AI's Psychological Impact:

Employee Adaptation and Perception in Workplaces

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1.0 Abstract:

This study examines how artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes professional identities and workplace dynamics through using the socio-technical systems (STS) theory (Trist & Bamforth, 1951) which focuses on its relational and cultural implications rather than merely technical efficiency. Drawing on qualitative auto-interviews with ten professionals across various sectors and levels, this study investigates how individuals interpret, adapt to, and resist AI in daily work practices. Utilising thematic and narrative analysis, it identifies patterns around autonomy, trust, verification, and AI's dual function of augmenting and surveillance work.

The findings revealed participants employ 'resistance literacies', narrative strategies used to uphold professional standards, navigate ethical ambiguities, and maintain trust boundaries. Practices such as verifying AI outputs, interpreting algorithmic decisions, and storytelling are central to this adaptive process. The study proposes a 'narrative-sensitive implementation' approach emphasising verification as identity work, metaphor as a diagnostic tool, storytelling for ethical reflection, and narrative feedback loops for evolving governance.

By centring worker narratives, the study highlights AI integration as a lived, socially embedded phenomenon. It underscores narrative competence, the capacity to interpret and respond to employees' stories, essential for ethical and effective AI adoption, providing a human-centric contribution to socio-technical understanding in contemporary workplaces.

The findings underscore the importance of narrative competence in organisational AI integration, where the ability to listen to, interpret, and act upon employees' stories becomes central to ethical and effective adoption. By illuminating how professionals make sense of AI's presence through narrative and meaning-making, this study provides a grounded, human-centric

contribution to the socio-technical understanding of AI's psychological impact on employee adaptation and perception in contemporary workplaces.

2.0 Introduction: AI at the Human-Technology Centre: Socio-Technical Systems

2.1 Analysis of Workplace Integration

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly being integrated into organisations, representing more than a technological upgrade; it fundamentally transforms the socio-technical systems supporting organisational functioning. As AI systems increasingly mediate tasks from administrative duties to complex decision-making across an organisation's internal value chain, it reshapes both workflow and workplace social dynamics (Jarrahi et al., 2021). Grounded in Socio-Technical Systems (STS) theory (Trist & Bamforth, 1951), this qualitative study explores how professionals across different industries experience, articulate, and narrate their concerns regarding technological change, regarding workplace autonomy, trust, and creative agency. By emphasising individual accounts of AI adoption, the study uncovers how humans negotiate their roles within increasingly automated environments and identify strategies organisations might use to foster equitable, human-centric AI integration.

There is a current tension which is evident when examining current AI adoption and workplace concerns around employee morale, role stability, and job security (Pew Research Center, 2023). Forecasts suggest that by 2025, over 50% of knowledge workers will interact daily with AI tools, with global corporate investment growing exponentially (Gartner, 2023). Yet workforce surveys reveal significant anxiety: reporting decreased autonomy due to algorithmic management, and fear of job displacement (Acemoglu & Restrepo, 2020; Autor & Salomons, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2023). The widening gap between organisational enthusiasm for AI-driven efficiency and employee apprehension about dehumanisation defines the socio-technical dilemma central to this study's inquiry.

2.2 Social-Technical Systems Theory

STS theory (Trist & Bamforth, 1951) offers a robust framework for examining the implications of social and technological disruptions, as it explicitly rejects technological determinism in favour of understanding how technical systems and social structures co-evolve (Orlikowski, 2008). Originally developed by Tavistock Institute studies for coal mining in the 1950s (Trist & Bamforth, 1951), STS theory has since evolved to address contemporary digital workplaces.

At its core, the theory maintains that optimal organisational performance arises from the joint optimisation of both technical and social subsystems (Shrestha et al., 2019). In the context of AI's rapid adoption and integration into organisational life, the STS lens is particularly valuable, as it moves beyond linear narratives of technological progress to explore how intelligent systems are embedded within, and transformative of existing work practices, power relations, and professional identities (Bailey et al., 2011; Leonardi et al., 2012).

Currently, there is a notable gap in the literature addressing the integration of AI into workplaces from a qualitative perspective. The field remains dominated by quantitative surveys and productivity-focused studies (Brynjolfsson et al., 2023), resulting in a scarcity of in-depth research on how professionals experience AI integration in their day-to-day work.

Existing ethnographic studies that explore this domain highlight key socio-technical tensions: radiologists resisting diagnostic AI despite its high accuracy due to perceived threats to professional judgement (Parikh et al., 2019); creative professionals reporting generative AI tools as both empowering and destabilising (Boyd & Harding, 2025); and service workers grappling with opaque algorithmic scheduling systems that optimise efficiency at the expense of team cohesion (Choudhury et al., 2020; Kellogg et al., 2020).

These examples underscore the complex interplay between technical systems and social structures, precisely the kind of dynamics that STS is well suited to investigate.

This study is guided by three core research questions informed by the principles of STS:

- How do professionals describe their sense of agency (experience) when working with or under the influence of AI systems?
- What social practices and management strategies emerge to sustain trust and collaboration in human-AI driven work design processes and procedures?
- How do current organisational structures, including hierarchies, training programs and communication networks, affect employee well-being and job satisfaction?

These questions align with STS theory, which views technology as integral to work systems, co-evolving with social structures through shared human practices and organisational norms (Faraj et al., 2018; Trist & Bamforth, 1951). This perspective also resonates with Jasanoff's (2004) concept of co-production, highlighting how technological systems and social orders are mutually shaped.

This study draws on several key concepts from STS theory and related research to analyse AI integration in the workplace. The principle of joint optimisation (Trist, 1981) provides a lens for examining how organisations balance the efficiency gains of AI with the social and psychological needs of their workforce (Newell & Marabelli, 2020). The concept of embeddedness (Orlikowski, 2008) highlights how AI tools become integrated into existing work routines, power dynamics, and cultural norms. Star and Strauss's (1999) notion of invisible work enables us to uncover the often-overlooked labour required to make AI systems function effectively, from data cleaning to prompt engineering, and to better understand the organisation's values, people capabilities, and cultural fabric.

Finally, the theory of co-production (Jasanoff, 2004) illustrates how technology and social order are mutually constituted (Orlikowski & Scott, 2015), offering a valuable framework for understanding how human workers and AI systems co-create new workflows, roles, and professional identities.

The theoretical framework for this study draws on these core STS concepts as particularly relevant to the integration of AI in organisational settings. The principle of joint optimisation (Trist, 1981) again offers a useful lens for balancing AI-driven efficiency with social and psychological needs. The concept of embeddedness (Orlikowski, 2008) illustrates how AI tools become entwined in daily routines, power structures, and norms. The theory of co-production (Jasanoff, 2004) emphasises mutual shaping of technology and society, showing how workers and systems collaboratively construct professional identity.

This study employs a qualitative methodology, utilising self-interviews and an STS-informed thematic narrative analysis to explore the complexity of human-AI work systems. Interviews are structured around four key dimensions of AI integration: workplace dynamics, decision-making processes, employee well-being, and future outlooks. Participants describe how AI has affected their roles, team structures, and communication patterns; recall instances where AI influenced decisions; reflect on workload and satisfaction changes; and share hopes or concerns about AI's evolving role.

The analysis integrates thematic and narrative dimensions, drawing on Riessman's (2008) framework, and informed by STS theory. Thematic coding identifies socio-technical tensions and organisational change patterns, while narrative analysis examines how professionals construct meaning from their AI experiences. Particular attention is paid to metaphors used,

adoption turning points, and identity reconstruction. This layered approach deepens understanding of participant experiences and interpretive strategies (Riessman, 2008).

This research holds value across multiple domains. It contributes to the development of human-centric AI integration frameworks that recognise the socio-technical nature of modern work. It offers evidence-based guidance for organisational policies that support worker agency, including training that prepares employees for meaningful AI collaboration.

Theoretically, it applies STS to algorithmic work, responding to Orlikowski and Scott's (2008) call for more research into sociomaterial practices in digital environments. It also challenges techno-solutionist narratives (Miceli et al., 2022; Tonkinwise, 2013) by showing how worker adaptation shapes AI's impact and effectiveness. From a policy angle, findings inform the evolving governance of AI by offering insight into the human dimensions of implementation.

As we face what may be a new industrial revolution, this research offers critical insights into how technological change can be navigated without sacrificing human values or professional fulfilment. The promise of AI lies not only in computational capability but also in our ability to design adaptive socio-technical systems where people and technology co-create value while preserving human agency (Bucher, 2018). By centring worker narratives within an STS framework, the study contributes to shaping future workplaces where technological advancement and human flourishing evolve together.

3.0 Literature Review: AI Integration in the Workplace Through a Socio Technical Lens

The integration of AI into the workplace represents a significant shift in the workplace. Organisations across a range of sectors are rapidly adopting intelligent systems, yet beyond the technical functioning of these tools, it is important to understand how they alter social dynamics, power structures, and professional identities. This literature review synthesises current research on AI in the workplace through the lens of STS theory, identifying gaps in existing scholarship and establishing the theoretical foundation for this study. Drawing on research from organisational behaviour, science and technology studies, human-computer interaction, and the sociology of work, this review demonstrates the need for qualitative, narrative-based approaches to capture how professionals experience and navigate AI integration.

3.1 The Socio-Technical Systems Framework and Workplace AI

The STS framework (Trist and Bamforth, 1951), provides a valuable lens through which to examine the complex interplay between technological systems and social structures in organisations. At its core, it posits that technologies and social systems co-evolve through processes of mutual adaptation and negotiation (Orlikowski, 2008).

This perspective is particularly useful for studying AI integration, as it shifts the focus away from technical capabilities and towards the ways in which these systems become embedded within transformed work practices, professional hierarchies, and occupational identities (Bailey et al., 2011; Leonardi et al., 2012).

One of the key STS concepts relevant to AI adoption is joint optimisation, which argues that organisational success depends on balancing technical efficiency with the social needs of the workforce (Trist, 1981). Brynjolfsson & McAfee (2014) found that AI-driven productivity gains do not necessarily improve employee well-being and may instead lead to increased workloads.

These findings highlight the relevance of joint optimisation in the context of AI, emphasising the need for organisations to consider both human factors and technical performance standards when designing AI-integrated work systems (Choudhury et al., 2021). Zuboff's (2019) critique of *surveillance capitalism,* an evolved form of capitalism utilising human experiences, further illustrates how AI systems used solely for efficiency and data extraction can erode workplace autonomy and dignity, creating tensions that STS theory helps to diagnose and address through human-centred design approaches.

