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Araştırma Makalesi ● Research Article

How HR Recruiters' Artificial Intelligence Awareness Effects Job Performance? Job Insecurity as Mediator *

İK İşe Alma Uzmanlarının Yapay Zeka Farkındalığı İş Performansını Nasıl Etkiler? Aracı Olarak İş Güvencesizliği

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ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Orta Doğu'daki İnsan Kaynakları (İK) İşe Alma Uzmanları arasında Yapay Zeka (YZ) farkındalık düzeyini ve bunun iş performansı ve iş güvencesizliği üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirmek ve ayrıca iş güvencesizliğinin bu ilişkide bir aracı görevi görüp görmediğini araştırmaktır. Araştırmada, değişkenler arasındaki hem doğrudan hem de aracılık eden ilişkileri değerlendirmek için 344 İK İşe Alma Uzmanından toplanan veriler üzerinde korelasyon, ANOVA ve regresyon testleri yapılmıştır. Analizlerde SPSS 21 programı tercih edilmiştir. Bulgular, iş performansının YZ farkındalığı ile negatif, iş güvencesizliği ile pozitif bir korelasyonu olduğunu göstermektedir. Araştırmada, YZ farkındalığının iş güvencesizliği üzerinde pozitif bir etkisi olduğu ve iş güvencesizliğinin YZ farkındalığı ile iş performansı arasındaki ilişkiye kısmen aracılık ettiği gösterilmiştir. Bu çalışma, YZ farkındalığının İK İşe Alma Uzmanlarının iş güvencesizliği ve iş performansı üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin araştırma alanına değerli içgörüler sağlamakta ve katkıda bulunmaktadır.

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ABSTRACT

The scope of the present research is to evaluate the level of Artificial Intelligence (AI) awareness among Human Resources (HR) Recruiters in the Middle East and its impact on their job performance and job insecurity, besides to explore whether job insecurity represents as a mediator in this relationship. The research used correlation, ANOVA and regression tests on data collected from 344 HR Recruiters to assess both direct and mediating relationships between the variables. SPSS 21 program was preferred in the analyses. The findings indicate that job performance had a negative correlation with AI awareness and a positive correlation with job insecurity. AI awareness was found to have a positive effect on job insecurity, and job insecurity was shown to partially mediate the relationship between AI awareness and job performance. This study provides valuable insights and contributes to the field of research on the effects of AI awareness on HR Recruiters' job insecurity and job performance.

1. Introduction

Today, one of the most transformative aspects of artificial intelligence in the scope of human resources is talent acquisition management and recruitment processes (Parasa, 2024; Jovanovic, 2025). Recruitment is the mechanism of

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identifying, attracting and selecting appropriate applicants to meet the workforce requirements of an organization. In this process, the expectations of recruiters include both preparing job advertisements and finding the most suitable candidates for the organization based on the organization's mission, vision and needs. Breaugh and Starke (2000) define recruitment as follows; recruitment includes all the practices and activities an organization undertakes to identify potential employees and attract them to the business. If recruitment practices are qualified, they can increase the quality of the workforce and the work culture, thus improving organizational performance (Devi and Banu, 2014).

As is known, classic recruitment processes can be time-consuming and may contain some built-in personal or institutional barriers or may be systems with biases (Cowgill et al., 2020). However, AI-based tools are not affected by these limitations and can scan applicants' CVs, filter among the required characteristics, match job descriptions with candidate profiles, and automate a series of processes such as conducting short interviews, simplifying them even further. Such AI systems can also use factors such as candidates' past experience, required skills, and even social media profiles to compare them, making it easier to find the most suitable candidate. As a result of its support in these processes, it can also help HR departments to be less biased and make more logical decisions. When we look at previous studies, it can be seen that if AI-based tools are preferred in the recruitment operation, the process time can be reduced, the quality of recruitments can be increased, and this can improve corporate performance (Upadhyay and Khandelwal, 2018). Another benefit of artificial intelligence is that it has the ability to detect signs of disinterest or premature resignation in employees in advance. Thanks to these skills, employees in HR departments can also develop strategies to retain qualified labor without losing it or to keep a potential candidate ready in reserve and hire them immediately when needed (Cheng, 2020).

The first of our main variables in this article is AI Awareness. This variable focuses on how aware HR professionals are about AI. This concept refers to the level of personal understanding that HR professionals and recruiters have regarding the possible solutions, opportunities, use cases, and potential challenges offered by AI applications in the workplace (Rathore, 2023). It is accepted that employees who are aware of AI have a significant impact on how AI is adjusted and implemented in HR functions (Basu et al., 2023). The research conducted by Nawaz et al. (2024) shows that increasing AI awareness among employees is an important criterion that can make sense of the success of AI use in HR departments. The second variable in the study is Job performance. Job performance is known as the effort and productivity of employees at the level they achieve organizational goals (Hermina and Yosepha, 2019). Reaching this level is a vital goal for many organizations because the future of the business depends on it. The third variable is job insecurity. Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) define job insecurity as the situation where a worker feels threatened at work and is no longer able to fully achieve the continuity that the organization expects of him/her.

