Does ChatGPT Alter Job Seekers' Identity? An Experimental Study

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Abstract

AI-driven solutions like ChatGPT, Bard, or LLaMA produce text that may be identified as if it was human-written.. While an employee can have different identities such as "being a dreamer" (personal identity), "being a manager" (role identity), or "being an Austrian" (social identity), they still may be threatened as one may feel substituted or augmented in their self-concept by AI. This study examines the impact of ChatGPT on job seekers' identity in the job selection process. A discrete choice experiment with 296 participants from the UK revealed that job seekers prefer vacancies aligning with their personal identity over social or role identities. They also favour vacancies requiring frequent ChatGPT utilisation. Yet, we did not find an interaction between identity and ChatGPT usage. The study provides insights for organisations to enhance their recruitment strategies and create inclusive work environments in the context of evolving AI technologies.

Keywords: *social identity, role identity, personal identity, ChatGPT, future of work*

1. Introduction

Businesses are using artificial intelligence (AI) at an accelerated rate. Robotics, natural language processing, computer vision, and machine learning are just a few of the intelligent applications that fall within the broad category of AI technology [1, 2]. According to a recent study, 85 per cent of the organisations polled were either contemplating deploying AI-based apps or had already done so [3]. Particularly, conversational AI is becoming more and more popular. According to MarketsandMarkets [4], the market for conversational AI is anticipated to rise from USD 10.7 billion in 2023 to USD 29.8 billion in 2028 at a compound yearly growth rate of 22.6 per cent.

The provided by OpenAI solution ChatGPT is the most well-liked and fastest-growing Large Language Model (LLM). It is a part of the class of huge language models called generative pre-trained transformers (GPT), created to produce conversational text that sounds like human speech. Yet, what if the customised experience conflicts with how the job seeker feels about themselves since ChatGPT can accomplish some duties (like creating creative material) even better than the job seeker?

Employees face changing work arrangements that may reduce connections with coworkers in person while increasing interactions centred around technology. One element determining whether a job is desirable to a job seeker is how communication is conducted at work. Roles that necessitate regular interaction with AI, for instance, may seem more attractive to those who identify as tech-savvy or have a keen interest in AI-driven environments [5]. At the same time, the human-like nature of ChatGPT-generated outputs might undermine the feeling of an individual's importance, competence, and uniqueness. These new working methods suggest a change in our current beliefs and values. As a result, recent work practices affect self-beliefs that make up professional identity or how one perceives their job there. A scenario that conflicts with one's identity might cause one to lose self-esteem, which puts one's role identity at risk [6]. Similarly, as most communication occurs online and not with real people, the sense of community may be diminished, resulting in social identity failure.

This failure may have drastic consequences for an employer. Identification of self with work may be so deep that dissatisfaction in your job may equate to dissatisfaction with yourself. This may eventually lead to low performance at work [7] and low overall life satisfaction [8]. This complex interplay between identity and technology, as studied by Selenko et al. [9] and Mirbabaie et al. [10], underscores the need for a more comprehensive understanding of how AI impacts job seekers' identity, especially in the job selection process.

Given this backdrop, our research questions emerge: First, we would like to know whether the technology-centred nature of work requires a shift in an individual's identity. Second, we ask ourselves, "What

is the impact of ChatGPT on job seekers' identity in the job selection process?"

Building our work on identity theory [11] – a theory that addresses expectations regarding one's own and others' behaviour as driven by the relatively stable components of the social structure – we show how categorisation of the self impacts change in preferences concerning the future job. Here, we address the three types of self - person identity, role identity, and social identity [12]. As the literature on ChatGPT and identity is scarce, we approach several aspects of new work in an exploratory manner. Based on the existing literature, we derive a set of hypotheses. For both hypothesis-testing and exploratory purposes, we apply a Discrete Choice Experiment, i.e. a specific type of conjoint analysis allowing us to understand the relative value of different kinds of identity, of the impact of ChatGPT on the preferences of job seekers, as well as their interaction [13, 14].