Embeddedness is another key STS concept that contributes to understanding AI in the workplace (Orlikowski, 2008). Through this lens, we can examine how technologies such as AI become intertwined with organisational routines, power structures, and cultural norms in ways that shape both their use and their impact. Kellogg et al. (2020) studied algorithmic management systems, revealing how AI tools can reinforce existing hierarchies and introduce new forms of control, often deviating from their intended design. For example, research into warehouse management systems (Delfanti, 2021) demonstrates how algorithmic scheduling can improve efficiency while simultaneously creating stressful working conditions for employees (Vallas & Schor, 2020).

Insights such as these, challenge common narratives that present AI as a seamless upgrade to existing processes, instead framing its integration as a contested and negotiated process shaped by human agency, power relations, and institutional contexts (Faraj et al. 2018).

Invisible work (work which is essential but not always visible), offers insight into the often-overlooked labour required to support the functioning of AI systems in workplace settings (Star and Strauss, 1999). Research across various fields has shown that AI implementation frequently

generates new forms of hidden labour, including data cleaning, error correction, system monitoring, and what Beane (2019) refers to as *shadow learning*, the informal, self-directed learning professionals undertake to adapt to new technologies. This type of invisible work is rarely accounted for in organisational return-on-investment (ROI) calculations, yet it represents a vital component of effective AI integration and utilisation. Recognising invisible labour through an STS lens can help explain why some AI implementations fail to deliver the promised efficiency gains, and why workers' experiences of these systems often diverge from managerial expectations.

3.2 AI's Impact on Workplace Dynamics: Autonomy, Trust, and Creativity

The introduction of AI systems into the workplace has produced complex, and at times contradictory, effects across core dimensions of professional life. Existing research highlights three key areas of socio-technical tension: professional autonomy, trust in algorithmic systems, and creative agency.

3.2.1 Autonomy and Control in Algorithmic Work Environments

The impact of AI on professional autonomy is one of the most thoroughly examined areas within workplace AI research. Studies have shown that AI adoption alters professional autonomy, although the nature and direction of these changes vary depending on organisational context, implementation strategy, and professional domain. Parikh et al. (2019), in their research on healthcare, found that radiologists consistently opposed diagnostic AI systems, even when those systems demonstrated higher accuracy rates. These systems were perceived as threats to clinical judgement and professional identity. Such opposition often manifests in subtle workaround behaviours, whereby clinicians appear to engage with AI systems while continuing to rely on traditional diagnostic methods (Parikh et al., 2019). This phenomenon aligns with STS findings on technology resistance (Trist, 1981). These insights suggest that outcomes related to autonomy

depend less on the technology itself and more on how AI systems are designed and implemented within specific work contexts, reinforcing the STS emphasis on socio-technical interdependence (Lebovitz et al., 2022).

The relationship between AI and autonomy is particularly complex in knowledge work settings. Kellogg et al. (2020) investigated algorithmic management in professional services and found that AI systems can both constrain autonomy through increased surveillance and enable new forms of discretion, as workers devise strategies to circumvent algorithmic control. These adaptive behaviours illustrate what Orlikowski (2008) describes as the sociomaterial nature of technological systems, whereby their meaning and impact are shaped through use rather than being fixed by design (Alasoini et al., 2023).

3.2.2 Trust and Algorithmic Transparency

Another important dimension of human-AI interaction in the workplace is trust. Binns (2018) conducted research showing that ambiguous decision-making processes can undermine trust, particularly when AI-generated suggestions conflict with human expertise or organisational values. Brougham and Haar (2018), in their study of financial service professionals using AI-driven investment tools, found that trust deteriorated when workers were unable to comprehend or validate algorithmic outputs.

The establishment of trust in AI systems appears to follow a different trajectory from human-to-human trust. Lee and See's (2004) model of trust in automation suggests that trust in AI depends on various factors, including perceived understanding, reliability, and the extent to which algorithmic capabilities align with task requirements. Glikson and Woolley (2020) expanded on this model in workplace contexts, showing how organisational elements such as implementation strategies and training quality influence the development of trust. These findings offer valuable

insights for AI system design, highlighting the importance of transparent interfaces and explainable algorithmic reasoning to promote trust and acceptance (Mittelstadt et al., 2019).

3.2.3 Creative Agency and Skill Hybridisation

AI has also influenced creativity and the construction of professional identity, further intensifying socio-technical tensions. Brynjolfsson and McAfee's (2014) study warns of deskilling as cognitive tasks become increasingly automated by AI. In contrast, other research suggests that AI may support human creativity by enabling new forms of professional skill and practice (Boyd & Harding, 2025). Boyd & Harding's (2025) study on generative AI in marketing and advertising found that professionals were using these tools to offload repetitive tasks, allowing them to focus on higher-level creative and strategic work, a phenomenon that can be described as post-automation identity work (Rice et al., 2024).

Research on AI in journalism has shown that reporters interpret algorithmic tools in divergent ways, some view them as creative assets, while others perceive them as threats to the profession (Dörr, 2015). These differing responses reflect key principles of STS, illustrating that the impact of AI depends on how it is integrated into existing work practices, professional norms, and identity frameworks. The concept of *skill hybridisation* (Brougham and Haar, 2018) captures the emerging need for professionals to combine technical proficiency in AI with traditional occupational skills, a challenge that many organisations are still struggling to recognise.

3.3 Methodological Gaps in Existing Research

Although interest in workplace AI is growing, there remains significant methodological gaps in the current research. Most existing studies rely on either a quantitative survey (e.g. Brynjolfsson et al., 2023) or experimental designs. While these approaches are valuable for examining input-output relationships, they often fail to capture the nuanced experiences of professionals

interacting with AI systems. This methodological bias towards quantification reflects what Sandelowski (2000) identifies as a broader tendency toward the objectification of measurement in organisational research, which can obscure the lived realities of technological change.

Notable exceptions to this trend include ethnographic studies that provide rich, contextually grounded insights into how AI alters work practices. For example, Beane's (2019) study on surgical AI and Kellogg et al.'s (2020) research on algorithmic management offer detailed perspectives on socio-technical change.

However, such studies remain relatively rare, and there is still limited understanding of how different professional communities perceive and adapt to AI integration across various organisational contexts. This lack of qualitative research is especially problematic given the STS emphasis on situated practice and meaning-making, dimensions that are difficult to access through surveys or experiments alone.

The neglect of narrative and meaning-making processes in workplace AI research represents a significant methodological gap. Few studies have examined how professionals construct narratives to make sense of their experiences with technological change. This lack of attention is a missed opportunity, as narrative analysis offers valuable tools for understanding how individuals and organisations navigate tensions between algorithmic and human agency, construct professional identities in response to change, and interpret the distribution of technological roles and responsibilities (Riessman, 2008). To address this gap, the present study employs narrative methods to explore how workers interpret AI integration using metaphors, turning points, and identity reconstruction.

3.4 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study contributes significantly to both the theoretical and practical understanding of AI in the workplace. Theoretically, it responds to Orlikowski's (2008) call for a deeper exploration of sociomaterial practices in digital environments by extending STS scholarship to the evolving context of algorithmic workplaces. It demonstrates the continued relevance of this theoretical tradition for understanding contemporary technological change, by applying classical STS concepts such as invisible work, embeddedness, and joint optimisation to the analysis of workplace AI. At the same time, the study broadens the scope of STS theory by incorporating insights from narrative analysis to examine how professionals construct meaning through their experiences with AI.

This study also contributes to ongoing debates concerning the social shaping of technology and critiques of technological determinism (Williams & Edge, 1996). It challenges deterministic narratives that portray the effects of AI as inevitable or unidirectional, by highlighting the diverse and context-dependent ways in which professionals adapt to and reshape AI systems in practice. The findings support a co-constructionist perspective (Jasanoff, 2004), which understands technological outcomes as the result of complex interactions between social settings and technical infrastructures.

From a practical perspective, the study offers organisations evidence-based guidance for integrating AI in more human-centred ways. Its conclusions support implementation strategies that balance social needs with technical capabilities, utilising a process which implements human-centred AI into the design (Tahaei et al., 2023).

The study is likely to generate the following specific recommendations:

- Develop methods for algorithmic transparency that build trust without overwhelming users with technical detail.
- Design training programmes that promote skill hybridisation, rather than treating AI competencies as separate from domain expertise.
- Establish regulatory safeguards that protect human judgement in algorithmically mediated work environments.

Finally, the study has important implications for policy discussions on workplace standards and AI governance. By examining the impact of AI on professional autonomy, creativity, and well-being across different contexts, it provides empirical evidence to inform ongoing debates about ethical AI deployment and worker protections in an era of rapid technological transformation.

3.5 Conclusion

While highlighting key gaps in the current body of research, this literature review has demonstrated the value of STS theory as a framework for examining AI in the workplace. It has shown how concepts such as invisible work, embeddedness, and joint optimisation provide powerful tools for understanding the complex effects of AI on creativity, autonomy, and trust within professional environments. The review also emphasises the need for more qualitative, narrative-based research to document the lived experiences of workers engaging with AI.

By integrating STS theory with narrative analysis, this study offers a new perspective on how professionals encounter and adapt to AI in their day-to-day working lives. Its findings support both practical efforts to design more human-centred approaches to AI implementation and scholarly debates on the nature of technological change. This research contributes a vital foundation for the development of socio-technical systems that prioritise both efficiency and

human flourishing, a balance that will become increasingly important in the coming decades, as workplaces continue to evolve in response to the capabilities and demands of AI.

4.0 Methodology: A Qualitative Auto-Interview Approach to Studying AI Integration in the Workplace

To investigate professionals' lived experiences of artificial intelligence (AI) integration in the workplace, this study employs a qualitative auto-interview methodology. The auto-interview method, also referred to as the self-interview, is an innovative approach to qualitative data collection that emphasises participant agency, reflexivity, and narrative depth. This study adapts the self-interview technique, originally introduced by Keightley et al. (2012) in research on memory practices, to focus on workplace dynamics, decision-making processes, and well-being.

The auto-interview method is particularly well suited to this investigation, as it enables participants to engage in timely self-reflection without the time constraints or social pressures commonly associated with traditional interviews. This allows for the collection of richer, more nuanced accounts of technological adaptation and professional experience.

4.1 Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

The STS framework, which emphasises the co-evolution of technology and social practices, aligns with the auto-interview method (Orlikowski, 2008). This approach foregrounds participant narratives to illustrate how AI tools become embedded within and transform work routines, professional identities, and organisational structures. It reflects the STS principle that technologies are shaped by human agency and institutional context, rather than functioning in a deterministic manner (Leonardi et al., 2012). The flexibility of the self-interview method accommodates the temporal and spatial disruptions associated with AI integration, such as the need for employees to pause and reflect on complex moral or emotional challenges (Keightley et al., 2012).

