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REVIEW ARTICLE PEER REVIEWED

Artificial Intelligence Adoption and Employee Job Performance among Academic Staff in Nigerian Universities: An I/O Psychology Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into organisational systems has significantly reshaped the nature of work, employee roles, and performance expectations, particularly within the higher education sector. This study examines the relationship between AI adoption and employee job performance among academic staff in Nigerian universities from an Industrial/Organisational (I/O) Psychology perspective. Adopting a narrative literature review approach to synthesise evidence from peer-reviewed publications published between 2020 and 2026. Drawing on the recent literature, the study explores key dimensions of AI adoption, including digital competence, psychological readiness, and organisational support, and how these factors influence performance outcomes in academic settings. This review indicates that AI adoption contributes positively to job performance by improving efficiency, augmenting instructional delivery, and increasing research productivity. However, the extent of these benefits depends on factors such as digital self-efficacy, availability of technological infrastructure, and institutional support systems. Despite these advantages, the review identifies persistent challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, limited technical expertise, and ethical concerns surrounding AI usage in Nigerian universities. The study concludes that academic staff who invest in AI-related training and digital skill development are more likely to experience improved job performance. Finally, the study contributes to Industrial/Organisational Psychology by extending technological application and adoption of AI tools to the academic work context in developing country like Nigeria and by highlighting the role of psychological and organisational factors in shaping performance outcomes.

KEYWORDS Artificial Intelligence • Employee Performance • AI Adoption • Academic Staff • Digital Self-Efficacy

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1. INTRODUCTION

Organisations quest for success and work towards accomplishing their goals. Each employee's job performance contributes to achieving those goals. Hence, job performance is one of the most vital factors that helps organisations to remain productive and maintain a standard in the competitive world (Dalal *et al*., 2020). It is no longer hidden that academic staff in Nigerian universities are putting more effort into their tasks to achieve the goals of the universities in these contemporary times. Traditionally, lecturers have been responsible for teaching, conducting research, assessing students, carrying out administrative duties, and delivering community service. However, in recent days, the same core duties require academics to step up their handling of these services due to the rapid advancement in technology, especially in the area of Artificial Intelligence.

Generally, job performance is the degree to which an employee effectively executes assigned tasks and demonstrates work-related behaviours that contribute positively to the organisational goals through task accomplishment, contextual support, adaptability, and minimized counterproductive behaviour. Job performance is a central construct in Industrial/Organisational (I/O) Psychology, reflecting the extent to which individuals effectively fulfil their work roles and responsibilities (Dalal *et al.,* 2020; Oluwasanmi *et al*., 2025). In academic settings, job performance is multifaceted, encompassing teaching effectiveness, research productivity, administrative contributions, and community service (Falola *et al*., 2020; Nwosu *et al*., 2021; Aduma *et al*., 2026). The introduction of AI technologies in organisations has the potential to reform those dimensions of job performance, especially by augmenting each activity and enabling more efficient work processes.

Globally, Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption has become a strategic priority for universities seeking to remain competitive in a knowledge-driven global economy. Incorporation of AI into universities' operations, especially academic activities, is changing the nature of work across many in the education sector. Thus, its emergence appears to be changing academic job structures and influencing lecturers' performance in various universities in recent times. This system is widely perceived as useful and valuable for improving job performance and effectiveness. As a result, some universities have demonstrated a strong commitment to investing in AI-related training and implementation programmes within their operations. In Nigeria, universities are gradually embracing digital transformation in response to global competitiveness, increased student enrolment, and evolving pedagogical demands (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; UNESCO, 2023; Okon *et al*., 2024; Essien *et al*., 2024).

From an Industrial and Organisational Psychology perspective, the relationship between AI adoption and job performance is not merely technological but deeply behavioural and psychological. Employee performance may be influenced not only by access to AI tools but also by other related factors. Van Iddekinge *et al.* (2023) opined that there are some other contributing factors such as workers' attitudes, motivation, digital self-efficacy, organisational support, learning orientation, and adaptability. Academic staff who perceive AI as supportive may experience increased productivity and innovation, whereas those who perceive it as threatening may exhibit resistance, reduced engagement, and lower performance outcomes. Another pressing concern is the apparent digital divide within Nigerian universities. While some academics readily embrace AI due to prior digital competence and institutional support, others still struggle because of lack of interest and attitude, inadequate infrastructure, limited training opportunities, unreliable internet connectivity, and insufficient policy structures.