The goal of the study is to explore the relationship between AI awareness, job performance, and job insecurity and to investigate whether AI awareness negatively affects the job performance of recruiters, whether job insecurity positively affects job performance, whether AI awareness positively affects job insecurity, and finally whether job insecurity plays a mediating function in this connection. Considering the benefits of AI, this research also aims to draw attention on issues such as job performance and job insecurity. Understanding how job insecurity affects job performance will allow us to identify this issue and find the best solutions to help organizations implement AI automation ethically and without ignoring the human factor. A quantitative research method was preferred and online surveys were sent to HR recruiters in companies with different numbers of employees. It is thought that the results to be obtained from this study will contribute to both businesses and academic literature on the future of HR recruiters, open a new field of discussion, and draw additional attention on the delicate harmony between technical efficiency and human expertise in recruiting for HR recruitment positions.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Artificial Intelligence Awareness

The concept of Artificial Intelligence (AI) awareness refers to the level of personal perception that employees are well-informed the functional capabilities of AI technologies and are also smart about their potential societal impacts. This personal understanding includes both how automated systems work and the knowledge gained about the use and evaluation of these technologies in different environments such as workplaces (Filippi et al, 2023). Corporate AI awareness, however, ensures that employees are holistically enlightened about the consequences of AI processes and helps them interact with these technologies more effectively (Kong et al., 2021). Within the framework of digital literacy, AI awareness is now also considered an important element, because individuals' ability to make self-conscious decisions about AI applications requires evaluating not only the positive outcomes of the technology at all costs, but also its ethical impacts (Kumar, Verma & Mirza, 2024). The main determinants of AI awareness include digital literacy, institutional support, and individual interest in technology. For this reason, individuals with academic and data science backgrounds grasp the potential of AI better than others (Alavi & Leidner, 2021). If AI awareness can be provided at the corporate level, employees can also be enabled to reach a higher level of productivity by using technology effectively (Zhao et al., 2025).

2.1.1. AI Awareness and Human Resources (HR)

If the success of AI technologies in the HR scope is to be investigated, it would be appropriate to look at the awareness of HR professionals about these technologies. Therefore, HR professionals need to be informed about the talents and disadvantages of AI tools in order to manage ethical issues and bias risks that may arise from the unconscious use of technology (Chen, 2023). If the uncontrolled use of AI-based recruitment and performance evaluation systems is allowed, unfortunately, the biases in the classical recruitment method will remain sustainable (Binns, 2018). Artificial intelligence awareness can enable HR professionals to detect and eliminate their biases and can also help use technology more objectively (Binns, 2018).

2.1.2. Factors Increasing AI Awareness Among HR Professionals

How well HR professionals understand AI is of great importance for the effective use of technology. If there are gaps in knowledge about AI, employee engagement (Xie et al., 2024), organizational citizenship (Yan & Teng, 2025) and innovative behavior (Liang et al, 2022) and at the end organizational performance may be affected and weakened. Providing training and corporate support programs in businesses is known as important ways to increase AI awareness. For this reason, the level of knowledge of HR professionals about AI may differ counting on the aim of training provided in the company, corporate support, and individual interests (Basnet, 2024). If companies can have HR professionals with higher education or certification in AI-related fields, they will be able to manage their technologies more effectively (Alavi and Leidner, 2021). Businesses can provide the necessary skills that HR professionals may lack by preparing specialized training programs and targeted certification courses on AI (Tusquellas et al., 2025).

2.1.3. AI and HR Functions

AI technologies help HR departments identify employee skill gaps and develop solutions accordingly (Tambe et al., 2019). The correct usage of AI acts a valuable function in the human resources growth of companies. Employees who can use AI effectively perform their tasks more expertly and can find more free time on creative problem-solving processes (Chen, 2023). When employees understand AI technologies well, they provide improvements in work outputs and systematic processes (Kassa & Worku, 2025). This results in increased performance and reduced error rates (Huang & Rust, 2018).

2.1.4. The Impact of AI on HR Operations and Recruitment

If HR professionals have full knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of AI, they can easily identify ethical issues in recruitment and performance evaluations and successfully implement technology integration (Binns, 2018). AI technologies improve candidate experiences during the recruitment process and create more accurate and efficient recruitment processes (Meshram, 2023). However, it should not be forgotten that some AI algorithms may carry the risk of perpetuating or strengthening existing biases in recruitment processes (O'Neil, 2016; Raghavan et al., 2020). Therefore, HR professionals should develop their awareness of AI and be careful to use fair and impartial practices in recruitment (Raghavan et al., 2020). Increasing AI awareness can increase both corporate success and employee satisfaction. In summary, AI awareness is a critical factor for HR professionals to effectively use this technology within the framework of ethical and social responsibilities and to manage its integration into business processes.

2.2. Job Performance

Job performance relates to the worker's fulfillment of the duties assigned to him/her in the workplace. This includes the behaviors exhibited by the employee during work hours, the quality and quantity of work (Çalışkan & Köroğlu, 2022). Motowidlo (2003) defines job performance as the activities performed by employees at work in order to achieve organizational success. Performance is usually measured by Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used to align with organizational goals (Kaplan & Norton, 1996).

High job performance is necessary for the survival of businesses because it increases market efficiency and profitability (Çalışkan & Köroğlu, 2022). High performance helps employees increase organizational performance, which enables businesses to adapt to market changes (Campbell, 1990). Locke and Latham (2002) indicated that clarity and meaningfulness of business goals increase employee performance, while performance feedback (especially positive and constructive feedback) plays a vital aspect in developing motivation and job performance (Armstrong, 2014).

