

A Conceptual Framework of Personality Traits, AI Utilisation and Employee Performance

Idris Osman^{*1}, Munirah Mohamed², Nurhaslinda Hashim³, Nurul Azrin Ariffin⁴

Faculty of Business and Management, UiTM Cawangan Melaka, Kampus Bandaraya, Melaka, 110 Off Jalan Hang Tuah, 75300, Melaka, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into contemporary workplaces is reshaping how employees perform tasks, process information, make decisions, and solve problems. Nevertheless, access to the same AI technologies does not necessarily produce comparable patterns of utilisation or performance, suggesting that employee-level characteristics play a critical role in determining the value derived from AI. This conceptual study develops an integrated framework that combines the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to explain how the Big Five personality traits influence employee performance through AI utilisation. Specifically, the study conceptualises AI utilisation as a behavioural mediator linking personality traits to employee performance and proposes the structural pathway Personality Traits → AI Utilisation → Employee Performance. Drawing on recent literature, the framework suggests that personality traits, particularly openness to experience and conscientiousness, shape employees' receptiveness to AI, technology-related perceptions, willingness to engage with AI, and patterns of technology use. Effective AI utilisation, in turn, may enhance task efficiency, work concentration, problem-solving, creativity, and innovative work behaviour, thereby contributing to improved employee performance. This current study advances a human-centred perspective of AI-enabled work by challenging technology-deterministic assumptions and positioning individual differences as an important antecedent of meaningful AI utilisation and performance outcomes. The proposed conceptual framework contributes theoretically by integrating personality, technology acceptance, and employee performance perspectives within a unified model, while offering practical implications for personality-sensitive AI implementation, targeted training, and employee development. The study concludes by presenting theoretical propositions and identifying directions for future empirical research, particularly through longitudinal and quantitative testing of the proposed mediation relationships.

Keywords— Artificial intelligence; AI utilisation; Big Five personality traits; employee performance

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI) has significantly transformed contemporary workplaces, changing how employees perform tasks, process information, solve problems, and make decisions. Organisations increasingly utilise AI-enabled technologies to automate repetitive activities, support decision-making, facilitate knowledge sharing, and improve work efficiency. Recent studies have indicated that AI utilisation can contribute to enhanced employee productivity and performance by enabling employees to focus on higher-value activities and improving the efficiency of work processes (Benhmama & Sabiri, 2025; Olan, Nyuur, & Arakpogun, 2024; Zhang, Yu, & Dai, 2025). AI has also been associated with increased innovative work behaviour by providing employees with new tools for creativity and problem-solving (Rajpurohit, Sharma, Sharma, & Jain, 2025; Zheng, Guo, Liao, et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the influence of AI on employees is not uniformly positive. AI utilisation may also create concerns regarding job security, autonomy, and over-reliance on technological systems, potentially affecting employee outcomes when AI is perceived as threatening rather than supportive (Lopez-Garcia, Romero-Gomez, Castañón-Puga, & Ahumada-Tello, 2024). These contrasting outcomes suggest that the performance implications of AI depend not only on the technology itself but also on how individual employees engage with and utilise AI in their work.

Employee performance remains a critical outcome for organisations because it reflects employees' ability to accomplish work responsibilities effectively and contribute to organisational objectives. In an AI-enabled workplace, employees can utilise AI to automate routine tasks, obtain information, support decision-making, receive performance-related feedback, and facilitate innovative activities. Evidence suggests that AI utilisation may improve employee performance through mechanisms such as enhanced work concentration, self-efficacy, task efficiency, and innovative behaviour (Benhmama & Sabiri, 2025; Olan et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). Recent empirical evidence further indicates that AI use can positively influence job performance through work concentration and self-efficacy, although individual characteristics may determine the extent to which employees benefit from AI (Wang, Lyu, Zhang, & Wu, 2026). Similarly, AI-enabled human resource practices and AI-related capabilities may strengthen employees' ability to convert technological resources into improved work outcomes (Li & Geng, 2026). Thus, AI utilisation should be understood as more than technological adoption; it represents an employee-level behavioural process through which AI capabilities are incorporated into actual work activities. This perspective highlights the importance of examining individual differences that may explain why some employees utilise AI more effectively than others.

Personality traits provide an important individual-level perspective for explaining differences in employees' responses to AI and their subsequent work performance. The Big Five personality dimensions, openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, represent relatively stable individual characteristics that influence how employees respond to workplace demands, technological change, and interpersonal situations. Recent research has shown that personality characteristics are relevant to employees' acceptance and engagement with workplace AI, with openness to experience associated with greater willingness to engage with AI technologies and conscientiousness associated with more effective AI-related work behaviour (Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Wang et al., 2026). Personality traits may also influence employee performance directly. In particular, conscientiousness has consistently been associated with reliability, task completion, and higher performance, while openness to experience may support creativity, adaptability, and innovative behaviour (Amoozegar, Elsiddig, Falahat, et al., 2025; Wright, 2025). These relationships suggest that personality may influence not only what employees are capable of achieving but also how they respond to emerging technologies. Consequently, personality traits provide an important theoretical basis for understanding variations in both AI utilisation and employee performance.