Recent studies suggest that AI adoption can significantly improve employee performance by automating routine tasks, facilitating data-driven decision-making, and enhancing learning experiences (Chatterjee *et al*., 2023; Dwivedi *et al*., 2021). Nevertheless, a research gap remains in Nigeria regarding how AI adoption specifically influences employee job performance among university academic staff, especially when examined through an I/O Psychology lens. Hence, this study explored the contributions of those factors to academic job performance in Nigerian universities as reported in the recent literature.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Job Performance in I/O Psychology

Job performance has gained a lot of attention in I/O division of psychology. According to Awan *et al.* (2020) job performance refers to the effectiveness with which employees carry out assigned duties and responsibilities while contributing to organisational goals and overall productivity. Chen (2023) described job

performance as employees' effectiveness in fulfilling work-related tasks and achieving expected organisational outcomes, particularly through measurable work behaviours and results.

Krijgsheld *et al.* (2022) conceptualised job performance as a multidimensional construct comprising task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour, reflecting how employees contribute to organisational functioning and outcomes. Similarly, Young-Sam & MyoungSo (2021) opined that job performance is a multidimensional construct encompassing task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance. In academic settings, performance includes teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and community engagement.

Below are the dimensions as explained by Krijgsheld et al. (2022) –

i. Task Performance – effectiveness in carrying out core technical duties formally required by the job.
ii. Contextual Performance – voluntary behaviours that support the social and psychological work environment (e.g., cooperation, helping others).
iii. Adaptive Performance – the ability to adjust effectively to changing work demands, technologies, or environments.
iv. Counterproductive Work Behaviour (CWB) – behaviours that harm organizational goals or functioning (e.g., absenteeism, sabotage, withdrawal).

Recent studies also define employee performance as the work outcomes individuals achieve in executing assigned duties and responsibilities, including quality, quantity, and effectiveness toward organisational goals (Maryadi *et al.*, 2026; Mohammad *et al.*, 2025).

Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Higher Education

The concept of artificial intelligence is well known and has gained confidence in its applicability in modern organisations. Most organisations, including higher education institutions that intend to pursue the highest rate of return, consider artificial intelligence an important tool for achieving their goals. Artificial Intelligence refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, and decision-making (Russell & Norvig, 2021). In higher education, AI applications include adaptive learning platforms, automated assessment systems, and research analytics tools (Zawacki-Richter *et al.,* 2019). For instance, embracing AI tools such as *ChatGPT, Quillbot, Gemini, Claude, Genni, Kimi*, etc., is now common and essential in institutions. Recent studies indicate that AI adoption enhances institutional efficiency and supports data-driven decision-making (Eleje *et al.*, 2025; Stojanov & Daniel, 2024). However, adoption in developing countries such as Nigeria is constrained by infrastructural deficits and limited digital capacity (Mbazu *et al.*, 2023). This may account for its slow take off in Nigeria.

AI Adoption and Job Performance

According to Jemiri *et al.* (2026), Artificial Intelligence has obviously become a transformative force with great potential to improve job performance in Nigerian universities and tertiary institutions. Thus, the inclusion of artificial intelligence tools in Nigeria universities has improved research efficiency by improving data analysis, literature retrieval, research writing, and knowledge management (Jemiri *et al.*, 2026). In addition, Chatterjee *et al.* (2023) reported that organisational readiness, leadership support, and perceived usefulness significantly influence AI adoption in firms, which may increase operational efficiency and organisational performance.

Nigerian studies show that AI tools and workplace automation significantly improve employee performance, task efficiency, and productivity within Nigeria's educational and organisational systems, which are knowledge-intensive sectors (Jegede *et al.*, 2025; Chukwuka & Imide, 2025). Similarly, recent studies have reported that digital technologies enhance teaching effectiveness and student engagement in higher education through improved interaction, accessibility, and pedagogical support (Nkomo *et al.*, 2021; Bond *et al.*, 2020). Tarafdar *et al.* (2020) opined that technological tools have been shown to improve performance by reducing workload and increasing efficiency. In sum, empirical evidence suggests that AI adoption positively influences employee performance by improving efficiency, reducing repetitive tasks, improving decision-making accuracy, and supporting research and teaching activities (Chukwuka & Imide, 2025; Jegede *et al.*, 2025).

Despite the positive findings above, the effectiveness of AI adoption depends on employee competence and organisational context. For instance, Van Iddekinge *et al.* (2023) argue that performance is strongly linked to employees' effort, persistence, and behavioural effectiveness, emphasizing performance as observable work behaviour that contributes to organisational objectives. Thus, the importance of human inputs in AI adoption

may not be overlooked, and this assertion further reinforces the usefulness of psychological factors and the individual perception of organisational support.

Psychological Factors

These are internal personal characteristics, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, or personality traits that influence how academic staff respond to AI adoption and perform their jobs. These include –

i. *Resilience:* It refers to an individual's ability to adapt positively, recover from stress, and maintain effective functioning in the face of challenges, uncertainty, or change. In Industrial/Organisational Psychology, resilience is conceptualised as a psychological resource that enables employees to cope with workplace demands and technological transitions (Ojeleye *et al*., 2022; Akpan *et al*., 2022). Within the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption in Nigerian universities, resilience is important because technological innovation often disrupts established work routines and creates adjustment pressures for academic staff. Academics with high resilience are more likely to adapt successfully to these technological changes and maintain high job performance despite challenges.

