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Artificial intelligence and the tourism and hospitality workforce: A systematic literature review of threat, collaboration and management (2023–2026)

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) and service robots are changing work in tourism and hospitality, and research on employees has grown quickly. This systematic literature review follows PRISMA 2020 and covers articles published from 2023 to 2026 in 62 Scimago Q1 and Q2 tourism and hospitality journals and 25 Indonesian journals accredited at SINTA 1 or 2. From 1,815 AI-related articles, 503 were screened and 222 included. Five themes were identified: working with AI and robots (97 studies), perceived threat, job insecurity and turnover (55), managing people with and through AI (35), jobs, tasks, skills and labour markets (25), and the future workforce (10). Awareness of AI is consistently associated with job insecurity, stress and the intention to leave, especially to leave the industry. Collaboration with AI has double-edged effects, and the balance depends on how employees appraise the technology and on how managers introduce it. AI in human resource management can itself be experienced as dehumanising. The evidence rests largely on surveys of hotel employees, with China the most frequent setting. Evidence on actual employment, wages and skills is scarce, and the national journals contribute one study. Forty-six studies were classified from titles alone. A research agenda is proposed.

Keywords: *artificial intelligence; service robots; employees; job insecurity; human-robot collaboration; human resource management; future of work; tourism; hospitality; systematic literature review*

1. Introduction

Tourism and hospitality are labour-intensive. Hotels, restaurants, travel agencies and attractions depend on people for the quality of their service, and in many countries they have difficulty finding and keeping staff. Artificial intelligence (AI) enters this setting in several forms. Service robots deliver items and greet guests, chatbots answer enquiries, generative AI drafts marketing text and replies to reviews, and algorithms schedule shifts, screen applicants and evaluate performance. For employees these technologies are at once tools, co-workers, supervisors and possible replacements.

Research on the subject has expanded rapidly, and several reviews already exist. They cover hospitality employees' perspectives on service robots (Xu et al., 2023), employees and AI in

general (Kumawat et al., 2025), AI awareness (Bakir, Dogru, et al., 2025), information technology and work psychology (Bischoff & Erdem, 2026), and generative AI and workforce dynamics (Ferreira & Kastenholz, 2026). Two meta-analyses synthesise employees' perceived benefits of AI (Castaneda et al., 2026) and their intentions to collaborate with robots (Xiaoxin et al., 2026). Most of these reviews deal with employees' perceptions, acceptance and psychological outcomes. They give less attention to how people are managed with AI, to what happens to jobs, wages and skills, and to those who have not yet entered the workforce.

This review takes the broader view. It examines research published from 2023 to 2026 in highly ranked international journals and in accredited Indonesian journals, and it asks four questions.

RQ1. What has been published on AI and the tourism and hospitality workforce, and how is it distributed across themes, research designs, occupations and national contexts?

RQ2. What does this literature show about the effects of AI on employees, and under which conditions are the effects favourable or unfavourable?

RQ3. What is known about the management of people with AI and about the effects of AI on jobs, tasks, skills and employment?

RQ4. What remains unknown, and what should future research address?

The review makes three contributions. It brings the psychological, managerial and labour-market strands of the literature into one account. It distinguishes what employees perceive from what has been observed about employment. It also places the Indonesian journals alongside the international ones and shows how little the former have yet contributed on this subject.

2. Conceptual background

Three ideas organise most of the literature reviewed here. The first is substitution and augmentation. AI can take over tasks that people perform, or it can support people in performing them. Jobs consist of many tasks, and the extent to which a job can be automated depends on the tasks that resist automation, such as those requiring perception, manipulation or social interaction (Melián-González, 2026). Hospitality research has also asked whether the future relation between people and robots will be one of competition or of collaboration (Khoa et al., 2023).

The second idea is appraisal. Employees do not respond to AI itself but to what they believe it means for them. The most widely used construct is AI awareness, which refers to employees' concerns about their future careers as these technologies spread (Cheng et al., 2025). It is also studied as awareness of smart technology, AI, robotics and algorithms (STARA) (Chi et al., 2026). Stress theories distinguish challenge appraisals, in which a demand is seen as an opportunity to grow, from hindrance appraisals, in which it is seen as an obstacle or a threat (He et al., 2024). Conservation of resources theory is the framework most often named in the abstracts, followed at a distance by the job demands-resources model and the transactional theory of stress and coping, and then by cognitive appraisal theory, self-determination theory and social cognitive theory.

The third idea is that AI is also a means of managing people. Algorithmic management refers to the use of algorithms to allocate, monitor and evaluate work, and it has spread from platform work, such as food delivery, to conventional hospitality workplaces (Jianu et al., 2025; X. Wu et al., 2023). AI is likewise used in recruitment, training, scheduling and performance appraisal. The workforce is therefore affected by AI at three levels, which correspond to the themes of this review: the individual employee who feels threatened by AI or works with it, the organisation that manages people with it, and the labour market in which jobs, skills and careers are formed.

3. Method

3.1 Protocol and reporting

The review follows the PRISMA 2020 statement (Page et al., 2021). No protocol was registered in advance. The search was run on 3 October 2026 and screening for this review was completed on 4 October 2026.