The relationship between personality traits and employee performance may become particularly important when examined through employees' utilisation of AI. Employees with greater openness to experience may be more willing to experiment with AI tools, learn new technological capabilities, and integrate AI into existing work practices. Similarly, conscientious employees may be more systematic and disciplined in applying AI, evaluating AI-generated information, and incorporating technological outputs into their tasks. Recent evidence indicates that conscientiousness can strengthen the positive effects of AI use on job performance, while AI self-efficacy and work concentration may further contribute to these performance gains (Wang et al., 2026). Other research has suggested that AI literacy and personality-related characteristics can shape employees' ability to engage effectively with AI and subsequently improve job performance (Lee & Jeon, 2025; Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026). Therefore, AI utilisation may represent an important mechanism through which employees' personality-driven tendencies are translated into workplace outcomes. Rather than viewing personality and AI utilisation as separate predictors of performance, integrating these constructs may provide a more comprehensive explanation of why employees derive different performance benefits from AI technologies.

Despite increasing scholarly attention to AI, personality, and employee performance, these areas have frequently been examined as separate streams of research, creating a need for greater conceptual integration. Existing evidence demonstrates that AI utilisation can enhance employee productivity, innovation, self-efficacy, and work performance, while personality traits can influence both employees' responses to AI and their general performance outcomes (Rajpurohit et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2026). However, comparatively limited conceptual attention has been directed toward explaining how personality traits may influence employee performance through AI utilisation. The evidence provided by recent studies suggests that AI literacy, AI self-efficacy, and personality characteristics may operate together in shaping employees' ability to obtain performance benefits from AI (Lee & Jeon, 2025; Li & Geng, 2026). Accordingly, this conceptual

study proposes that personality traits influence employees' AI utilisation, which subsequently contributes to employee performance. Specifically, AI utilisation is conceptualised as a potential mediating mechanism connecting individual personality characteristics with employee performance. This integrated perspective contributes to the emerging literature on AI-enabled workplaces by bringing together an individual-differences perspective and a technology-utilisation perspective, while providing a conceptual foundation for future empirical research examining the relationship between personality traits, AI utilisation, and employee performance.

Notwithstanding the expanding literature on artificial intelligence, personality psychology, and employee outcomes, these domains remain largely compartmentalized, leaving critical conceptual voids in the organizational literature. First, prevailing technology acceptance models predominantly treat AI usage as a standardized, uniform outcome governed by system-level factors or managerial mandates, failing to explain why workers operating within identical technological infrastructures exhibit starkly divergent patterns of AI utilization grounded in their psychological profiles. Second, extant scholarship heavily favors investigating dispositional traits and AI utilization as isolated, parallel predictors of job performance (Amoozegar et al., 2025; Rajpurohit et al., 2025), an approach that overlooks the complex interaction between an individual's internal personality structure and their technology-driven work behaviors. Third, although preliminary evidence indicates that traits such as openness and conscientiousness influence technological readiness (Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Wang et al., 2026), there is a distinct shortage of theoretical frameworks establishing AI utilisation as a functional mediator through which intrinsic dispositional tendencies translate into enhanced workplace performance.

This study directly addresses these gaps by synthesizing personality theory and technology-utilization perspectives into a unified conceptual framework. By formalizing AI utilisation as a behavioral mediator linking the Big Five personality traits to employee performance, this study moves beyond purely deterministic views of technology adoption. Ultimately, this conceptualization provides a robust, human-centered foundation for future empirical inquiry, offering organizational scholars and practitioners actionable insights into how dispositional differences dictate technological engagement to drive employee performance in AI-enabled workplaces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Personality Traits in the Workplace

Personality traits represent relatively stable individual differences that shape how employees perceive, respond to, and behave within their work environments. The Big Five personality model, comprising conscientiousness, openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, has remained one of the most widely applied frameworks for understanding workplace behaviour and employee outcomes. Recent evidence suggests that these personality dimensions are relevant to various work-related outcomes, although their effects may differ according to the nature of the job and organisational context (Sandigawad et al., 2024; Xiaoxin et al., 2025). Among the five dimensions, conscientiousness has consistently demonstrated strong relevance to employee performance because conscientious employees tend to be organised, responsible, dependable, and goal-oriented. These characteristics are associated with stronger work engagement and positive work behaviours, including organisational citizenship behaviour (Narayanasami et al., 2024; Shahreki et al., 2020). Thus, conscientiousness can be regarded as one of the most important personality characteristics for understanding employee behaviour and work outcomes.

