

A Systematic Review of Psychological Contract Research in AI-Driven Workplaces

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Abstract – This study examines how artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping psychological contracts in contemporary workplaces. As AI-driven technologies increasingly influence work processes, decision-making, and employee–organization interactions, traditional expectations and perceived obligations between employees and employers are being redefined. However, existing research remains fragmented, lacking a systematic understanding of how psychological contracts evolve in AI-driven work environments. The objective of this study is to systematically review the current body of literature on psychological contracts in AI-driven workplaces, identify key research themes, and highlight gaps for future research. Drawing on a systematic literature review approach, this study analyzes peer-reviewed articles retrieved from Web of Science and Scopus databases. A structured screening and selection process is employed to ensure the relevance and quality of the included studies. The findings reveal four major research streams: changes in employee expectations, shifts in perceived organizational obligations, issues of trust and fairness under algorithmic management, and emerging forms of employment relationships. These studies collectively indicate a transition toward more dynamic, uncertain, and individualized psychological contracts in AI-driven contexts. This study contributes to the literature by integrating fragmented findings into a coherent framework and proposing directions for future research. Practically, it offers insights for organizations seeking to manage employee expectations and maintain sustainable employment relationships in increasingly digitalized workplaces.

Keywords – Artificial intelligence; Psychological contract; Workplace; Employee expectations; Algorithmic management

I. INTRODUCTION

With the growing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and generative technologies into the workplace, employment relationships are undergoing structural change. AI is no longer a supporting tool. It increasingly acts as an organizational agent, shaping task allocation, performance evaluation, and managerial decisions, especially in contexts of algorithmic management (Tomprou & Lee, 2021; Zhang et al., 2025). This shift places pressure on psychological contracts, understood as employees' implicit beliefs about mutual obligations with the organization (Abasaheb & Rajagopal, 2025; Bankins & Formosa, 2019). In education, the spread of generative AI further intensifies these changes. Faculty expectations regarding professional identity, autonomy, and organizational support are being redefined. Technology is not only altering how work is performed, but also how exchange relationships are understood (Huang & Zhao, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2025).

Despite the rapid growth of research in this area, several gaps remain. Existing studies are largely concentrated in gig

and low-skill service settings, with limited attention to highly professional contexts such as education. In these settings, psychological contracts tend to be more relational and closely tied to identity and autonomy, yet the impact of AI has not been systematically integrated (Tomprou & Lee, 2021; Zhang et al., 2025; Huang & Zhao, 2025; Schmitt et al., 2024; Shahzad et al., 2025). At the same time, theoretical perspectives remain fragmented. Social exchange theory (SET), conservation of resources theory (COR), and psychological contract theory (PCT) are often applied separately, with limited effort to explain how they interact. The process through which AI awareness evolves from resource pressure to perceived contract breach, and further affects exchange relationships, remains insufficiently synthesized (Cheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025). In addition, the idea of a human–AI psychological contract is still underdeveloped. Most studies retain a human–organization focus and do not fully capture the role of AI in shaping communication, feedback, and fairness signals (Abasaheb & Rajagopal, 2025; Bankins & Formosa, 2019; Huang & Zhao, 2025; Liu et al., 2025).

Against this background, this study addresses two questions: which theoretical perspectives are most commonly used to explain psychological contract dynamics in AI-driven contexts, and how these perspectives jointly explain the mechanisms linking AI to employee behaviour and contract perceptions. The aim is to integrate fragmented insights and provide a more coherent analytical framework.

These issues are also visible in practice. The use of AI in management is creating a form of algorithmic agency. Algorithms now play a central role in assigning tasks, evaluating performance, and monitoring behaviour, yet their decision processes are often opaque and impersonal (Tomprou & Lee, 2021; Zhang et al., 2025). When employees struggle to understand or trust these systems, their perception of organizational obligations weakens, and psychological contracts tend to shift from relational to transactional forms (Abasaheb & Rajagopal, 2025; Tomprou & Lee, 2021).