3.2 Information sources

Records were retrieved from the Crossref REST API by journal ISSN. Two journal sets were defined in advance. The international set contains 62 journals ranked Q1 or Q2 in the Scimago category "Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Management". Eight sport-specific journals in that category were left out. The national set contains 25 Indonesian journals whose own websites state accreditation at SINTA 1 or SINTA 2, comprising tourism journals and journals in management, information systems, law and regional studies that publish tourism research. Scopus and Web of Science were not available to the author for this search.

3.3 Search strategy

For each journal in the international set, Crossref was queried with a set of AI-related terms: artificial intelligence, AI, ChatGPT, generative AI, large language model, chatbot, robot, service robot, machine learning, deep learning, algorithm, automation, AI agent, agentic, smart tourism, intelligent, virtual assistant, human-robot, AI-powered and AI-generated. For the national set, English and Indonesian terms combining AI, digital technology and tourism were used. Records published from 2022 onward were retrieved so that articles first published online in 2022 and assigned to a 2023 issue would not be lost. The year used for eligibility is the year of the print issue or, where there is none, the year of online publication.

3.4 Eligibility criteria

Table 1 sets out the criteria. The focal criterion is that the relation between AI and people at work, or people preparing for work, in tourism and hospitality is the central subject of the article.

Table 1. Eligibility Criteria

Criterion	Included	Excluded
Period	Published 2023 to 2026	Published before 2023
Source	Journals ranked Q1 or Q2 in the Scimago tourism, leisure and hospitality category; Indonesian journals accredited at SINTA 1 or 2	Other journals, books, conference papers and reports
Document type	Journal articles, including conceptual papers, reviews and opinion papers	Retracted articles, retraction notices, corrigenda, editorials and interviews
Domain	Tourism, hospitality, travel or leisure	Other sectors
Focus	Employees', managers' or platform workers' perceptions of and work with AI and robots; AI in human resource management, leadership and algorithmic management; jobs, tasks, skills, wages and employment; customer studies whose outcome concerns the role, treatment or inclusion of employees; students' career responses to AI and AI-supported workplace training	Customer responses to robots or AI compared with human staff where the outcome is customer satisfaction or intention; organisational adoption of AI without a workforce outcome; AI in education for learning, teaching or academic research; machine learning used only as a method
Language	English or Indonesian	Other languages

3.5 Selection process

Records were first deduplicated by DOI and limited to 2023 to 2026. They were retained when the title or the abstract contained an AI-related term and, for general-interest journals, when the title or abstract referred to tourism, hospitality, travel or leisure. These steps produced a corpus of 1,815 AI-related tourism and hospitality articles. A keyword rule then flagged a record when its title contained a work-related term, such as employee, worker, workforce, job, labour, staff, frontline, skill, training, career, turnover, human resource, leadership, manager, recruitment, job crafting, student or education, or when its abstract contained at least two specific phrases such as job insecurity, turnover intention or human-robot collaboration. The rule flagged 375 records, none of them from the national set. A further search was therefore made. For the international set, titles containing related terms, such as practitioner, team, colleague, employment, gig, rider, human capital and well-being, and abstracts obtained from publisher pages were examined, which added 93 records. For the national set, all 35 records in the corpus were examined. All 503 records were screened manually against the criteria in Table 1 using titles and, where available, abstracts. Screening was carried out by one reviewer.

3.6 Data extraction and synthesis

Each included study was assigned to one primary theme. The research design, sample, occupation and national context were coded from the abstract. Crossref provided abstracts for 101 of the included studies and publisher pages provided another 75. For the remaining 46 studies no abstract could be accessed, and they are classified from their titles only. Full texts were not read. The synthesis is thematic and narrative. No meta-analysis was attempted because the studies are heterogeneous, and no formal quality appraisal was carried out because the review did not have access to full texts. Because the number of included studies

is large, the text cites representative studies for each finding, and the full list is given in the supplementary table.

4. Results

4.1 Selection of studies

Table 2 reports the flow of records. The 222 included studies represent 12.2% of the 1,815 AI-related articles in the corpus. Of the included studies, 213 came from the keyword rule and nine from the further search. Forty-three records concerned AI in education for learning, teaching or academic research. They form a separate literature and were excluded under the focus criterion.

Table 2. Flow of records through the review (PRISMA 2020)

Stage	International set (Q1 and Q2)	National set (SINTA 1 and 2)	Total
Records retrieved from Crossref, deduplicated by DOI	17,463	2,066	19,529
Records published 2023 to 2026	15,811	1,636	17,447
Records mentioning AI in title or abstract	2,081	633	2,714
Records within tourism and hospitality scope (AI corpus)	1,780	35	1,815
Candidates flagged by keyword rule	375	0	375
Candidates added from a further search	93	35	128
Records screened on title and abstract	468	35	503
Records excluded: retracted article, retraction notice, corrigendum, editorial or interview	11	0	11
Records excluded: AI in education for learning, teaching or academic research	43	0	43
Records excluded: workforce not the central subject, or term used in another sense	193	34	227
Studies included in the review	221	1	222

4.2 Profile of the literature

The literature has grown from 11 studies in 2023 to 30 in 2024, 88 in 2025 and 93 in 2026. It is concentrated in highly ranked hospitality journals. Two hundred and five studies appeared in Q1 journals, 16 in Q2 journals and one in a SINTA 2 journal. The studies are spread over 26 journals, and three of these account for more than half of them: the International Journal of Hospitality Management with 50, the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management with 36 and the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology with 30. The Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management published 20, and Current Issues in Tourism and Tourism Management 13 each.

