

Exploring changes: The role of generative AI in transformations in the work of HR generalists

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1. Introduction

The shift to a digital economy is the biggest step forward in global economic development in recent decades, and with technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), there will be significant changes, including both industry and management (Kalenova, 2022; Levchenko & Levchenko, 2020; Sætra, 2023). A growing number of digital platforms, a rise in process automation, and the emergence of new business models centred around them are some of these changes (Levchenko & Levchenko, 2020). This also involves changes in management toward data-driven decision-making, workforce upskilling to accommodate digital tools, and the necessity for leaders to handle the ethical issues surrounding the use of AI (Kalenova, 2022; Budhwar et al., 2023).

The question is no longer whether AI will have an impact on society, because it will, the only question is how influential it will be (Sætra, 2023). As organizations navigate this digital transformation, technologies like AI impact various functions, including human resources (HR). So, AI is one of the technologies that changes the work of HR professionals. Practitioner surveys confirm that AI is already used within HR practices. A survey by Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) shows that the use of AI within HR operations has become more of a priority over the past 12 months and that more than 60% of participants are optimistic about the potential for the effective use of AI at their organization, and 56% is optimistic about the potential for AI to improve collaboration (Maurer, 2024). A Gartner survey also shows that the majority of the HR leaders surveyed have already looked into or used AI solutions to increase the productivity in their departments (Gartner, 2023). However, a small part of respondents are still worried that AI will result in job losses (Maurer, 2024).

AI is described as: “a system’s ability to interpret external data correctly, to learn from such data, and to use those learnings to achieve specific goals and tasks through flexible adaptation“ (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). It builds on developments in digitalization such as the Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) in which various HR documents and information could be stored, and the development of e-HRM and HR analytics which is used to facilitate HR activities and to make business decisions (Wiblen & Marler, 2021; Marler & Parry, 2015, p. 2; Gurusinghe et al., 2021).

These technological innovations caused changes in the work of HR professionals. For example, in the field of e-recruitment; with easy access to online recruitment websites and social media, it is possible to reach employees on a broader scale, and in addition, other strategies must be developed to recruit employees through these new platforms (Canedo et al., 2017). Furthermore, AI plays a significant role in recruitment, training, and employee engagement, streamlining time-consuming tasks like organizing interviews and resume

reviews (McDonald et al., 2017; Pillai and Sivathanu 2020; Kaushal et al., 2021). When using AI, the HR professional has more time available for other core HR activities such as supporting line management, addressing employee problems, and focusing on strategic HR activities (Budhwar et al., 2023).

Generative AI, which is a newer form of the original AI, is the most recent technological development that is thought to influence the work of HR professionals (Alzyoud, 2022). Generative AI can ensure improvements in employee performance, talent development, and employee retention while reducing employee turnover (Alzyoud, 2022). Furthermore, the adoption of generative AI can have a positive outcome in the domain of productivity, innovation, and decision-making and it may lead to cost reduction and operational efficiencies (Srivastav & Kaur, 2022; Malik et al., 2023). The development of generative AI constituted a completely new class of automation, whose capabilities coincided with those of the most inventive, intelligent, and well-paid individuals (Eloundou et al., 2023). So, systems based on this generative AI can generate content and responses that match what humans can do and therefore is seen as a distinctive phase of technological development (Budhwar et al., 2023; Shet & Pereira, 2021).

The main difference between regular AI, and generative AI is that the regular forms of AI were focused on repetitive tasks performed by lower-skilled occupations, for example deploying robots to pack products in a factory or deploying chatbots in customer service to guide on where to find information on the website or answer frequently asked questions (Budhwar et al., 2023; De Vries et al., 2020). In contrast, generative AI can create new content and mimic the human thought process, and therefore support the work of higher educated people in for example selecting candidates for a job based on criteria, creating artwork, writing job descriptions, explaining the purpose of a scientific paper, creating interview questions or come up with example questions about any subject asked (Budhwar et al., 2023; Silva & Costa, 2023; Meyer et al., 2023).

In addition, ChatGPT-4, a well-known application based on generative AI, made a move from the 39th to the 96th percentile of human performance and it is indicated to have a disruptive effect compared to regular technological developments (Frey & Osborne, 2023; Budhwar et al., 2023). The shift from control of knowledge from humans to machines is another argument for the fact that generative AI is distinctive from other innovations and has significant new implications for society and various fields of work, such as the HR field (Shet & Pereira, 2021).