2.2.1. Factors Affecting Job Performance

Job performance indicators are important for evaluating employee effectiveness and understanding the effects of AI on performance management. Traditional performance assessment methods were based on subjective judgments of managers, but these methods could produce inconsistent and biased results. Today, organizations use a more reliable evaluation method based on KPIs (Setiawan & Purba, 2020). The integration of AI provides more accurate and objective measurements in organizational performance management, creating comprehensive reports with employee work outputs and behavioral data (Kassa & Worku, 2025). When these systems are used, employees' job performance can be analyzed in a data-driven manner, possible future performance difficulties can be predicted, and corrective measures can be developed.

Factors such as employees' competencies, motivation,

support provided by the organization, and access to advanced technology tools are also important factors affecting job performance (Baskaran et al., 2020). The implementation of AI is a factor affecting job performance (Raisch & Krakowski, 2021).

2.2.2. AI and Job Performance

One of the essential elements of improving business performance can be considered to be AI awareness. Because AI provides automation of repetitive processes, it can provide employees with the opportunity to focus on much more valuable tasks instead of unnecessary tasks, which increases productivity (Joshi et al., 2024). Further, employees experiencing AI can easily break down to components of large data sets and save themselves additional time to focus on more vital and visionary work (Chen, 2023). Effective use of AI creates a more proactive work environment in workplaces. In addition, increasing AI awareness helps Human Resources professionals improve organizational knowledge management systems (Alavi & Leidner, 2021).

Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2017) emphasized the transformation of AI in business performance and stated that with tools such as Robotic Process Automation, employees can get rid of routine tasks and pay more attention to difficult to understand tasks. This increases operational efficiency and increases employee satisfaction (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2017).

2.2.3. Managing AI-Supported Business Performance

The implementation of AI systems creates some challenges for organizations. The rapid development of technology requires employees to acquire new competencies, which can bring on questions about job security and professional development in the workplace (Bessen, 2019). The elimination of some jobs with the automation of AI necessitates transition management systems that require employees to reskill (Bessen, 2019). In addition, inadequate training of employees regarding AI awareness can lead to a situation called "technological stress", which can have negative outcomes on focus and performance (Yuan et al., 2025).

The pressures and insufficient training brought by AI can negatively affect employees' job performance (Kong et al., 2021). The benefits of AI must be balanced with the stress and job insecurity that may arise, otherwise work productivity may be negatively affected by this incompatibility (OECD, 2023).

Based on this need for harmony, it can be said that the impacts of AI on job performance are complex. If appropriate training and support are not provided, the benefits of AI can also negatively affect job performance. Therefore, organizations should provide emotional and psychological support to their employees without ignoring the fact that they demand to be trained in the effective use of AI.

2.3. Job Insecurity

Job insecurity has risen as a critical interest in contemporary workplaces, largely propelled by rapid shifts in the economy, advancements in technology, and restructuring within organizations. It is generally understood as a worker's subjective feeling of instability regarding their job status, encompassing both emotional distress and uncertainty about their future employment (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). The concept of job insecurity extends beyond simply the risk of losing one's job; it also includes the anxiety and worry that employees experience concerning potential alterations to their working conditions (Sverke et al., 2002). Stress factors resulting from job insecurity can bring on to weakened job satisfaction, reduced engagement, and weakened loyalty to the organization, all of which can negatively affect productivity (De Witte, 2005).

In the context of an unstable work environment, job insecurity acts as a psychological trigger that initiates negative emotions and defensive behaviors, thereby adversely affecting employees' dedication to their work and their overall attitudes towards the organization (Sverke et al., 2002). The concept is comprised of two key aspects: fears about job continuity (the potential for job loss) and fears about job quality (the deterioration of working conditions) (Vander Elst et al., 2014). Organizations can mitigate job insecurity by establishing transparent communication channels, providing clear paths for career advancement, and offering support for employees' mental well-being (De Witte, 2005).

The increasing adoption of AI in workplaces has further intensified feelings of job insecurity. The swift integration of AI technologies has generated interests about job displacement, adding to the mental health challenges and performance issues encountered by employees (Golgeci et al., 2025). Workers are apprehensive that AI could render their jobs obsolete, leading to increased tension in the workplace and decreased motivation (Hellgren & Sverke, 2003). However, organizations that implement training programs to assist employees in adapting to these technological changes can lessen job insecurity (Van Hootegem et al., 2018), as efforts towards reskilling and upskilling equip workers with the necessary tools to remain relevant in evolving digital landscapes (Singer & Gupta, 2025).

Job insecurity has also been examined as a mediating factor in employee behavior. It describes the subjective worries of employees regarding job termination or a decline in job quality (De Angelis et al., 2021). The introduction of AI can worsen job insecurity by presenting technology as a danger to the establishment of employment (Kim & Kim, 2024). Nevertheless, employees who experience job insecurity often develop new skills as a way to cope with these threats, which can lessen the adverse consequences of their insecurity (Stiglbauer et al., 2012).

While job insecurity is commonly perceived as a negative influence that leads to stress, disengagement, and subpar performance, it can also, in certain circumstances, motivate employees to enhance their efforts. Research indicates that employees who believe a strong relation to their organization (job embeddedness) might utilize job insecurity as an impetus to improve their performance in an attempt to secure their positions (Adekiya, 2024). Furthermore, the type of job insecurity influences how employees respond. Quantitative insecurity, which is linked to the doubt of losing one's employment, often results in disengagement, whereas qualitative insecurity, which pertains to the loss of promotion opportunities or responsibilities, may encourage employees to work harder (Niesen et al., 2018).

