

**AI Adoption, Human Adaptability, and Future Work Readiness: A Conceptual  
Exploration**

**Sujatha Krishnamoorthy**

**Doctoral Student**

**Doctorate of Business Administration at Golden Gate University**

**February 24, 2026**

**Table of Contents**

Introduction .....	3
Problem Statement .....	3
Context and Rationale .....	4
Ongoing Methodology .....	5
Description of planned action .....	6
Reflection on learning .....	7
Conclusion .....	7
References .....	8

## **Introduction**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged at a fast pace as a technology reshaping multifaceted systems of the environment, namely economies, organizations and industries (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017; Jarrahi, 2018). Beyond automation, AI has filled in areas such as decision-making, innovation processes, designing workforce and customer engagement (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). While adoption of AI is often related to technological capability, there prevails scholarly argument pertaining to successful adoption which is human: adaptability of the workforce (Wilson & Daugherty, 2018; Vodanovich et al., 2018).

Future work readiness has gained attention in the recent past, as many organizations navigate AI driven change. As per (Frey & Osborne, 2017; Clarke, 2017), future work readiness refers to the readiness of employees and organizations to adapt to evolving technological enhancements, skill development, and sustain performance even under uncertain situations. It was well said by (Spreitzer et al., 2017; Luthans et al., 2021) that being ready is not just competence development but most importantly, on psychological adaptability, resilient, and overall organizational culture.

Despite its importance and relevance, current scholarship remains disintegrated. There seems to a visible gap where AI adoption studies quite often omit the human adaptability dimension to it, while research on adaptability and readiness do not integrate with technological game changers. This gap is identified as a conceptual one to observe how AI adoption and human adaptability of it can interact to shape future work readiness.

## **Problem Statement**

This study is at an early stage, more specifically as a concept note. Post, the completion of doctoral degree I wish to conduct this research.

The adoption of AI has widespread across organizational contexts, but readiness for the future of work is not well understood. Existing research has primarily focused on the technical factors and enhancements of AI (Bughin et al., 2018), however there is less attention on human and organizational environments necessary to create the adoption that translated to sustainable readiness of the workforce (Strohmeier, 2022).

There is a **conceptual gap** where readiness is considered as an not well articulated ideal state. There is much ambiguity of how technology and human factors would combine to product that state. In addition, there is an **empirical gap** which highlights studies that often isolate AI adoption or adaptability of the workforce but rarely study their interaction. Finally, there is a **practical gap** which is more practical and critical. Most organizations remain uncertain about how to strike the balance between the investments made on technology and on human competence building to create a secure future ready workplace.

At this point there lacks a framework that explicitly connects the three hands, which is AI adoption to human adaptability and readiness. Without this model, organizations tend to risk the future in two ways. Either a technologically advanced organization but socially not prepared workplaces, or maybe adaptive workplaces but lacking adequate technology enhancements. This study address this gap by recommending a model that conceptualizes this.

## **Context and Rationale**

Three major gaps emerge out of this research. They are fragmented conceptualization, which means an integrated theoretical framework is lacking that well connects AI adoption, adaptability and future readiness. They are individually studied but misses the interrelationship between them. Secondly, there is limited empirical linkage between them. Very few studies examine the combined influence of adaptability of readiness and AI adoption at an organizational level. Lastly, the practical relevant is still in question. In spite of growing practitioner concern on the future workforce strategies, academia has not sufficiently addressed the alignment of AI adoption with human adaptability to build workforce readiness.

This research proposes to bridge these gaps by advancing a conceptual framework that links AI adoption and human adaptability as predictors of future work readiness.

## **Ongoing methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The design for this is chosen with a mindset to illustrate how the framework can be empirically tested. Hence, it adopts the mixed-methods design. This design is chosen as future work readiness is multifaceted which combines technological and human aspects. The quantitative phase would allow for statistical testing between adoption of AI, human adaptability and readiness, while the qualitative phase would provide deeper insights into employee's lived and contextual experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

The current status of this study is in concept stage. Proposing this design strengthens the conceptual contribution by demonstrating feasibility and rigor.