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. New Work Issues

New work driven by a giant technological leap changes the processes and the actors involved in these processes. For instance, ChatGPT has shown great promise in revolutionising workplace dynamics, from streamlining administrative tasks to enhancing customer interactions. Various studies have evaluated its functional properties, such as response accuracy, adaptability, and overall efficiency [15]. Yet, we don't know whether these technologies will substitute employees in some of their tasks or help them find fulfilment in their work.

The issue gets to a new level with the advent and rapid rise of AI in the workplace, whereby employees face new identity dynamics leading to new challenges and opportunities. Integrating AI technologies, especially LLMs, can significantly influence how individuals perceive themselves in their roles. Peters and colleagues [16:23] write:

> "[...] the identity of contemporary people has a longitudinal aspect, i.e. the in-depth self-feeling of individuals. This self-feeling refers to an agent's constant inward exploration of and speculation about his or her own meaning and value, involving both self-identity and collective identity. ChatGPT as a conversational platform is obviously a powerful influence on human self-identity."

In addition, researchers like Ho, Hancock, & Miner [17] have examined the psychological, relational, and emotional effects of interacting with such an LLM,

providing valuable insights into its potential influence on human behaviour. Yet, amidst these explorations, one area remains conspicuously unexplored - the potential impact of ChatGPT on job seekers' identity during the job selection process.

2.2. Challenges of ChatGPT for Job Seekers

"[T]he problem with new chatbots is not just that they are often stupid and naive, but that they are not stupid or naive enough to pick up on nuances and ironies that reveal the contradictions constituting human culture and communication," said Peters and colleagues [16] and we agree. ChatGPT, with its sophisticated language processing capabilities, offers a groundbreaking dimension to how identity intertwines with job selection. Job seekers may find their perceived fit for a role influenced by their interactions with or impressions of AI models like ChatGPT [18].

ChatGPT elucidates a paradox between an opportunity and a challenge in job seeking. For individuals with a keen interest in technology and a willingness to adapt to new tools, ChatGPT offers a platform to showcase these skills and bolster their identity within the job market. These individuals could leverage their proficiency with this advanced AI model to differentiate themselves in an increasingly tech-saturated professional environment. Such ability could enhance their self-concept as tech-savvy individuals and align with role identities tied to technology-oriented careers [17].

However, the flip side of this dynamic is the potential threats ChatGPT could pose. Individuals who find it challenging to comprehend or interact with ChatGPT could face an identity threat, particularly when job vacancies require or highly value proficiency in using this or similar LLM. This potential barrier may make them feel less capable, impacting their self-concept and perception of their suitability for specific roles. This dichotomy reflects the multifaceted implications of AI-driven solutions like ChatGPT on identity in job seeking and selection [10, 19].

2.3. Identity Theory and Identity Types

Identity theory offers valuable insights into the interplay between individuals' sense of self and their roles within social contexts, providing a relevant theoretical framework for understanding the impact of ChatGPT on job seekers' identity in the job selection process. Identity theory, in particular, examines how individuals' self-concepts and behaviours are shaped by their position in the social structure [20]. Within the job selection process, job seekers' identification with particular social groups, such as those proficient in

using AI tools like ChatGPT, may influence their preferences, behaviours, and perceptions of fit within specific job roles [19, 21]. Moreover, individuals seek confirmation and validation of their self-concept through interactions and roles that align with their identity [22]. In interacting with ChatGPT, individuals receive an impression that they are communicating with a human-like entity. Yet, as individuals want their recipient to see them as they see themselves [23, 24], an interaction with an AI-driven system might not give them this feeling leading to misconception of self.

The identity theory is relevant to understanding job seekers' identities. Indeed, according to the theory, several identities might be attached to an individual. This work focuses on three types of self-categorisation: personal identity (also "person identity"), role-identity, and group identity. For instance, each individual may have a vision of self that has started to develop from infancy, making them distinct from the others. This is the lowest level of self-categorisation [12, 25]. At the same time, this level of self-categorisation is linked to the role identity [26]. These two types of identities are related but distinct as they may assume a different behaviour in a similar situation (simultaneous vs sequential operation), can have different structural expectations (being tied to a group vs role identities), and may have different pace of identities' adjustment [12].