Research designs could be coded for the 176 studies with an accessible abstract. Seventy-eight are surveys and 32 combine designs, most often a survey with an experiment or with interviews. Nineteen are experiments and 18 are qualitative. Nine are conceptual, seven are

reviews or meta-analyses, four analyse secondary data or rate tasks, two develop scales and one builds a system. Six abstracts do not state the design. Table 3 shows the distribution by theme. Seventy studies name a country, a place within a country or a multi-country region in the title or abstract. China appears in 35, or 37 when Hong Kong and Macau are counted, and the United States in 11. South Korea, Malaysia, Türkiye and Vietnam appear in three each, and Indonesia in one. The word robot appears in the title of 85 studies, and generative AI, ChatGPT or AI-generated content in the title of 14. The full list of included studies is given in the supplementary table at the end of this article.

Table 3. Themes, years and research designs of the included studies (n = 222)

Theme	n	2023	2024	2025	2026	Designs of studies with an abstract
Perceived threat: AI awareness, job insecurity, stress and turnover	55	2	9	25	19	Survey 27, mixed 8, experiment 3, other 5
Working with AI and robots: collaboration, acceptance and performance	97	4	17	35	41	Survey 32, mixed 18, experiment 12, qualitative 6, review 4, other 5
Managing people with and through AI	35	3	2	15	15	Survey 9, qualitative 5, experiment 4, mixed 4, conceptual 4, other 2
Jobs, tasks, skills and labour markets	25	2	1	7	15	Qualitative 6, survey 4, secondary data or task analysis 3, review 3, conceptual 3, other 2
The future workforce: students and training	10	0	1	6	3	Survey 6, mixed 1
Total	222	11	30	88	93	

4.3 Thematic synthesis

Theme 1. Perceived threat: AI awareness, job insecurity, stress and turnover

Fifty-five studies treat AI and robots as a perceived threat. Their most consistent finding is a chain that runs from awareness of AI or fear of robots to job insecurity, in some studies together with job stress, and on to the intention to leave. It is reported for 321 lodging and 308 food service employees in the United States (C.-C. Chen & Cai, 2025), for 279 hospitality employees of different generations in the United States (Horpynich et al., 2025) and for 357 hospitality employees (Jeong et al., 2026). Among 343 employees of 20 robot-integrated hotels in Guangdong, robot usage itself raised job insecurity and, through it, turnover intention (Xiaoxin et al., 2025). Two studies separate the destinations of intended turnover. Among 259 frontline hotel employees, job insecurity raised turnover intentions, with a notably stronger effect for moves to companies outside the hotel sector (Kang et al., 2024). Among 571 frontline hotel employees in South Korea and China the effect was again strongest for the intention to move to other industries (H. Shin & Kang, 2026). In an experiment, fear of robots was related to the intention to leave the industry, and fear had an inverted U-shaped relation with the perceived human-likeness of the robot (Shum, Kim, et al., 2024).

Awareness of AI or of the risk from robots is also associated with a range of harmful work behaviours and states. These include work withdrawal (Pan et al., 2025; Teng et al., 2024), silence (Cheng et al., 2025), deviant behaviour in a paired sample of employees and co-workers (Y. Zhang, Wang, et al., 2025), workplace cheating, where hindrance and challenge awareness interact (Cai, Song, & He, 2026), unethical pro-organisational behaviour (S. Zhou & Yi, 2025), abuse of robots (Shum, Min, et al., 2024), and symptoms of depression and anxiety that arise through role conflict (Yan et al., 2025). Higher robot anthropomorphism increased employees' awareness of risk from robots and their objectification of colleagues (B. Li et al., 2026), and overload from AI-generated content reduced proactive service and increased service sabotage through ego depletion (Wei et al., 2026). Guests are part of the process. Among 374 Chinese hotel guests, interaction with robots increased the perception that employees' work can be substituted and the objectification of those employees (L. Hao & Wang, 2025).

A second group of studies finds that awareness has two edges. In data from hotels in Shanghai, Paris and Seoul, AI awareness was related both to work engagement and to boycotting AI, through recovery and through job insecurity respectively (S. Liu & Cheng, 2025). Among 434 Chinese hotel employees it suppressed intrapreneurial behaviour through job insecurity and fostered it through organisational identification (J. Huang et al., 2026). It increased proactive service while reducing the sharing of tacit knowledge, both through the motive to preserve one's job (Y. Zhang, Wang, & Zhang, 2025), and it prompted learning as well as the withholding of knowledge from AI (Qin et al., 2025). Findings on voice diverge. One study of 203 service employees found that AI awareness reduced voice (He et al., 2025), and another of 319 hotel employees in four Chinese cities found that it promoted voice (Lin & He, 2024). Other studies link perceptions of AI to career resilience and informal learning (Kong et al., 2024) and to career satisfaction and perceived employability through job crafting (P. Zhou et al., 2026). These results have led to a reconceptualisation of the construct. Gui et al. (2025) develop a 16-item scale with augmented and depleted dimensions, Bakir et al. (2026) argue that hospitality research has framed AI awareness too narrowly as a threat of displacement, and several studies now separate challenge awareness from hindrance awareness (Cai, Song, & He, 2026; Song et al., 2026) or insecurity about job replacement from insecurity about job transformation (Qiao et al., 2026).