Openness to experience is particularly relevant in contemporary workplaces characterised by technological change, innovation, and evolving work requirements. Employees with higher openness tend to demonstrate greater curiosity, willingness to explore new ideas, creativity, and adaptability, making this trait especially relevant to innovative and creative work behaviours (Amoozegar et al., 2025; Shaw et al., 2023). Extraversion is also associated with positive workplace outcomes, particularly those involving interpersonal interaction, social engagement, creativity, and job satisfaction (Sandigawad et al., 2024; Xiaoxin et al., 2025). Meanwhile, agreeableness is generally associated with cooperative behaviour, teamwork, positive interpersonal

relationships, and organisational citizenship behaviour, which can contribute to constructive workplace interactions (Sabahattin Mete, 2020; Shahreki et al., 2020). In contrast, neuroticism, or low emotional stability, tends to be associated with less favourable work-related outcomes. Employees characterised by higher levels of neuroticism may experience greater stress, lower job satisfaction, and more negative work attitudes (Mansour et al., 2021). Collectively, these findings indicate that personality traits influence not only what employees achieve but also how they interact, adapt, collaborate, and respond to workplace demands.

The influence of the Big Five traits on work-related attitudes and behaviours is particularly important when considering employee performance in contemporary and increasingly technology-enabled workplaces. Conscientiousness may encourage employees to maintain effort and discipline in completing tasks, whereas openness may facilitate creativity, experimentation, and adaptation to new approaches. Extraversion and agreeableness may strengthen interpersonal and collaborative behaviours, while neuroticism may constrain positive work experiences through increased stress and negative affect (Narayanasami et al., 2024; Xiaoxin et al., 2025). Previous research has therefore established that personality provides an important individual-level explanation for differences in employee behaviour and performance. More importantly, the relevance of personality may become increasingly significant as employees interact with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), because individuals may differ in their willingness to explore, adopt, and integrate new technological tools into their work. This provides a strong basis for examining whether personality traits influence AI utilisation, and whether such utilisation subsequently contributes to employee performance.

AI Utilisation in the Workplace

Artificial intelligence (AI) has increasingly become embedded in employees' daily work activities, extending beyond simple task automation to support decision-making, communication, knowledge development, and problem-solving. Employees utilise AI to automate repetitive and administrative activities, thereby reducing time spent on routine work and allowing greater attention to higher-value and creative tasks (Rana & Bhambri, 2026; Yoshida & İnce-Yenilmez, 2025). AI is also increasingly applied in analytical and decision-support activities, including workforce analytics, predictive analysis, and other data-driven processes that assist employees in making more informed decisions (Ajonbadi et al., 2024). In human resource management, for example, AI can support candidate screening, turnover prediction, compensation-related analysis, and other administrative functions. These applications indicate that AI utilisation is progressively shifting from being a purely technological function to becoming an integral component of employees' work processes and capabilities.

Beyond automation and decision support, employees increasingly use AI to enhance communication, learning, collaboration, and workplace support. AI-powered chatbots and intelligent platforms can provide personalised information and assistance, while AI-enabled systems may facilitate knowledge sharing and employee engagement (Behare, 2025; Makwambeni & Makwambeni, 2024). In remote and digitally mediated work environments, AI tools can further support employee engagement, job satisfaction, and work-related outcomes by facilitating communication and improving access to work-related resources (Jacob & Kumar, 2026). At the same time, the increasing integration of AI is reshaping job roles and skill requirements, requiring employees to develop new competencies and adapt their responsibilities to AI-supported work processes (Rana & Bhambri, 2026). Consequently, AI utilisation should be understood not merely as the adoption of a technological tool, but as an ongoing process through which employees incorporate AI into task execution, decision-making, communication, and knowledge-based activities.

Employees' utilisation of AI, however, is influenced by a combination of individual, technological, and organisational factors. Individual characteristics such as employees' skills, motivation, perceived ability, and personality can influence their willingness and capacity to engage with AI technologies (Elziny et al., 2026; Thorp et al., 2026). In particular, personality traits may shape employees' openness to experimentation, confidence in using new technologies, and persistence in integrating AI into their work, providing a direct link between personality and AI utilisation (Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Wang et al., 2026). At the organisational level, supportive leadership, training opportunities, and a work environment conducive to innovation can facilitate employees' adaptation to AI (Yin & Hoang, 2025). Perceived usefulness and ease of integrating AI into existing work processes are also important determinants of utilisation (Khanfar et al.,

2026). These findings suggest that AI utilisation results from the interaction between individual characteristics and contextual conditions, supporting the need to examine personality traits as potential antecedents of AI utilisation and AI utilisation as a mechanism through which individual differences may ultimately influence employee performance.

Employee Performance in the AI-Enabled Workplace

AI utilisation has become increasingly important in shaping employee performance in contemporary workplaces by supporting task execution, decision-making, knowledge sharing, and work process optimisation. The utilisation of AI can automate repetitive activities, reduce errors, accelerate information processing, and enable employees to devote greater attention to complex and higher-value tasks, thereby improving productivity and work efficiency (Benhmama & Sabiri, 2025; Lopez-Garcia et al., 2024). AI-enabled human resource systems can also support employee engagement and performance through data-driven performance management and personalised workplace interventions (Malik, 2024). In addition, AI facilitates knowledge sharing and access to relevant information, which can strengthen employees' ability to perform their responsibilities effectively (Olan et al., 2024). Nevertheless, the effects of AI utilisation are not universally positive, as outcomes may depend on how AI is implemented, the nature of employees' tasks, and the extent to which employees perceive AI as a supportive rather than controlling technology (Tariq, 2025).