As a result, psychological contract breach is becoming more common (Cheng et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025). Its effects extend beyond perception. Resource loss often translates into behavioural responses, such as employee silence or reduced knowledge sharing (Cheng et al., 2025). At the same time, the impersonal nature of human–AI interaction can reduce work engagement and increase career-related anxiety (Bankins & Formosa, 2019; Khan et al., 2025).

The challenge is particularly evident in educational settings. Academic staff tend to have strong professional identity and high expectations of autonomy (Huang & Zhao, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2025). If AI is introduced without careful design, it may create both technological pressure and identity threat. When organizations fail to balance efficiency

gains with the protection of psychological resources, employee well-being and long-term commitment are likely to decline (Huang & Zhao, 2025; Liu et al., 2025). Over time, this may also affect teaching quality and academic innovation (Liu et al., 2025; Shahzad et al., 2025).

A systematic review is therefore needed to clarify how psychological contracts evolve in AI-driven contexts, to identify key mechanisms, and to provide more grounded guidance for organizations, particularly in knowledge-intensive environments (Cheng et al., 2025; Huang & Zhao, 2025; Liu et al., 2025).

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to synthesize empirical evidence on psychological contract research in AI-driven workplaces. The SLR approach is widely recognized for its systematic, transparent, and rigorous process of literature identification and screening (Tranfield et al. 2003; Paul & Criado 2020; Del Vecchio et al. 2022). Compared with traditional narrative reviews, SLRs can reduce potential bias and improve transparency and replicability. This helps build a stronger theoretical foundation for the reviewed topic (Battisti et al. 2021; Davies et al. 2023).

To ensure the quality and relevance of the selected studies, this study applied strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected articles needed to focus on psychological contract in the context of AI or digital technologies. They also needed to relate to employee and organization relationships in workplace settings. In addition, only peer-reviewed journal articles written in English were included.

The literature search was conducted in Web of Science and Scopus. In Web of Science, the search used the keywords "psychological contract" and AI OR "artificial intelligence" OR "algorithmic management" OR digital*. The initial search identified 63 articles. After applying language, document type, and subject category filters, 58 records were excluded. The selected subject categories included Management, Business, Psychology Applied, Psychology Multidisciplinary, Social Sciences Interdisciplinary, Education Educational Research, and Social Sciences Psychology.

The same keyword combination was used in Scopus. The initial search identified 120 articles. After applying language, document type, and subject area filters, 33 records were excluded. The selected subject areas included Business, Management and Accounting, Social Sciences, and Psychology. After the database filtering stage, 183 records remained for further screening.

In the next stage, titles, abstracts, and journal scopes were screened for relevance. This process led to the exclusion of 15 articles. The remaining 125 articles were then assessed for eligibility. At this stage, the screening focused on conceptual and thematic relevance. Articles were excluded if they did not focus on psychological contract, were not related to AI or digital technologies, were not situated in workplace or employee contexts, were purely technical or system-oriented, or showed conceptual inconsistency or insufficient relevance. Based on these criteria, 85 articles were excluded.

After all screening procedures, 40 articles were retained for in-depth analysis. These articles formed the final sample for the review. The study selection process is illustrated in Figure 1.

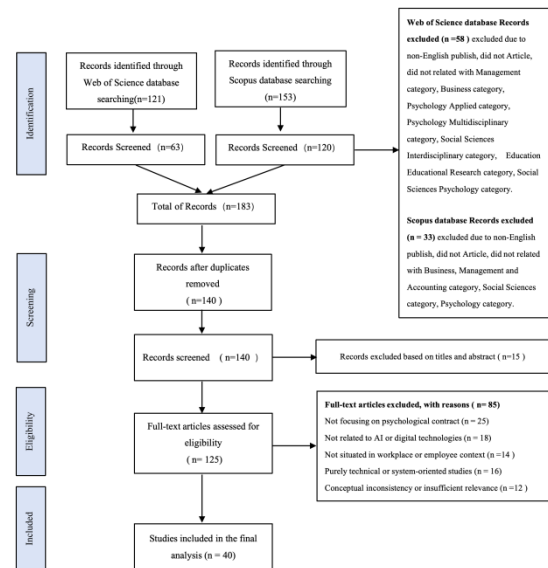


Figure 1. Data Collection Flow Diagram

III. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings based on the analysis of the 40 selected studies. Table 1 summarizes the key characteristics of these studies and provides the basis for the following analysis. It offers an overview of how recent research has approached psychological contract issues in AI-driven work environments.

