

The Impact of AI-Driven Leadership Tools on Employee Performance and Development Outcomes

A Quantitative Research Proposal: Case Study of Travelodge UK

Module: BMSW7004 | Research Methods in Business

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Background and Rationale

- ▶ Travelodge operates 600+ UK hotels and is one of the UK's largest budget hospitality employers, making it an ideal real-world research site (Travelodge, 2024).
- ▶ AI tools are increasingly used by managers for performance analytics, personalised L&D pathways and automated coaching prompts (Charlwood and Guenole, 2022).
- ▶ The hospitality sector faces acute challenges: high staff turnover, inconsistent development and disengagement (Kim *et al.*, 2022; Baum *et al.*, 2023).
- ▶ Despite rapid AI adoption, frontline employees' experiences of AI-mediated development remain empirically under-investigated (Budhwar *et al.*, 2022).

Research Aim & Objectives

AIM: To examine, through a deductive quantitative approach, the effects of AI-assisted leadership practices on employee performance and professional development outcomes at Travelodge UK.

1. To measure employee perceptions of AI-assisted training and development tools used by line managers.
2. To assess the relationship between AI-mediated feedback and self-reported performance improvement.
3. To quantify levels of employee motivation and engagement in relation to AI-driven development practices.
4. To evaluate the perceived fairness and transparency of AI-based performance management.

Research Philosophy: The Research Onion

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2023)



Philosophy: Post-Positivism

Reality exists independently but is imperfectly measured. Suited to quantitative survey research where objectivity is sought but acknowledged as partial (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

Approach: Deductive

Theory-first: hypotheses derived from existing AI and HRM literature, then tested through data. Aligns with scientific, confirmatory research (Creswell and Creswell, 2023).

Strategy: Survey

Structured online questionnaire distributed to Travelodge employees. Enables broad reach, standardisation and statistical analysis (Veal, 2017).

Choice : Mono-method Quantitative

Single quantitative method chosen to maximise statistical rigour and sample size (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

Time Horizon: Cross-sectional

Data collected at one point in time (Cohen *et al.*, 2018).

Research Approach: Why Deductive?

DEDUCTIVE (This Study)

- ✓ Begins with theory and existing literature
- ✓ Hypotheses formed before data collection
- ✓ Tests whether observed data confirms theory
- ✓ Suited to quantitative, survey-based research
- ✓ Produces generalisable, replicable findings
- ✓ Appropriate for post-positivist philosophy

Applied here: Hypotheses drawn from AI/HRM theory (Charlwood and Guenole, 2022; Malik *et al.*, 2023) and tested via Travelodge employee survey.

INDUCTIVE (Not Used)

- ✗ Begins with observations/data
- ✗ Theory emerges from findings
- ✗ Suited to qualitative methods
- ✗ Produces contextual, not generalisable findings
- ✗ Less replicable across organisations

Excluded because: This study aims to test established theory across a measurable sample, not to generate new theory from individual experiences (Creswell and Creswell, 2023).

Methodology and Data Collection

Method	Online structured questionnaire distributed to Travelodge frontline staff and supervisors across 10+ properties.
Sample	Target number: 150 employees. Stratified random sampling by role (reception, housekeeping, supervisory) to ensure representativeness (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).
Instrument	Likert-scale, rating scale and multiple-choice items. Validated against established HRM and AI perception scales (Malik <i>et al.</i> , 2023; Tambe <i>et al.</i> , 2023).
Data Analysis	Excel or SPSS
Access	Survey distributed to Travelodge staff via email and internal staff communication channels.
Pilot Testing	Pilot survey of 15–20 participants to test clarity, reliability and item validity prior to full distribution (Creswell and Creswell, 2023).

Literature Review: Theoretical Framework

AI in HRM

AI adoption in HR is rapidly evolving from recruitment into L&D, performance monitoring and coaching (Charlwood and Guenole, 2022). Budhwar *et al.* (2022) identify a research gap in operational-level AI impact on frontline workers. Garg *et al.* (2022) confirm machine learning is reshaping performance analytics.

Performance Management

Aguinis (2023) frames effective PM as continuous, developmental and two-way. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) emphasise the relational quality of feedback. The key question is whether AI preserves or disrupts these qualities when deployed by line managers.

Employee Experience in Hospitality

Baum *et al.* (2023) and Kim *et al.* (2022) highlight hospitality's vulnerability to disengagement and high turnover. Pillai and Sivathanu (2022) confirm AI adoption in hospitality is accelerating. Malik *et al.* (2023) call for research on AI's effect on frontline workers' development experience.

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent

All participants will receive a full participant information sheet explaining the study purpose, data use and their rights before completing the survey (BERA, 2023).

Voluntary Participation

Completion of the survey is entirely voluntary. Participants may withdraw at any time without consequence or obligation to provide reasons.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

No personally identifiable data will be collected. All responses will be anonymised at the point of entry and stored in encrypted form (UK GDPR, 2021).

