**AI in the Organizational Nexus: Building Trust, Cementing Commitment, and Evolving Psychological Contracts**

**Abstract**

Since the Industrial Revolution, significant technological advancements have revolutionized various manual processes and workflows entrenched for decades. Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers similar transformative potential across diverse industrial and social domains. The rapid pace of change in the AI-driven digital age presents unprecedented opportunities and challenges for sustained progress. Given the potentially profound impact of AI, this study seeks to explore its disruptive effects and challenges within organizational contexts. Drawing on the Social Exchange Theory, this research examines the relationship between psychological contract (PC) fulfillment and organizational commitment, with trust acting as a mediator and AI acceptance as a moderator. Data were collected from the service industry using a time-lagged design. The findings indicate that PC fulfillment positively influences workers’ trust and organizational commitment. Furthermore, AI acceptance attenuates the direct and indirect positive effects of PC fulfillment on job-related outcomes. This study offers valuable insights into building and maintaining trust and fostering a committed workforce amidst the digitalization era. It underscores the importance of fulfilling promissory expectations in fostering trust and commitment. Additionally, it sheds light on the disruptive effects of AI technology on critical job outcomes, emphasizing the societal and industrial implications, the future of work, and avenues for further advancements in AI technology.

**Keywords**: AI, psychological contract, trust, organizational commitment

**1. Introduction**

Job is fundamentally a trade-off between workers and employers, and each side can attain something from this association (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In the past years, worker-organization associations have been steady and foreseeable (e.g., job assurance). In return, workers entirely devote themselves to the firm(Bal et al., 2008; Conway & Briner, 2009). Recently, fundamental changes have been noticed in worker-employer associations. Modern employers require their workers’ reservoir to increase or decrease per their present requirements or market conditions.

Consequently, conventional job conditions(for instance, work security)are outdated(Jayaweera et al., 2021). This has changed workers’ perceptions of their employer and disturbed the association between employer and work dedication, leading to diverse worker-employer discourse(Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2019). Organizational commitment has received the attention of scholars and professionals. This is believed to be an excellent redefining of the rising employee-employer association, which also adds to employer productivity while promoting workers’ faithfulness and content (Moin, 2018). While employers require hiring and sustaining the best workforce, they also require their best workers to be bodily and psychologically devoted to their jobs. A committed staff is believed to be a long-term asset (Wang et al., 2022; Yan et al., 2019). Despite rising interest in studying organizational commitment, few studies have explored work and individual reservoirs’ influence on organizational commitment (Lambert et al., 2020). Existing studies have neglected employee psychological factors that can impact organizational commitment (George et al., 2021; Pathardikar et al., 2023; Uribetxebarria et al., 2021). Thus, this research investigates the causes and psychological factors that influence organizational commitment. Changing job settings has focused the administration’s attention on employment contracts. Yet, this element has not been properly discussed in prior organizational commitment research (Lambert et al., 2020). *Thus, drawing upon the social exchange theory, we propose investigating the influence of psychological contract (PC) fulfillment on organizational commitment.*

Workers who demonstrate a committed demeanor are undertaking some daring because commitment requires devoting a person’s spirit to chasing employer objectives. Without workers’ trust in the employer, they would not be inclined to devote themselves to their duties (Jaramillo et al., 2005). Few studies have investigated the link between trust and organizational commitment (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013; Gaudencio et al., 2017; George et al., 2021; Metin Camgöz & Bayhan Karapinar, 2016; Pathardikar et al., 2023; Tremblay et al., 2010; Uribetxebarria et al., 2021). Moreover, the mediating effect of trust between PC fulfillment and organizational commitment has not been investigated. Trust indicates reciprocity, articulating joint faithfulness, benevolence, and help (Braganza et al., 2021). Workers feeling of PC fulfillment makes employers reliable, which subsequently impacts workers’ actions (Ababneh et al., 2022; Conway & Briner, 2009). Workers undergoing fair job settings, among other elements, brought them to trust their colleagues, bosses, and schemes (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2019). Specifically, while other elements in job conditions can result in workers being committed, they are based on trust. Organizational commitment is a motivational idea. Investigating PC fulfillment and trust boosts the variety of causes connected to organizational commitment (Agarwal, 2014; Lambert et al., 2020). Thus, the second objective of this paper is to *investigate trust as a mediator impacting the association of PC fulfillment and organizational commitment.*