Organizational justice represents another significant element in how job insecurity impacts employees. Studies reveal that when employees realize their workplace as objective and transparent, they are less likely to suffer the negative impacts of job insecurity. In such corporations, workers feel inspired to exert more effort, even when faced with uncertainty, because they have trust in the organization's fairness (Wang et al., 2015). In some instances, when managed effectively, job insecurity can act as a positive motivator, leading to increased performance and responsibility, particularly within supportive work environments (Piccoli et al., 2021).

To conclude, although job insecurity is frequently viewed in the role of a damaging force within the workplace, it can also serve as a motivator for enhanced performance, especially when employees feel supported by their organization. By addressing job insecurity through clear communication, opportunities for skill development, and ensuring fairness, organizations have the potential to transform what is typically seen as a negative factor into a potential catalyst for positive change.

2.4. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Workplace implementation of AI technologies has rebuilt employee work experiences yet created uncertainties about job stability together with fears about performance quality and technological abilities. The research examines the connections between worker of AI Awareness and job insecurity and their impact on job performance while using established theoretical approaches to develop testable hypotheses and filling gaps in existing research.

2.4.1. The Effect of AI Awareness on Job Performance

AI awareness describes how well someone understands the operation of AI systems and their operational effects on workplaces (Kong et al. (2021). The degree of employee AI tool understanding influences job performance outcomes yet inadequate awareness fosters misconceptions and technological stress which decreases productivity (Atrian & Ghobbeh, 2023; Yuan et al., 2025). Workers with unclear understanding of how AI helps operations tend to see the technology as cumbersome which results in decreased worker involvement and work output (Lane & Saint-Martin, 2021). As AI awareness increases, job burnout also increases (Kong et al., 2021). This finding can also be associated with the finding that burnout reduces job performance, meaning that AI awareness can also reduce job performance. Bai et al. (2024) report that AI awareness has a significant positive influence on unproductive work behavior, and psychological contract and emotional exhaustion play a partial mediating role in the relationship between AI awareness and unproductive work behavior. Therefore, this study hypothesizes:

H1: AI awareness has a negative impact on job performance.

2.4.2. The Role of AI Awareness in Job Insecurity

AI awareness also influences employees' feelings of job security. The understanding of AI among employees tends to grow their perception of job replacement risks primarily in automated environments according to Kim & Kim (2024). Workers who grasp AI technology capabilities often notice how technological progress eliminates particular job roles which produces increased job insecurity (Binns, 2018). Thus, this study hypothesizes:

H2: AI awareness is positively related to job insecurity.

2.4.3. The Effect of Job Insecurity on Job Performance

Organizational job insecurity is a concept that acts as an important stress factor because it represents a perceived risk to job stability or quality (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Current research also indicates that job insecurity can increase job performance under certain conditions and instead act as a source of motivation (Piccoli et al., 2021). Traditional research suggests that job insecurity has negative role such as lowering employee commitment and job performance (Sverke et al., 2002). Therefore, the effects of job insecurity on job performance continue to be debated. In this study, a stance close to the idea that job insecurity will cause workers to increase their job performance in order to remain in their current positions, especially when they feel the need for career development opportunities or perceived organizational justice (Wang et al., 2015). Therefore, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H3: Job insecurity positively affects job performance.

2.4.4. The Mediating Role of Job Insecurity

It is thought that the mediating act of employees' perception of job insecurity is in the effect between artificial intelligence awareness and job performance. Because employees who understand artificial intelligence well tend to perceive increased occupational instability due to their anxiety of failing their job functions and roles at work (Kim & Kim, 2024). This situation affects the change in the emotional state caused by insecurities at work, and can affect employees' performance results in different ways due to personal characteristics and organizational conditions

(Sverke et al., 2002). From this perspective, the present article attempts to explain the connection amid artificial intelligence awareness and job performance, while trying to investigate how job insecurity enriches this relationship with its indirect effect. Thus, the hypothesis is:

H4: Job insecurity mediates the relationship between AI awareness and job performance.

In this research, it is aimed to experimentally test the above four hypotheses and to understand the job performance of human resources recruiters in companies by utilizing the findings to be obtained. It is also aimed to present evidence-based findings for companies to understand the combined effects of artificial intelligence awareness and job insecurity factors that affect job performance.

3. Methodology

This article aimed to analyze the relationship between AI awareness level, job insecurity and job performance among Middle Eastern HR Recruiters and adopted the quantitative research method for this purpose. Data were collected using a cross-sectional survey design. The study uses a deductive methodology that tests pre-specified hypotheses with real data by applying well-established theoretical frameworks. A systematic survey was created to ensure accurate measurement of components and consistency of responses.

Measures were observed to ensure that participants' rights to privacy were observed strictly as a way of observing ethical considerations. To ensure the respondents' confidentiality, no confidential information was collected. Respondent's input was received out of their own free will; there was no coercion used to motivate the respondents to finish the study. All the data that was collected was properly collected, stored and utilized for the purpose of the study only. Ethical approval was obtained from Aydın Istanbul University as per the institutional research ethics (Number: E-88083623-020-138051, 25.11.2024).