### ***Population and Sampling***

The conceptual population would comprise of organizations from various industries who actively adopt AI technologies to varying degrees. While both large-scale corporations and small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) are relevant, to be able to conduct the research well within the time and budget constraints, I decide to chose SMEs.

The sampling strategy employed for this research would be multi-stage sampling strategy. Based on the progress of the research and constraint attached in recruiting participants from different locations, I might limit it to specific geography like India or India and UAE.

The quantitative phase is planned to be conducted through stratified random sampling across industries, such as manufacturing, healthcare, technology and customer service. Within each organization, both managers and employees would be randomly selected. The qualitative phase participants would be selected through purposive sampling. They

will be leaders and employees who have deep AI related experience as a part of their work responsibilities. Ideally, I would target to pick the qualitative participants from the quantitative phase on a voluntary basis.

### **Data Collection**

At a high level, conceptually the data collection strategy would include the following proposed measures for the qualitative research. AI adoption, the adapted scaled from previous digital transformation research (Vial, 2019). Validated adaptability scales on human adaptability (Martin et al., 2013; Pulakos et al., 2000). A composite index would be developed from frameworks of workforce readiness and digital adaptability (World Economic Forum, 2018).

The plan is to distribute surveys electronically to reach wider spectrum of respondents across organizations and industries. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted covering managers, HR leaders, and employees. This will explore perceptions of workforce readiness, the challenges imposed by AI integration and the role of human adaptability. In addition, the focus group discussions will provide insights drawing collective experiences and on organizational dynamics. I am interested in the triangulated approach that provides breadth and depth in understanding relationships in the framework.

### **Description of planned action**

The proposed early stage research concept possibly is identified by the following planned actions. These are based on theory and prior evidence. I anticipate few themes as a part of the data collection and expected information. They could be **AI adoption as an enabler of readiness**. This means that organizations that invest in AI as tools and training are likely to report higher readiness. This might be purely because employees gain access to new learning opportunities and interventions and technology readiness (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The next possible theme could be **Adaptability as a protector**. As mentioned by (Martin et al., 2013), employees with higher adaptability have lower resistance to change and higher engagement. This might be true as they adjust more

effectively to AI induced disruptions. The next possible theme could be **Interaction synergy**. This is practically observed in organizations as they can possibly achieve higher readiness if AI adoption and adaptability are high and in synergy compared to isolation. This calls for organizations to make conscious investments on human too, while they focus on technology enhancements.

### **Reflection on learning**

This early research opens several promising avenues for scholar practitioner exploration at organizations, in addition to academia. Some of those could be, longitudinal studies which examines how adoption of AI and human adaptability interact over time and through the various stages of technological journey. Since, this study could be across geographies, there could be cross cultural factors that shape adaptability and perceptions of readiness driven by AI. A very explicit learning would be the differences that might come up across industries in readiness. The key factor for this could be the varying degrees of automation risk through AI.

Suggestions for future studies would be to test with moderating variables like leadership styles, organizational culture and learning interventions to enrich the model.

### **Conclusion**

This research concept has presented a structure framework linking **AI adoption**, **human adaptability**, and **future work readiness**. This model highlights possible three propositions, they are AI adoption directly enhances readiness, adaptability fosters readiness, and combining both yields the strongest outcomes. By emphasizing the interplay between human and technological dimensions, this framework adds value to theory, offers practical guidance for organizations, and entitle employees to champion adaptability as a core capability.

## References

- Aroles, J., Mitev, N., & de Vaujany, F. X. (2019). Mapping themes in the study of new work practices. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 34(3), 285-299.
- Baxter, G., & Sommerville, I. (2011). Socio-technical systems: From design methods to systems engineering. *Interacting with computers*, 23(1), 4-17.
- Bessen, J. (2018). Artificial intelligence and jobs: The role of demand. In *The economics of artificial intelligence: an agenda* (pp. 291-307). University of Chicago Press.
- Bogg, T. (2017). Social media membership, browsing, and profile updating in a representative US sample: independent and interdependent effects of big five traits and aging and social factors. *Frontiers in psychology*, 8, 1122.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bughin, J., Seong, J., Manyika, J., Chui, M., & Joshi, R. (2018). Notes from the AI frontier: Modeling the impact of AI on the world economy. *McKinsey Global Institute*, 4(1), 2-61.
- Chan, D. (Ed.). (2014). Individual adaptability to changes at work: New directions in research.
- Clarke, M. (2018). Rethinking graduate employability: The role of capital, individual attributes and context. *Studies in higher education*, 43(11), 1923-1937.
- Davenport, T. H., & Ronanki, R. (2018). Artificial intelligence for the real world. *Harvard business review*, 96(1), 108-116.