AI is changing the basis of employment and challenging the nature of the worldwide workforce (Frey & Osborne, 2017; Moin & Zhang, 2024). It influences affairs and duties while possibly increasing business adequacy. Automating AI-driven duties is anticipated to advance output with an extended workforce and a growing desire for customization and high-value yields. Prevalent acceptance of AI at businesses will expedite the evolution of growing automatized work activities (Prikshat et al., 2023). Thus, it is important to probe whether increased automation caused by AI improves work outputs. There is a consensus that AI and associated automation would impact firm operations and employees. AI-led automatized modification and progress steadily cause issues, prompting employees to be displaced and creating higher redundancy, especially among susceptible clusters.

On the contrary, some scholars forecast that AI automation will impact the nature of duties, not employment (Makridakis, 2017). Such automation led by AI brings rapid modification, which can improve enterprise ability and originate several shifts in the actions and anticipations of workers, consumers, and other market elements (Prikshat et al., 2023). This highlights the notion that AI is increasing job productivity on one side; on the other, it may also reduce workers’ commitment and lower promissory expectations’ features. Thus, *the third objective of this study is to examine the relationship of AI on PC fulfillment, trust, and employee commitment to enterprise, especially in changing working settings.*

As a result, based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), this research aims to examine the effect of AI-led automating progress on the link among PC fulfillment, trust, and worker commitment. It seeks to contribute to fairness, trust, commitment, and AI literature. Moreover, there have been growing numbers of studies recently published on ‘technology influence’ along with ongoing calls to acknowledge the importance of this topic and calls for more research to clarify its impact on wider settings (Alnsour et al., 2023; Bankins & Formosa, 2020; Chatterjee et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023; Dennehy et al., 2023; Drydakis, 2022; Du et al., 2022; Enholm et al., 2022; Fosso Wamba et al., 2024; Harfouche et al., 2023; Harfouche, Quinio, & Bugiotti, 2023; Hasan et al., 2023; Hossain et al., 2022; Kar & Kushwaha, 2023; Koniakou, 2023; Kumar et al., 2022; Kushwaha et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022; Löffert & Diehl, 2023; Merhi, 2023; Moin & Zhang, 2024; Samtani et al., 2023; Tseng, Lo, & Chen, 2023; Tursunbayeva & Gal, 2024). Thus, our research also seeks to respond to those recent calls and provide a comprehensive view of technology in broader settings.

Specifically, drawing upon social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), this study investigates the relationship between Psychological Contract (PC) fulfillment and organizational commitment, with trust serving as a mediator and Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a moderator. Results indicate a positive association between PC fulfillment and organizational commitment, mediated by trust, while AI adoption attenuates this relationship. The paper contributes to organizational commitment literature by elucidating factors influencing commitment and the reciprocal nature of employer-employee relationships. It extends PC fulfillment scholarship by exploring its consequences, particularly organizational commitment, and highlights trust as a crucial mediator in this association. Moreover, the study broadens understanding of AI’s role, suggesting its potential to disrupt traditional job outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of trust in fostering organizational commitment amid evolving work environments, emphasizing the need for organizations to fulfill promissory expectations to engender employee trust and commitment.

The rest of the paper unfolds in the following structure. The following section presents a literature review. Section 4 outlines the research methodology. Section 5 details the results. Sections 6 and 7 discuss the research contributions and practical implications. The last section concludes with limitations and future research directions.