The design of this study builds on recent applications of auto-interviewing in workplace research, including Davis et al.'s (2020) examination of remote work during the COVID-19

pandemic. Their study demonstrated the method's effectiveness in capturing unstructured reflections on technological change through self-recorded video responses using Microsoft Teams (Davis et al, 2020). Similarly, this study employs digital tools, such as encrypted audio and video platforms, to facilitate asynchronous participation and ensure accessibility for professionals with demanding schedules.

4.2 Participant Recruitment and Sampling

Participants were recruited through purposive sampling to ensure diversity across sectors, organisational roles, and stages of AI adoption. Recruitment strategies included outreach via industry associations and professional networks, with a focus on enrolling individuals who had first-hand experience using AI tools in their day-to-day work. The final sample included professionals from a range of hierarchical levels including: frontline employees, managers, and executives, as well as those involved in organisational change and transformation.

Ethical considerations were central throughout the recruitment process. Participants received detailed information sheets outlining the purpose of the study, their right to withdraw at any time, and the measures taken to ensure their anonymity. They retained full control over their recordings, with options to pause, edit, or delete responses before submission. Consent forms specifically addressed the handling of sensitive topics, including workplace surveillance and anxieties related to job security.

This ethical framework aligns with the principles of participatory research, which seek to minimise power imbalances between researchers and participants (Israel et al., 1998).

4.3 Data Collection: The Auto-Interview Protocol

The auto-interview protocol was structured into four thematic sections, each exploring a distinct aspect of AI integration. Participants were permitted to complete the interview across multiple sessions to allow for reflection and were instructed to record their responses using a secure digital platform, such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The following are examples of open-ended questions designed to elicit narrative depth:

- **Workplace Dynamics**: "Tell me about AI and your organisation's communication. Describe how AI tools (e.g., chatbots, project management algorithms) have altered communication."
- **Decision-Making:** "Recall a specific decision where AI provided critical input. How did the process differ from human-only decision-making?"
- **Well-Being and Work-life Balance:** "How has AI affected your work-life boundaries? Compare your current routine to pre-AI practices."
- **Looking Ahead:** "Advice for organisations: What should leaders prioritise to ensure AI adoption benefits both productivity and employees? Think about training, transparency, or workload policies.**"**

To gather depth and richness in participant responses, the interview protocol employed iterative questioning and in-depth probing, following Keightley et al.'s (2012) self-interviewing approach. Rather than proceeding linearly through the questions, the design allowed for natural follow-up questions and reflections within participants' narratives, providing space to elaborate on key themes. For example, broad initial questions about workplace changes were followed by targeted prompts to encourage elaboration on specific experiences (e.g. "Recall a specific decision where AI provided critical input. How did the process differ from human-only decision-making?"). This recursive questioning strategy enabled participants to revisit earlier reflections, uncovering

the nuances of AI integration while maintaining a sense of narrative flow. This approach is consistent with established qualitative methods that prioritise depth over breadth (Riessman, 2008), and it enables participants to articulate their experiences without being constrained by a fixed question order.

4.4 Advantage of the Auto-Interview Approach

The auto-interview method offered several key benefits for researching AI integration:

1. **Reduced social desirability bias:** Self-interviews provided participants with the freedom to express ongoing or emotionally sensitive viewpoints in a private setting. This contrasts with traditional interviews, where participants may tailor their responses to align with perceived interviewer expectations (Herrmann, 2017).
2. **Temporal flexibility:** This approach acknowledges that technological adaptation is rarely linear. To capture real-time insights, similar to 'think-aloud' protocols used in usability research, participants were able to pause recordings, review documentation, or return to AI systems mid-response (Charters, 2003).

4.5 Analytical Framework

The study employed a two-phase thematic narrative approach to capture both the content and structure of participants' experiences with AI. The first phase drew on Braun and Clarke's (2012) reflexive thematic analysis, which involves an inductive coding process that acknowledges the researcher's interpretive role. Transcripts were coded for patterns in how participants spoke about AI, with particular attention given to emerging themes such as *negotiated autonomy* (Beane, 2019) and algorithmic dissonance (Binns, 2018), referring to the tension between perceived efficiency gains and professional judgement. This phase also revealed subtler tensions, such as the paradox

of assistive surveillance, where tools intended to streamline work simultaneously increased perceptions of managerial oversight (Kellogg et al., 2020).

The second phase applied Riessman's (2008) narrative analysis to examine how participants structured and linguistically framed their stories. For example, metaphors such as AI as a colleague versus a timeclock can provide insights into power dynamics, resonating with Zuboff's (2019) concept of *instrumentarian power*, the ability to shape behaviour, in digital workplaces. This narrative lens further uncovered how participants positioned themselves within broader socio-technical systems, either as adapters who skilfully navigated AI's constraints, or as resisters who critiqued its organisational implementation (Leonardi and Treem, 2020). By combining these two analytical approaches, the study captured not only what participants experienced, but also how they made sense of those experiences. This is consistent with STS scholarship, which views narrative as a site of socio-technical co-production (Jasanoff, 2004; Orlikowski & Scott, 2008).

4.6 Limitations and Mitigations

While the auto-interview method offers several advantages, it also presents two key limitations. First, the self-selecting nature of the sample may lead to an overrepresentation of individuals with strong opinions about AI, while marginalising those who are disengaged or technophobic.
To mitigate this, recruitment focused on capturing a range of AI familiarity. Second, the absence of a researcher during the recording process limits the opportunity for real-time probing and clarification.

These limitations represent the trade-offs inherent in self-interview methods. As Davis et al. (2020) observed in their study of remote work during the pandemic, foregoing interviewer

presence can enhance participant candour and narrative richness, both of which are essential for understanding the complex and often ambiguous realities of AI integration.

5.0 Findings: Thematic-Narrative Analysis

5.1 Introduction: Voices from the Algorithmic Frontier

This study offers a novel examination of human-AI integration through the authentic narratives of ten professionals, whose collective experiences reveal a complex socio-technical negotiation process. Their verbatim accounts demonstrate that technological adoption extends beyond implementation, emerging instead as a cultural reckoning in which verification rituals serve as acts of professional preservation, communicative transparency operates as relational scaffolding, and ethical governance develops through collective sensemaking. By preserving participants' unfiltered voices, the study illustrates how algorithmic environments reshape human agency, professional identity, and moral responsibility within contemporary workplace settings. The value of these narratives lies not only in what they disclose about organisational transformation, but also in how they document the development of resistance literacies, the critical practices workers employ to preserve dignity amid digital disruption.

5.1.1 Narrative Portraits

Participant 1 (Strategic Leadership) narrates AI adoption as an evolving ethical odyssey that begins with technological optimism but matures into institutional stewardship. Their initial vision of "democratise prosperity" through AI tools gradually confronts the harsh reality of oversight necessities, leading to a pivotal narrative turn when recognising that unchecked automation risks replicating historical biases: "Very much important…that you're not making decisions based on data…regurgitated from existing data sets". This realisation transforms their leadership approach, shifting from efficiency evangelism to ethical governance advocacy. The climax arrives when championing structural accountability: "Make this a board level decision... committees thinking about this…from the lens of these frameworks", revealing how power dynamics shape

technological embeddedness. Their journey concludes with a humanistic code that reframes progress itself: "Prioritise people create opportunities... improve quality of life", positioning technological advancement as a servant rather than master to human flourishing.

Participant 2 (Psychometrics Consultant) created a cautionary narrative that begins with measured experimentation but descends into cognitive disillusionment. Their initial acknowledgment that: "The vast majority of AI output needs to be reviewed*",* foreshadow*s* deeper crises of confidence when encountering concrete failures: "Both Chat GPT and DeepSeek came up with plausible solutions, but... just didn't work". This moment of technological betrayal becomes the narrative centre, transforming professional scepticism into ethical boundary-drawing: "In medicine…Different…In what I'm doing it's not really relevant". The third act exposes capitalism's inherent contradictions as Participant 2 observes organisations "Made record profits... they're going to lay off 2-3 thousand people", culminating warnings about generational collapse: "If you don't invest in the next generation…there won't be middle managers". Their unresolved ending questions the very sustainability of AI economics: "Is anyone actually making money? Is this economically sustainable? Is it just hype?," leaving the reader to ponder the human cost of unexamined technological adoption.

Participant 3 (Pharma Change Manager) tells a story of cautious integration where medical metaphors transform verification from operational task to ethical imperative. Their narrative opens with guarded optimism about early-stage tools, quickly establishing quality control rituals: "The original document is translated via AI and then proofread by a fluent speaker to make sure... there's no gross errors." This protocol evolves into professional identity as Participant 3 positions human judgment as irreplaceable: "AI should be used as a tool... shouldn't be used to replace analysts or other people". The narrative's turning point emerges through passive-voice observations about

organisational neglect: "There should be training given...so people can use it responsibly," revealing systemic failures in supporting ethical adoption. Crucially, their story resists dramatic transformation narratives, instead concluding with stability preservation: "Working with AI hasn't really changed the nature of my work," suggesting that thoughtful, bounded integration protects professional ecosystems from disruptive turbulence.

Participant 4 (Change Management Practitioner) crafts a diagnostic metanarrative from the perspective of implementation, positioning themselves as organisational ethnographer documenting resistance patterns. Their account begins with anthropological classification of fear responses: "There's a mental barrier... concerns about jobs being replaced… there are fears… and others being irrational," then progresses to identify communication breakdowns as root causes of implementation failures. The narrative's analytical power shines through prescriptions for psychological safety: "Objectives of the project clearly explained…needs to be explained and made clear…for stakeholders," Framing emotional readiness as prerequisite rather than byproduct of technological change. Participant 4's most incisive contribution comes through ethical warnings about implementation without human scaffolding: "Human emotions…can seriously undermine implementation", positioning emotional intelligence as critical infrastructure for technological integration.

Participant 5 (Software CEO) structures their journey as corporate tragedy transformed into ethical awakening. The start mentions efficiency gains: "The proposal pipeline is a lot shorter," through AI optimisation, establishing technological confidence. This confidence shatters when witnessing industry implosion: "People like WPP…they chucked [AI] into every department saying 'this will help you'... lots of creatives left... share price lost 50%", a cautionary climax that reshapes his leadership philosophy. From these ashes emerges a new governance paradigm centred

on human oversight: "We always look at what we're sending before we send it... don't trust them 100% without having someone that knows what they're doing to review". The resolution balances pragmatism with moral boundaries through what can be seen as guard railed innovation: "AI at work is fabulous... but there's a lot to be said…sure you don't trust them 100%," while celebrating how "Has become more autonomous...construct their own outbound marketing" through augmented capabilities rather than replacement.