The dimensions of employee performance most influenced by AI utilisation include productivity and efficiency, innovative work behaviour, employee engagement, and learning and knowledge development. Productivity and efficiency are among the most direct outcomes because AI can streamline workflows, automate routine processes, and provide analytical support for work-related decisions (Benhmama & Sabiri, 2025; Lopez-Garcia et al., 2024). AI utilisation can also facilitate creativity and innovative work behaviour by providing employees with new sources of information, ideas, and problem-solving resources. However, recent research suggests that the relationship between AI utilisation and innovation can be double-edged, as excessive reliance on AI may potentially constrain employee autonomy or create psychological and emotional challenges (Jiang et al., 2026; Zheng et al., 2025). Furthermore, AI-supported learning systems can enhance access to training and knowledge resources, potentially strengthening employees' skills and subsequent work performance (Suleymenova et al., 2025). These findings suggest that AI affects employee performance through both direct productivity-enhancing mechanisms and broader cognitive, behavioural, and developmental processes.

AI utilisation may also influence employee performance through engagement, motivation, job satisfaction, and work-related well-being. AI-driven performance management systems may strengthen motivation and satisfaction when employees perceive AI applications as useful, supportive, and aligned with their work needs (Muridzi & Dhliwayo, 2026; Oglesby et al., 2024). Similarly, AI-supported hybrid and remote work environments may facilitate employee engagement and performance by improving communication, coordination, and access to work resources (Jacob & Kumar, 2026; Saritha & Madhavi, 2026).

Overall, the literature indicates that productivity and efficiency, innovative work behaviour, engagement and motivation, and learning and knowledge development represent important dimensions through which AI utilisation can influence employee performance. Importantly, these findings strengthen the rationale for positioning AI utilisation as a mediating mechanism in the relationship between personality traits and employee performance, as employees' individual characteristics may determine how effectively they engage with AI, while the resulting utilisation may subsequently contribute to differences in performance outcomes.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The relationships between personality traits, AI utilisation, and employee performance can be effectively explained through the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). AMO Theory provides the broader theoretical foundation for understanding employee performance by proposing that performance is influenced by employees' abilities, motivation, and opportunities to perform. In the context of AI-enabled workplaces, personality traits can be considered important individual characteristics that shape employees' abilities and behavioural tendencies, while access

to AI provides employees with opportunities to enhance how they perform their work. Recent evidence suggests that individual characteristics such as conscientiousness can interact with AI-enabled human resource practices to influence employee engagement and performance (Jia & Hou, 2024). Thus, AMO Theory provides a useful explanation of how individual differences and workplace opportunities can contribute to employee performance in increasingly digital work environments.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) complements AMO Theory by explaining the mechanism through which employees accept and utilise AI technologies. TAM proposes that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence individuals' willingness to accept and use a technology, ultimately affecting actual technology utilisation. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because employees may differ in their willingness to incorporate AI into their work activities according to their individual characteristics and perceptions of the technology. Recent research has shown that personality and demographic characteristics can be associated with differences in workplace AI acceptance, while AI-related capabilities such as AI literacy can contribute to job performance (Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Lee & Jeon, 2025). Accordingly, TAM provides a theoretical explanation for how employees move from recognising the value and usability of AI to actively incorporating AI into their work tasks.

Integrating AMO Theory and TAM provides a coherent theoretical foundation for the proposed relationship between personality traits, AI utilisation, and employee performance. The Big Five personality traits provide the individual-difference perspective, while TAM explains employees' acceptance and utilisation of AI, and AMO Theory explains how these individual and technological factors can ultimately contribute to performance. Based on this integration, personality traits may influence employees' propensity to utilise AI, while AI utilisation provides an opportunity and mechanism through which individual characteristics can be translated into improved work outcomes. The proposed conceptual relationship is therefore expressed as Personality Traits → AI Utilisation → Employee Performance, while the direct relationship between personality traits and employee performance may also be considered. This integrated perspective provides a stronger theoretical justification for examining AI utilisation as a mediator and offers a basis for developing a conceptual framework that explains how individual differences and AI-enabled work practices jointly contribute to employee performance.

Relationships Between Personality Traits, AI Utilisation and Employee Performance

Personality traits play an important role in shaping employees' attitudes, willingness, and behavioural responses towards artificial intelligence (AI) in the workplace. Evidence based on the Big Five personality perspective indicates that openness to experience and conscientiousness are particularly relevant to employees' engagement with AI. Employees with higher openness tend to demonstrate greater curiosity, receptiveness to new technologies, and more positive attitudes towards AI, which may increase their willingness to explore and incorporate AI tools into their work (Babiker et al., 2024; Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026). Conscientiousness may similarly influence how systematically and responsibly employees utilise AI, while also affecting the extent to which AI use translates into improved job outcomes (Wang et al., 2026). Other individual characteristics, including agreeableness and core self-evaluations, may also shape employees' attitudes and engagement with AI, although the strength and direction of these relationships may vary across contexts (Grassini et al., 2025; Khudozhnikova et al., 2026). Thus, personality traits provide an important individual-level explanation for differences in employees' utilisation of AI.