**2. Theoretical Underpinning: Social Exchange Theory**

According to the social exchange theory (SET), the benefits of social exchange are compared to the potential advantages of other exchange interactions, such as those obtained from a different type of trade or a different partner. Consequently, the decision to maintain or terminate an existing exchange relationship is determined by the relative advantage of the connection (Lambe et al., 2001). In both the foundational works on SET (Blau, 1964) and the evaluations of the theory in the context of B2B, trust is considered one of SET’s most crucial aspects (Smith & Barclay, 1997). Trust is the belief that trade is reliable and that parties will fulfill their commitments (Lambe et al., 2001). Arrow (1974) states that trust is a vital facilitator of a social system. Typically, trust is developed over time through repeated and positive trade interactions (Cropanzano& Mitchell, 2005).

Homans (1969) expanded his research on Social Exchange Theory (SET) by integrating concepts from sociology and behavioral psychology, emphasizing the necessity for further investigation. Meanwhile, Anderson et al. (1969) highlighted the economic implications of the theory. In 1973, Goode suggested that role theory and exchange theory were convergent. Emerson (1976a) argued that SET should be viewed as a framework encompassing various theories rather than a standalone theory. Various aspects such as commitment (Bishop et al., 2000), organizational citizenship behaviors (Organ, 1990), supervisory and organizational support (Ladd & Henry, 2000), and justice (Tepper & Taylor, 2003) have been examined through the lens of SET. Mitchell et al. (2012) introduced the concept of a social life cycle, focusing on events and transactions between parties. Cropanzano et al. (2017) introduced the term “initiating action” to describe the actions of the first actor, which can be categorized as positive or negative. Positive initiating actions include justice (Cropanzano& Rupp, 2008) and organizational support (Riggle et al., 2009), while negative actions may involve incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2005), abusive supervision (Tepper et al., 2009), and bullying (Rayner &Keashly, 2005). The response elicited from the recipient can be classified as behavioral and relational. Successful exchanges can transform an initial economic exchange into a social exchange relationship (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Lyons and Scott (2012) introduced the concept of “homeomorphic reciprocity,” highlighting that an employee’s receipt of help or harm is contingent upon their engagement in beneficial or harmful actions. Moreover, the exchange of behaviors between an employee and a coworker should be reciprocal, where providing help without harm results in support, and engaging in harm without help leads to harm in return.

**3. Model Construction and Hypothesis Development**

**3.1 PC Fulfillment and Organizational Commitment**

Promissory expectations are workers’ feelings regarding their association with their employer. Promissory expectation has two types: transactional and relational (Conway & Briner, 2009). Transactional dealings are defined by brief time and financial schemes, with less mutual participation in the life and actions of each one, emphasizing solely material outputs. Workers only put effort into getting their salary. On the contrary, relational dealings are defined by mutual accord with sharing or both social-cognitive and financial aspects. The association between workers and organization is based on long-period, open-ended involvement that facilitates employees to build and progress with that organization (Bal et al., 2008). Due to this reason, relational dealings are linked with mutually favorable consequences for the organization and employees.

In contrast, transactional dealings due to material and short-term emphasis are linked with unfavorable consequences. Lowering the transactional facets of promissory expectation is helpful for employers as workers with these types of dealings are less devoted to the employer’s objectives (Jayaweera et al., 2021). Building and remodeling relational promissory expectations facilitate workers to become more devoted to employers’ goals and involved in the job (Bal et al., 2008). Violating promissory expectations or employers’ dealings produces unfavorable cognitive and behavioral outputs (Liang, 2022), such as lower commitment, dissatisfaction, and distrust—unsatisfactory workers’ feelings screen PC violations by not achieving them fully.

PC breach lowers the degree of trust between workers and the organization. As work trust depends on the association between worker and organization, a PC breach can destroy workers’ wellness, negatively impacting firm productivity (Gillani et al., 2021). In contrast, favorable PC fulfillment aids employers with workers’ dedication and job contentment (Agarwal, 2014; Braganza et al., 2021). When workers’ assurances have been matched, workers likely perform better as per the understanding of promissory expectations (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2019; Jayaweera et al., 2021). Accordingly, organizational commitment is payback for meeting the assurances (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, assessing PC fulfillment as a cause of organizational commitment is reasonable. Social reciprocity in work associations is perhaps generated via the employer’s fair conduct of its workers (Conway & Briner, 2009). Workers consider being treated relatively by fulfilling psychological requirements, including affiliation, self-respect, and life worthwhile (Bal et al., 2008). This conduct on the part of the employer generates a duty on the part of workers to pay back the good conduct of the employer. When the firm offers fair conduct, the workforce will pay back because the workforce counts on paying back. In this view, organizational commitment is an exchange for what the employer has offered. Hence, it is anticipated that a favorable association will be determined between PC fulfillment and workers’ commitment. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H1**: *PC fulfillment has a positive relationship with organizational commitment*.