A third group identifies conditions. In three experiments with employees in the United States and the United Kingdom, AI introduced to replace staff produced more job insecurity than AI introduced to augment them, but augmentation also increased insecurity, and organisational support did not moderate the effect (Y. Yuan, Hao, & Liu, 2026). The relation between a robot's social competence and job insecurity followed an inverted U shape (Z. Wu et al., 2026). Robot use in 18 Chinese hotels reduced turnover intention through work autonomy and increased it through job insecurity (L.-X. Zhang et al., 2023). Transformational, change-oriented and ethical leadership weakened some of the harmful paths (Shum, Min, et al., 2024; Yin et al., 2024; S. Zhou & Yi, 2025). In a study of 554 hotel employees in China, perceived organisational support was related to turnover intention partly through the perceived value and the perceived threat of AI (Y. Li & Khan, 2026). Older employees in luxury hotels reported more job insecurity and more negative attitudes toward AI (Jung et al., 2025). Among 547 hotel employees in the United States, technology competence had no direct relation with turnover intention but a positive indirect one through the intention to use the technologies, and this was stronger when employees perceived alternative job opportunities (Bakir, Ayoun, et al., 2025).

Two studies use data from the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe and move beyond perception. The risk that an occupation will be substituted by intelligent automation had non-linear relations with job tenure and with the probability of a career change out of hospitality (B. Yuan & Liu, 2025), and a negative relation with health that work autonomy and social community at work buffered (B. Yuan & Zhang, 2025). Twelve studies in this theme are known only by their titles, among them a systematic review of AI awareness (Bakir, Dogru, et al., 2025) and studies of occupational uncertainty, career identity and older employees' quality of life (Darvishmotevali et al., 2026; J. Wang et al., 2024; B. Yuan & Liu, 2026).

Theme 2. Working with AI and robots: collaboration, acceptance and performance

This is the largest theme, with 97 studies. One group examines whether employees accept the technology. An extended acceptance model explains the intention of fast-food employees to use robots in Egypt and Malaysia (Abdelhakim et al., 2023), and barriers derived from innovation resistance theory explain it in Pakistan (Khan & Mehmood, 2024). Self-identity and expectations of performance and effort shape the willingness of hotel employees in Taiwan to be early adopters (Horng et al., 2025), and trust in robots and in leaders shapes the intentions of employees in small and medium-sized hotels in China (F. Yang et al., 2026). In experiments, hotel employees preferred a room service robot with physical functions to a concierge robot with cognitive functions (Leung et al., 2023), and employees felt more enjoyment and less stress when working with non-humanoid robots (D. Wang et al., 2024). Two meta-analyses summarise this work. Across 71 studies and 23,051 employees, perceived benefits of AI were positively related to adoption and job engagement, and the authors note that anxiety about displacement can weaken these relations (Castaneda et al., 2026). Across 28 studies, organisational and individual factors shaped employees' intentions to work alongside robots (Xiaoxin et al., 2026).

The most frequently reported pattern among studies of work outcomes is again a double-edged effect, now of actual use and collaboration. About one in five of the abstracts in this theme report a favourable and an unfavourable path together. Among 280 hotel employees in China surveyed at three points, AI use raised technological self-efficacy and prosocial service behaviour and also raised workplace anxiety and withdrawal (Y. Liu et al., 2024). Robot use in 16 hotels increased both job insecurity and thriving at work, with opposite effects on service innovation (L. Wang et al., 2026). Dependence on AI fostered approach job crafting through work passion and avoidance job crafting through perceived threat (Zhao et al., 2025). AI integration raised task performance through role overload and lowered it through role conflict (X. Wu et al., 2026). Similar dual paths are reported for digital performance (G. Zhang et al., 2026), proactive service (Cai, Yu, & Meng, 2026), quality of work life (Duan et al., 2026) and adaptive performance (J. Y. Bai et al., 2025). The path that prevails depends on whether the employee appraises AI as a challenge or a hindrance and on mindset (Cai, Yu, & Meng, 2026; He et al., 2024; Xie & Ma, 2026). AI knowledge strengthened both the favourable and the unfavourable path (He et al., 2024), and AI literacy was related to more job crafting (Mansour et al., 2026).

Several studies report benefits. Collaboration with AI was associated with quality of work life and work engagement among 475 hotel employees (T.-J. Wu et al., 2025) and with meaningfulness at work among 448 tour guides in China, through greater autonomy and less boredom (Y. Wang et al., 2026). The social presence of robots reduced workplace loneliness in studies that included a field experiment (X. Liu, Lin, et al., 2025), and engagement with

robots reduced depersonalisation (X. Liu, Zhang, Lin, & Guan, 2025). Human-robot collaboration and robot affordances were related to better service performance (Sun & Li, 2026; L. Tan et al., 2025), and experience of using robots was related to more learning (X. Liu et al., 2024). In interviews, frontline hotel employees in China described lower work stress and mental fatigue (X. Wang et al., 2024), and explainable AI was related to service innovation through self-efficacy and lower anxiety (X. Li & Zong, 2026).