The relationship between personality, AI utilisation, and employee performance suggests that employees may derive different performance benefits from the same AI technologies. Employees characterised by openness may be more likely to experiment with AI and use its capabilities to support creativity, innovation, and problem-solving, whereas conscientious employees may integrate AI more systematically into task completion and work processes (Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Rajpurohit et al., 2025). Recent evidence further indicates that conscientiousness can strengthen the positive relationship between AI utilisation and job performance, suggesting that personality may determine how effectively employees translate AI capabilities into work outcomes (Wang et al., 2026). In this respect, AI utilisation should not be viewed as producing uniform effects across employees; rather, its effectiveness may depend partly on individual characteristics, attitudes, and behavioural tendencies. This perspective is particularly relevant in contemporary workplaces,

where employees increasingly exercise discretion in deciding when, how, and for what purposes AI technologies are incorporated into their work.

The literature further provides a basis for conceptualising AI utilisation as a mediating mechanism between personality traits and employee performance. Personality traits may influence employees' willingness to accept and actively utilise AI, while greater and more effective AI utilisation may subsequently contribute to enhanced job performance, creativity, and innovative work behaviour. Recent empirical evidence demonstrates that AI use is associated with employee job performance through mechanisms such as work concentration and self-efficacy, while conscientiousness can shape the strength of these relationships (Wang et al., 2026). Accordingly, the proposed mediation pathway can be represented as Personality Traits → AI Utilisation → Employee Performance, with personality traits potentially retaining a direct relationship with performance. However, the existing evidence remains relatively limited regarding the specific mediating role of AI utilisation across the full range of Big Five personality traits and workplace contexts. This gap provides a strong justification for further examining AI utilisation as the mechanism through which personality differences may be translated into employee performance outcomes.

Table I Empirical Studies on Personality Traits, Ai Utilisation And Employee Performance

Author(s)	Focus	Key Findings	Relevance
Babiker et al. (2024)	Personality and AI attitudes	Personality traits influenced attitudes toward AI.	Supports Personality → AI
Daniilidou & Antoniadou (2026)	Personality and workplace AI acceptance	Personality profiles differed in AI engagement and usage.	Strong support for Personality → AI
Wang et al. (2026)	AI use and job performance	AI use influenced performance; conscientiousness shaped the relationship.	Supports Personality → AI → Performance
Rajpurohit et al. (2025)	AI and innovative work behaviour	AI capability and usage enhanced innovative work behaviour.	Supports AI → Performance
Jia & Hou (2024)	AI-driven HRM and conscientiousness	Conscientiousness interacted with AI-driven HRM to influence engagement.	Supports Personality × AI
Xu et al. (2026)	Personality and AI usage	Personality was associated with AI usage and perceptions.	Supports Personality → AI
Grassini et al. (2025)	Personality and AI attitudes	Personality and demographics influenced AI attitudes.	Supports Personality → AI
Lee & Jeon (2025)	AI literacy and job performance	AI-related capability was associated with job performance.	Supports AI → Performance

The existing literature indicates several gaps that warrant further investigation. First, previous studies have predominantly examined personality traits and AI attitudes or utilisation (Babiker et al., 2024; Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Xu et al., 2026) or AI utilisation and employee performance (Rajpurohit et al., 2025; Lee & Jeon, 2025), with relatively limited studies integrating these constructs within a single explanatory model. Second, although Wang et al. (2026) examined AI use, conscientiousness, and job performance, the broader Big Five personality traits and their collective influence on AI utilisation remain insufficiently explored. Third, existing studies have focused on specific outcomes such as innovative work behaviour, engagement, or job performance, providing limited understanding of AI utilisation as a mediating mechanism through which

personality traits may influence employee performance. Therefore, further research is needed to develop and empirically examine an integrated model that explains how employees' personality characteristics shape AI utilisation and how such utilisation subsequently translates into employee performance. Therefore, this present study proposes that:

Proposition 1: Big Five personality traits are positively related to employee performance (H_1)

Proposition 2: AI utilisation is positively related to employee performance (H_2)

While the Big Five personality model provides a foundational understanding of individual differences in technology adoption, expanding the conceptual framework to encompass broader dispositional traits, specifically emotional intelligence, adaptability, and psychological resilience yields a more comprehensive perspective on employee–AI interaction. Employees exhibiting high adaptability and resilience navigate digital workflows with lower cognitive fatigue, whereas emotional intelligence enables workers to evaluate AI outputs critically without feeling threatened by automated feedback mechanisms. Furthermore, the relationship between dispositional traits, AI utilisation, and employee performance is bounded by critical contextual and individual moderators. AI literacy serves as a fundamental individual-level moderator; without baseline digital competence and domain-specific AI knowledge, positive dispositional traits like openness or conscientiousness cannot fully translate into effective technology usage. At the workplace level, organizational support resources such as continuous training initiatives and accessible infrastructure create a safe environment that encourages technological experimentation. Additionally, leadership dynamics significantly condition this pathway; empowering and transformational leadership styles buffer workplace anxiety and foster constructive engagement, whereas controlling leadership stifles innovative AI adoption.