**3.2 AI Acceptance, Work Trust, and Organizational Commitment**

Organizational commitment has received notable consideration from scholars and professionals (Cheng & Stockdale, 2003; Lee et al., 2001; Wasti, 2005). Organizational commitment refers to workers’ consequences that improve employer value with greater monetary benefits (Meyer et al., 2002). Organizational commitment is a unique facet involving affective, normative, and continuance parts linked with a person’s productivity. Workers who are exceptionally committed to their jobs are usually strongly associated with their employers and work with greater passion (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Studies examining the causes of organizational commitment are scant, especially in changing job settings (George et al., 2021; Pathardikar et al., 2023). Examining the causes of organizational commitment is significant because uncommitted workers increase the costs to employers (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013). There is some agreement among business scholars that organizational commitment has a key effect on work satisfaction and productivity consequences (Jaramillo et al., 2005). Workers with high commitment levels have greater satisfaction with self-fulfillment to their employer (Uribetxebarria et al., 2021).

Trust is the assurance of the other party’s credibility and trustworthiness. In the job context, trust is defined as workers’ favorable anticipation from organizations established on ability and integrity (Dirks & de Jong, 2022; Mayer et al., 1995). Trust is vital to stop workers from violating dealings. Because of worldwide disturbance and automating progress, employers are responding rapidly to persist in the market. Consequently, employer or work trust becomes even more significant in accomplishing favorable firm consequences (Mittal et al., 2019). Trust is vital in all areas of daily life. It connects companionship, aids agreement, lowers trade costs, and eases political disagreements. Trust positively predicts consequences such as common way, OCB, and workers’ faithfulness. Higher work trust positively impacts communication quality and troubleshooting between workers and between workers and employers. Trust in employers is also a key factor that can generate organizational commitment (Colquitt et al., 2007; Colquitt & Rodell, 2011).

When workers devote their strength, they make sure they put their spirit into making the right choice in the facilitation of employers and will not be fooled. Trust aids workers in making those choices. If workers believe in employers, it encourages them to devote themselves completely to their jobs. On the contrary, in the absence of trust, workers spend plenty of periods shielding themselves. It is vital in any favorable and constructive social scheme (Braganza et al., 2021). Mutual trust is key to the survival of any social reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Research shows that job instability, insufficient job situations, poor conduct or work vulnerability, HR plans, and firm culture can impact workers’ trust. Promissory expectations are a key predictor of trust (Dirks & de Jong, 2022). As reciprocity necessitates trusting others to pay back, the initial problem is proving oneself trustworthy. Research suggests that an employer’s fair conduct of the other party starts a social reciprocity link with the workers, which, over time, strengthens the faithfulness of the party involved.

When workers undergo fair organizational schemes, they recognize faithful employers and proportionate to standards of paying back, and they repay the employer. Employer fairness is one of the causes of trust (Agarwal, 2014). Prior research also suggests that work dedication is one of the outcomes of organizational trust (Tremblay et al., 2010). Furthermore, AI-based automation brings both possibilities and concerns to workers(Frey & Osborne, 2017). This can aid workers and employers in looking for added opportunities worldwide (Prikshat et al., 2023). As automatized modifications bring hesitation at a job, the acceptance of AI would undermine the association between workers’ PC fulfillment and organizational commitment. Hence, we propose the following hypotheses.