Finally, the already mentioned group identity deals with vision of self through a prism of belonging to a social group. I.e. the concept of self and the related behaviour are driven by the "social requirements of the situation, and results from an interaction between individual and situational characteristics" [12:230]. Although group identity penetrates and is being penetrated by two other types of identity, it is distinct and may require an adaptation of the personal and role identities.

A job seekers' alignment with personal, role-based, and group-based identities may drive their preferences for job vacancies. These preferences may be impacted by the technologies associated with the job. As ChatGPT and other LLMs deliver a human-like communication, this technology might be the most salient factor interacting with all three identities when searching for a new job as it addresses their identity and the potential impact of ChatGPT on their self-verification process [11, 27].

3. Theoretical Development

3.1. Interaction of Identities with ChatGPT

Stryker and Burke [11] argue that identity, including personal, role-based, and social identities,

guides one's inclination towards specific occupations and alignment with certain job roles. For instance, someone with a strong personal identity in creativity may gravitate towards artistic professions. At the same time, those with a dominant role-based identity as caregivers may prefer professions such as nursing or social work [21, 27].

Indeed, people naturally gravitate towards groups and roles that resonate with their inherent (personal) identities, seeking a sense of belonging and affirmation in these affiliations [28, 29, 30]. These identity-driven preferences shape individuals' behaviours, decisions, and relationships within social structures, including the workplace. However, as we move towards increasing technological integration, the human-machine relationship adds another layer of complexity to these identity dynamics. Tools like ChatGPT, through their increasing humanisation, are not merely functional assets but are also becoming part of individuals' social and professional milieu [31, 32].

The functional-identity perspective proposed by Selenko et al. [9] provides a lens for examining the role of AI technologies, like ChatGPT, in shaping job seekers' identities. This perspective suggests that individuals' functional and psychological needs play a crucial role in shaping their identity and engagement with technology in the workplace [33]. The view highlights the importance of understanding how LLMs meet these needs and how their usage influences job seekers' sense of self and identity in the job selection process. This perspective can provide insights into the functional and psychological implications of ChatGPT usage for job seekers' identity formation and job preferences [9].

Thus, we hypothesise:

H1: Participants prefer vacancies that address their personal identity over (a) social or (b) role identity. This effect will be (c) weakened if the vacancy assumes frequent usage of ChatGPT.

3.2. Learning to Use New Technologies

Understanding identity and work-based identity is crucial to the new nature of work as it explains perceptions and behaviours in jobs related to change, innovation, and technology [18]. A worker's identity, often considered the cornerstone of one's self-concept, is deeply rooted in an individual's beliefs, attitudes, and distinct characteristics that set them apart. This cornerstone is not only a matter of an individual but also an important impact factor for their job satisfaction and job performance [7].

While the sense of individual identity provides a stable anchor of selfhood, it is continuously shaping

and being shaped by one's experiences and interactions [28, 34]. These interactions are linked to both individual and organisational learning [18]. For instance, personal identity captures the uniqueness of an individual, encapsulating their personal traits, strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations. Identity is like a personal signature that echoes one's decisions and preferences across diverse contexts. Therefore, when a firm penalises someone for his or her way to learn about a new technology, the person might feel a threat to identity ("I am an incompetent person"), experience negative emotions, and avoid any further interaction with the focal object [35].

For this reason, the way a firm addresses incorporating ChatGPT into its processes (i.e., learning to work with ChatGPT on a daily basis), should be driven by positive reinforcement rather than by positive punishment or negative reinforcement in terms of Skinner [36]. Moreover, identity threats may result in social distancing and identity-protecting responses [37]. Yet, if the technology is being introduced correctly, job seekers will like its usage [38].

Therefore, we hypothesise:

H2: Vacancies that involve more frequent usage of ChatGPT are preferred over those that require infrequent usage.

H3: Job seekers prefer vacancies where they are not penalised for learning ChatGPT.