A balanced conceptual framework must also integrate the psychological, ethical, and technological risks accompanying workplace AI utilization. While AI adoption drives task efficiency, decision support, and creative problem-solving, excessive or unmanaged reliance introduces notable dark-side outcomes. Constant interaction with rapidly evolving AI platforms can induce technostress, information overload, and psychological exhaustion among employees.

Opaque or controlling AI implementations risk diminishing employee autonomy, lowering self-efficacy, and triggering fears of algorithmic replacement. Furthermore, cognitive over-reliance on AI outputs can erode critical thinking skills, reduce analytical rigor, and expose organizations to significant ethical vulnerabilities surrounding data privacy, algorithmic bias, and unverified AI outputs. Maintaining human oversight and psychological safety is therefore essential to mitigate these unintended costs.

Mediating Role of AI Utilisation

The extent to which AI utilisation mediates the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and employee performance remains insufficiently established in the existing literature. However, recent studies provide evidence of related mechanisms that support the plausibility of this relationship. Lee and Jeon (2025) found that AI literacy and its antecedents were associated with job performance, suggesting that individual characteristics such as conscientiousness, openness to experience, and agreeableness may encourage employees to develop AI-related capabilities that subsequently enhance performance. Similarly, Li and Geng (2026) identified AI self-efficacy as an important mechanism linking AI usage with employee performance, while Wang et al. (2026) demonstrated that AI use influenced job performance through mechanisms such as work concentration and self-efficacy. These findings suggest that employees' personality characteristics may shape their willingness and capability to utilise AI, which can subsequently influence their performance outcomes.

Nevertheless, direct empirical evidence testing AI utilisation as a mediator between the Big Five personality traits and employee performance remains limited. Conscientiousness has received particular attention, with Wang et al. (2026) showing that it moderates the relationship between AI use and job performance, indicating that highly conscientious employees may derive greater performance benefits from AI. Evidence concerning openness and agreeableness is also emerging through their associations with AI literacy, whereas the roles of

extraversion and neuroticism remain comparatively underexplored (Lee & Jeon, 2025). Consequently, existing research has largely examined related mechanisms such as AI literacy, AI self-efficacy, work concentration, and AI leadership capability rather than directly testing AI utilisation as the central mediating mechanism (Li & Geng, 2026; Memon et al., 2026). This gap provides a strong justification for examining whether AI utilisation mediates the relationships between the Big Five personality traits and employee performance, thereby offering a more integrated explanation of how individual differences are translated into performance in AI-enabled workplaces. Therefore, we propose the following:

Proposition 3: AI utilisation mediates the relationship between Big Five personality traits and employee performance (H₃)

Big Five Personality Traits

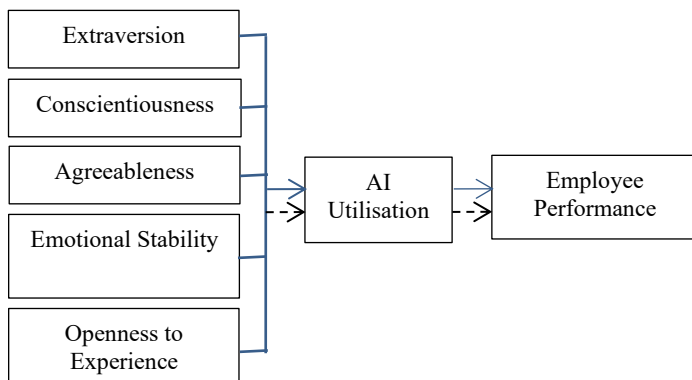


Fig. Proposed Research Framework

DISCUSSION

The conceptual integration of the Big Five personality traits, AI utilisation, and employee performance provides an important perspective for understanding employee behaviour in contemporary technology-driven workplaces. Unlike conventional technology adoption perspectives that may assume relatively homogeneous responses to technological implementation, the present conceptualisation highlights the importance of individual differences in shaping how employees perceive and engage with AI. In particular, openness to experience and conscientiousness appear especially relevant to employees' willingness and capability to utilise AI. Employees with higher openness are more likely to demonstrate curiosity, receptiveness to technological change, and positive attitudes towards AI, whereas conscientious employees may be more systematic and disciplined in incorporating AI into their work activities (Babiker et al., 2024; Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Wang et al., 2026). From the perspective of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), these personality differences may influence employees' perceptions of the usefulness and usability of AI, which subsequently shape their behavioural intention and actual utilisation. Thus, AI adoption should be understood not merely as an organisational technology decision but also as an individual behavioural process shaped by dispositional characteristics.

The proposed relationship between AI utilisation and employee performance is further supported by emerging evidence that AI can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of employees' work. AI utilisation may reduce the burden of repetitive activities, facilitate information processing, support decision-making, and enable employees to devote greater cognitive resources to more complex tasks (Benhmama & Sabiri, 2025; Olan et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). Recent research also suggests that AI use may improve work concentration and self-efficacy, thereby contributing to enhanced job performance (Wang et al., 2026). Similarly, AI-enabled technologies have been associated with innovative work behaviour by supporting employees in generating ideas, solving problems, and developing new approaches to work (Rajpurohit et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the relationship should not be interpreted as uniformly positive. AI may also create concerns related to job security, autonomy, technological dependence, and employee well-being when implementation is poorly managed (Lopez-Garcia et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2025). Consequently, the effectiveness of AI utilisation

depends not simply on whether employees have access to AI but on how effectively and purposefully they incorporate AI into their work processes.