A clear pattern emerges from the summary table. Most studies rely on quantitative approaches, with survey-based methods appearing most frequently. This suggests that existing research tends to focus on measuring employee perceptions, attitudes, and behavioural responses in structured ways. Qualitative and conceptual studies are less common. When they appear, they are often used to explore emerging issues that are not yet well captured by established measurement tools, especially in rapidly changing digital work settings.

The research settings are also relatively concentrated. The majority of studies are situated in organizational or platform-based environments. This reflects the growing presence of digital technologies and algorithmic management in the workplace. Many studies focus on how AI systems are used to monitor performance, allocate tasks, or support decision-making. At the same time, sector-specific contexts receive limited attention. In particular, education appears only rarely in the selected studies. This indicates that the application of psychological contract theory in education under AI-driven conditions remains underexplored.

The research focus shows a similar level of concentration. The reviewed studies frequently examine employee expectations, trust, fairness, and responses to algorithmic control. These topics are closely related to how individuals interpret organizational obligations and evaluate technological interventions in their work. Some studies also

consider issues such as job insecurity, autonomy, and perceived organizational support in digital contexts. Together, these themes point to the changing nature of psychological contracts in AI-driven environments. They also suggest that technological systems are increasingly shaping how employees understand and negotiate their relationships with organizations.

Overall, the patterns observed in Table 1 indicate that current research remains focused on a relatively narrow range of methods, contexts, and topics. While this provides a degree of consistency, it also highlights several limitations. In particular, there is a need to expand research into more diverse contexts and to adopt a broader range of methodological approaches. These observations provide a useful basis for a more detailed examination of the theoretical perspectives underlying the reviewed studies. Building on these patterns, the following section examines the theoretical perspectives used in the reviewed studies.

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARIES OF STUDIES REVIEWED

No	Author	Year	Content Context	Topic	Method
1	Shekhar & Saurombe	2026	AI-driven workplace discourse	Algorithmic anxiety; trust; identity; psychological contract disruption	Mixed-methods discourse analysis
2	Braganza et al.	2021	AI adoption in organizations	AI adoption; job engagement; employee trust; decent work	Quantitative survey
3	Deas & Coetzee	2022	Digital-driven workplace	Generational differences; value-oriented psychological contract	Quantitative survey / ANOVA
4	Kim & Kim	2024	AI learning / cybersecurity workplace	Work overload; cybersecurity behaviour; PCB; ChatGPT-related AI learning	Quantitative moderated mediation
5	Salama et al.	2025	Hotel employees	AI awareness; turnover intention; burnout; PCB	Quantitative PLS-SEM
6	Deas	2021	Digital natives in workplace	Digital natives; expectations; measurement of psychological contract	Conceptual / measurement discussion
7	Deas & Coetzee	2021	Digital-era workplace	Digital-era psychological contract; research and practice issues	Review / synthesis
8	Bankins & Formosa	2020	Workplace social robots	AI social robots; human-robot psychological contract	Conceptual
9	Bankins & Formosa	2021	Ethical AI at work	Ethical AI; social contract; workplace psychological contract	Conceptual / theoretical
10	Al-Massalkhi & Ajonbadi	2024	Chinese gig economy	Gig work; platformisation; precarious psychological contracts	Conceptual chapter
11	Raeder	2021	Digital HRM / HRM 4.0	HRM digitalisation; trust; transparency; relational contracts	Conceptual