Research suggests that resilience enhances employee adaptability, innovation, and work engagement in technology-driven environments (Shin *et al*., 2023). In higher education, resilient lecturers are more capable of integrating AI tools into teaching, research, and administrative tasks, thereby improving efficiency and instructional quality. From an I/O Psychology perspective, resilience will serve as a protective psychological factor that moderates the stress associated with technological change and supports sustained job performance (Ojeleye *et al*., 2022; Akpan *et al*., 2022).

ii. *Self-efficacy:* Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to successfully perform specific tasks or behaviours. The concept was originally developed by Albert Bandura and remains central to social cognitive theory. The theory explains that self-efficacy influences how individuals think, behave, and respond to challenges. Hence, employees with strong self-efficacy are more confident in learning new technologies, solving problems, and persisting in difficult tasks. In the context of AI adoption among academic staff, digital self-efficacy specifically refers to confidence in the ability to use AI technologies effectively for teaching, research, and administrative purposes. Thus, Academic staff with high AI-related self-efficacy are more likely to embrace and utilise AI tools for teaching, student assessment and research productivity. Studies indicate that self-efficacy positively predicts technology acceptance and job performance (Michael-Olomu, 2023; Okediran *et al*., 2020). Lecturers who believe they can effectively use AI systems are more willing to adopt them and are more likely to experience improved teaching effectiveness and work efficiency. Empirical evidence from Nigerian universities corroborates that lecturers' self-efficacy in using artificial intelligence significantly increases their intention to adopt AI systems, which in turn enhances teaching effectiveness and work efficiency (Amupitan & Tella, 2026; Dada & Yusuf, 2025).

iii. *Openness to experience:* Openness to experience is one of the major personality dimensions in the Five-Factor Model of personality. It reflects an individual's tendency to be imaginative, curious, flexible, innovative, and receptive to new ideas and experiences (Ogbuanya & Salawu, 2024). Employees who score high on openness to experience are generally more willing to explore technological innovations, embrace organisational change and engage in continuous learning. In relation to AI adoption, openness to experience significantly influences employees' attitudes toward emerging technologies. Academic staff who are open-minded are more likely to perceive AI as an opportunity rather than a threat. They are typically more enthusiastic about integrating AI-based tools into teaching, research, and knowledge dissemination. Research shows that openness to experience positively predicts innovation behaviour and technology acceptance in organisations (Xu *et al*., 2021). In higher education settings, lecturers with high openness are more likely to demonstrate creativity and adaptability, which contribute to improved job performance. Some recent studies in Nigeria indicates that lecturers and employees with high openness to experience demonstrate greater adaptability and creativity, which significantly enhance job performance in higher education and organisational settings (Ogbuanya & Salawu, 2024; Abiona *et al*., 2020).

Organisational Factors

Organisational factors are workplace or institutional conditions that influence employee behaviour, technology adoption, and job performance. These include –

i. *Institutional support system:* This refers to the organisational structures, policies, resources, and assistance provided to employees to facilitate effective job performance and adaptation to workplace demands. In the context of AI adoption, institutional support includes management encouragement, training, technical support, funding opportunities, digital learning resources, and favourable technology policies. Institutional support is essential because successful AI implementation requires more than individual willingness; it also depends on organisational readiness and supportive work environments (Abubakar & Onasanya, 2025; Margherita, 2022). Academic staff are more likely to adopt AI technologies when universities provide continuous professional development programmes, accessible digital infrastructure, technical assistance, incentives for innovation, and supportive leadership. Studies indicate that perceived organisational support enhances employee commitment, technology acceptance, and job performance (Eisenberger *et al.,* 2020). When lecturers perceive that their institutions value and support their technological development, they are more motivated to engage with AI tools productively. In some Nigerian universities, institutional support remains a major challenge due to inadequate funding, unstable electricity supply, weak ICT policies and insufficient training opportunities (Omole, 2026; Ogunode & Musa, 2020). Consequently, lack of institutional support may hinder effective AI integration and reduce its potential impact on employee performance.