3.3. Explorative Research

There are other theories that address the issues of identity and even propose additional dimensions that can be impacted by usage of new technologies. Some dimensions directly contribute to the overall understanding and expression of identity for personal, role-based, and group-based identities. Extant literature describes the following dimensions worth of consideration [12, 39]:

- The identification dimension encompasses the core aspects of an individual's self-concept and self-perception, including their personality traits, strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations..
- The activation dimensions reflect how individuals actively engage with and express their identity in various situations, indicating the level of awareness and importance they place on their identity.
- Self-verification dimension (stemming from the self-verification theory), conversely, involves seeking confirmation and validation of one's identity from others and the social environment, influencing self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

- Lastly, self-efficacy, a critical dimension of identity, relates to individuals' belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and achieve desired outcomes.

Understanding these dimensions is crucial for comprehending the impact of AI-driven solutions, such as ChatGPT, on job seekers' identity in the job selection process, as they shape perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours related to work and career development [40].

ChatGPT can potentially reshape the landscape of identity within the job selection process, highlighting the intersection of identity theory and technology in the contemporary world of work. Thus, we approach these dimensions wihtout a hypothesis, in an explorative manner.

In our research model, hypotheses containing *a* and *b* are related to the different types of identity, while hypotheses containing *c* look at the moderation effects of ChatGPT and identity. We approach other dimensions of identity in an exploratory way and, thus, do not depict the effects. We depicted our hypotheses in Figure 1.
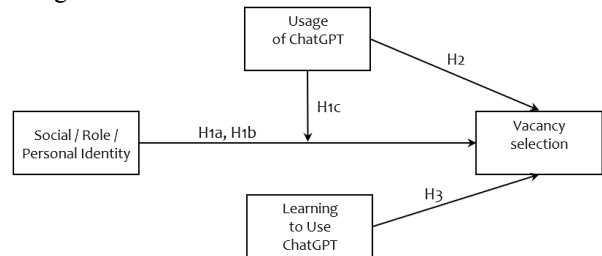

Figure 1. Research model

4. Methodology

4.1. Method description

In our study, we applied a discrete choice experiment (DCE) – a method that combines the depth of a quantitative questionnaire with an experimental approach. This allows for testing the causality while remaining at a more concrete level regarding the investigated constructs [41]. In a DCE, participants are shown two or more objects or events with different descriptions (in our case, two job vacancies) with a request to select the one they prefer. The way the object or event is presented is the manipulation – the descriptions change for each trial. The indicated preference is, thus, caused by the seen description.

A DCE is rooted in two assumptions: first, each participant optimises their utility [42] and selects the option that offers the highest utility. Second, we assume that different presented characteristics fit at

least one participant's needs [43]. Each time a participant has to make a decision she or he decides based on the highest utility expectation. The random utility theory supports this notion [44, 45]. Consequently, in our experiment, when we ask a participant to select between two vacancies, they find one or more aspects that reflect how they feel about the potential job opportunity and select this option.

In a DCE, the presented options are formed by attributes, i.e. a category containing a set of variables, the so-called levels. The attributes and levels for the research were developed based on the notions by Stets and Burke [12] as well as by Hogg [25], who suggested differentiating between different bases of identity (group, role, person) as well as based on their suggestion to look at the macro level (identification), meso level (intra-group relationships, e.g. verification of self, activation of identities), and micro-level (self-efficacy). We also considered concerns by Jussli and colleagues [18] who introduced the specificity of the identity concept in the IS domain. The full list of attributes and levels and respective attributes can be found in supplementary materials or requested by the authors (Table S1).

Which of these vacancies would you rather apply for?

	Vacancy 1	Vacancy 2
This job reflects…	how you dreamt of future as a child	how your family and friends see you
You are expected to act…	as the role suggests	as you feel appropriate
You are recognised for…	excelling in this position	being a part of the company
You are effective when you…	act as other team members do	act as expected by the role
The job description was…	created by HR	created by HR
This position assumes…	constantly working with ChatGPT	some utilization of ChatGPT
When learning to apply ChatGPT…	errors are penalized	errors are penalized
The expected salary increase…	28%	20%
The time needed to apply…	60 minutes	20 minutes

Vacancy 1

Vacancy 2

Figure 2. An example of a DCE decision

The decision variable is dichotomous ("Which of these vacancies would you rather apply for?"). To conduct the experiment, we used Qualtrics© in combination with the Conjoint Survey Tool by Hainmueller and colleagues [46]. An example of a decision is depicted in Figure 2.