12	Ding et al.	2026	University design teachers	Generative AI; empowerment; depletion; education workplace	Quantitative SEM
13	Khan et al.	2025	AI-human workplace interaction	AI-human interaction; work engagement	Quantitative survey
14	Xu & Xue	2023	AI transformation workplace	Unemployment risk; knowledge hiding; AI disruption	Quantitative two-stage survey
15	Ballas et al.	2024	Digital age of work	Digital work; psychological contract research synthesis	Systematic literature review
16	Deas & Coetzee	2022	Digital mindset employees	PCIOI measurement; digital mindset; psychological contract content	Quantitative factor analysis
17	Zhang et al.	2026	Gig workers / digital platforms	Algorithmic control; work engagement; perceived fairness; psychological contract	Quantitative survey
18	Bulinska-Stangrecka & Naim	2021	Gen Z digital workplace	Gen Z expectations; digital world; psychological contract	Conceptual / review
19	van Haeften	2023	Digital government transformation	Digital transformation; organizational change; psychological contracts	Research proposal / conceptual
20	Sinha	2025	Digital workplace	AI integration; knowledge hiding; psychological contract	Conceptual framework / review
21	Dhliwayo	2021	Digital-era personnel selection	Personnel selection; pre-emptive management; psychological contract	Conceptual
22	Amoako et al.	2024	Healthcare professionals	Digital transformation; technological readiness; turnover intention	Quantitative moderated mediation study
23	Van Der Schaft et al.	2020	Digitally transforming organizations	Social interaction; psychological contracting dynamics	Qualitative process study
24	Tomprou et al.	2025	Downsizing / algorithmic management	Downsizing; bad news; layoff footprint; algorithmic management	Conceptual chapter
25	Sanders & Florkowski	2025	Employment relationship	Psychological contracting process; sensemaking	Conceptual process model
26	Bester & Stander	2021	Talent assessment in digital era	Talent-enabled assessment; employee experience; psychological contract	Conceptual / practitioner guide
27	Ghasemaghahi	2026	AI-supported organizational decisions	Organizational-AI misalignment; integrity-based trust; AI reliance	Experimental / AI decision study
28	Asfahani & Alharbi	2024	Fluid digital work arrangements	Fluid work; digital platforms; employment boundaries	Conceptual / narrative review
29	Chang et al.	2024	AI people management	AI in HRM; people	Critical review

				management; opportunities and constraints	
30	Bussin	2021	Digital-era rewards management	Total rewards; psychological contract perceptions	Conceptual
31	Darshith et al.	2025	Logistics workforce	Machine learning; PC fulfillment; retention prediction	Predictive analytics / quantitative
32	Coetzee	2021	Digital-era career mindsets	Career values; employee- employer obligations; digital work mindset	Review / conceptual
33	Coetzee & Deas	2021	Digital-era employment relationship	Multi-level digital-era psychological contract; future research	Book / integrative review
34	Kim et al.	2024	Digital workplace / sustainability	AI-induced job insecurity; PCB; pro- environmental behaviour	Quantitative three-wave survey
35	Sumalatha et al.	2025	AI-driven Indian workplaces	AI work environment; retention; job satisfaction; psychological contract	Quantitative survey / critical review
36	Abasaheb & Rajagopal	2025	AI-mediated workplace	Chatbots; AI interactions; psychological contracts	Conceptual
37	KIM & LEE	2025	Organizational innovation context	Perfectionism; PCB; knowledge hiding; AI technology acceptance	Quantitative four-wave time-lagged study
38	Khairy et al.	2025	Hotel enterprises	AI awareness; work withdrawal; PCB; resilience	Quantitative PLS-SEM
39	Cheng et al.	2025	Frontline service employees / hotels	AI awareness; employee silence; PCB; moral identity	Quantitative survey
40	Tomprou & Lee	2022	Algorithmic management workplace	Employment relationships; algorithmic agent; obligations	Five online experiments

Theoretical Perspectives

The analysis of the selected studies shows a clear concentration of theoretical perspectives used to explain psychological contract dynamics in AI-driven workplaces. As indicated in Table 2, psychological contract theory remains the dominant framework. This reflects its central role in understanding employee and organization relationships under conditions of technological change. Social exchange theory is also widely used. It provides a complementary lens to explain trust, reciprocity, and perceived obligations between employees and organizations.