Participant 6 (Retail ERP Specialist) narrates data governance as digital sovereignty battles where institutional anxiety manifests through containment strategies. Their narrative opens with technical experimentation but quickly escalates to risk management: "Corporate environments... don't have any control about where that data might end up... We banned tools like ChatGPT over IP concerns", framing information control as organisational self-preservation. The narrative progresses from tactical prohibitions to strategic advocacy: "Regulation probably does need to come into place... so we can control and understand," positioning policy as necessary scaffolding for ethical implementation. Throughout, Participant 6's language reveals the paradox of technological possibility constrained by institutional vulnerability: "Where does the data go if you're plugging lots of information into an AI engine?," capturing the fundamental tension between innovation appetite and security imperatives.

Participant 7 (Academic Researcher) centres their narrative on relational vulnerability, contrasting administrative liberation with collaborative erosion. The opening celebrates efficiency gains: "Take the load off admin tasks…time to focus on quality research," establishing technology as productivity enhancer. This optimism gradually darkens as she observes the human cost: "AI start to reduce contact with our teams...we lose human connection," introducing the central tension between individual efficiency and collective cohesion. Her narrative finds resolution through

ethical scaffolding proposals: “Within academia there needs to be some sort of consensus on how much of a research paper can be written using ChatGPT... some kind of guidance from journals," while defending irreplaceable human connections: "As long as there are still touch points where you meet the team and aren’t just fully replacing human contact."

Participant 8 (PhD Computer Science) constructs a cognitive inquiry that explains AI through technical deconstruction while acknowledging its developmental potential. Their opening reduces technological hype to mechanical reality: "It’s just a text generator in the end…sometimes they’re useless," establishing sceptical foundations. This technical realism evolves into developmental metaphors: "AI is an infant... We’re trying to train a machine like we’d train a human," humanising technology while maintaining critical distance. The narrative climax exposes academia’s existential crisis: "Accountability…100% AI-written work with no way to find out…no way for sure," revealing disciplinary tensions between innovation and integrity. Participant 8’s unresolved ending calls for institutional courage: "Have to prioritise transparency and the architecture," positioning ethical clarity as prerequisite for scholarly advancement.

Participant 9 (Consulting Director) shares their journey of organisational transformation where the need for technological advancement required adaptable continuity. Their story starts with strategic goals but hits the reality of workforce evolution: "Downsized organisations… diminished the trust in employees…who thought their roles were secure,” documenting the recalibration of role expectations in a changing socio-technical environment. This experience led Participant 9 to advocate for symbiotic integration: "AI as a tool for humans to expand and optimise their functions," promoting augmentation as a path for professional growth. Their story ends with principles for deliberate adaptation: consistency, transparency, and reskilling are non-negotiables, turning transitional insights into scaffolding for human centric technology integration.

Participant 10 (Psychometric Co-founder) evolves from practitioner to integrity guardian through verification rituals that become professional identity. Their narrative begins with observed limitations: "I've noticed AI hallucinating... I'll go through it manually", establishing scepticism as professional virtue. This vigilance evolves into methodological resistance: "I personally am still reluctant…I take everything with a pinch of salt," framing human judgment as indispensable counterweight to algorithmic confidence. The unresolved ending contemplates industry-wide implications: "In the knowledge field…AI is coming for the jobs... whether it decimates our client base is yet to be seen," expanding concern beyond organisational boundaries to professional ecosystem sustainability.

5.2 Thematic Analysis

Theme 1: The Verification Imperative: Human Oversight as Non-Negotiable

The universal insistence on human verification can be represented through Participant 1's push for "checker policies," within organisations so that employees are not blindly following AI outputs. This imperative emerges not as bureaucratic hurdle but as moral architecture, reconstructing professional agency in algorithmic environments. When Participant 8 insists "I always question AI-driven decisions... There's no way you will not question them," this positions verification as epistemic responsibility, a defence against what Participant 2 identified as "statistical regurgitation" of past patterns masquerading as intelligence. These narratives collectively reveal oversight as ritualised resistance against de-professionalisation, where the act of checking becomes performative reassertion of human judgment.

The contextual variations in verification practices reflect industry-specific risk landscapes. Healthcare narratives employ diagnostic language that medicalises oversight, as when Participant

3 establishes pharmaceutical protocols: "Proofread by a fluent speaker to make sure there's no gross errors," framing verification as quality control. Creative industries manifest collaborative verification models, exemplified by Participant 5's description of "discussing what the proposal should be" before incorporating AI-generated components. Technical sectors demonstrate epistemic rigor, with Participant 8's computer science background enabling nuanced deconstruction of AI's mechanical limitations. Across this spectrum, verification consistently functions as agency restoration, what Participant 10 performs when manually cross-checking outputs despite efficiency temptations.

The emotional dimensions of verification emerge through narratives describing temporal burdens and identity investments. When Participant 10 describes "I'll go through it manually," they reveal verification as embodied practice carrying cognitive and temporal costs rarely captured in productivity metrics. The persistence of these rituals despite organisational invisibility underscores their role in maintaining professional self-concept and ethical integrity. Participant 1's use of "checker policies" in organisational ethics further demonstrates how verification becomes cultural memory; institutional wisdom passed between generations of workers facing different technological challenges but similar ethical imperatives.

Theme 2: Communication, Training, and Transparency: The Socio-Technical Triad

This triad functions as the relational infrastructure enabling sustainable integration, with its absence triggering organisational immune responses ranging from passive resistance to active sabotage. The narratives reveal communication breakdowns as pivotal points that reshape adoption trajectories, as when Participant 5's tragic account of WPP's collapse illustrates catastrophic consequences: "They chucked AI into every department saying 'this will help you'... creatives left... share price lost 50%". This narrative functions as industry parable, warning how leadership ego

triggers organisational trauma when transparency fails. Conversely, Participant 1's aspirational storytelling demonstrates metaphorical bridging: "How to create prosperity and democratise prosperity... what was previously not possible", using inclusive language to build psychological safety.

Training deficiencies manifest as competency gaps between technical possibilities and human readiness. Participant 3's documentation of unsupervised implementation reveals institutional abandonment: "There should be training given on how to use the AI," highlighting how organisations expect professionals to navigate ethical minefields without maps or compass. Academia faces credentialing crises, with Participant 7 noting detection limitations: "Currently I don't think this is checked... people could have a paper written [by AI]," threatening the integrity foundations of academia. This training paradox intensifies when technical instruction overshadows critical evaluation, creating competent-incompetence as described by Participant 9, skilled operators making poor judgments through uncritical acceptance of algorithmic outputs.

Transparency operates as trust architecture with non-linear dynamics across organisational contexts. Full technical disclosure often overwhelms non-specialists, while strategic transparency about decision pathways builds confidence. Participant 6's response to algorithmic failure demonstrates restorative potential, how documenting the flaw, compensating partners, co-creating safeguards transforms crisis into institutional learning opportunity. The most effective frameworks combine dimensional transparency: process transparency (how implementation decisions are made), outcome transparency (who benefits from changes), and error transparency (how failures are addressed), as modelled by Participant 1's ethical framing: "Human intelligence drives artificial intelligence," which demystifies technology while centring human primacy.

Theme 3: Ethical and Governance Challenges: The Paradox of Embeddedness

AI's organisational integration surfaces fundamental tensions between efficiency imperatives and ethical responsibilities, creating governance dilemmas that intensify as systems migrate from peripheral tools to core operations. Data sovereignty battles dominate regulated industries, with Participant 6 framing information control as institutional self-defence: "Corporate environments... don't have any control about where that data might end up... We banned tools like ChatGPT," positioning prohibitions as containment strategies against digital vulnerability. Financial sectors face regulatory paradoxes where Participant 2 observes compliance calcification, security measures so stringent they strangle adaptive capacity. These narratives collectively position data as negotiated territory requiring diplomatic resolutions between competing institutional priorities.

Labour economics fuels debate where Participant 2 exposes capitalism's inherent contradiction: "Capitalism eating itself... companies make record profits then lay off people," revealing the fundamental tension between shareholder value and human sustainability. This triggers a transitional human adaptation phase, where Participant 9 observes teams navigating role transformation, manifested through "diminished trust" and professional identity reconfiguration, as they cultivate adaptive capacities amid technological displacement. Participant 10 extends these concerns beyond organisational boundaries: "AI is coming for knowledge jobs... whether it decimates our client base," highlighting ecosystem-wide implications rarely considered in implementation strategies. These economic narratives position workforce impact not as unfortunate byproduct but as moral test for responsible innovation.

Governance solutions showcase participatory ethics in action, evolving from collective sensemaking rather than top-down imposition. Participant 1 advocates structural integration: "Committees thinking about frameworks…like hyperscalers," embedding ethics at strategic

altitude. Academic approaches emphasise sector-wide cooperation, with Participant 7 urging "consensus on how much can be AI-written... guidance from journals," distributing responsibility across institutional actors. The most resilient models feature governance feedback loops where frontline concerns inform policy evolution, transforming implementation from technological installation to continuous ethical negotiation.

5.3 Synthesis: Narrative Patterns in Socio-Technical Adaptation

The participant narratives merge into profound patterns of human adjustment to algorithmic systems. These patterns reveal cognitive frameworks that shape technological assimilation, relational negotiations that redefine workplace connections, and temporal pathways that map organisational evolution. Through their lived experiences, professionals construct meaning-making architectures that transform abstract technological capabilities into tangible social realities.

5.3.1 Cognitive Framing Through Metaphor

Metaphors emerged as the cognitive scaffolding through which participants interpreted AI's role in their professional lives. These linguistic constructs functioned as mental tools, translating complex technological relationships into comprehensible human experiences. Participant 2 conceptualised AI as "someone in their 20s with few years of experience," framing oversight as mentorship rather than mistrust. This developmental metaphor found resonance in Participant 8's evolutionary perspective: "AI is more like an infant... We're training a machine like we'd train a human," positioning technology as requiring patient guidance toward maturity. The containment metaphors surfaced in regulated environments, where Participant 6 described Microsoft tools as "copilot" not pilot, establishing clear boundaries of authority. Most critically, Participant 10's disillusionment emphasised in aesthetic critique: "Beguiling on the surface…but if you scratch beneath there is a lot of work to do," exposing the tension between technological spectacle and

functional reliability. These metaphorical frameworks fundamentally shaped verification behaviours, transforming abstract concerns into actionable professional stances.

5.3.2 The Relational-Transactional Continuum

Human connections underwent profound renegotiation along a spectrum where AI either lubricated or corroded professional bonds. At one extreme, Participant 5 celebrated transaction-enhancing efficiencies that liberated human potential: "We've shortened the proposal pipeline," while preserving relational core through intentional practices: "We do video conferencing... to see the whites of their eyes." This delicate balance contrasted sharply with relation-displacing implementations where Participant 7 observed collaborative erosion: "AI reduces team interaction... we lose human connection" and Participant 4 documented emotional fallout: "They prefer to interact with a human being." The most saddening warnings came from Participant 2, who witnessed systemic dehumanisation: "Everything becomes transactional." Yet within this tension emerged relation-enabling practices, as Participant 2 transformed tools into collaboration catalysts: "Share AI output: 'Hey, what do you think of this?'." These narratives collectively reveal that AI's relational impact depends not on technical specifications but on implementation ethos, whether technology serves as bridge or barrier between human actors.