Other studies report harms that are specific to working beside a machine. Collaboration with AI reduced employees' concern for the impression they make and thereby their organisational citizenship behaviour (S. Bai & Zhang, 2025). Working with robots increased moral disengagement and counterproductive behaviour among 324 employees of a restaurant chain in southern China, and in an experiment with employees in Western countries (L. Tan & Li, 2025). A higher extent of collaboration increased perceived robot agency, self-identity threat and service sabotage (G. Yu et al., 2026), and AI use was indirectly related to deviant behaviour among 506 Chinese hospitality employees (Chi et al., 2026). Robot failures create a further burden. Employees must deal with illegitimate tasks, customer mistreatment and robotic instability (X. Liu, Zhang, Lin, & Jia, 2025), they experience anger, anxiety and guilt (Mo et al., 2026), and their responses carry over to customer satisfaction (Gong, 2026). In interviews with 42 restaurant workers in the United States who used a robot under a mandated adoption, the themes included robot reliability, management training and support, use of the robot to entertain customers, feelings of dread, anger and frustration, and reduced physical exertion (Mejia et al., 2024).

A further group shows that implementation choices change these outcomes. In two online experiments, introducing robots with a focus on employees and not on the business raised collaboration intentions and lowered complaint intentions (Y. Huang et al., 2026). In two scenario experiments and one field experiment in three hotels, collaboration led by the employee produced higher job satisfaction than collaboration led by generative AI (Shen et al., 2026). Employees with a zero-sum mindset saw intelligent robots as competitors, and an advocacy campaign and participation in task design improved their willingness to collaborate (Jin et al., 2025). Transparency of AI raised readiness for change (Z. Zhang et al., 2026), leaders who crafted their own work around AI were followed by employees who did the same (W. Li et al., 2024), and under laissez-faire leadership employees working with AI experienced more role ambiguity and less empathetic creativity (Luo et al., 2025). Among 432 employees of online travel agencies in the United States, organisational support moderated the effects of perceived benefits and risks of ChatGPT on job insecurity and turnover intention (Lu et al., 2024). Employees distinguished four kinds of relationship with robot co-workers, and competitive relationships undermined retention (Habib et al., 2026a; Habib et al., 2026b). Two experimental studies concern judgement. Employees preferred advice from human managers to output from AI systems (Y. Yang et al., 2025), yet low-quality information was more likely to be trusted when it came from an AI expert than from a human expert (Y. Yuan, Hao, et al., 2026). Twenty studies in this theme are known by title only.

Theme 3. Managing people with and through AI

Thirty-five studies concern management. The first group examines AI in human resource management (HRM). AI involvement in promotion and performance evaluation increased organisational dehumanisation and thereby turnover intention (H. H. Shin et al., 2025). AI adoption in HRM raised employees' perception of their company's competence and lowered

their perception of its warmth, with opposite effects on commitment, and servant leadership moderated these effects (Mo et al., 2025). Interviews with 55 human resource practitioners in India describe stress, reduced well-being and lower commitment under algorithmic HRM (Nayak et al., 2025). Conceptual papers consider which human resource duties generative AI is likely to replace (Garcia & Kwok, 2025) and assess AI-assisted hiring against the OECD AI Principles (Kwok et al., 2026). In recruitment, five experiments with 2,199 participants found a divide between candidates and recruiters in their trust in AI (Hu et al., 2024). Other studies examine candidate satisfaction with a chatbot scheduling system (Elmashhara et al., 2026), generative AI and gender-diverse recruitment (Thakur et al., 2025), and experts' priorities for AI in HRM in Malaysian hotels (Wider et al., 2026).

The second group concerns algorithmic management and AI as a supervisor. On Chinese food-delivery platforms, algorithmic management improved efficiency and reliability and also produced impersonal service and extra workload, and deliverers coped through compliance, flexible response and resistance, including resistance in collusion with other parties (X. Wu et al., 2023). Volatility of pay and delivery time increased drivers' emotional exhaustion (H. Yu et al., 2026). In conventional hospitality workplaces, resistance to algorithmic management was driven by algorithmic restraints. Resistance lowered well-being, and lower well-being raised turnover intention (Jianu et al., 2025). In two experiments with 328 hotel employees, management by AI in place of a human manager increased self-objectification and reduced proactive behaviour (W. Yu et al., 2026). In a scenario experiment, trust in robotic managers depended on demonstrated skill and remained narrower than trust in human managers (Baldick & Gordon, 2026).