Beyond these core theories, several supporting perspectives can be identified. Conservation of resources theory and organizational justice theory appear in a number of studies. They are often used to explain how employees respond to uncertainty, fairness, and resource loss in digital work environments. In this way, these perspectives extend the explanatory scope of psychological contract research. They bring attention to issues such as stress, equity, and coping processes.

At the same time, some emerging and context-specific perspectives are beginning to appear. These include concepts

related to algorithmic management, technostress, and human AI interaction. Although they are used less frequently, their presence is notable. They reflect the growing influence of digital technologies on employee experiences. More importantly, they point to new directions for future theoretical development in this field.

TABLE 2. KEY THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES IN AI-DRIVEN PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT RESEARCH

Content		
Specific Theory	Frequency	Representative Studies
Social Exchange Theory	12	Bankins & Formosa, 2019; Cheng et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025; Malik et al., 2023; Tomprou & Lee, 2021; Zhang et al., 2025
Psychological Contract Theory	14	Abasaheb & Rajagopal, 2025; Bankins & Formosa, 2019; Cheng et al., 2025; Hayes & Keyser, 2022; Kozhakhmet et al., 2023; Sherman et al., 2025; Tomprou & Lee, 2021; Zhang et al., 2025
Theory of Mind (ToM)	6	Bankins & Formosa, 2019; Logg et al., 2017; Sherman et al., 2025
Conservation of Resources Theory	7	Cheng et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025; Wang & Long, 2025
Job Displacement Theory	4	Khan et al., 2025; Wang, 2023
Self-Determination Theory	4	Huang & Zhao, 2025; Schmitt et al., 2024; Shahzad et al., 2025
Signaling Theory	3	Bankins & Formosa, 2019; Tomprou & Lee, 2021
Organizational Justice Theory	6	Robert et al., 2020; Tinguely et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2025
Moral Identity Theory	2	Cheng et al., 2025; Robert et al., 2020
Protection Motivation Theory	2	Low et al., 2025
Total	60	

Theoretical Analysis

Building on the overall distribution discussed above, it is necessary to further examine how core theories are used to explain the underlying mechanisms. The reviewed studies do not simply apply multiple theories in parallel. Instead, they tend to converge around a small set of key frameworks that offer relatively stable explanatory paths. Among them, psychological contract theory (PCT), social exchange theory (SET), and conservation of resources theory (COR) form the main analytical backbone. Together, they capture changes in employment relationships from the perspectives of relational cognition, exchange logic, and resource dynamics.

Psychological Contract Theory: Core Focus and Conceptual Shift

In AI-driven workplaces, the meaning of psychological contract theory is being redefined. Its focus is no longer limited to the traditional employee–organization relationship. It is gradually extending to a broader structure that includes human–AI–organization interactions. Existing studies suggest a shift from a classical contract perspective to one that incorporates human–AI relational contexts (Abasaheb & Rajagopal 2025; Bankins & Formosa 2019).

As AI becomes embedded in everyday work, employees begin to form stable expectations toward these systems. When AI appears in forms such as social robots or “boss bots,” employees tend to attribute a certain level of agency to them and treat them as participants in the contractual relationship (Abasaheb & Rajagopal 2025; Bankins & Formosa 2019). This tendency toward anthropomorphism leads employees to expect support, feedback, and fairness from AI, which contributes to the emergence of human–AI psychological contracts.

At the same time, algorithms increasingly function as carriers of contract fulfillment. In contexts of algorithmic management, AI is often perceived as an agent of the organization. Its decision rules, task assignments, and evaluation criteria become key signals through which employees assess whether the organization is meeting its obligations (Tomprou & Lee 2021). When these processes lack transparency or clear communication, employees are more likely to perceive psychological contract breach (PCB), which in turn reduces work engagement (Tomprou & Lee 2021; Zhang et al. 2025).

