling the early implementation of coping strategies. Meanwhile, managers can contribute by implementing training programs that reduce feelings of insecurity caused by AI technology. Digital skills training can be provided to employees to help them understand the basics of digital technology, use specific applications, and develop digital skills so that a positive perspective on AI is formed (Tarsuslu et al., 2025). At the organizational level, AI integration policies need to be enforced

by prioritizing mental health, transparency, and human-centered implementation (Liṭan, 2025).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The emergence and development of artificial intelligence in various sectors of work has had a significant impact, both in terms of efficiency and productivity. However, behind these benefits, AI poses complex psychosocial challenges for workers and employees, particularly job-related anxiety. This anxiety manifests itself in various forms, such as technology anxiety, artificial intelligence anxiety, job replacement anxiety, job insecurity, and future anxiety. Changes in work patterns, increasing demands for new technological skills, and disparities in access to technology further exacerbate this situation, particularly for older workers. Therefore, collaborative efforts between employees, managers, and organizations or companies are needed to minimize the negative impacts of AI implementation. Such efforts can be reflected through digital skills training, increased self-awareness, improved coping strategies, and the development of policies related to artificial intelligence (AI).

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Advanced research in this area could investigate the integration of digital technology, such as blockchain and IoT-enabled traceability systems, into the green batik supply chain to enhance transparency, consumer trust, and measurable environmental impact. By linking green awareness and green knowledge with verifiable product life cycle data, researchers can examine how real-time sustainability information influences green purchase intentions across different consumer segments. Furthermore, future studies could employ experimental designs to compare the behavioral effects of conventional eco-labeling versus interactive digital storytelling, providing insights into the most effective communication strategies for promoting eco-friendly batik in both domestic and global markets.

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