4.2. Experimental procedure

For data gathering, we conducted an online survey using Qualtrics®. The count of decisions was fixed at ten (+ 2 attention checks). Each determination encompassed two choices ("*Vacancy 1*" or "*Vacancy 2*"), excluding the "none of the proposed" option (Figure 2). The levels were randomised in order to eradicate the sequence bias. Yet, we did not randomise the order of the attributes as did Bogodistov and Ostern [13]. We avoided attribute order randomisation in order to minimise confusion due to the complexity of each set of selections. The latter was suggested by participants of a pre-test ($N = 7$). For the pre-test, we applied cognitive interviewing with the "thinking aloud" procedure where participants had to comment on the experiment while attending it [47]. We described the task, avoiding linking to identity theory or hypothesised relationships. In this way, we tried to minimise wording, confirmation, and acquiescence biases.

4.3. Sample

In order to test our model, we decided to use Prolific. We invited participants from the UK, who had to fulfil the following criteria:
- being actively seeking a job,
- living in the UK,
- having English as their first language, and
- being fluent in English

As we know that external data collection bears risks, we introduced several attention control questions [48]. All participants who did not pass the attention checks were dropped from participation and were excluded from the final analysis (around 80 participants). The final sample was 296 participants, whereby 157 were male, 137 were female, and 2 indicated non-binary/diverse. A number of 157 indicated they are in a full-time job, 73 were in a part-time relationship, 35 were students, 47 were unemployed, and 1 was retired. The average age of the participants was 36.29 ($SD = 12.25$). The participants stated an average of 14.58 ($SD = 11.59$) years of work experience. A number of 160 apply ChatGPT sometimes, 34 about half of the time, 16 most of the time and 6 always. We also had participants who were familiar with the technology but do not apply it on a regular basis (80 participants).

As each participant made 10 decisions and each decision can show the preference for one job or dislike of the other job, we came up with a dataset of 4,160 final decisions.

5. Results

As the dependent variable (final decision) is binary, we applied the logistic regression IBM© SPSS®. We ran three models: Model 1 for direct effects of identity-related attributes (identity, activation, verification, and self-efficacy) and ChatGPT-related attributes (vacancy description, ChatGPT usage, learning from ChatGPT). Model 2 added interactions of *ChatGPT usage * identity* variables and *ChatGPT learning * self-efficacy* as a dimension of the worker's identity. Model 3 added the control variables of gender, age, education, function, etc. As none of the control variables showed significant effects and as the delta R^2 after adding controls was only 0.2 per cent, we do not report this model in Table 1.

Our experiment also had the scalable variables "expected salary growth" and "time needed to apply" that we used to calculate the willingness-to-trade-salary (an equivalent of willingness-to-pay) and willingness-to-trade-time to make the preferences tangible for practical understanding (Supplements, Table S2).

Table 1. DCE results

Attributes/Levels	Model 1				Model 2			
	B	S.E.	p	Exp(B)	B	S.E.	p	Exp(B)
Identification[†]								
Social Identity	-.288	.083	<.001	0.750	-.392	.222	.078	0.676
Role identity	.0039	.083	.641	1.039	-.198	.220	.369	0.821
Activation[†]								
Social Identity	-.605	.082	<.001	0.546	-.606	.082	<.001	0.545
Role Identity	-.228	.084	.006	0.796	-.227	.084	.007	0.797
Verification[†]								
Social Identity	-.159	.083	.053	0.853	-.160	.083	.053	0.852
Role Identity	-.012	.083	.880	0.988	-.013	.083	.871	0.987
Self-Efficacy[†]								
Social Identity	-.354	.081	<.001	0.702	-.353	.082	<.001	0.703
Role Identity	-.373	.084	<.001	0.689	-.371	.084	<.001	0.690
Vacancy description[‡]								
created by ChatGPT	-.176	.083	.034	0.839	-.176	.083	.033	0.838
as a firm template	.062	.082	.451	1.064	.062	.082	.448	1.064
Scalable variables:								
ChatGPT usage	.157	.042	<.001	1.170	.214	.072	.003	1.239
ChatGPT learning	.716	.043	<.001	2.0467	.711	.060	<.001	2.037
Salary growth	.157	.010	<.001	1.169	.157	.010	<.001	1.170
Time to apply	-.013	.002	<.001	0.987	-.013	.002	<.001	0.987
Moderation analysis								
ChatGPT usage x Identification - SI[†]					-.051	.103	.616	0.950
ChatGPT usage x Identification - RI[†]					-.118	.102	.247	0.889
ChatGPT learning x Self-Efficacy - SI[†]					.008	.089	.925	1.008
ChatGPT learning x Self-Efficacy - RI[†]					.004	.090	.966	1.004
R^2 **(Nagelkerke)**	.198				.198			

