Requirements for the use of AI in HRM. A workers' representives' perspective on AI regulations

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1   Purpose

Despite the intense debate about its risks and challenges (e.g., bias), artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used for various tasks in human resource management (HRM) (Prikshat et al. 2022). However, to ensure the responsible use of AI, legislators worldwide are aiming to counteract AI risks with regulatory efforts. The AI Act is one of the most advanced AI regulations, classifying HRM as a high-risk area and requiring the fulfilment of specific requirements for the use of AI (European Commission 2024). However, current AI Act regulations are still in development and need to be concretised by expert committees and aligned with stakeholders. Hence, to concretise the AI Act regulations and to implement them in an accepted way, it is necessary to understand the stakeholders' requirements.

In HRM, key stakeholders include HR managers, applicants and workers' representatives (Bondarouk & Brewster 2016). Previous research has focussed on examining the perspective of HR managers (e.g., Malin et al. 2023) and applicants (e.g., Fleiß et al. 2024), contributing to understanding their requirements. However, examining the perspective of workers' representatives is scarce in literature, meaning little insight into their AI requirements. However, this stakeholder group is crucial as it is the link between employees and employers to ensure that AI is used in a way that meets the interests of both.

This study investigates which requirements workers' representatives have for AI in HRM and which countermeasures can be used to fulfil them. Thus, a 5-stage study consisting of five focus group workshops with workers' representatives and a literature research will be conducted. We develop a list of workers' representatives ' core requirements for the trustworthy use of AI in HRM, including countermeasures to fulfil them. Consequently, our findings contribute to the harmonisation of development processes and ethical or legal AI standards within the European Union, supporting the consistency and effectiveness of the AI Act.

2   Method and Procedure

This study aims to identify core requirements and the most promising countermeasures for the trustworthy use of AI in HRM. Thus, a 5-stage study (see Table 1) will be conducted. Specifically, three focus group workshops (Krueger & Casey 2014) with an equal expert group consisting of 18 workers' representatives and a literature research (Webster & Watson 2002) were conducted between December 2023 and June 2024. The results obtained will be tested in a larger sample with two further focus group workshops in September 2024.

Stage 1 – Scoping workshop. The first workshop (n=7) took place in December 2023. An open discussion was held with the participants to determine the status quo regarding the use of AI in HRM and their previous experience in AI use.

Stage 2 – Requirement workshop. The second workshop in March 2024 consisted of brainstorming, clustering, voting and in-depth discussion regarding (1) the perceived criticality of AI use in each HRM phase and (2) requirements for the use of AI in HRM. First, the phases of the Employee Life Cycle (ELC) (Gladka et al. 2022) were presented and discussed. The participants then allocated a total of eight points to the phase of the ELC in which they perceive the use of AI to be most critical and explained their decision. Second, the technical and organisational requirements for the use of AI in HRM were identified. The participants presented and justified their requirements. Two final questions analysed the differences in the requirements between the phases of the ECL.

Stage 3 – Literature search. By June 2024 the literature was reviewed for countermeasures that fulfil the requirements identified for the use of AI in HRM. The requirements were divided into three stages of requirements fulfilment. Thus, a list was developed that maps the requirements with promising countermeasures from the literature.

Stage 4 – Priorization workshop. To prioritize the identified requirements and countermeasures, a workshop (n=7) was held in June 2024. First, the requirements were discussed and prioritized by the expert group assigning 'priority points' to one or more requirements. Second, they defined and justified their minimum level of requirements fulfilment.

Stage 5 – Feedback workshops. At two workshops in September 2024, the developed requirements' list will be prioritized by workers' representatives outside the expert group. Feedback will also be obtained on the developed list, which will then be adapted.

Table 1. Overview of the research process

	Stage 1	**Stage 2**	**Stage 3**	**Stage 4**	**Stage 5**
Method	Scoping workshop	Requirement workshop	Literature research	Priorization workshop	Feedback workshop
(Expected) results	Status quo & experience with AI use	Perceived criticality & requirements for AI use	Identifying countermeasures	Prioritized requirements & countermeasures	List of requirements & countermeasures

3   (Expected) findings and contribution

Currently, the AI Act's regulations are being concretised by expert committees. The concretisation process requires the consideration of stakeholders, however, little is known about the requirements of the HRM key stakeholder group workers' representatives. This study aims to identify core requirements and most promising countermeasures for the trustworthy use of AI in HRM that has been prioritized by workers' representatives. Thus, our study offers key contributions to both research and practice. First, we contribute to research on AI adoption by identifying and prioritizing requirements for the use of AI in HRM from a under-researched key stakeholder group, while providing countermeasures to fulfil them. Second, expert committees can use our findings when concretising the AI Act to better understand the requirements of the stakeholders and thus to better fulfil the necessary requirements.

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