More importantly, the proposed framework extends existing literature by conceptualising AI utilisation as a mediating mechanism between personality traits and employee performance. Previous research has frequently examined personality and AI-related attitudes or acceptance separately from research investigating AI and employee performance (Babiker et al., 2024; Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Lee & Jeon, 2025). Such fragmented perspectives provide limited explanation of how employees' dispositional characteristics are translated into actual performance outcomes in AI-enabled workplaces. The proposed pathway, Big Five personality traits → AI utilisation → employee performance, provides a more integrated explanation of this process. Personality traits may shape employees' willingness to explore, accept, and effectively use AI, while AI utilisation provides the behavioural mechanism through which these individual characteristics can be converted into improved work outcomes. For example, conscientious employees may be more likely to employ AI systematically, verify AI-generated outputs, and integrate AI into task completion, thereby enabling their dispositional characteristics to contribute more effectively to job performance (Wang et al., 2026). In this sense, AI utilisation represents an important behavioural bridge between employees' psychological characteristics and their observable performance.

The integration of AMO Theory and TAM provides a complementary theoretical explanation for the proposed relationships. TAM explains the technology-oriented component of the framework by highlighting how employees' perceptions of AI usefulness and ease of use can influence their willingness to utilise AI. AMO Theory, meanwhile, provides a broader organisational perspective by suggesting that employee performance depends on the interaction of ability, motivation, and opportunity. Within the proposed framework, personality traits can represent important individual differences associated with employees' capabilities, motivation, and behavioural tendencies, while access to AI represents an organisational opportunity that enables employees to apply these characteristics in technology-supported work environments. Evidence that conscientiousness interacts with AI-enabled HR practices further illustrates the importance of aligning individual characteristics with technological opportunities (Jia & Hou, 2024). Therefore, integrating TAM and AMO Theory helps explain why employees exposed to similar AI technologies may demonstrate different levels of utilisation and performance. The framework consequently shifts the discussion away from technological determinism towards a more human-centred explanation of AI-enabled performance, in which technological value depends partly on employees' characteristics, perceptions, and actual utilisation behaviour.

From a practical perspective, the proposed relationships provide important implications for organisational leaders, human resource practitioners, and AI implementation teams. Organisations should recognise that effective AI adoption cannot necessarily be achieved through uniform training and implementation strategies. Instead, employee differences should be considered when designing AI training, onboarding, support, and development initiatives. Employees who demonstrate lower technological confidence or greater resistance to technological change may benefit from structured training, clear usage guidelines, and initiatives designed to strengthen AI self-efficacy and perceived usefulness (Lee & Jeon, 2025). In contrast, employees who demonstrate high levels of openness and conscientiousness may be provided with greater opportunities to experiment with advanced AI applications and develop innovative approaches to task execution (Amoozegar et al., 2025; Rajpurohit et al., 2025). More importantly, viewing AI utilisation as a mediator encourages organisations to focus not only on providing access to AI but also on ensuring that employees actually use these technologies effectively and responsibly. Overall, the proposed conceptual framework provides a basis for understanding how who employees are (personality), how they engage with AI (AI utilisation), and what they achieve at work (employee performance) are interconnected in contemporary AI-enabled workplaces.

To maximize the performance benefits of AI integration while mitigating psychological risks, human resource practitioners and organizational leaders must move away from standardized adoption strategies in favor of personality-sensitive interventions. HR managers should design differentiated AI training programs tailored to dispositional profiles. Employees high in openness and adaptability benefit most from unstructured, exploratory workshops featuring advanced generative AI capabilities. Highly conscientious employees thrive in structured, policy-driven training modules focused on accuracy verification, algorithmic ethics, and

standard operating procedures. Conversely, employees displaying higher neuroticism or lower technological readiness require low-stakes, supportive training environments with step-by-step guidance designed to build AI self-efficacy and alleviate technostress.

Organisations can further enhance adoption by appointing employees with high emotional intelligence and extraversion to act as change champions and peer mentors who demonstrate practical utility, ease workplace anxiety, and foster collaborative learning culture. Performance management systems must also be realigned to evaluate how responsibly and effectively employees integrate AI into their workflows. Appraisals should explicitly reward critical oversight, human-in-the-loop decision-making, and innovative problem-solving, while monitoring for over-reliance and burnout to ensure balanced, sustainable performance outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This conceptual study proposes an integrated framework to explain the relationships among the Big Five personality traits, AI utilisation, and employee performance by drawing on the Ability–Motivation–Opportunity (AMO) Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The framework recognises that AI utilisation is not simply determined by technological availability or organisational implementation, but is also shaped by employees' individual characteristics, perceptions, and behavioural responses. In particular, openness to experience and conscientiousness appear particularly relevant to employees' willingness to explore, accept, and systematically utilise AI in the workplace (Babiker et al., 2024; Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Wang et al., 2026). AI utilisation may subsequently enhance employee performance by supporting task efficiency, decision-making, problem-solving, creativity, and innovative work behaviour (Benhmama & Sabiri, 2025; Rajpurohit et al., 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). Accordingly, this study proposes that AI utilisation functions as an important behavioural mechanism through which personality differences may be translated into employee performance outcomes.