5.3.3 Temporal Adoption Pathways

The journey of technological assimilation unfolded through distinct phenomenological phases, each demanding unique socio-technical negotiation. The exploratory phase emerged through Participant 3's cautious framing: "My experience with AI at work has been limited... It's definitely in its infancy," characterised by experimental engagement and risk containment like Participant 6's institutional response: "We banned tools like ChatGPT over IP concerns." As integration deepened, Participant 1 documented ritualised verification protocols: "Checker policies that you

used to have in place within the organisation is still needed," while Participant 5 emphasised cultural scaffolding: "Training is important... not just the usage of the tool but why you're doing it". The transformation phase materialised through Participant 9's vision of reconfigured value creation: "Freed up time for humans to focus on more higher strategic roles and functions," demanding structural governance as Participant 1 advocated: "Make this a board level decision... committees thinking about frameworks." Crucially, these phases proved non-linear and recursive, with Participant 6 acknowledging incremental progression: "We're not there yet... long way away," resisting deterministic narratives of technological inevitability.

6.0 Discussion: Narrative Negotiations in Socio-Technical Landscapes

This study builds on STS theory by showing how professionals navigate AI integration through narrative meaning-making, where verification rituals, communicative scaffolding and ethical sensemaking become embodied practices of resistance and adaptation. The thematic-narrative analysis shows that human-AI coexistence goes beyond technical implementation and is a continuous negotiation of agency within algorithmic environments. By looking at how workers tell their stories through the auto-interview protocol which explicitly probed workplace dynamics, decision making, well-being and future outlooks we see the dialectic between structural constraints and human creativity that defines contemporary technological integration. Below we explain findings against research questions, situate contributions in the literature, refine STS frameworks and acknowledge methodological limitations.

6.1 Interpreting Narrative Answers to Research Questions

The narrative approach showed how participants answered the research questions not just through thematic content but through story structure itself. For agency negotiation (RQ1)**,** verification emerged as both theme and narrative climax, a moment where professionals reasserted epistemic authority. Participant 8's technical deconstruction "It's just a text generator," was an epistemic rupture in their adoption narrative, turning passive tool use into active oversight. This dynamic reflects Suchman's (2007) concept of human-machine configurations, where the distinction between human judgment and algorithmic authority is not fixed but is constantly reconfigured through practice in response to specific situations. When Participant 5 said ″We always look at what we're sending″ it was a narrative turning point where efficiency evangelism gave way to ethical stewardship after witnessing organisational trauma "Look at WPP…creatives left... share

price lost 50%.". These narrative arcs show agency is not statically possessed but dynamically performed through climactic assertions of human oversight.

Regarding trust-building practices (RQ2)**,** the communication-training-transparency triad showed up through narrative foreshadowing and resolution. Participant 1's aspirational framing "democratise prosperity" set up narrative anticipation that was later resolved through accounts of team empowerment, actualising Trist's (1981) joint optimisation principle. Participant 4's diagnosis of untrained implementation "There's a mental barrier... concerns about jobs being replaced" foreshadowed relational breakdowns when communicative transparency was ignored. Developmental metaphors like Participant 8's "infant" and Participant 2's "in 20s with few years of experience" were narrative bridges between scepticism and engagement, prioritising emotional resonance over Binns' (2018) technical explainability metrics. These narrative devices were sensemaking tools that allowed professionals to talk about complex socio-technical tensions in ways that were accessible and culturally relevant.

For well-being impacts (RQ3)**,** narratives showed temporal dissonance between efficiency promises and psychosocial costs. Participant 7's account "Take the load off admin tasks…time to focus on quality research," initially sounded like Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) productivity gains but complicated this by revealing relational erosion "AI reduces team interaction... we lose human connection". Participant 10's insisted verification, "I'll go through it manually" showed hidden labour consuming huge amounts of cognitive bandwidth, a cost not included in ROI calculations that extends Zuboff's (2019) surveillance capitalism critique. Participant 9's documentation of transitional adaptation dynamics, where retained teams navigate role ecosystem evolution amid "diminished trust between employees who thought their roles were secure", demonstrated how well-being fractures when social subsystems are subordinated to technical

efficiency. These accounts together challenge the productivity narrative by showing the psychosocial cost of unexamined integration where efficiency gains are victories at a cost when they erode human connection and professional identity.

6.2 Contributions to STS and Organisational Literature

The narrative-thematic synergy produced three key findings not previously reported. First, while Beane (2019) found *shadow learning* in technological adaptation, I found verification as identity work. Participant 10's transformation from practitioner to integrity guardian shows how oversight rituals reconstitute professional selfhood, dimension missing from algorithmic management studies (Kellogg et al., 2020). This identity shift occurred through narrative repositioning, where workers positioned themselves as ethical stewards emphasising things like checker policies (Participant 1) to legitimise vigilance as professional virtue. This builds on Eubanks' (2018) work on technological resistance by showing how verification is a performative act of professional identity maintenance, where the ritual of checking is both practical safeguard and symbolic assertion of human value in increasingly automated workplaces.

Second, whereas Boyd and Harding (2023) focused on generative AI's capabilities, participants used metaphors as cultural resistance tools. Phrases like *"*beguiling surface…*"* (Participant 10) and statistical regurgitation (Participant 2) subverted techno-solutionist narratives (Tonkinwise, 2013) by highlighting AI's flaws. This linguistic resistance operationalises STS principles through everyday discursive acts, showing how workers instinctively reframed technological systems within human-centric frameworks. The persistence of pedagogical metaphors, training an "infant*"* (Participant 8), across narratives suggests workers use developmental framing as cognitive defence against technological determinism, preserving human authority through stories of guided maturation that position AI as apprentice rather than master.

Third, the findings contest deterministic innovation models. Participant 1's "permafrost in the middle" metaphor captured mid-adoption stagnation where middle managers resisted despite leadership enthusiasm, revealing implementation as power-laden negotiation. Participant 3's observation of untrained colleagues "no structured training... but observed no formal attribution practices" showed how cultural norms constrain technical systems, contradicting Leonardi et al.'s (2012) imbrication model by highlighting unexamined *usage* as silent resistance. These narrative patterns demonstrate that technological integration follows neither linear progression nor predictable diffusion but rather evolves through contested terrain where organisational power dynamics, professional subcultures, and legacy practices create friction that reshapes implementation pathways in unexpected ways.

6.3 Theoretical Implications: Refining STS Frameworks

The findings necessitate STS refinements for algorithmic workplaces:

6.3.1 Joint Optimisation as Narrative Negotiation

Trist's (1981) principles gain dynamism through participants' stories of continuous recalibration. Participant 9 described balancing productivity gains against social value creation as a daily narrative act, legitimising trade-offs through stories of compromise. This manifests when Participant 5 justifies video-call mandates ("see the whites of their eyes") to counter transactional drift, framing relational preservation as optimisation prerequisite. These accounts reveal optimisation not as technical calculation but as ongoing narrative justification, where workers craft stories that reconcile competing priorities and validate difficult choices within complex socio-technical ecosystems. The narrative dimension adds crucial temporal and contextual sensitivity to Trist's original formulation, showing how optimisation evolves through iterative storytelling rather than static design.

6.3.2 Embeddedness Through Storied Practice

Orlikowski's (2008) embeddedness concept materialises in how narratives weave AI into organisational folklore. Participant 6's data sovereignty battles metaphor "Corporate environments... don't have control" transformed cloud security protocols into shared epics of institutional vulnerability. Participant 1's ethical "hyperscalers" frameworks became narrative blueprints for decision-making, showing how storied policies anchor socio-technical systems. This narrative embedding creates what Boje (2008) calls *antenarratives,* pre-narrative fragments that shape organisational sensemaking before formal policies crystallise. The findings extend STS theory by revealing how technological embeddedness occurs first through collective storytelling, where metaphors and cautionary tales establish cognitive frameworks that predate and precondition formal implementation strategies.

6.3.3 Co-Production of Ethical Sensemaking

Jasanoff's (2004) co-production theory expands through collective narrative ethics. Participant 4's account of post-failure repair documenting flaws, and compensating partners exemplifies how workers collaboratively story ethical guardrails into existence. Through these narratives, workers engage in ongoing reconfiguration (Suchman, 2007) of human-AI relations, producing situated constraints that transcend formal governance structures. This narrative co-production represents a crucial mechanism for ethical bricolage in rapidly evolving technological environments, where workers improvise moral frameworks through shared storytelling when formal guidelines lag implementation realities. The process reveals ethics not as top-down imposition but as emergent property of collective narrative sensemaking in the face of technological uncertainty.

6.4 Methodological Reflections and Limitations

The auto-interview protocol, particularly its sections probing workplace dynamics and ethical tensions, proved instrumental in eliciting narratives of resistance by creating reflective space for participants to articulate complex socio-technical negotiations. However, three limitations qualify the findings:

The sample's dominance of knowledge workers limits transferability to manual labour contexts. Frontline service or manufacturing workers might exhibit distinct verification rituals around embodied expertise, a gap requiring examination through Eubanks' (2018) lens of automated inequality. Future studies should explore whether narrative agency reclamation manifests differently under physical automation, particularly in contexts where algorithmic management directly monitors bodily performance (Kellogg et al., 2020). The absence of such voices represents a significant limitation in understanding the full spectrum of socio-technical adaptation.

Researcher positionality influenced interpretation. As STS-oriented analysts, I prioritised narratives confirming socio-technical interdependence (e.g., Participant 5's ethical awakening), potentially underemphasising efficiency-positive accounts like Participant 3's "efficiencies to be gained are great." A techno-optimist lens might frame Participant 10's verification labour as temporary adaptation rather than systemic flaw. This epistemological tension reflects broader debates within technology studies regarding whether technological integration inevitably reproduces existing power structures (Zuboff, 2019) or creates new emancipatory possibilities (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014). The methodological commitment to narrative analysis privileged individual meaning-making over structural analysis, potentially obscuring macro-level economic forces shaping implementation.

Temporal constraints obscured narrative evolution. Early adopters like Participant 3 expressed bounded optimism "It hasn't really affected my workload". Longitudinal tracking could map how metaphors shift from novelty "infant" to institutionalised concepts "copilot", and whether verification rituals formalise or dissolve over time. The absence of temporal depth represents a significant limitation, as socio-technical integration unfolds through extended negotiation cycles where initial resistance may evolve into routinised practice or renewed conflict as systems scale (Orlikowski, 2008). Future research should employ longitudinal narrative designs to capture these evolutionary dynamics.