Institutional Approval

Ethical clearance will be obtained from the university ethics committee prior to any data collection (Cohen *et al.*, 2018).

Organisational Access

Travelodge management will be involved.

No Occupational Risk

Survey design will avoid questions that could compromise participants' employment position. (BERA, 2023).

Data Retention

Raw data will be retained for a maximum of five years in line with university policy, then securely deleted (UK GDPR, 2021).

Researcher Positionality

As a researcher with a connection to the hospitality sector, reflexivity will be maintained to avoid bias in instrument design and interpretation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2023).

Limitations of the Study

Limitation 1: Single Organisation

Restricting the study to Travelodge limits external generalisability. Findings may reflect Travelodge-specific management culture rather than the broader hospitality sector (Creswell and Creswell, 2023).

Limitation 2: Self-Report Bias

Quantitative survey responses are subject to social desirability bias; employees may not accurately report perceptions of their managers' use of AI (Saunders *et al.*, 2023).

Limitation 3: Cross-Sectional Design

A single snapshot in time cannot capture longitudinal changes in performance outcomes. Causal claims are therefore limited (Veal, 2017; Field, 2024).

Limitation 4: Access Constraints

Gaining organisational access to a large hospitality chain may be difficult. Unequal response rates across properties could introduce sampling bias.

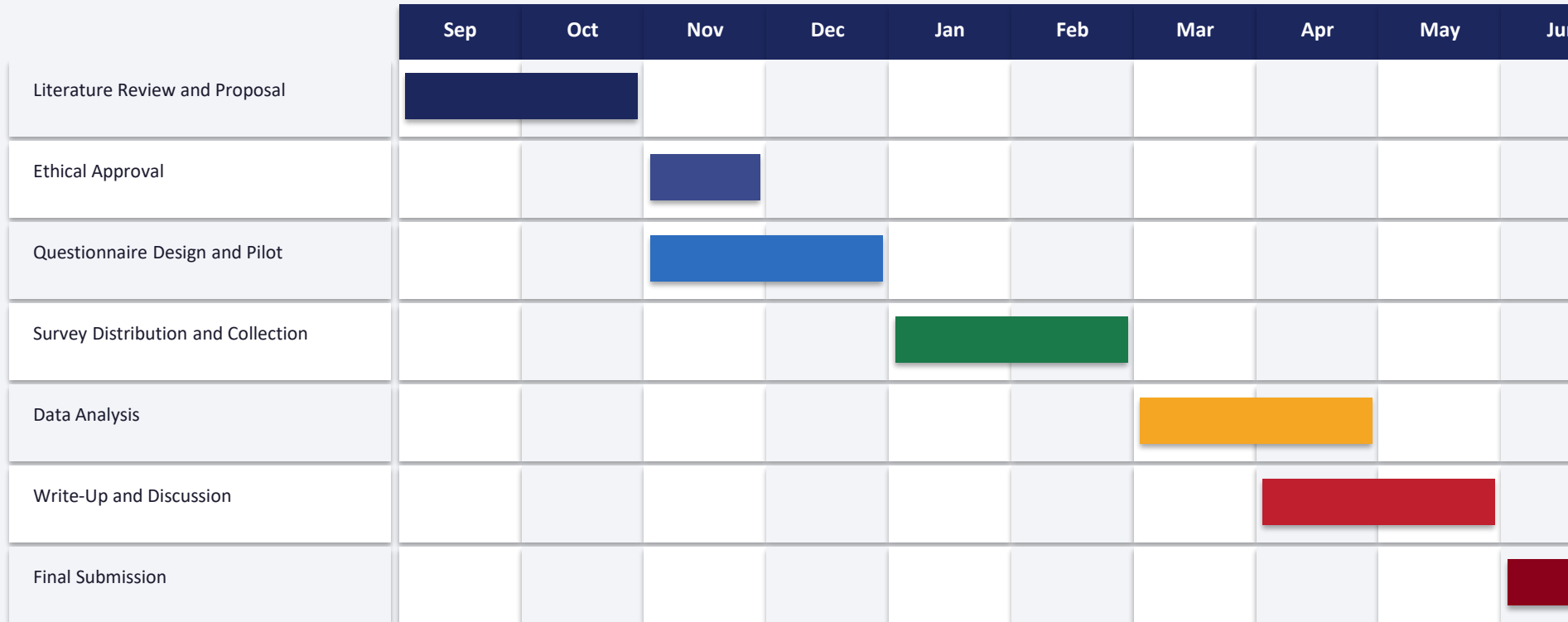
Limitation 5: AI Awareness Gap

Frontline staff may have limited awareness of when AI tools are being used to support their management, affecting the validity of their responses (Budhwar *et al.*, 2022).

Limitation 6: Researcher Positionality

The researcher's existing connection to the hospitality context may unconsciously influence questionnaire design or interpretation of results (Saunders *et al.*, 2023).

Research Timeline: Gantt Chart



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