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The Promise and Pitfalls of Cognitive Computing & AI in Human Resources

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There is a growing interest in the potential of cognitive computing systems (CCS) and artificial intelligence (AI) for organizations and society (Jarrahi, 2018; Schuetz & Venkatesh, forthcoming). Some argue that CCS and AI may transform organizational communication, e-commerce, medicine, and human resources (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018). In addition, these systems may fundamentally alter how we interact with technology. Therefore, it is appropriate to discuss the potential of these systems to transform business and society. However, implementing these systems is not without risks. These risks are particularly relevant for human resources because they can affect jobs, careers, and reputations of employees and poorly designed systems can affect organizational social, legal, and performance outcomes (Johnson et al., 2016). For example, managers may abdicate decision-making responsibility or be unable to explain how the AI-enabled decision was made. This can undermine confidence of employees in decisions-made by managers. In addition, as these tools respond in a more human-like fashion, employees may ascribe characteristics and authority to these tools that they do not have (Shneiderman, 1998). In addition, the use of CSS and AI can create unexpected biases that affect legally protected minority groups (Dastin, 2018). Third, job applicants and employees must trust and respond positively to CCS and AI. Given that there is some disagreement regarding how individuals respond to performance feedback from humans and computers, we do not yet understand how employees will trust the recommendations from the CSS or AI tool. Thus, the aim of this research is to identify promise and pitfalls of CSS and AI in supporting the human resource function, and to identify opportunities for research in this area.

References

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