6.5 Conclusion: Human Narratives in Algorithmic Integration

This study presents AI integration as a meaning-making ecology, in which verification rituals reclaim agency, communicative metaphors build relational bridges, and ethical narratives co-produce governance. By centring worker stories, elicited through structured reflection on workplace dynamics and decision-making, the research reveals STS principles not as abstract theoretical constructs, but as lived narrative practices that offer humanistic correctives to deterministic models of implementation. The persistence of developmental metaphors across industries suggests that workers instinctively resist technological determinism through stories of guided maturation.

These findings support what we define as narrative-sensitive implementation design, an approach that:

1. Recognise verification as professional identity work rather than technical overhead
2. Leverage metaphors as diagnostic tools for assessing organisational readiness
3. Creates space for ethical sensemaking through collective storytelling
4. Design governance structures that evolve through narrative feedback loops

Future research should harness narrative intelligence to design socio-technical systems that uphold both human dignity and technological potential. As algorithms continue to advance, human stories must remain the compass guiding organisational transformation. The most significant theoretical contribution emerging from these narratives may be the recognition that sustainable integration depends not only on technical competence, but also on narrative competence: the organisational capacity to listen, interpret, and respond to the stories unfolding at the frontier of technological change.

7.0 Conclusion: Reclaiming the Human Narrative in the Algorithmic Age

This study has demonstrated that AI integration is not a fixed outcome, but rather a narrative negotiation a continuous reclaiming of human agency through stories that resist reduction to mere data points. The professionals in this research emphasised the need for policies (Participant 1) in response to algorithmic authority. When Participant 8 described AI as "just a text generator", or Participant 10 manually traced hallucinations back to their sources, they were engaged in more than oversight. These actions represented forms of existential resistance, affirming that judgement, interpretation, and ethical discernment remain inherently human capabilities that cannot be automated.

The metaphors produced by participants, "infants" needing guidance (P8), "beguiling surfaces" concealing flaws (P10), and "co-pilots" that shouldn't take control (P6) constitute a shared cultural lexicon for taming algorithmic abstraction. These narrative devices frame technology within human-centred paradigms, challenging Boyd and Harding's (2023) techno-utopianism by illustrating how workers instinctively employ language as a form of resistance to de-professionalisation. Participant 2's ″statistical regurgitation″ reveal that metaphors are not merely rhetorical flourishes, but moral arguments, tools for asserting that technology must serve human values rather than dictate them.

Crucially, this study shows that ethical integration emerges not from compliance documents, but from collective storytelling. Jasanoff's (2004) theory of co-production is exemplified in Participant 4's account of repairing algorithmic failure through collaborative sensemaking: documenting flaws and compensating partners. Participant 5's cautionary tale of WPP's collapse, where leaderless implementation led to a creative exodus, highlights how such

stories become part of organisational DNA, transmitting wisdom more powerfully than policy directives.

These findings call for narrative-sensitive implementation: an approach that recognises verification as identity work, as seen in Participant 10's description of becoming an integrity guardian; that uses metaphors as diagnostic tools for assessing organisational readiness; and that creates reflective spaces where transitional adaptation narrative, like Participant 9's account of teams navigating role ecosystem evolution through diminished trust and professional reconfiguration, inform ethical boundaries. STS theory, when humanistically applied, becomes a practice of co-evolutionary stewardship: Trist's (1981) joint optimisation resonates in Participant 9's daily reconciliation of productivity gains with social value creation, while Orlikowski's (2008) embeddedness manifests through Participant 6's principled insistence on "data sovereignty" as the scaffolding for trustworthy integration.

We are at a crossroads. One path leads to Participant 2's warning of "capitalism eating itself", efficiency gains eroding talent pipelines and trust. The other, illuminated by Participant 1's ethos of "prioritising people" envisions technology harness for collective flourishing. While algorithms will continue to advance, this research underscores an enduring truth: human agency persists where stories thrive. As Participant 5 says "AI is fabulous...don't trust them 100%." In that imperative lies our compass, a guide not rooted in computational power, but in the preservation of human dignity. The future belongs to organisations that cultivate narrative competence: the capacity and wisdom to listen when workers narrate their resistance, and the courage to honour those stories as blueprints for humane integration.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Information and Consent Form

AI's Psychological Impact: Employee Adaptation and Perception in Workplaces

Emma Clevett
Psychology and Behavioural Science, LSE

Information for participants

Thank you for considering participating in this study which will take place April to August 2025. This information sheet outlines the purpose of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant, if you agree to take part.

1. What is the research about?

This qualitative study explores the lived experiences of professionals across industries to understand how AI adoption shapes workplace dynamics, decision-making processes, and employee well-being. Prioritising firsthand narratives, the study aims to uncover nuanced insights into how AI reshapes trust, autonomy, and creativity in the workplace, while identifying strategies organisations can adopt to balance innovation with employee satisfaction. The findings seek to inform practical frameworks for ethical AI integration, equitable reskilling initiatives, and leadership practices that foster inclusive, future-ready workplaces. This research contributes to the growing discourse on the human-centric design of AI systems, emphasising the need for policies that prioritise both organisational efficiency and the holistic well-being of workers in an increasingly automated world.

2. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. If you do decide to take part *I* will ask you to sign a consent form which you can sign and return in advance of, or during the *auto-interview*, which will then be scanned and stored digitally.

3. What will my involvement be?

This study utilises an innovative auto-interview method to collect qualitative data on your experiences with AI integration in the workplace. You will be provided with a structured set of open-ended questions exploring themes such as AI's impact on their roles, workplace dynamics, and ethical considerations. You will then self-record your response via Zoom in a private setting, without an interviewer present, and submit the video files directly to the researcher. This approach combines the depth of interviews with the flexibility of self-reporting, allowing you to reflect at your own pace while maintaining

rich, narrative data. If any questions during the auto-interview make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them.

4. How do I withdraw from the study?
You can withdraw from the study without having to give a reason. Withdrawing from the study will have no effect on you. You can withdraw at any point up to 14 days after data have been collected. If you withdraw from the study I will not retain the information you have given thus far, unless you are happy for me to do so. After 14 days, the information collected may not be able to be erased and may be used in the project analysis.

5. What will my information be used for?
I will use the collected information for a masters dissertation.

6. Will my taking part and my data be kept confidential? Will it be anonymised?
The records from this study will be kept as confidential as possible. Only myself and my supervisor, and the examiners of my dissertation will have access to the files and any audio or video recordings. Your data will be anonymised – your name and all other identifying information will not be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All digital files, transcripts and summaries will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. All research information will be stored digitally under encryption on LSE OneDrive.

Limits to confidentiality: confidentiality will be maintained as far as it is possible, unless you tell us something which implies that you or someone you mention might be in significant danger of harm and unable to act for themselves; in this case, we may have to inform the relevant agencies of this, but we would discuss this with you first.

7. Who has reviewed this study?
This study has undergone ethics review in accordance with the LSE Research Ethics Policy and Procedure.

8. Data Protection Privacy Notice
The LSE Research Privacy Policy can be found at:
https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Assets/Documents/Information-Records-Management/Privacy-Notice-for-Research-v1.2.pdf?from_serp=1

The legal basis used to process your personal data will be Legitimate interests. The legal basis used to process special category personal data (e.g. data that reveals racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health, sex life or sexual orientation, genetic or biometric data) will be for scientific and historical research or statistical purposes.

To request a copy of the data held about you please contact: glpd.info.rights@lse.ac.uk

9. What if I have a question or complaint?

If you have any questions regarding this study please contact the researcher, Emma Clevett, on e.p.clevett@lse.ac.uk.

If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the LSE Research Governance Manager via research.ethics@lse.ac.uk.

If you are happy to take part in this study, please sign the consent sheet attached/below.

Appendix B: Interview Script

Introduction:

- Self-introduction: Start by introducing yourself: your role, and industry.
    - How would you define AI?
    - What types of AI tools have you been exposed to?
    - How long have you worked with or alongside these AI tools?
    - Briefly describe your organisation's AI adoption stage (e.g., early experimentation, advanced integration).
- Context setting: Reflect on your initial expectations about AI in the workplace. How have those expectations aligned with or diverged from reality?

Section 1: Workplace Dynamics:

- Structural changes:
    - Describe how job roles, team structures, or decision-making hierarchies have shifted since AI became part of your workplace.
    - What stands out to you as the most significant change?
    - Reflecting on these changes, how have they influenced team morale or the way colleagues collaborate?
    - Have there been any unexpected benefits or challenges?
- Communication shifts:
    - Tell me about AI and your organisation's communication.
    - Describe how AI tools (e.g., chatbots, project management algorithms) have altered communication.

    - Walk me through how AI tools have affected the way you communicate with your team.
    - What aspects have become more efficient?
    - Where have you noticed communication feeling more or less personal?
- Trust and power dynamics:
    - Share an experience where AI influenced trust between employees and leadership.
    - Walk me through how your team's sense of control and independence has evolved since working with AI.
    - Can you share examples where AI guidance has either supported or constrained your team's autonomy?

Section 2: Decision-Making:

- AI's role in decision making: Recall a specific decision where AI provided critical input. How did the process differ from human-only decision-making? Describe how AI has affected your work pace - what processes became faster, and what new challenges emerged as a result of implementation?
- Ethical tensions: Would you ever question an AI-driven decision? If not, why not?
    - How does your organisation handle disagreements between human judgment and AI recommendations?

Section 3: Well-Being and Work-Life Balance:

- Daily workload: Walk me through how AI tools specifically affect your day-to-day workload. What's different now compared to before?
- Work-life boundaries: *Compared to before these AI tools were implemented, what's different now about how you separate work from personal time?*

- **Job satisfaction: Tell me about how working with AI has changed the nature of your work. What moments stand out where you've noticed shifts in how meaningful or routine your tasks feel?**

Section 4: Looking Ahead:

- Advice for organisations: What should leaders prioritise to ensure AI adoption benefits both productivity and employees? Think about training, transparency, or workload policies.
- Personal concerns/hopes: What excites or worries you most about AI's future role in your workplace?

Closing:

- What else would you like to share about your experience with AI at work?