The third group concerns leadership. Transformational leadership helped employees to appraise AI as a challenge (K. Tan et al., 2025), and digital leadership supported hotels' digital transformation through employees' passion and creativity (J. Wang et al., 2025). A conceptual paper proposes rapport leadership for teams of humans and robots (Leung et al., 2025), and a survey of 953 employees examines servant leadership supported by AI (Radic et al., 2025). High-performance work systems fostered employees' use of AI through intrinsic motivation (L. Liu & Zhang, 2026). Hotel managers themselves were interviewed about whether they perceive robots as a threat (Mutlu-Öztürk et al., 2026). Two studies treat AI as support for staff, in the form of a scenario of chatbot counselling that 553 hospitality employees in Japan evaluated (Y.-C. Wang et al., 2024) and a scheduling system designed to balance efficiency with employee well-being (J. Li et al., 2026). Seven studies are known by title only, including work on algorithm transparency for food-delivery riders (M. Liu et al., 2025), surveillance (Zhao et al., 2023) and talent management (El Hajal & Yeoman, 2026).

Theme 4. Jobs, tasks, skills and labour markets

Twenty-five studies address jobs and labour markets, and they rely less on employee surveys than the preceding themes. Three examine tasks. Melián-González (2026) rates 202 tasks in hotel jobs in Spain against eight engineering bottlenecks. More than 90% of tasks met at least one moderate-to-severe bottleneck, and the study concludes that automation is more likely to complement hotel work than to replace it. Observation and interviews in Bulgaria and the United States suggest that white-collar tasks have substantial potential for automation and that manual tasks such as housekeeping and maintenance have less (Webster, 2025). Restaurant employees in the United States considered that the shortcomings of each technology sustain the need for human labour (Seyitoğlu et al., 2025).

Managers' and employees' views are reported in four studies. Hotel executives in Türkiye saw AI as being in its infancy and as useful in addressing staff shortages (Demirdelen Alrawadieh, 2026). Twenty-two accommodation managers identified the skills that frontline employees will need (H. Shin et al., 2025), and interviews with 55 people at three hierarchical levels showed that top managers stress competitive advantage and non-managerial employees stress cost savings (Cozzio et al., 2026). In Istanbul, a survey of 423 tourism employees and interviews with 25 managers found that perceptions of AI risk affect employees' career decisions (Kizildemir et al., 2026). Skills are addressed through an employability framework for upscale hotels (Fang & Liou, 2024), a definition of the smart tourism employee based on 883 hotel employees in Spain (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2025) and an analysis of gendered competencies in Chinese tourism companies (Q. Chen et al., 2026).

Two studies use secondary data on firms or regions. In a panel of 1,206 listed tourism, travel and hospitality firms in the United Kingdom, AI human capital was positively associated with firm value and negatively associated with wage inequality (Agag et al., 2026). A difference-in-differences analysis of Chinese cities from 2000 to 2019 found that the national smart tourism pilot city policy raised employment rates in eastern and central regions (Zheng et al., 2026). The policy is broader than AI, and the abstract does not isolate the effect of AI. Inclusion is addressed in studies of how consumers respond to employees with disabilities who work through robots (Choi & Kim, 2025; Motoki et al., 2026) and of retirees' willingness to work remotely through avatar robots (H. Shin et al., 2026).

Conceptual papers and reviews complete the theme. They consider the future hospitality workforce at micro, meso and macro levels (Liu-Lastres et al., 2026), the redesign of frontline work (Jooss et al., 2026), and the argument that agentic AI challenges the role of tourism as a source of inclusive work (Filimonau et al., 2026). A review of 89 studies of generative AI finds the research fragmented and predominantly customer-centric (Ferreira & Kastenholz, 2026). The single national study reviews literature and secondary sources and concludes that robots, AI and service automation in Indonesian tourism are at an introductory stage and are becoming viable for repetitive and high-risk tasks (Asmoro et al., 2023). Four studies are known by title only, including one on labour reallocation, gender and governance (Anning-Dorson, 2026) and one on jobs and tasks as a starting point for automation research (Melián-González & Bulchand-Gidumal, 2025).

Theme 5. The future workforce: students and training

Ten studies concern people who are entering the workforce. Concerns about robots, AI and service automation among hospitality and tourism students were related to depression, quiet quitting and the intention to leave their studies (Rezapouraghdam et al., 2025). In a mixed-method study with students, robotic integration raised anticipated job anxiety and did not change the intention to pursue a hospitality career (Dou et al., 2025), whereas in a study in Theme 1 students with greater awareness of risk from robots reported lower intentions to work in the industry (Pan et al., 2025). Among 521 students in Vietnam, AI readiness and experiential learning supported job intentions (Vo et al., 2026), and among 1,026 recent graduates in the Middle East and North Africa, robotic simulation training was related to perceived readiness for the labour market (Selem & Selim, 2026).

Three studies examine training delivered with AI. Trainees' positive evaluation of AI-assisted cross-cultural training was related to cultural intelligence, which in turn was related to career

confidence, among 484 hotel newcomers (Y.-C. Wang et al., 2025) and 456 hospitality interns in China (Pan et al., 2026). Avatar-led green training was related to environmental citizenship behaviour among 724 hotel employees (F. Hao et al., 2025). Three studies are known by title only (Cifci et al., 2024; Kim et al., 2025a; Kim et al., 2025b).