The study contributes conceptually by bringing together three areas that have often been examined separately: personality psychology, AI utilisation, and employee performance. Previous research has predominantly examined the relationship between personality traits and attitudes towards AI or investigated the direct effects of AI on employee outcomes (Babiker et al., 2024; Grassini et al., 2025; Lee & Jeon, 2025). The proposed framework extends these perspectives by establishing the indirect pathway of Big Five personality traits → AI utilisation → employee performance. The integration of TAM and AMO Theory further provides complementary explanations of this relationship. TAM explains employees' technology-related perceptions, particularly perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, whereas AMO Theory provides a broader explanation of how individual capabilities and motivation interact with workplace opportunities to influence performance. This integrated perspective therefore moves beyond technological determinism and emphasises the importance of the employee as an active participant in AI-enabled work environments (Jia & Hou, 2024; Li & Geng, 2026).

From a practical perspective, the proposed framework suggests that organisations should avoid adopting a uniform approach to AI implementation and employee development. Instead, AI training and implementation strategies should recognise differences in employees' personality characteristics, technological readiness, and patterns of AI utilisation. Highly conscientious employees may benefit from structured guidelines that support systematic and responsible AI use, whereas employees high in openness may benefit from greater autonomy to experiment with AI applications for creativity and innovation (Amoozegar et al., 2025; Wang et al., 2026). At the same time, employees who experience lower technological confidence or greater uncertainty may require additional training, supportive leadership, and interventions that strengthen AI self-efficacy and perceptions of ease of use (Lee & Jeon, 2025). Such differentiated approaches may enable organisations to maximise the performance benefits of AI while ensuring that employees remain actively involved in the technology implementation process.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Nevertheless, several limitations should be acknowledged. As a conceptual study, the proposed relationships

and mediation effects have not yet been empirically validated, and the magnitude and significance of the proposed relationships remain to be established through primary data. In addition, the study conceptualises personality using the broad Big Five dimensions and treats AI utilisation as a general construct without distinguishing between different forms of AI, such as generative AI, predictive analytics, intelligent decision-support systems, and robotic automation. Differences across industries, occupations, organisational cultures, and levels of technological maturity may therefore influence the applicability of the proposed framework (Daniilidou & Antoniadou, 2026; Xu et al., 2026). Furthermore, although the framework emphasises the potential positive contribution of AI utilisation to employee performance, emerging research indicates that excessive or poorly managed AI use may also generate technostress, concerns regarding autonomy and job security, cognitive over-reliance, and other unintended consequences (Jiang et al., 2026; Lopez-Garcia et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2025).

Because this study advances a conceptual model, future research must prioritize empirical validation of the proposed structural relationships. Scholars are encouraged to empirically test the framework using quantitative approaches, such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) via CB-SEM or PLS-SEM, as well as mixed-methods research designs to validate the mediating role of AI utilisation. Empirical models should explicitly incorporate and test the moderating effects of AI literacy, organizational support climate, and leadership styles on the primary personality–performance pathways. Additionally, future inquiries should investigate the applicability of the framework across diverse industry contexts and longitudinal timeframes. Sector-specific case studies comparing highly regulated environments (e.g., healthcare), technical domains (e.g., IT and knowledge services), and ideation-focused sectors (e.g., creative industries) will clarify how task complexity and organizational culture shape personality–AI interactions. Finally, longitudinal and time-lagged research designs are needed to track the long-term impact of AI utilisation, specifically examining non-linear effects and the cumulative psychological toll of technostress, reliance, and privacy concerns over time.

Future research should therefore empirically test the proposed framework using quantitative, longitudinal, or time-lagged research designs to establish the relationships between personality traits, AI utilisation, and employee performance more rigorously. Future studies could examine whether AI utilisation significantly mediates the relationship between each of the Big Five personality dimensions and employee performance and identify whether certain personality traits demonstrate stronger indirect effects than others. Researchers should also consider contextual variables such as AI literacy, organisational learning climate, ethical AI practices, leadership support, and AI training as potential moderators or boundary conditions (Li & Geng, 2026; Yin & Hoang, 2025). Comparative research across occupations and industries could further determine whether different forms of AI generate different performance outcomes, while future studies should also investigate potential non-linear effects and the negative consequences of excessive AI dependence (Jiang et al., 2026; Rana & Bhambri, 2026; Tariq, 2025). Overall, the proposed framework provides a foundation for future empirical research and advances understanding of how personality characteristics shape AI utilisation and how AI utilisation, in turn, contributes to employee performance in contemporary AI-enabled workplaces.

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