**H2**: *PC fulfillment has a positive relationship with workers’ job trust*.

**H3**. *Job trust has a positive relationship with organizational commitment*.

**H4**: *Job trust mediates the positive relationship between PC fulfillment and organizational commitment*.

**H5**: *Acceptance of AI undermines the positive relationship between PC fulfillment and trust*.

**H6**: *Acceptance of AI undermines the positive indirect relationship between PC fulfillment and organizational commitment via workers’ job trust*.

H5, H6

H4

H3

H2

H1

Psychological Contract

AI   
Acceptance

Organizational Commitment

Trust

**Figure 1**. Proposed research model

**4. Method**

**4.1 Measurement Scale**

The survey instrument was developed by integrating items from established literature, with careful customization to align with the particular context of our study, thereby ensuring its relevance and appropriateness. PC fulfillment was measured using five Robinson and Wolfe Morrison’s (2000) scale items. Sample items include ‘So far, my employer has done an excellent job fulfilling its promises to me.’ Trust was measured using seven items from the Gabarro and Athos scale (1976, 1978). Sample items include ‘I think my employer treats me fairly.’ Organizational commitment was measured using six items from the affective commitment scale of Meyer and Allen (1991). Sample items include ‘This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.’ AI adoption was measured using four items from the scale of Brougham and Haar (2018). Sample items include ‘I think there is a possibility that AI will replace my current job.’ Following the guidelines (Brislin, 1980) and standard translate-back approach, the English language surveys were converted into Chinese and back with the help of two teachers proficient in both these languages. Participants assessed their stance on various aspects of the research model, represented by statements, on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strong agreement to strong disagreement. To validate the survey instrument, a panel of experts performed content appropriateness of the items. Additionally, a pilot study was conducted with the participation of 30 individuals. Subsequently, minor adjustments to the questionnaire were implemented to enhance its accuracy and relevance.

**4.2 Sampling and Questionnaire Administration**

Data were collected using an online survey questionnaire with the help of a market research firm. Data were collected in three waves from customer service enterprises based in China that recently adopted AI at work. At time 1, workers rated their PC fulfillment, AI acceptance, and demographics. At time 2 (one month after T1), workers rated trust. Workers rated organizational commitment at time 3 (one month after T2). All the surveys were properly coded and matched. Out of 350 surveys, the author received 180 final usable surveys. The sample units for data collection were customer service enterprises using AI. To ensure the eligibility of the participants, we included a screening question: “Are you using AI in your organization?”. The respondents were first explained about the AI-enabled systems and the features of the AI-enabled systems.

**4.3 Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model**

According to Hair et al. (2010), we assessed the measurement model by evaluating the latent constructs’ reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) findings revealed a good model fit. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS 26 was conducted to scrutinize the reliability and validity of the study constructs. To assess reliability, Cronbach’s alpha values were computed for all constructs, each surpassing 0.7, affirming their reliability (Hair et al., 2017) (See Table 1). Convergent and discriminant validity were established by examining the average variance extracted (AVE) values (all above 0.5) and composite reliability (CR) values (all above 0.7) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

**4.4 Common Method Bias**

We applied procedural measures and statistical controls to mitigate common method bias (CMB) in our data collection. Furthermore, we executed Harman’s single-factor test to evaluate CMB within our study. Results revealed that the loading on the first factor is below the 50% threshold (Podsakoff et al., 2003), signifying negligible influence within our findings. Consequently, we can infer that participants engaged attentively and responded considerately to the survey questionnaire.

**Table 1:** Intercorrelations, descriptive statistics, and reliabilities among the latent variables

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | variables | mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 | Gender | .51 | .50 | - |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | Age | 29.50 | 6.78 | .04 | - |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Tenure | 2.64 | 1.04 | -.00 | .11 | - |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Psychological contract | 3.06 | 1.16 | .00 | .06 | -.02 | (.90) |  |  |  |
| 5 | Trust | 3.33 | 1.31 | .06 | .01 | -.00 | .47\*\* | (.96) |  |  |
| 6 | Organizational commitment | 3.19 | 1.20 | .04 | .07 | .03 | .40\*\* | .59\*\* | (.95) |  |
| 7 | AI Acceptance | 2.84 | 1.20 | .04 | .16\* | -.01 | .44\*\* | .46\*\* | .45\*\* | (.86) |

Note: \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01 (Two-tailed); figures in parentheses are alpha internal consistency reliabilities; for gender, 0 = ‘female’, 1 = ‘male’, for tenure, 1 = ‘less than 1 year,’ 2 = between ‘1–3 years,’ 3 = between ‘4-5 years’; and 4 = ‘6 years and above.