5. Discussion

5.1 A literature of perceptions, centred on hotels

The profile of the literature is narrow in three respects. First, it is psychological. Themes 1 and 2 contain 152 of the 222 studies, and most of them relate employees' perceptions of AI to self-reported or supervisor-rated attitudes and behaviours. Many use time-lagged, multi-wave or multi-source surveys, which strengthens them, and a few include field experiments (Fan et al., 2026; X. Liu, Lin, et al., 2025; Shen et al., 2026). Second, it is centred on hotels and on frontline staff. Back-of-house work, small enterprises and informal work are almost absent. Third, it is geographically concentrated. China accounts for about half of the studies that name a place. Service robots are the most studied single technology and are named in 85 titles, while most other studies refer to AI in general. Generative AI, which reaches office, marketing and front-desk work, is named in 14 titles. Hotels are named in the title or abstract of 83 studies, restaurants or food service in 15, food-delivery work in three and tour guides in two.

5.2 What decides which edge of the sword cuts

The phrase double-edged sword recurs in this literature, and the evidence supports it. The same exposure to AI is associated with self-efficacy, thriving, learning and engagement on one path and with insecurity, anxiety, overload and withdrawal on another. Three kinds of condition appear to decide the balance. The first is appraisal. Employees who see AI as a challenge craft their jobs and perform better, and those who see it as a hindrance feel more insecure or alienated, craft their jobs less and perform worse (He et al., 2024; Song et al., 2026; Xie & Ma, 2026). The second is the way AI is introduced. Framing it as augmentation, explaining it, involving employees in task design and letting the employee lead the collaboration improved responses in the studies cited (Jin et al., 2025; Shen et al., 2026; Y. Yuan, Hao, & Liu, 2026; Z. Zhang et al., 2026), although not for every employee. Prevention-focused employees were more satisfied when generative AI led (Shen et al., 2026), and one study warns that excessive openness about algorithms may increase resistance (Jianu et al., 2025). The third is leadership and organisational support (W. Li et al., 2024; Lu et al., 2024; K. Tan et al., 2025). None of these conditions removes the threat entirely. In the experiments of Y. Yuan, Hao, and Liu (2026), AI presented as augmentation still raised job insecurity, and organisational support did not moderate the effect. The practical reading is that the effects of AI on employees are to a considerable degree a management outcome, and that reassurance alone is not sufficient.

5.3 AI as a retention risk

The most policy-relevant finding concerns turnover. Hospitality managers see AI as a response to staff shortages (Demirdelen Alrawadieh, 2026). The surveys in Theme 1 indicate that awareness of AI raises job insecurity and, through it, the intention to leave, and that the intention to move outside the hotel sector (Kang et al., 2024) or to other industries (H. Shin & Kang, 2026) is the most sensitive. Students show related concerns (Pan et al., 2025;

Rezapouraghdam et al., 2025). If these intentions turn into behaviour, AI adopted to compensate for a shortage of labour could deepen it by encouraging experienced staff and prospective entrants to look elsewhere. The evidence concerns intentions. The one study of observed behaviour relates the substitution risk of occupations to job tenure and career change among European workers (B. Yuan & Liu, 2025), and no study reports actual exits after AI was adopted in a workplace. Technology competence had no direct relation with turnover intention, but it was related to it indirectly through the intention to use the technologies, and more strongly when employees perceived alternative jobs (Bakir, Ayoun, et al., 2025). Training that raises competence may therefore also raise mobility.

5.4 AI as manager

Leadership and HRM are presented in Themes 1 and 2 as buffers against the harmful effects of AI. Theme 3 shows that when AI is itself used to manage people the effects are mixed and often unfavourable. AI in appraisal and promotion is experienced as dehumanising (H. H. Shin et al., 2025), AI supervision leads employees to see themselves as objects (W. Yu et al., 2026), algorithmic restraints provoke resistance (Jianu et al., 2025), and human resource practitioners report stress (Nayak et al., 2025). Candidates and recruiters differ in their trust of AI in selection (Hu et al., 2024). Favourable paths are also reported. AI in HRM raised perceptions of the company's competence (Mo et al., 2025), and algorithmic enhancements were positively related to well-being (Jianu et al., 2025). There is a tension here. Organisations are advised to support employees through the transition to AI while they automate the functions through which support is given. The literature has not yet examined this tension directly.

5.5 What is missing: jobs, wages and skills

For a topic usually discussed in terms of job losses, the literature contains very little evidence on employment. Four studies draw on secondary data about workers, firms or regions. Two use European survey data (B. Yuan & Liu, 2025; B. Yuan & Zhang, 2025), the second combined with a survey in China, one concerns listed firms in the United Kingdom (Agag et al., 2026) and one concerns a city-level policy in China (Zheng et al., 2026). No study in the corpus measures how many jobs were removed, created or changed in tourism firms that adopted AI, and none follows workers' employment after adoption. Task-level analysis suggests that automation is more likely to complement hotel work than to replace whole jobs (Melián-González, 2026; Webster, 2025), but this rests on two studies. Evidence on skills comes from the opinions of managers and experts and from employee surveys, and not from skills measured at work. Gender, age and disability are addressed in a handful of studies (Q. Chen et al., 2026; Choi & Kim, 2025; Jung et al., 2025), and the distribution of gains and losses among groups of workers is largely unexamined.