3.1. Population and sample

This study investigates the perceptions of HR recruiters working in public and private organizations in the Middle East. HR recruiters were selected because, despite their involvement in AI-assisted recruitment procedures, they exhibit varying degrees of familiarity with AI-based technologies, potentially shaping their views on job stability and job outcome. The research design brought together recruiters from various business sectors in many countries in the region, encompassing HR practitioners with conflicting views on job insecurity and different perspectives on AI. Limited availability and rapid data acquisition led the researchers to choose convenience sampling as their methodology. Since it was not possible to reach such a large number of participants, the "convenience sampling" method was chosen and we aimed to reach as many participants as possible, and 344 HR professionals who met the analysis requirements were included in the study to conduct statistical tests. An inclusive group of participants was formed to participate in the study, representing a variety of age ranges, education levels, and years of work experience among HR professionals who actively participate in recruitment activities with AI tasks.

Data collection was conducted in 2024, it was managed from Istanbul City, targeting HR professionals across the Middle East. The responses came from several middle eastern countries, including but not exclusive to, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. with participants recruited through Google Forms and professional networks such as LinkedIn. The survey targeted approximately 2,000 HR professionals from companies with large recruitment team such as M.H. Alshaya, NBK Bank, Kuwait Finance House, IKEA, Arab Bank and Bayt.com, among other medium, large, and small enterprises. At the end of the designated period, 450 responses were received with 430 valid entries, after screening, additional filtering reduced the final dataset to 344 valid responses, to ensure data quality and compliance, the design was simple and the participants were required to complete all questions. The electronic distribution method facilitated broad participation while maintaining anonymity and minimizing response bias.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

To gather information on job performance, job insecurity, and AI awareness, a systematic questionnaire was created using the 5-point Likert-scale questions whether they agreed or disagreed.

3.2.1. AI Awareness Scale

AI Awareness Scale was developed by Kong et al. (2021). The scale is grounded on the study of Brougham and Haar (2018). There are 4 items in the scale. Cronbach's Alpha value of the questionnaire was reported as .89. In the original study, it was reported that the scale validity was provided by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and was appropriate. The scale is a widely used tool to measure employees' perceptions of AI in workplace environments, showing strong internal consistency and construct validity.

3.2.1. Job Performance Scale

The Job Performance Scale was advanced by He et al. (2023) grounded on the study of Janssen and Van Yperen (2004). The scale contains 5 items. Cronbach's Alpha value was reported as .90 for the reliability of the scale. It was reported to be confirmed by CFA and empirical tests for validity.

3.2.3. Job Insecurity Scale

The Job Insecurity Scale was suggested by Presbitero (2023) based on the work of Hellgren & Sverke (2003). The scale consists of 3 items. The reliability value reported in the original study is Cronbach's Alpha .83.

3.3. Analysis of data

To analyze data, the SPSS 21 software was preferred. This section sums up the correlations and tests performed in the study to analyze the primary variables of the research namely AI Awareness, Job Insecurity and Job Performance. Some of the techniques used covered in the analysis include descriptive analysis, reliability assessment, exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, hypothesis testing via multiple regressions analysis, and mediator analysis preffering the Process Macro suggested by Hayes (2013).

4. Results

Table 1 presents demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, and work experience. Descriptive values are presented at Table 2. Skewness and Kurtosis values are also presented to increase the robustness of the analysis. The acceptable ranges for skewness are generally between -2 and +2 and for Kurtosis between -7 and +7 (Kline, 2011). In this study, the values in question were found in the specified ranges. Skewness measures the asymmetry of the distribution of a data set and indicates whether the values are more concentrated on one side of the mean value (Field, 2013). Kurtosis, on the other hand, evaluates the "tailedness" of a distribution; higher kurtosis values indicate more extreme tails, while decreased kurtosis values indicate a more uniform distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2019).

Table 1: Frequency Statistics of Demographic Variables (N=344)

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	190	55.2
	Female	154	44.8
Age	Under 25	53	15.4
	25-34	138	40.1
	35-44	90	26.2
	45-54	49	14.2
	55-64	14	4.1
Education	High School	7	2
	High School or Equivalent	8	2.3
	Associate Degree	7	2
	Bachelor's Degree	152	44.2
	Master's Degree	132	38.4
	Doctorate Degree	38	11
Experience	Less than 1 year	17	4.9
	1-5	114	33.1
	6-10	84	24.4
	11-15	73	21.2
	16 and above	56	16.3

Descriptive statistics provide an outline of the main variables in the research: Job Performance, Job Insecurity, and AI Awareness. Second Table summarizes the mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values for these variables. The mean Job Performance score is 3.73 (SD=.93), indicating that respondents rated their performance slightly above average. Job Insecurity has a mean of 3.17 (SD=1.08), reflecting moderate concerns about job stability, while AI Awareness has a mean of 2.85 (SD=.95), suggesting a neutral stance on AI-related knowledge. Skewness and kurtosis values suggest that Job Performance (-.284) and AI Awareness (.246) are approximately symmetric, while Job Insecurity (.046) is slightly positively skewed. The kurtosis values remain within acceptable ranges, indicating a roughly normal distribution for these variables.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.Dev.	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Sta	Sta	Sta	Sta	Sta	Sta	Std.Err	Sta	Std.Err
Gender	344	1	2	1.45	.498	.211	.131	-1.967	.262
Age	344	1	5	2.51	1.044	.471	.131	-.364	.262
Education	344	1	6	4.48	.947	-1.040	.131	2.792	.262
Experience	344	1	5	3.11	1.177	.211	.131	-1.059	.262
Job Perf	344	2	5	3.7337	.93148	-.284	.131	-1.059	.262
Job Insec	344	1	5	3.1715	1.07906	.046	.131	-1.013	.262
AI Aware	344	1	5	2.8525	.95213	.246	.131	-.196	.262