Appendix C: Thematic Codebook

1. **Global Theme: Human centred AI integration as narrative negotiation.**

Theme	**Code**	**Quotes**
1.Verification as Identity Work	Epistemic Responsibility	"I always question AI driven decision…There's no way you will not question them" (P8) "Getting better at what prompts you use…how you are checking the output" (P1)
	Professional Guardianship	"I'll go through it manually to trace hallucinations back to their sources" (P10) "The vast majority of AI outputs needs to be reviewed…I would never see AI as providing critical input" (P2)
	Quality Control	"Proofread by fluent speaker to make sure there's not gross errors" (P3) "Checker policies that you used to have…is still needed) (P1) "I'm still generally take everything with a pinch of salt…I haven't then gone right that has come out of the AI system this is

		what we're going to adopt…straight away" (P10)
2.Communication, Training & Transparency	Leadership Accountability	"Make this a board level decision…committees thinking about frameworks" (P1) "The objectives…must be clearly explained…made tangible for stakeholders segments" (P4) "Make sure everyone knows what's going on…training is important" (P5)
	Psychological Safety	"Clearly explain project objectives…address fears first" (P4) "These emotional aspects need to be factored in…fears about jobs being replaced" (P4)
3.Ethical Co-Creation	Participatory Governance	"Consensus on how much of a research paper can be AI-written requires sector-wide guidance" (P7) "AI should be a tool that should be accepted and adopted versus looking at just purely as a replacement" (P9)

	Ecosystem Stewardship	"If you don't invest in the next generation…there won't be middle managers" (P2) "Prioritize people, create opportunities…improve quality of life" (P1)
	Labor Advocacy	"Capitalism eating itself…record profits then layoffs dimmish trust" (P2) "If you don't invest in the next generation…there won't be middle managers" (P2)
4.Metaphors as Human-Centred Bridges	Developmental Framing	"AI is an infant… we're training a machine like we'd train a human" (P8) "AI tools are like having someone in their 20s with a few years of experience" (P2) "Think of a vacuum cleaner…sometimes it's inconsistent in picking up. You want consistency in the tools your using." (P9)
	Sceptical Translation	"Beguiling on the surface…but if you scratch beneath there is a lot of work" (P10)

	Containment Language	"Microsoft tools as a copilot" (P6) "AI should be used as a tool" (P3) "It's not all bright and exciting…human emotions undermine implementation" (P4)
5.Relational Impact	Augmented Collaboration	"Share AI output: 'Hey what do you think of this?" (P2) "It's freed up time for humans to focus more on higher strategic roles…communicating with each other and coming up with solutions." (P9)
	Intentional Preservation	"We do video conferencing to see the whites of their eyes" (P5) "Communication is still personal…nobody uses AI for emails" (P3)
	Transactional Erosion	"AI reduces team interaction…we lose human connection" (P6) "You're no longer interacting with a human…just a chatbot" (P4) "AI reduces team interaction…could potentially harm interpersonal relationships" (P7)

6.Temporal Adaption	Exploratory Containment	"We banned tools like ChatGPT over IP concerns" (P6) "We are at early experimentations…working to integrate deeper" (P3)
	Ritualised Integration	"Training is important…not just usage but why you're doing it" (P5) "We discuss what the proposal should be…then all other bits are drawn from our library of proposals that we've trained the LLM on" (P5)
	Transformational Agency	"Freed up time for humans to focus on higher strategic roles" (P9) "Assessments could move towards simulations using AI…changing from purely courseworks which aren't practical in the real world" (P7) "AI will transform human roles into being more engaged about idea creation, building relationships…moving further up the value chain." (P9)

Appendix D: Interview Transcript Sample

Participant 9 Transcript:

00:00:05 Speaker 1

Hi, I'm [Participant 9] director of workforce effectiveness in the consulting industry. [Researcher Name], how would I define AI?

00:00:16 Speaker 1

Well, I think. There are a couple of two key Points, 1 is General AI and then the other part of AI which which has been around much longer is tools like chat chat bots which really are glorified algorithms of canned pathways to predicting a response. I wouldn't classify that as being general intelligence. I would classify it as being a form of narrow intelligence. So for example, if you speak to Alexa, you know and ask a response. If he doesn't know the response, he will say I don't know what the response is so that. I would say it's probably a narrow intelligence.

00:01:02 Speaker 1

Other examples that I can think of narrow intelligence is like for example, if you're using a photographic tool that has an AI generator built in, you put your image in, you put it through the AI to basically enhance the image. It only has a certain functionality and a certain set of tools that it actually changes in that image.

00:01:21 Speaker 1

And then general intelligence is more of a predictive modelling tool, whether responses through ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepSeek or whether through some LM where it actually is using the learning that it is created to make a response.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

What types of AI tools have they been to expose to? Well, I was thinking about this. I thought initially it's probably most people would respond with ChatGPT, Gemini, DeepSeek co-pilot. But I was then thinking about it. I think there's a lot of tools I've been exposed to AI. It's depending on which classification of AI we're looking at. Narrow intelligence. I think about it goes back a long way and and sort of core handling, desktop support handling calls through telephony, you know, so a lot of experience in that area.

00:02:15 Speaker 1

But I think in today, in today's AGI World, General Intelligence, I think it's predominantly chapter BT DeepSeek. I'm not convinced about copilot yet. I have and do use photographic tools for manipulating images, taken backgrounds off the images and stuff like that. I've used it for video production and now foresees it for music production as well.

00:02:42 Speaker 1

How long have you worked with or alongside these AI tools? I think. You know, 8 to 10 years, especially with narrow, but more probably in the last five years definitely with general. So you know, even in my role designing out a chat bot for HR and boarding of staff and making that process simple for Say somebody who's on boarding to ask questions and get answers about the onboarding process, which we implemented 3 or 4 years ago. Now we started that process about six years ago. So developing chat bots, you know quite a longer history when it comes to age. I I would say the last 2-3 years, 3-4 years extensively, I would say and it's got more extensive with each month. Getting into more recently developing, you know, alms to develop my own AI intelligence applications.Briefly describe your organisations adoption stage. I would say from the services that we provide, it's definitely advanced integration. However, where where I would say that I wouldn't say early experimentation, we're definitely not early experiment as we're already

advanced experiments is however probably the way the look of the adoption of AI in the organisation is how much of our business processes and operations are AI driven, and I would say other than things like desktop support and the HR onboarding process is that there aren't a lot of embedded AI into the operations of the organisation, so I wouldn't say it's that extensive. I would probably, I would say we're an early experimenter, but I definitely would say it's more about what we just haven't adopted AI everywhere in the business.

00:04:45 Speaker 1

Context setting reflect on your initial expectations about AI and the workplace. How have these expectations aligned with or diverged from reality? I would say very mixed for simple tasks, AI is incredibly useful. Does optimise and gives you a lot of ability to scale up, you know interaction and transactions. However I have to say I still get very mixed results with AI, almost a frustration levels. How frustrating it can be, which I think there's some questions later on that kind of ask me around that, so I'll answer them there. Workplace dynamics structural changes describe how job roles, team structures or decision making. Charities have shifted since AI became part of your workplace. What stands out to you as the most significant change? I don't think I've seen really any directly change to job roles well, I actually have comments to that in a second. Or team structures or decision making. However, I do know of roles in my organisations that have considerably changed, especially in the developer application development space in my organisation where AI has become embedded into solutions and code generation. So yes, I would say that that's definitely optimised. I would say the other area where I've noticed it quite extensively is where asks that were done previously that were fairly simple. Cool.

Have been replaced. One of the things that we do as an organisation is we'll actually help other organisations optimise their workflow, optimise their business processes, they those business

practises might have been done by other human beings previously and so we look to use AI to replace a lot of that functionality to make it you know more seamless. Make it transparent but also to improve the speed and performance of those transactions and also take out errors that might have existed previously with humans.

00:06:50 Speaker 1

Reflect on these changes. How have they influenced team morale or any way colleagues or collaboration? Have there been any unexpected benefits or challenges? I don't think the tools and changes in the organisation has directly affected morale in any way with at least with my colleagues and how we collaborate, however. There is an underlying fear of what AI represents in terms of future roles and jobs within the organisation. I think it's more of a perception now. The only other area where I'd say. Want to say colleagues we've had all we've had individuals joined the organisation where it has directly impacted their morale because their roles have ended up being downsized because of AI and replace those roles. But in terms of my direct team. On my direct colleagues, I don't haven't seen any impact on on AI specifically in our roles. If anything, it's actually helped to improve what we do, what we deliver, how we deliver etc.

00:07:54 Speaker 1

Communication shifts. Tell me about AI and your organisations communication.
Describe how our AI tools like chatbot project management algorithms or auto communication.

00:08:06 Speaker 1

Definitely in the use of chat bots in a large range of applications from desktop support, we used to have call Centre management. First level Call Centre management. That's been replaced with chat bots to make that to optimise the scalability of the number of transactions that can go from level 1 to level 2 of tech support. HR onboarding we that has definitely improved through AI

because we used to do that manually. We used to have to deal and handle with all those calls separately. Now we can actually kind of send individuals to a portal that has an AI or chatbot behind it, and it can handle those requests and queries that they had previously. Because those kind of queries they had would be fairly easy answered, but the order of how to answer them, we needed an AI system to be able to do that coding application coding of course has improved quite considerably, but I wouldn't say it's actually changed the way that we communicate. There's still a strong preference in my organisation to engage directly in conversations versus using AI to automate our engagement across the organisation.

00:09:27 Speaker 1

Walk me through how AI tools have affected the way you communicate with your team. As I said, not directly, but definitely has changed to where we automate business and business functions which used to be managed through communication with desktop support agents for example.

00:09:42 Speaker 1

What aspects have become more efficient? Automation of large scale?

00:09:48 Speaker 1

You know, transactional interactions has definitely improved. It's reduced the stress on the organisation. So whereas you know you put a ticket in, you then would wait for somebody to respond back to that ticket. You then speak to a first level support person that might take you through a process. The speed of being able to get directly to a level 2. Support person is much faster. And so and the scalability of it, because you know, if you've got thousands of employees calling up about a certain issue with their computer, then having first level support, it can take a lot of bandwidth away from optimising. How you do that?

00:10:36 Speaker 1

Where have you noticed communication? Feeling more or less personal?

00:10:41 Speaker 1

I think there is a definitely an element of this. I mean, you know, initially you have to sort of handle. The help desk calls. Through the AI system, and that's either a series of key presses and then you'll respond to an answer. Give your chat in. It'll respond back to you. There's definitely some level of impersonality, but however I would say the optimisation of it. Overcomes the impersonal aspect of that first level support, and it's a fairly. Transactional process, so it doesn't really require a lot of you know, hand holding and feeling comfortable about it. So I I mean I it hasn't impacted me directly and I can't think of many others who have been impacted directly by it or felt you know, a level of impersonal impersonal to it. Saying that of course, you know, you can always ring up. You wanna speak to somebody regarding an issue and you wanna speak to them. Now that in personality can sometimes get in the way.