The nature of the psychological contract is also shifting. Some studies indicate that relational contracts, which emphasize long-term commitment, are weakening. In contrast, transactional contracts, which focus on short-term exchange, are becoming more prominent (Abasaheb & Rajagopal 2025). This trend is particularly visible in gig economy settings, where employment relationships are less stable (Zhang et al. 2025).

Social Exchange Theory: Reconfiguring Reciprocity

While PCT focuses on the content of relationships, social exchange theory explains how these relationships operate. In AI-driven contexts, employees still evaluate their work in terms of inputs and returns. However, this evaluation process becomes more complex.

The literature shows a clear dual pattern (Khan et al. 2025). On the one hand, AI can enhance efficiency and provide technical support. This strengthens employees’ perception of organizational investment and reinforces the exchange relationship, leading to higher work engagement (Malik et al. 2023). On the other hand, increased algorithmic monitoring and reduced human interaction may weaken the sense of reciprocity. As a result, employees may withdraw discretionary effort (Cheng et al. 2025; Khan et al. 2025).

Fairness plays a central role in maintaining this exchange relationship. Employees care not only about outcomes but also about the fairness of decision processes. In particular, perceptions of distributive and procedural justice in algorithmic decisions are critical (Robert et al. 2020; Tinguely et al. 2023). When algorithms are seen as opaque or biased, employees tend to interpret this as a violation of reciprocal norms. This can trigger negative responses, such as silence or turnover intention (Cheng et al. 2025; Zhang et al. 2025).

Conservation of Resources Theory: Stress and Adaptive Responses

Compared with the previous two theories, conservation of resources theory focuses more on how individuals respond to uncertainty. The introduction of AI creates a situation in which resource gain and resource threat coexist. This

increases psychological tension for employees (Liu et al. 2025).

AI can function as a new resource. For example, generative AI can improve efficiency and support job crafting. At the same time, it may also create technostress, as employees feel uncertain about their capabilities in a changing environment (Liu et al. 2025).

AI-related risks can also intensify the perception of resource loss. When employees become aware of the possibility of job replacement, they are more likely to experience stress (Cheng et al. 2025; Khan et al. 2025). This perceived loss of resources can further translate into a sense of psychological contract breach. In response, employees may adopt defensive behaviours to protect their remaining resources, such as knowledge hiding or reducing organizational citizenship behaviour (Cheng et al. 2025; Low et al. 2025).

Individual differences matter in this process. Moral identity, as a form of personal resource, can moderate the impact of resource pressure. Studies show that individuals with higher moral identity are more likely to maintain professional standards when facing AI-related uncertainty. This helps stabilize their perception of the psychological contract (Cheng et al. 2025).

Research Design

A review of the sampled studies shows a clear shift in research design. The field has moved from early conceptual work toward more empirical and causal analysis. Early studies mainly relied on conceptual frameworks. They focused on defining the role of AI as a third party in psychological contracts and clarifying theoretical boundaries (Abasaheb & Rajagopal, 2025; Bankins & Formosa, 2019). As the field developed, quantitative methods became dominant. Many studies use partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to test complex psychological relationships (Cheng et al., 2025; Shahzad et al., 2025). This method is well suited for handling latent variables and mediation effects. At the same time, some recent studies adopt experimental designs. By manipulating algorithm transparency and interaction frequency, they capture employees’ attribution processes more directly. This helps address the limits of survey-based causal inference (Logg et al., 2017; Tomprou & Lee, 2021). Multi-wave designs are also becoming more common. They allow researchers to observe changes over time and examine how AI awareness affects the stability of psychological contracts (Cheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025). Overall, research designs are moving toward more dynamic and causal explanations.