5.6 The national evidence base

The national set contributes one study, a review of the state of robots, AI and service automation in Indonesian tourism published in 2023 (Asmoro et al., 2023). None of the 35 national records reports data collected from Indonesian tourism workers, managers or students on the subject of AI. Indonesia does not appear as a research setting in the international studies either, as far as titles and abstracts show. The questions examined in China, the United States and elsewhere, such as whether awareness of AI raises the intention to leave, have therefore not been asked in the Indonesian journals searched.

6. Research agenda

Table 4 sets out eight areas for future research, each of which follows from a gap identified above.

Table 4. Research agenda for AI and the tourism and hospitality workforce

Area	Research questions	Suitable designs
Employment outcomes	How many jobs and hours are removed, created or changed when tourism firms adopt AI, and what happens to the workers concerned?	Firm-level panel data; matched employer and employee records; difference-in-differences designs
From intention to exit	Do AI awareness and job insecurity predict actual turnover and exit from the industry?	Longitudinal studies linking surveys to personnel records
Task and skill change	Which tasks move to AI, which remain, and which new tasks appear in each occupation?	Task-level analysis; observation; repeated job analysis
Implementation practices	Which ways of introducing AI protect employees, and do the effects last?	Field experiments with staged roll-out; process evaluation
AI as manager	How do algorithmic scheduling, appraisal and recruitment affect fairness, well-being and retention?	Field studies in firms using such systems; audits of algorithmic decisions
Generative AI at work	How does generative AI change office, marketing and front-desk work and the value of experience?	Experiments with real tasks; diary studies
Unequal effects	How do effects differ by gender, age, disability, contract type and firm size?	Stratified surveys; analysis of labour force data; qualitative studies of informal and small-firm workers
Emerging destinations	How do workers, managers and students in Indonesia and comparable countries perceive and experience AI?	Replication of established models; national workforce surveys; evaluation of training programmes

7. Implications for practice and policy

For employers, the evidence suggests that the way AI is introduced matters as much as the technology. Introductions that explain what the system does, present it as support for staff, involve employees in redesigning tasks and leave the employee in the lead are generally associated with better responses. Managers should expect insecurity even when no jobs are to be cut, and should monitor intentions to leave among experienced staff. Robot failures should be planned for, because the burden of recovery falls on employees. Caution is warranted before AI is used for appraisal, promotion and supervision, where the studies reviewed report dehumanisation and resistance.

For educators and training providers, students' anxiety about automation is a matter for curricula and career guidance. The studies of AI-assisted training are encouraging, although they report perceptions and not skills measured at work.

For policy makers, two points follow. First, statements about the effect of AI on tourism employment cannot at present be based on tourism research, because the tourism journals

examined contain almost no measurements of jobs in firms that adopted AI. Labour force and enterprise surveys should record AI adoption and its consequences for jobs in the sector. Second, in countries where tourism is a large employer and AI adoption is at an early stage, as the national study describes for Indonesia (Asmoro et al., 2023), there is still time to collect baseline data on workers and to design training and transition measures before adoption spreads.

8. Limitations

This review has limitations that affect how its results should be used. First, the search used Crossref and not Scopus or Web of Science. Crossref matches queries approximately, so relevant records may have been missed, although a check against 26 known key articles on AI in tourism found all of them in the corpus. Second, journal rankings were taken from a secondary listing of Scimago data and from the websites of the national journals, and they should be confirmed against the primary sources. Third, screening and coding were done by one reviewer and relied on titles and abstracts. Full texts were not read, and 46 of the 222 studies are classified from their titles alone. These are mainly articles in the Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management and Current Issues in Tourism, whose abstracts could not be accessed. Statements about what the studies measure refer to what their abstracts report. Abstracts taken from publisher pages were retrieved with an automated reading tool and were not checked word for word against the source. Fourth, research on AI and work is also published in management, labour economics and human resource journals that this review did not search, so the absence of employment data applies to the tourism journals examined and not to the wider literature. Fifth, the boundary of the topic involves judgement. Studies of AI in education for learning and teaching, studies comparing customer responses to robots and to human staff, and studies of organisational adoption without a workforce outcome were excluded, and each study was assigned to one primary theme. The line between Themes 1 and 2 is in particular a matter of emphasis. Sixth, with 222 studies the text cites representative studies and cannot discuss each one. Seventh, most of the studies appeared in 2025 and 2026, so the profile of the literature is likely to change quickly.

9. Conclusion

Between 2023 and 2026 the journals searched published 222 studies with the relation between AI and the tourism and hospitality workforce as their central subject. Most of them examine how hospitality employees, most often in hotels, perceive AI and robots and how these perceptions relate to their attitudes and behaviour. The results are consistent on two points. Awareness of AI goes with job insecurity, stress and the intention to leave, and working with AI has both favourable and unfavourable effects whose balance depends on appraisal, on the manner of introduction and on leadership. When AI is used to manage people, the reported effects are mixed and often unfavourable. Evidence on actual employment, wages and skills is scarce, the range of occupations and countries is narrow, and the national journals contribute one study. The next step for the field is to follow workers and jobs after AI is adopted, and to do so in the countries where tourism employs the most people.

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