Sta: Statistics; Std.Dev.: Standart Deviation; Std.Err.: Standart Error; Job Perf: Job Performance; Job Insec: Jon Insecurity; AI Aware: Artifical Intelligence Awareness

In Tests of Normality Table 3, the Kolmogorov-Simirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Tests results are also seen to be significant for dependent, independent and mediator variable scores. In other words, the distribution of the data for all three types of scores is not normal, so non-parametric tests can be applied. A significant result ($p<.05$) in both tests indicates that the data deviates from a normal distribution. In this research, the p-values for Job Performance, Job Insecurity, and AI Awareness are all .000, meaning that none of the variables follow a perfect normal distribution.

Table 3: Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Job Performance	.097	344	.000	.936	344	.000
Jon Insecurity	.117	344	.000	.951	344	.000
AI Awareness	.085	344	.000	.973	344	.000

To evaluate the internal consistency of the study's measurement scales, Cronbach's Alpha was used. The Job Performance scale consisted of five items reached an acceptable reliability score of .760 thus demonstrating robust internal consistency. The four items AI Awareness scale attained an acceptable reliability score of .703 which suffices for research investigation. However, The Job Insecurity scale consisting of three items produced a Cronbach's Alpha measure of .318. The Job Insecurity Scale initially had a Cronbach's Alpha of .318, which is considered unacceptably low for reliability (Peterson, 1994). To investigate the cause, item-total correlation analysis revealed that Item 2 had a negative item-total correlation (-.030) and a very low factor loading (-.098) compared to Item 1 (.845) and Item 3 (.846). Since a low or negative factor loading suggests that an item does not align well with the underlying construct, removing Item 2 was expected to improve reliability (Taber, 2018). After deletion, Cronbach's Alpha increased from .318 to .607, bringing it to an acceptable level for exploratory research. Additionally, the total variance explained by the scale rose from 47.96% to 71.79%, confirming a more stable measure. Therefore, Item 2 was removed to maintain the validity and internal consistency of the scale, and further analyses were conducted using the revised two-item version of the Job Insecurity Scale.

To evaluate the validity of the scales, exploratory factor analysis was preferred and principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was chosen. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to determine sample adequacy.

Factor analysis was performed to check the construct validity of the scales. The factor loadings confirm that the items significantly contribute to their respective constructs. The KMO values indicate that AI Awareness and Job Performance have moderate suitability for factor analysis, while Job Insecurity meets the minimum threshold. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant for all constructs, justifying the use of factor analysis. KMO values were found as .699 for the AI awareness Scale, .669 for the Job Performance Scale and .500 for the Job Insecurity Scale. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy for the Job Insecurity scale was .500, which is considered borderline acceptable for factor analysis. Kaiser (1974) originally proposed that KMO values above .50 are still suitable for analysis, though values closer to 1.0 are preferred. According to Field (2013), KMO values between .50 and .60 are barely acceptable, indicating that while the sample size may be sufficient, researchers should critically evaluate whether additional data or alternative variables should be included. Despite this limitation, KMO values in this range have been used in exploratory studies where sample sizes are constrained or constructs are narrowly defined. In this study, Job Insecurity Item 2 was taken out as a result of small factor loading, which subsequently improved the variance explained from 47.96% to 71.80%, strengthening the overall validity of the scale (Field, 2013).

Relationship analyses were performed using Pearson correlation and the correlation matrix (Table 4) reveals significant but relatively weak relationships between the study variables.

AI Awareness is negatively correlated with job performance ($r=-.111$, $p=.039$), proposing that employees with higher AI awareness tend to report slightly lower job performance. However, the correlation strength is weak (Cohen, 1988), indicating that other factors likely contribute to job performance.

AI Awareness is positively related with Job Insecurity ($r=.347$, $p<.001$), showing that respondents who are more aware of AI developments likely to feel greater job insecurity. This is a moderate correlation, suggesting a meaningful relationship between AI knowledge and perceived job instability.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Job Performance	Job Insecurity	AI Awareness
Job Performance	1		
Job Insecurity	.265**	1	
AI Awareness	-.111*	.347**	1

Job Insecurity is positively correlated with Job Performance ($r=.265$, $p<.001$), implying that employees who feel insecure about their jobs may work harder to maintain their positions.