**5. Analysis and Results**

SPSS process macro was used to test the moderated mediation model using a two-step approach(Hayes, 2013). In the first step, model 4 was used for simple mediation. Table 2 shows the results of mediation such that PC fulfillment has a positive relationship with trust (β = 0.53, t = 7.14, p < 0.001) and organizational commitment (β = 0.16, t = 2.31, p < 0.05). Further, trust has a positive relationship with organizational commitment (β = 0.47, t = 7.69, p < 0.001). In addition, this study tested the indirect effect such that PC fulfillment’s indirect effect on organizational commitment via trust was (β =0.25, SE = 0.05, 95% CI: 0.16 to 0.36). Hence, H1-H4is supported.

**Table 2:** Results of regression analysis

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| antecedents | mediator | | | | dependent variable | | | |
| trust | | | | organizational commitment | | | |
| β | SE | t |  | β | SE | t |  |
|  |  |  |  | .22 |  |  |  | .37 |
| Constant | 1.70 | .24 | 6.98\*\*\* |  | 1.11 | .22 | 4.88\*\*\* |  |
| Psychological contract | .53 | .07 | 7.14\*\*\* |  | .16 | .07 | 2.31\* |  |
| Trust | - | - | - |  | .47 | .06 | 7.69\*\*\* |  |
|  |  | |  |  | β | SE | LLCI | ULCI |
| *Indirect effect of Psychological contract* |  |  |  |  | .25 | .05 | .16 | .36 |

Note: \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001; Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown; Bootstrap sample size=5000; LLCI=Bias corrected lower limit confidence interval; ULCI=Bias corrected upper limit confidence interval

In the second step, model 7 was used for moderated mediation. Table 3 shows that, again, PC fulfillment has a positive relationship with trust (β = 0.34, t = 4.51, p < 0.001) and organizational commitment (β = 0.16, t = 2.31, p < 0.05). Further, trust has a positive relationship with organizational commitment(β = 0.47, t = 7.69, p < 0.001). Table 3 also showed that AI (β = -0.20, t = -3.12, p < 0.01) moderates the relationship between PC fulfillment and trust. Hence, H5 is supported. This study also plots the slope for moderation as shown in Fig 2, such that the slope of the relationship between PC fulfillment and trust is weaker when AI is high (t = 0.83, ns) but stronger when AI is low (t = 4.27, p < 0.001).

**Table 3:** Results of moderated mediation overall model

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| antecedents | mediator | | | | dependent variable | | | |
| trust | | | | organizational commitment | | | |
| β | SE | t |  | β | SE | t |  |
|  |  |  |  | .34 |  |  |  | .37 |
| constant | 3.45 | .08 | 38.69\*\*\* |  | 1.60 | .21 | 7.34\*\*\* |  |
| Psychological contract | .34 | .07 | 4.51\*\*\* |  | .16 | .07 | 2.31\* |  |
| trust | - | - | - |  | .47 | .06 | 7.69\*\*\* |  |
| AI | .37 | .07 | 5.03\*\*\* |  |  |  |  |  |
| Psychological contract × AI | -.20 | .06 | -3.12\*\* |  |  |  |  |  |

Note: \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001; Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown; Bootstrap sample size=5000; LLCI=Bias corrected lower limit confidence interval; ULCI=Bias corrected upper limit confidence interval

Table 4 shows the index of moderated mediation (β = -.09, SE = 0.03, 95% CI: -0.16 to -0.03). Moreover, Table 4 also showed the conditional indirect relationship between PC fulfillment and organizational commitment via trust across levels of AI at a low level (β =0.28, CI: 0.16 to 0.42) and a high level (β =0.05, CI: -0.05 to 0.16). This suggests that the indirect relationship between PC fulfillment and organizational commitment via trust is weaker at a high level of AI and stronger at a low level of AI. Hence, H6 is supported.