Research Context

The sampled studies cover a wide range of work settings, showing how deeply AI has entered employment relationships. Early research focused on gig and platform work, where algorithmic control is strong. In these settings, workers often interact only with algorithms rather than human supervisors. This makes the formation of contract perceptions more complex (Sherman et al., 2025; Tomprou & Lee, 2021; Zhang et al., 2025). The focus then expanded

to service industries such as hospitality. Here, studies examine how AI awareness shapes frontline employees' behaviour, including silence and work attitudes (Cheng et al., 2025; Malik et al., 2023). More recently, education has become a key area of growth (Huang & Zhao, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2025). Research in this context focuses on the use of generative AI in universities and its impact on faculty psychological contracts. Findings show that AI literacy affects not only technology adoption but also autonomy and competence. These factors are linked to job satisfaction and work-life balance (Huang & Zhao, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2025). This shift suggests that AI is no longer limited to replacing manual work. It is increasingly involved in complex cognitive tasks (Schmitt et al., 2024).

Key Topics

Four main research themes emerge from the literature. One stream focuses on psychological contract breach and reconstruction. It examines how AI awareness creates a sense of resource loss, which then leads to perceived contract breach (Cheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025). Another theme centres on fairness in algorithmic management. Employees evaluate procedural and interactional fairness to judge whether the organization fulfills its obligations (Robert et al., 2020; Tinguely et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). A third theme addresses psychological attribution in human-AI interaction. Employees often anthropomorphize AI and treat it as a social actor, which allows exchange relationships to form (Bankins & Formosa, 2019; Sherman et al., 2025). The fourth theme concerns identity protection and proactive responses. When facing AI-related threats, employees adopt strategies such as job crafting, stronger career commitment, or knowledge hiding to protect their resources (Liu et al., 2025; Schmitt et al., 2024). Together, these themes offer a multi-dimensional view of employee responses in AI-driven workplaces.

Limitations

Despite these advances, several limitations remain. A key issue is the lack of longitudinal evidence. Most studies rely on cross-sectional data, which makes it difficult to capture how psychological contracts evolve over time, especially the process of rupture and repair (Cheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025). Measurement is another concern. Many studies still use traditional interpersonal scales and do not fully reflect AI-specific features such as algorithm transparency and data interpretability. This limits their explanatory power in new contexts. There is also a lack of cross-cultural analysis. Existing samples are often drawn from specific regions or high-tech settings. The role of cultural factors, such as power distance and uncertainty avoidance, remains underexplored in AI-driven workplaces (Huang & Zhao, 2025; Liu et al., 2025). These gaps suggest that the field is still developing and point to clear directions for future research.

IV. CONCLUSION

This review of forty studies shows that artificial intelligence and algorithmic management are reshaping the agent structure of psychological contracts. The traditional

human-human relationship is giving way to a technology-mediated form, in which algorithms are seen as organizational representatives rather than neutral tools (Sherman et al., 2025; Tomprou & Lee, 2021). While AI enhances efficiency and provides new resources, it also introduces monitoring pressure and perceived replacement risks. These conditions increase resource loss perceptions and, in turn, the likelihood of psychological contract breach (Cheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025). Employees' interpretations of the employment relationship are therefore shifting from relational toward more transactional orientations (Abasaheb & Rajagopal, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025), and responses tend to be defensive, such as reduced discretionary effort or organizational citizenship behaviour, to protect remaining resources (Cheng et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025). These findings highlight the importance of algorithm transparency, fairness, and AI literacy in maintaining stable psychological contracts, particularly in education contexts (Tomprou & Lee, 2021; Zhang et al., 2025; Huang & Zhao, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2025). At the same time, the literature points to several gaps. Existing measures do not fully capture human-AI contract features such as transparency and data interpretability (Bankins & Formosa, 2019; Tomprou & Lee, 2021). Longitudinal evidence remains limited, making it difficult to trace how contracts evolve over time (Cheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025). Cross-cultural perspectives are also underdeveloped (Huang & Zhao, 2025; Kozhakhmet et al., 2023). In educational settings, future research should pay closer attention to multi-layered contract structures, the role of AI literacy as a psychological resource, and the challenges to professional identity under increasing AI involvement (Huang & Zhao, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2025; Cheng et al., 2025; Schmitt et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2025). Longitudinal approaches would be particularly valuable in capturing how psychological contracts move from initial tension to more stable forms over time (Cheng et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2025).

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