This aligns with previous studies that suggest job insecurity can act as a motivator under certain conditions (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

The correlation values between AI Awareness, Job Insecurity, and Job Performance are relatively low. According to Cohen (1988), an r value of 0.1 is considered low, 0.3 is moderate, and 0.5 is high. In this study, AI Awareness and Job Performance showed a weak negative correlation (r=-.111, p=.039), while Job Insecurity and Job Performance presented a weak-to-moderate positive relation (r=.265, p<.001). The relatively low correlations may be due to external factors influencing job performance beyond AI-related concerns, such as company policies, leadership, or job satisfaction (Wang, Lu, & Siu, 2015). However, a low correlation does not invalidate the significance of the relationships found. Instead, it suggests that job performance is influenced by multiple factors, and AI-related job insecurity is one of them. Previous studies have identified that psychological variables, workplace dynamics, and technological advancements interact in complex ways to shape job performance (Murugesan et al., 2023). Therefore, the findings enrich to a developing body of the field emphasizing the nuanced impact of AI awareness and job insecurity on employee outputs.

Table 5 presents the model summary for hierarchical multiple regression analysis, assessing the effect of AI awareness and job insecurity on job performance.

Model 1, which includes only AI Awareness, explains 1.2% of the variance in Job Performance (R^2=.012, p=.039), indicating a weak predictive ability.

Model 2, adding Job Insecurity, significantly increases the explained variance to 11.8% (R^2=.118, p<.001), suggesting that Job Insecurity is a higher predictor of Job Performance than AI Awareness.

The Durbin-Watson statistic (.890) is below the acceptable range (1.5 - 2.5), indicating potential autocorrelation in the residuals, which should be considered when interpreting the results (Field, 2013). These findings indicate that while both variables influence Job Performance, additional factors likely contribute to performance outcomes.

Table 5: Model Summary[c]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.111[a]	.012	.010	.92703	.012	4.304	1	342	.039	
2	.343[b]	.118	.112	.87759	.105	40.617	1	341	.000	.890

a. Predictors: (Constant), AI Awareness
b. Predictors: (Constant), AI Awareness, Job Insecurity
c. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The ANOVA test (Table 6) evaluates whether the independent variables significantly explain the variance in Job Performance.

Model 1 (AI Awareness only): The model is significant (F=4.304, p=.039), meaning AI Awareness has a low but significant impact on Job Performance.

Model 2 (AI Awareness + Job Insecurity): The model improves significantly (F=22.710, p<.001), confirming that Job Insecurity significantly strengthens the model's explanatory power.

Table 6: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.699	1	3.699	4.304	.039[b]
	Residual	293.910	342	.859		
	Total	297.609	343			
2	Regression	34.981	2	17.490	22.710	.000[c]
	Residual	262.628	341	.770		
	Total	297.609	343			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), AI Awareness
c. Predictors: (Constant), AI Awareness, Job Insecurity

These findings support the hypothesis that both AI Awareness and Job Insecurity influence Job Performance, with Job Insecurity playing a more dominant role.

Table 7 presents the results of the regression coefficients for AI awareness and job performance, including the inclusion of job insecurity as an additional predictor. AI awareness negatively effects job performance (H1 supported); AI awareness positively effects job insecurity (H2 supported) and job insecurity positively effects job performance (H3 supported).

In sum, the findings suggest that AI Awareness indirectly affects Job Performance by increasing Job Insecurity. While AI Awareness negatively influences performance, Job Insecurity plays a dual role, contributing positively to performance. The mediation analysis confirms that Job Insecurity partially explains this relationship, emphasizing the importance of managing AI-related concerns to sustain employee motivation.

Table 7: Regression Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coeffficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.045	.158		25.589	.000		
	AI Aware	-.109	.053	-.111	-2.075	.039	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	3.433	.178		19.310	.000		
	AI Aware	-.226	.053	-.231	-4.266	.000	.880	1.137
	Job Insec	.298	.047	.346	6.373	.000	.880	1.137

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

Up to this stage, the effects between variables have been addressed. In the last stage, tests were conducted regarding the mediating role. The principles suggested by Baron & Kenny (1986) were applied in determining the mediating effect role. Accordingly, the conditions that need to be met must be checked (Şentürk & Ertem, 2020). These conditions are as follows, respectively:

- The independent variable must have an influence on the dependent variable.

- The independent variable must have an influence on the mediating variable.

- The mediating variable must have an influence on the dependent variable.

- If the first three conditions specified are met, the mediating variable is added in the regression analysis in which the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is examined in the fourth stage. In this case, if it is found that the independent variable has a non-significant effect on the dependent variable: it can be said that there is full mediation. If it causes a decrease in this relationship: it can be said that there is a partial mediating role.

After confirming that AI Awareness significantly influences Job Insecurity and Job Performance, a mediation analysis was conducted to examine if Job Insecurity explains part of this relationship (Table 8).

Table 8: Mediation Analysis with SPSS Process Macro

Effect	Beta (β)	SE	F	p-value	Confidence Interval (CI)
Direct Effect (AI Awareness → Job Performance)	-.2263	.0531	4.304	.039*	LLCI: -.3307; ULCI: -.1220
Indirect Effect via Job Insecurity	.1173	.0286	-	Significant	LLCI: .0664; ULCI: .1785
Total Effect (AI Awareness → Job Performance)	-.1091	.0526	4.304	.0388*	LLCI: -.2125; ULCI: -.0057

In order to see whether job insecurity mediates the relationship between AI awareness and job performance perception, the mediator variable was included in the SPSS Process Macro regression analysis with using Model 4 type according to suggestions of Hayes (2013). The values related to the regression analysis are given in Table 9. Accordingly, the effect of AI awareness on job performance did not become insignificant, but the indirect effect of the mediator variable was found to be significant (β=-.309, p=.000). This situation shows that job insecurity has a partial mediator role in accordance with the principles stated in the method section. This finding indicates that Hypothesis 4 is supported.

5. Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

The study shed a light on a key workplace challenge, while employees with higher AI awareness more often feel greater job insecurity and the latter also reduces actual job performance. According to Tarafdar et al. (2019) research reveals that when employees perceive AI as a risk, they may experience stress and resulting, decreased motivation leading to lower job performance eventually. They are not capturing AI as a tool for career growth, but instead, they get lost in analyzing their perspectives and worries about what it implies (Makarius et al., 2020). The study further shows that job insecurity may generate temporary spikes in job performance; due to the pressure of showing their worth (Staufenbiel & König, 2010). Job insecurity also leads to less organizational commitment (Anand et al., 2023).

Through self-observation, I have personally experienced the impact of job insecurity. At times, uncertainty about my job stability has led me to focus intensely on enhancing my job performance, taking on additional responsibilities, and ensuring I achieve competitive advantage within the organizations and gain a level where I won't be irreplaceable easily, However, this response may have been effective in the short term, it is not sustainable, and high performance should not be based upon fear. In the long run, job insecurity results in emotional exhaustion, lower interest in completing the task, and therefore poor job performance. On the same topic, the level of workers' AI awareness varies out of another key self-observation. In my workplace, I've witnessed this contrast, one employee who uses AI every day in their daily tasks to increase productivity, and another who will not touch AI as they fear the effect on their own role, saying I am truly feeling scared of it. The study verifies that simply being aware of AI does not imply its acceptance; in most cases, AI awareness increases insecurity of the job and resistance (Berente et al., 2021). This is another indication of how important it is how AI is introduced in an organization. Employees who are trained, reassured and provided with role clarity will adapt more than employees who are not trained, not reassured and not provided with role clarity

Moreover, although we cannot deny the efficiency AI tools bring to the field, however, for those who have worked in recruitment; this issue takes on an even deeper significance, from human to human, people might be afraid of their job interviews, something that a computer cannot grasp. That is why human supervision is always necessary in recruitment process, especially beyond the initial screening stage. Although AI is useful for resume screening and basic assessments, interviews and hiring decisions should be finalized by HR professionals, overreliance on the AI in recruitment can result in loss of key human elements such as emotional intelligence, and ethical considerations. Companies should adopt some more proactive practices to provide that AI awareness does not contribute to job insecurity. Concerns can be reduced through transparent communication regarding the position of AI in the offices (Rafferty & Griffin, 2006) and workers should have opportunities to retool and reskill in order to adapt AI into their roles instead of seeing it as a risk to their positions (Makarius et al., 2020). To reduce the AI related stress, structured career development programs, job rotation opportunities and psychological support services can be supported. Moreover, leadership is one of the most important elements in how AI awareness is framed positively. Managers who highlight that AI is an instrument for augmentation and not for substitute, while also having a transparent discussion on AI awareness, are more likely to encourage employees to engage constructively with technological advancements hence increase overall profitability (Stiglbauer et al., 2012).

The purpose of this study was to search the amid between AI Awareness, Job Performance and Job Insecurity among HR recruiters in the Middle East region. The findings discovered AI awareness negatively impacts Job Performance while increasing job insecurity. Additionally, higher job insecurity leads to increased job performance, which can be temporary yet valid. The mediation analysis confirmed that job insecurity partially explains the negative impact of AI awareness on job performance. This examine is important because it contributes to study the concept of AI in the workplace which is relatively new yet revolutionary; any study in this field at this time is considered valuable as it is fast paced. This study filled the gap in the literature by adding the results to the Recruitment field which is highly impacted by AI Automation such as CV screening, interviews, onboarding and talent acquisition, it also spotted a light in the many under layers that are interconnected and not only the positive side of AI Implications, decision makers and those on authority in organizations should understand that the use of AI must be balanced, calculated and include strategic planning, transparent communication and guidance, in summary, A sustainable approach to AI adoption should prioritize both business efficiency and employee well-being, ensuring an ethical and inclusive transition that supports long-term organizational success.

Limitations of the Study

This study offers insightful sensing of the tie between AI awareness, job insecurity, and job performance of HR recruiters, it still has limitation. The sample is towards HR professionals in the Middle East only, hence may not represent global workforce trends. Moreover, perceptions and impacts related to AI and HR are rapidly changing, so they may change again over time. Another limitation of this study that may arise from personal interpretations is that it is based on survey data.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Further research on relationship AI awareness, job performance and job insecurity across different industries and regions should be conducted to get wider insights. Moreover, qualitative studies such as in-depth interviews can offer more insights into employees' behaviors towards AI adoption. One area worth investigating is the role of learned knowledge in the relationship between AI awareness and job performance. A lack of learned knowledge may lead to a skills gap, which in turn could negatively affect performance when interacting with AI systems. Future studies could examine how addressing this skills gap might mitigate the adverse effects of AI integration. While the current study, conducted among Middle Eastern recruiters, found that AI awareness increases job insecurity, future research could explore whether factors such as learned knowledge or job-specific competencies moderate this relationship, especially considering the unique cultural context of the Middle East. It may be that in some contexts, AI awareness enables employees to perform more effectively, potentially reducing job-related anxiety and perceived job insecurity. The effects of AI awareness on job

engagement, stress coping methods, and perception of employability might also be a subject of further studies.

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