Note: [†] Reference value - Personal Identity, SI - Social Identity, RI - Role Identity; [‡] Reference value - Created by an HR specialist

Our hypotheses focused on personal identity, so we used the personal identity-related levels as reference values. Consequently, data in Table 1 shows how much social and role identity is more/less likely to be selected than personal identity. The *Exp(B)* value of 1 indicates that participants are indifferent (50:50 chance) about the levels. A value higher than 1 shows that the level is preferable, whereas a value lower than 1 indicates a tendency to reject the level (if *Exp(B)* = 2, the option is twice as likely to be selected than the reference value).

As can be seen in Table 1 we supported our H1a, H1b, H2 and H3. Yet, we could not support H1c. This indicates that the usage of ChatGPT and the approach to learning the ChatGPT application were not moderating the relationships between identity types and participants' preferences. We refer to this finding as well as to our exploratory findings in the Discussion section.

6. Discussion

6.1. Main findings

Our research provides valuable insights into the interplay between identity and ChatGPT usage in job selection, thus, advancing identity theory with the influence of AI-driven technologies that generate human-like text. This knowledge is particularly valuable for practitioners searching for new candidates, especially for vacancies relying on innovative technologies. ChatGPT is the most known example, yet other similar tools will come. Concerning ChatGPT, we showed that job seekers prefer vacancies with more frequent usage of ChatGPT. This suggests that job seekers may have reservations or concerns about jobs avoiding the usage of tools like ChatGPT. They may perceive LLM as a tool that helps decrease the number of routine tasks [16] to focus on those aspects of work that correspond to their competence.

While we expected that usage of ChatGPT would be at odds with a job seeker's identity, we could not support related hypotheses. Yet, while not statistically significant, the direction is as expected. A follow-up study focusing more on the interaction of ChatGPT usage with identity might yield significant results and support our theory.

Furthermore, our findings underscore the significance of a supportive learning environment that sees errors as learning opportunities. Such an approach would encourage individuals to adapt to new technologies without fear of negative consequences. Job seekers may be more inclined to pursue vacancies that offer opportunities for skill development and growth without the risk of being penalised for initial learning challenges with ChatGPT or similar tools. Organisations should consider fostering a learning culture and providing resources for employees to acquire and enhance AI-related skills, promoting a positive attitude towards technology adoption.

We found that job seekers prefer vacancies that address their personal identity over social identity. The role identity in the vacancy description seems to appeal to job seekers at the same level as the personal identity. On the one hand, this highlights the importance of personal values, aspirations, and self-perception in job seekers' preferences. Job seekers are more likely to be attracted to vacancies that resonate with their unique personal identity, emphasising the individual's sense of authenticity and alignment with their personal goals and values [34, 40, 49].

On the other hand, we see that there is no statistically significant difference between personal and role identity. Moreover the *Exp(B)* value are very close to 1, indicating that our participants were almost indifferent concerning personal and role identity, while refusing the social identity in a vacancy description. This means that the role description that fits the expected role identity is as important as the personal identity.