**Figure 2**. Moderation effect of AI acceptance

**Table 4:** Results of Index of moderated mediation model and conditional indirect effects across levels of moderator

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Effect | SE | Boot Lower limit 95% CI | Boot Upper limit 95% CI |
| **Index of the moderated mediation model** | | | | |
|  | -.09 | .03 | -.16 | -.03 |
| **Conditional Indirect effects** | | | | |
| -1 SD | .28 | .06 | .16 | .42 |
| +1 SD | .05 | .05 | -.05 | .16 |
| Note: \*p<.05; \*\*p<.01; \*\*\*p<.001; Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown; Bootstrap sample size=5000; LLCI=Bias corrected lower limit confidence interval; ULCI=Bias corrected upper limit confidence interval | | | | |

To check the robustness of results, we conducted CFAs and examined the distinctiveness of four constructs included in our analyses: psychological contract, trust, organizational commitment, and AI acceptance. The findings show that the four-factor model suited the data well and was a substantially better fit than the alternate model, indicating the discriminant validity of the measures of our main variables.

**6. Discussion and Conclusion**

**6.1 Summary of Findings**

Based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), this study explores how fulfilling PC impacts organizational commitment through trust and how AI affects this relationship. The findings show that PC fulfillment increases organizational commitment both directly and through trust. However, AI weakens this positive effect on job outcomes.

Organizations value commitment due to its link with productivity (Tremblay et al., 2010), so it is crucial to understand the factors that influence it. This research uses a social exchange perspective, showing that when employers treat workers fairly, it builds trust and creates a sense of obligation in employees, leading to greater commitment. The results align with previous studies (Agarwal, 2014; Braganza et al., 2021), suggesting that PC fulfillment and trust improve employee outcomes. From a job demands-resources view (Bakker & de Vries, 2021), PC fulfillment serves as a resource that workers expect from their organization. Another key finding is that AI adoption reduces the positive impact of PC fulfillment on job outcomes, likely due to job insecurity (Frey & Osborne, 2017).

This research contributes to several areas of literature. It expands the understanding of organizational commitment by identifying factors like PC fulfillment and trust that influence it (Jaramillo et al., 2005). The study also adds to the psychological contract literature by examining organizational commitment as a result of PC fulfillment (Bal et al., 2008; Conway & Briner, 2009; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2019). Trust is highlighted as a key mediator in this relationship—when employees feel their employer meets promises, trust develops, leading to greater commitment (Mayer et al., 1995). Additionally, by considering AI as a moderator, the research contributes to studies on AI in the workplace (Prikshat et al., 2023), showing its role in altering the effects of PC fulfillment on job outcomes.

**6.1 Theoretical Contributions**

This study makes a unique contribution to AI literature by exploring how different psychological contracts influence organizational commitment through trust in an AI-driven environment. It builds on social exchange theory to better understand how AI affects employee commitment.

First, the research addresses the lack of studies on how AI impacts employee behavior, especially commitment, amid job insecurity due to AI adoption. While previous studies focused on AI’s role in enhancing business performance (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Kshetri et al., 2023), this study fills the gap by investigating its effect on employee commitment using a quantitative survey-based approach. The study also examines the role of trust and AI acceptance, offering a unique contribution to the literature.

Second, it highlights how PC boosts employee commitment and how innovative AI technologies influence that commitment, contributing to organizational commitment research.

Third, by applying social exchange theory, the research provides a deeper understanding of employee behavior in the digital age, significantly advancing the literature on technology adoption and social exchange theory in new contexts.

Fourth, the study shows that trust plays a key role in shaping employee behavior, contributing to both trust literature and the understanding of how trust mediates the effect of psychological contracts on organizational commitment.