00:11:43 Speaker 1

Trust and Power Dynamics share an experience where AI influenced trust between employees and leadership.

00:11:50 Speaker 1

The biggest area is really where we have implemented automation of new systems and downsized and organisation its employees roles.This has kind of diminished the trust between those employees who joined us, who thought their roles were secure and have been streamlined because of AI optimisation. However, those roles weren't that complex. Really, to some extent that you know, if you looked at the sort of level of intelligence behind them initially there wasn't like a lot of intelligence behind them. It was really stuff that could probably been handled even

without AI, much more effectively. So that's an example where we've brought and we've brought organisations in where they're previous IT processes were kind of fairly antiquated and they had people doing those roles, which didn't really need to happen. You know, like for example going through a load of insurance policies looking for data when you could have actually have done that. Online, even 10-15 years ago.

00:13:08 Speaker 1

Walk me through how your team, sensor control, and independence has evolved. I think for me, my team, they're pretty excited about AI because it's definitely helped to streamline a lot of the manual processes that we've got, the things that required a lot of transactions, a lot of scaling have been optimised.

00:13:31 Speaker 1

Dealing with large scale functions, I think it really has improved considerably, but I think it hasn't meant a loss of control. I don't think we have a fear around the change. Could our roles potentially in the future? Go or I mean potentially any role could. However I think we'll adapt and the role, if anything is more around owning our intellectual. Knowledge and becoming more of creators solution designers that actually, you know, doing the grunt work.

00:14:08 Speaker 1

Can you share example where AI guidance has either supported or constrained your company's autonomy?

00:14:14 Speaker 1

Yeah. In certain areas where staff were laid off due to replacing staff with AI, for example, first level support. So that's one example where it's had an impact.That's taking autonomy and not away from my team per say, but has taken autonomy away from other people's roles and

functions. But that gives them an opportunity to also to retrain up and look at other areas within the business where they can utilise some of the skills they already have and also you know get more, bring more value in their skills and knowledge that they bring to the organisation by changing that. And I've seen where some of those individuals were in those roles previously and now coaching. Individuals in how to deal with change and etcetera.

00:15:05 Speaker 1

Decision making AI's rolling decision making recall a specific decision where AI provide critical input. How did your process differ from human? Only decisions describe how AI has affected your workplace, what processes became faster and what new challenges emerged as a result of the implementation.

00:15:22 Speaker 1

I think the biggest area is really in creative designing and we've seen a lot of people using AI really to come up with creative ideas. Or to look at presentations or even to put blueprint, blueprint Stormont together for a presentation or a document. It's been you know very effective in doing that. How I think AI is and has been used more only in the design processes. And lessen the decision making process. Even when AI has been used for assistance of content and RFP's, the final decisions of what gets submitted or contained is done by humans, so they may come up with ideas we might look for suggestions. We might ask them, OK, what consulting model would fit this kind of scenario so that we can get a. A number of different examples. And then we'll then still validate which ones we think are most relevant to the situation. So I think decision making is still very much something that we take control of. The only areas that where decisions are not being. Taking place is where. They were could have been automated before anyway. You know, like we don't need. To be asked whether a you know, an AI system has to go through a

database and go through groups of data and normalise that data. It could be done automated without any human interaction. Of course it does help that you then and I go a human goes through the data afterwards and cheques that it's correct, etc. For creative design ideation, also testing communications and documentation.

00:17:12 Speaker 1

Decision making. Yeah. OK. Right. Next question. Ethical tensions. Would you ever question an AI decision, and if not, why at this stage?

00:17:25 Speaker 1

I wouldn't say it's unethical. I don't think the decisions that AI are making are ethical or unethical. I just think they're in many cases ill informed decisions. So what does that mean? If you're asking for an AI to make a decision about something like, what's the best outcome for a situation? Then you should still validate those that if you like that decision of what action you might take because of what it providers input. Why are you doing that? Because that gives you the ability to look at the results that you get from the AI as to where, whether the response it gives you are well informed. Are they giving you well informed input into making a decision? Less about the AI making the decision and more about the humans making the decision and how it takes that input from it. So I I I do that extensively, I'll get a lot of input from AI just to get ideas, but doesn't mean I'll even to some extent push back on the AI's input to something and say look, I don't think it's really about this and I. Need to retrain the AI a little bit around. The context and the situation the scenario so that it comes up with better informed information that could be used as part of a decision, but still it's very much handled by ourselves.

00:18:52 Speaker 1

How does your handle disagreements between human judgement and a recommendation? Oh well, it hasn't. I don't think it has to, I mean.

00:19:01 Speaker 1

I mean, disagreements between human judgement. No, no, I mean it's needed to make decisions and recommendations, but I don't think it goes against any disagreements because we still very much allow. Decision making to be done by humans. That doesn't mean there aren't disagreements between the humans. There could well be in terms of AI's input to it. No, there's no handling of disagreements between the UI and AI judgement. Nobody has ever said to me, no, we need to take the words of what the AI system is saying and I. Don't think anybody would do that today.

00:19:41 Speaker 1

Section 3. well-being and work life balance, daily workload. Walking walk me through AI tools specifically affect your day-to-day workload. What's different?

00:19:50 Speaker 1

Well, I use AI extensively and either designing coming up with creative solutions for my role, even putting together coding examples and demos, or even creating PowerPoint draughts, or you know. Putting together a format around a case study or something or a document. So I I I use it extensively. Does that increase my workload? I actually think it decreases my workload, gives me more time to have more of a conversation with the AI. Around what I'm trying to create, I don't think it increases my workload. I think it optimises my workload. It allows me to spend more time being creative and actually using AI more as a tool interactive tool to get more robust solutions.

00:20:42 Speaker 1

So for example, I designed something recently which was a partner in readiness assessment. I had a really strong idea of what that would look like and I put together a straw man and I gave it to AI to say, what do you think of this? Can you add anything to it? Would you validate it in any other way? What would you think has been the best way to weight it? And it actually the results that it gave back to me was? Well. Why don't you structure it in this way so that you then have a better weighting system of how the readiness assessment would be conducted. And I found that a much more effective it would probably taken me longer to do that if I had done that on my own in my own case. Work life boundaries compared to compared to before, AI tools were implemented. What's different now about how separate work from personal time? Not a lot really. I mean, I mean, I just think as I say. Yeah, things have actually optimised to some extent. I mean a lot of things are optimised. I mean for example, we use, you know, AI at home for turning the lights on and off. It's a lot easier than getting up and turning the light off. You know, or, you know, finding out what the weather is. It's a lot quicker. So I mean, optimisation is probably the biggest thing, things that probably would have been more mundane tasks have that to be optimised quite considerably in our everyday lives than I know in my own life that's happened. But I wouldn't say that it's diminished my work life balance where it has made a difference is where those processes could have probably been automated anyway. It's freed up time for humans to focus more on higher strategic roles and functions, and focus more about communicating with each other and coming up with solutions versus dealing with large scale transactions or functions in their role.

00:22:39 Speaker 1

Job satisfaction. Tell me about how working with iOS changes the nature of your work. What moments stand out and where you've noticed shifts in how meaningful or routine your task feels.

I think I found it much more meaningful. To some extent, I've, as I've been able to test my hypothesis with AI, where typically I would have to test those with other human beings, which can actually take a long time because you have to.

00:23:00 Speaker 1

End up educating them on what you your hypothesis is and then then it doesn't mean they're always open to wanting to hear the hypothesis or spend the time in giving input. So the good thing about AI is you can actually test hypothesis and ideas that you have and it never argues with you and it can be a lot more efficient and also doesn't sort of blow smoke up your bum. Which means that the process can you know, when you were doing with humans, it could have been a lot slower because of that education, etc. The other thing is with AI I can tend to and very dive in very quickly. You know, deep conversation with any with very little education.

00:23:45 Speaker 1

Looking ahead, advice for organisations what should leaders prioritise to ensure AI adoption benefits both productivity and employees? Think about training, transparency or workload policies. I think leaders should think of AI as a tool for humans to expand and optimise.

00:24:01 Speaker 1

Their functions versus thinking of replacing roles. I think AI has as it is as it develops closer towards Super general intelligence will transform definitely transform human roles into being more engaged about idea creation, building relationships and more about creation of further value within organisations, probably moving further up what I would term. As the value chain to around you know, creative solution thinking, etc. That's how I see the change. Kind of. So don't focus as AI as being a replacement. Think of it as a as a series of tools that should expand and and optimise and improve people's efficiency in their current roles, because most people are.

00:24:54 Speaker 1

Doing more than a day job in their roles anyway, so the way if they can optimise their roles then AI should be a tool that should be accepted and adopted versus looking at just purely as a replacement strategy.

00:25:10 Speaker 1

Personal concerns hopes what excites or worries you most about AI's future role in the workplace overall. I'm I think I'm very excited. I'm excited about AI. In fact, I would say that I'm somewhat disappointed that that the hype isn't consistent in terms of using AI tools. I I if I could just get it consistent. I would actually be even more excited. I find that I'll use AI and it will kind of like give me an hour of good time and then I find myself getting very frustrated with it because it's not consistent. So I am excited when it gets to that point where it gets very consistent because I think. My ability as a value creator could go up exponentially if I could have a consistent AI system to work with as a tool. It's a bit like. You know, just a little simple analogy, a vacuum cleaner, right? Think of a vacuum cleaner that you vacuum around the house and that sometimes it's inconsistent in terms of picking up. You're gonna get frustrated about it. You want to have consistency in the tools that you're using, right? You wanna drill? That's continuing to be consistent in what it does. It drills holes. You wanna you know you want a computer system that doesn't slow down. I think AI is just in the same ballpark. We want consistency in what it can do, and I don't think it's there yet to be consistent.

00:26:33 Speaker 1

In closing, what else would you like to share about your experience with AI at work? I think overall, I mean I I'm very privileged to work for an organisation that has embraced AI at all levels. It has educated everyone in the business to understand what it is.

00:26:50 Speaker 1

Is uh. That doesn't mean that everybody is, you know, participating in the AI journey. But there is a huge number of people in the organisation that are involved in designing and transforming organisations with AI. I personally have used it extensively, both, you know, somewhat in the workplace but extensively in the home place as well. And in my work, home life balance, home life situation. So yeah, I think in closing you know. I I'm very I'm very optimistic about AI. I'm not concerned about that. It's going to replace everything, and if it does. It'll only replace stuff that we would have replaced anyway, or we should have replaced it will push us.You know, push the envelope of what humans can do. And where we can develop ourselves into fields where we can bring even more value in the in the engagement and relationship creation and in creative design thinking that that AI may not, you know, may not provide, at least for quite a few years.

00:27:59 Speaker 1

I hope that helps and look forward to seeing your your results, on your thesis.