6.2. Exploratory findings

As the three investigated types of identity can be also approached via dimensions of activation, self-efficacy, and self-verification, we included these dimensions in our analysis without making predictions on their effect. However, when investigating the nature of work, we must include all theoretically necessary attributes. Indeed, the nature of work is rapidly changing, and our results suggest a growing emphasis on valuing personal individuality among job seekers. The exploratory details indicate that personal identity gains momentum, while social and role identities appear less significant on these dimensions of identity. For instance, this statement holds for the activation and self-efficacy dimension, i.e. job seekers like to use the opportunity to express their personal (over social and role) identity. However, we could observe only a partial preference for the self-verification dimension (similar to the hypothesised relationship between identity and vacancy selection, *Exp(B)* is close to 1). Put differently, job seekers are indifferent concerning the confirmation and validation of their identity. The weak significance, though, indicates a trend towards a preference for confirmation of personal over social identity ($p = .053$), whereas role identity lies far from the significance level. Finally, we have to mention the salary growth and the simplicity of the application. Both factors showed the highest level of significance, whereby each

per cent of salary growth increased the likelihood of vacancy selection by 1.17. To underscore the strength of the effect: a promised increase in salary by about 5 per cent will make the vacancy twice more attractive.

Moreover, we found that job seekers prefer vacancies that address their self-efficacy based on personal identity over social or role identity. This finding suggests that job seekers prioritise opportunities that enable them to utilise their unique strengths and skills, fostering a sense of confidence and competence in their abilities. Vacancies that provide a platform for individuals to pursue their personal goals and demonstrate their effectiveness are likely more appealing to job seekers [11, 27]. Employers in technological spheres should consider emphasising candidates' personal competencies over the tools and technologies they are assumed to work with.

We were not surprised by the fact that job seekers value vacancies created by an HR over those created with the help of ChatGPT. We assume that participants use this information to signal personal interest rather than a routinised hiring process often associated with biases [50]. This finding aligns with our theorising on the role of personal identity and finds reflection in HR-related literature [51].

7. Limitations and further research

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample used in this study was limited to participants from the UK, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings to other cultural and geographical contexts. Future research should aim to collect data from a more diverse range of participants across different countries to enhance the external validity of the results.

Secondly, the data collection method relied on an online platform, specifically Prolific, which may introduce certain biases. Future research could consider utilizing other data collection platforms such as Amazon Mechanical Turk or professional networking platforms like Xing or LinkedIn to address this limitation. By using different media, a more diverse pool of participants with varied backgrounds and experiences could be reached, contributing to a broader understanding of the topic. An additional argument to use an online panel is the ability to recruit tech-savvy individuals that is hard to administer in person.

Another limitation could be a potential influence of prior experience or familiarity with ChatGPT. Future studies should consider exploring the role of previous knowledge and expertise with LLM technologies in job seekers' identity formation and preferences. It would be valuable to specifically examine the perceptions and preferences of individuals who have extensive experience with ChatGPT or similar LLMs, as their perspectives may differ from those without prior exposure. Yet, while appearing critical, the topic of LLMs is in its infancy and may be vaguely understood to research at this time.

As the field of AI and its impact on work is still relatively new, the results of this study may be subject to change over time. Conducting longitudinal studies or follow-up investigations could track the evolving dynamics of job seekers' identity and their interactions with LLMs. It would be insightful to repeat the survey in six months or a year to assess whether the patterns observed in this study hold true or if any significant changes occur as technology and work contexts continue to evolve.

Finally, a willingness-to-trade approach was used to quantify preferences related to salary and time. While this method provides an approximate measure, perceptions of trade-offs may not fully reflect real-world decision-making processes [52]. Future research could explore alternative methodologies, such as conjoint analysis or experimental auctions, to more accurately assess the value individuals place on different attributes and trade-offs in job selection decisions.

Even though our study has several limitations, the causality that a DCE well addresses increases the value of our findings. We reliably elucidate what the future work landscape will look like. Combining our confirmed hypotheses and the exploratory findings, we can estimate the future of work, including the usage of LLMs: job seekers will value jobs that appeal to their intrinsic beliefs and values, stress their competencies, and allow them to reveal their role. However, individuality will most likely need LLMs to get rid of routine tasks.

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