ii. *Working Condition:* This refers to the physical, psychological, and organisational environment within which employees perform their duties. It includes factors such as office facilities, work-life balance, safety & welfare provision, organisational climate, job security and workload. Good working conditions are essential for employee well-being, motivation, and productivity. In technology-driven workplaces, favourable working conditions influence employees' readiness to adopt new technologies and sustain high performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023; Dwivedi *et al.,* 2021; Molino *et al*., 2020). Poor working conditions such as excessive workload, unreliable internet connectivity, insufficient office equipment, and inadequate power supply may discourage lecturers from effectively using AI tools. According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, employees perform better when workplace resources exceed job-related stressors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). Studies have shown that supportive working conditions promote technological experimentation, innovation, job satisfaction, research productivity, and effective teaching performance. (Oladejo & Adenuga, 2023; Adeniji *et al*., 2022). In I/O Psychology, working conditions are recognised as a major organisational factor influencing employee behaviour, motivation, and performance outcomes.

iii. *Availability of Technological Infrastructure:* This refers to the accessibility and adequacy of digital facilities, technological tools, and ICT resources necessary for implementing and sustaining AI technologies. This includes internet connectivity, computer systems, AI software platforms, electricity supply, cloud computing services, digital laboratories, and learning management systems. Technological infrastructure underpins effective AI adoption in universities. Without adequate infrastructure, implementing AI-driven systems becomes difficult or ineffective. In Nigerian universities, infrastructural challenges remain one of the major barriers to digital transformation. Many institutions experience unstable electricity, poor internet access, inadequate ICT facilities, and insufficient maintenance culture (Omole, 2026; Shehu, 2025; Ogunode & Musa, 2020). These limitations reduce academic staff's ability to integrate AI technologies into teaching and research activities. Thus, lecturers are more likely to use AI effectively when digital resources are accessible, reliable and user-friendly. In line with this submission, some studies have shown that technological infrastructure significantly predicts digital adoption and employee productivity in educational institutions (Eleje *et al*., 2025; Shehu, 2025).

3. METHOD

The study adopted a narrative literature review approach. Some literature on artificial intelligence adoption and employee job performance among academic staff in Nigerian universities were considered for the study. Relevant studies were identified using databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar,

ScienceDirect, and ResearchGate. Keywords included "Artificial Intelligence adoption", "job performance", "academic staff", "higher education", and "Nigeria". These databases were selected because they index high-quality peer-reviewed literature in Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Human Resource Management, Educational Technology, Information Systems, and Higher Education. The publications were synthesised based on the methods employed, results reported, and discussion of findings. Studies included satisfied the following criteria: published between 2020 and 2026 (with seminal theories and foundational studies included where necessary). They examined artificial intelligence, generative AI, machine learning, or intelligent systems in educational or organisational contexts. They investigated employee performance, academic productivity, work performance, organisational behaviour, or related I/O psychology variables. They included empirical, theoretical, conceptual, or review studies relevant to the study objectives. However, the study excluded studies published before 2020 unless they were seminal or foundational; lacked peer review; focused exclusively on technical AI development without organisational or behavioural implications; or consisted of editorials, opinion articles, blogs, newspaper reports, or magazine articles lacking scholarly rigour.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study explored the issue surrounding the adoption of artificial intelligence in Nigerian universities with a specific focus on the use of AI tools, their relevance to job performance and factors that influence it across universities in Nigeria. In terms of methodology, the literature was reviewed, and submissions were interrogated with a view to underscoring empirical evidence on how Artificial Intelligence is reshaping academic work within higher education institutions from an Industrial/Organisational (I/O) Psychology perspective.

Findings from the reviewed literature indicate that AI adoption positively influences employee job performance by improving instructional delivery, reducing repetitive administrative tasks, and increasing research productivity. However, these benefits are not guaranteed, as their realization depends on key psychological and organisational factors such as self-efficacy, openness to experience, digital competence, institutional support, and availability of technological infrastructure.

The study concludes that AI adoption has strong potential to improve academic staff job performance in Nigerian universities, but its effectiveness is largely determined by the interaction between individual psychological readiness and organisational support systems. Therefore, academics who possess higher digital self-efficacy, openness to innovation, and access to institutional support are more likely to adopt AI tools effectively and translate them into improved teaching and research outcomes.

5. RECOMMENDATION AND LIMITATION

Some limitations were shown in this study. Firstly, this study is limited by its reliance on a narrative literature review, which depends solely on secondary data from existing studies rather than primary empirical evidence, and this may not suffice for generalisation. Again, the focus on Nigerian universities limits the generalisability of the findings to other educational contexts with different technological and institutional conditions. Future studies may adopt a comparative approach by examining AI adoption and employee job performance across different organisational settings beyond universities. Universities in Nigeria should prioritise continuous training and capacity-building programmes that augment academic staff's competence in the use of Artificial Intelligence technologies. Policymakers and university management should also invest adequately in technological infrastructure by improving internet connectivity, electricity supply, ICT facilities, and institutional digital support systems. Finally, academic staff should be continuously motivated to develop positive attitudes toward AI integration through continuous learning, resilience, and openness to technological change. Future researchers should also expand studies on AI adoption and job performance by conducting comparative and empirical investigations across different sectors and institutions.

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