Frey, C. B., & Osborne, M. A. (2017). The future of employment: How susceptible are jobs to computerisation?. *Technological forecasting and social change*, 114, 254-280.

Fugate, M., Kinicki, A. J., & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Employability: A psycho-social construct, its dimensions, and applications. *Journal of Vocational behavior*, 65(1), 14-38.

Griffin, B., & Hesketh, B. (2003). Adaptable behaviours for successful work and career adjustment. *Australian Journal of psychology*, 55(2), 65-73.

Heijde, C. M. V. D., & Van Der Heijden, B. I. (2006). A competence-based and multidimensional operationalization and measurement of employability. *Human Resource Management: Published in Cooperation with the School of Business Administration, The University of Michigan and in alliance with the Society of Human Resources Management*, 45(3), 449-476.

Huang, M. H., & Rust, R. T. (2021). A strategic framework for artificial intelligence in marketing. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 49(1), 30-50.

Jarrahi, M. H. (2018). Artificial intelligence and the future of work: Human-AI symbiosis in organizational decision making. *Business horizons*, 61(4), 577-586.

Liao, C., Wayne, S. J., & Rousseau, D. M. (2016). Idiosyncratic deals in contemporary organizations: A qualitative and meta-analytical review. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 37, S9-S29.

Luthans, F., Youssef-Morgan, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2015). *Psychological capital and beyond*. Oxford university press.

Martin, A. J., Nejad, H., Colmar, S., & Liem, G. A. D. (2012). Adaptability: Conceptual and empirical perspectives on responses to change, novelty and uncertainty. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 22(1), 58-81.

McAfee, A., & Brynjolfsson, E. (2017). *Machine, platform, crowd: Harnessing our digital future*. WW Norton & Company.

Munyon, T. P., Summers, J. K., & Ferris, G. R. (2011). Team staffing modes in organizations: Strategic considerations on individual and cluster hiring approaches. *Human Resource Management Review, 21*(3), 228-242.

Parkes, L. P., & Langford, P. H. (2008). Work–life balance or work–life alignment? A test of the importance of work-life balance for employee engagement and intention to stay in organisations. *Journal of management & organization, 14*(3), 267-284.

Pulakos, E. D., Arad, S., Donovan, M. A., & Plamondon, K. E. (2000). Adaptability in the workplace: development of a taxonomy of adaptive performance. *Journal of applied psychology, 85*(4), 612.

Sarker, S., Ahuja, M., & Sarker, S. (2018). Work–life conflict of globally distributed software development personnel: An empirical investigation using border theory. *Information Systems Research, 29*(1), 103-126.

Savickas, M. L., & Porfeli, E. J. (2012). Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability, and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. *Journal of vocational behavior, 80*(3), 661-673.

Shrestha, Y. R., Ben-Menahem, S. M., & Von Krogh, G. (2019). Organizational decision-making structures in the age of artificial intelligence. *California management review, 61*(4), 66-83.

Spreitzer, G. M., Cameron, L., & Garrett, L. (2017). Alternative work arrangements: Two images of the new world of work. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 4*, 473-499.

Tarafdar, M., Beath, C. M., & Ross, J. W. (2017). Enterprise cognitive computing applications: Opportunities and challenges. *It Professional, 19*(4), 21-27.

Trist, E. L., & Bamforth, K. W. (1951). Some social and psychological consequences of the longwall method of coal-getting: An examination of the psychological situation and defences of a work group in relation to the social structure and technological content of the work system. *Human relations*, 4(1), 3-38.

Wirtz, B. W., Weyerer, J. C., & Geyer, C. (2019). Artificial intelligence and the public sector—applications and challenges. *International journal of public administration*, 42(7), 596-615.