Finally, the study examines how AI acceptance affects the role of trust as a mediator, further expanding the literature on AI acceptance. In summary, this research fills important gaps and adds to the growing conversation on AI’s impact on employee commitment and behavior.

**6.2 Practical Implications**

This study gives useful advice for managers adopting AI. Organizational commitment is key for good outcomes, so employers should focus on creating a fair and trusting work environment. Fair treatment builds trust, which boosts employees’ commitment (Conway & Briner, 2009). To ensure fairness, employers should be transparent about how benefits are distributed and communicate regularly with employees, explaining decisions and changes (Bal et al., 2008).

Building trust involves actions that show fairness. Employers should involve employees in decisions, gather feedback, and make sure they explain reasons for choices (Jayaweera et al., 2021). Top management is key in creating a fair work environment, as employees look to them for support. Managers need training to treat employees fairly and explain decisions well (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2019). Being approachable is also important.

Trust is essential for organizational commitment. Employees who trust management feel safe and willing to commit to their jobs. This sense of security is especially important during tough times (Colquitt et al., 2007). Trust builds quickly with new employees, so treating them fairly from the start is important. Managers should ensure trust is maintained within teams by showing appreciation and being considerate (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011). Giving employees a say in decisions also helps.

AI adoption is often driven by competition or regulations (Frey & Osborne, 2017). It typically has strong support from senior management due to its high cost. Employees at all levels should be involved in the process. However, the study shows that AI may reduce job satisfaction due to job uncertainty. Managers should clearly communicate how AI will be used and what its impact will be on work. AI can create anxiety, so managers must support and reassure employees, especially when jobs or tasks may be automated (Makridakis, 2017).

**6.4 Limitations and Future Research Directions**

This study has some limitations, offering opportunities for future research. First, it used a time-lagged design to reduce common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), but future studies could employ a longitudinal design. Second, the findings are based on data from a service sector firm in China, so future research could replicate this in other sectors and regions. Third, future studies could examine how violations of promissory expectations affect trust and other types of commitment, such as normative and continuance. Previous research has shown that higher trust produces numerous advantages, including better working conditions, teamwork, and open communication (Costa et al., 2018). Exploring trust within enterprises at multiple levels, from supervisors to immediate bosses and colleagues, could also be valuable. Future research could further explore the roles of gender, organizational support, and leader-member exchange (LMX) in reciprocal relationships. Although this study highlights AI’s negative impact at work, AI may also improve society by enhancing job inclusion, reducing gender discrimination, and lowering cyberbullying—areas worth further exploration. Additionally, AI might inspire creativity and optimism, positively influencing trust. The effects of AI on job outcomes may also vary depending on the nature of the task or job type, so further exploration is needed (Prikshat et al., 2023; Makridakis et al., 2017). Finally, this study used the social exchange framework, but future studies could apply other theories, such as equity theory, which suggests that individuals seek fairness in relationships. A perceived imbalance in rewards and costs can lead to dissatisfaction and efforts to restore fairness.

**Declarations**

**• Ethics approval and consent to participate**

The paper does not involve any human objects and does not require ethics approval.   
**• Consent for publication**

All authors agree with the publication of this manuscript.  
**• Availability of data and materials**

Data is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.  
**• Competing interests**

The authors declare no competing interests.  
**• Funding**

The authors did not receive support from any organization for the submitted work.  
**• Authors’ contributions**

Conceptualization: Muhammad Farrukh Moin, Justin Zhang; Methodology: Muhammad Farrukh Moin, Justin Zhang, Abhishek Behl; Formal analysis and investigation:Muhammad Farrukh Moin, Justin Zhang, Abhishek Behl, Amit Shankar; Writing - original draft preparation:Muhammad Farrukh Moin, Justin Zhang, Abhishek Behl, Amit Shankar; Writing - revised draft preparation: Muhammad Farrukh Moin, Justin Zhang, Abhishek Behl, Amit Shankar; Supervision: Justin Zhang.  
**• Acknowledgements**

None  
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None

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