Despite the positive aspects of using generative AI in the work of HR professionals, there are associated risks. These risks are related to inaccurate or misleading information, outdated information, bias and discrimination, privacy and data security, and legal and ethical concerns (Budhwar et al., 2023). In addition, systems based on generative AI, such as

ChatGPT, may overlook the context which may lead to a lack of contextual understanding and therefore may result in negative consequences for decision-making (Budhwar et al., 2023). Moreover, the fact that systems based on generative AI lack transparency raises concerns about fair decision-making (Tambe et al., 2019).

So, research has provided insights into the technological developments that have changed the work of HR professionals (Wiblen & Marler, 2021; Marler & Parry, 2015; Gurusinghe et al., 2021; Canedo et al., 2017; McDonald et al. 2017; Pillai and Sivathanu 2020). Generative AI has unique characteristics, can learn from big amounts of data and can generate content and responses that match what humans can do, making it distinct from other technological innovations (Budhwar et al., 2023; Shet & Pereira, 2020). Due to this distinctiveness, generative AI is expected to change the work of HR professionals differently than other technological innovations. The intelligent and adaptive nature allows generative AI to not only automate simple tasks, like sending automated emails but also to support complex tasks such as strategic decision-making and problem-solving (Budhwar et al., 2023; Shet & Pereira, 2021).

Generative AI systems are expected to mainly support the HR professional by providing suggestions, insights, and creative output that enhance decision-making and productivity (Srivastav & Kaur, 2022; Malik et al., 2023). This represents a new way of collaboration between humans and machines, where the generative AI system learns from the HR professionals' inputs and can offer suggestions, insights, and creative ideas, enhancing the HR professionals' capabilities rather than replacing their labour, such as with previous technological innovations.

That the focus is on collaboration rather than on automatization is unique, and this is possible because of the ability of generative AI systems to understand, generate, and interact with human language (Budhwar et al., 2023; Shet & Pereira, 2021). This makes it possible for HR professionals to collaborate with generative AI systems and use the valuable output to give better advice, write more valuable content, and make more informed decisions. Thus, with the deployment of generative AI, the work of HR generalists is expected to change as they need to learn to collaborate with these systems, which will result in more efficiency, quality, creativity, and productivity (Srivastav & Kaur, 2022; Malik et al., 2023). In addition, the focus is on learning, collaboration, and enhancing capabilities instead of just automating tasks.

Because generative AI has only been launched and become widely available so recently, insights into the changes in the work of HR professionals, with the deployment of generative AI are missing. Additional research in this area is crucial to explore these changes,

supporting companies in understanding the benefits and challenges of using generative AI, and fostering adaptability to emerging technologies for competitiveness (Kaushal et al., 2021).

The goal of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of what the exact changes are in the work of HR professionals when making use of generative AI, and how the HR professionals experience these changes. For this research, the HR professional that will be examined is the HR generalist. The HR generalist has a wide range of both operational and strategic tasks and is known for its wide variety of work, which includes all aspects of HR (Martin & Latham, 2010). This brings up the following research question: **What specific changes occur in the work of HR generalists with the deployment of generative AI, and how do the HR generalists experience these changes?**

To answer this research question the Work Design Theory is used. Parker and Grote (2020) explain how technology can affect Work Design according to the five categories of work characteristics (job autonomy and control, skill variety and use, job feedback and related work characteristics social and relational aspects of work and job demands). This theory is used to get a better understanding of what changes occur in the work of HR generalists, when deploying generative AI, and how the HR generalists experience these changes. It is important to study this because the changes in the work of the HR generalists will also have consequences for the motivation and performance of the HR generalists. From previous research we know that technological innovations may have positive but also negative consequences for employees (Parker & Grote, 2020). Understanding and addressing these outcomes is crucial in order to minimize the negative effects for HR generalists and optimizing the effectiveness of AI integration. For example, if the use of generative AI leads to increased task demands and more stress for HR generalists, interventions may be needed to rebalance and reduce pressure.

Because generative AI is a very new concept, there is still a gap in the literature. It is only recently that generative AI technologies, like ChatGPT, have advanced to the point where they are useful in professional contexts, like in the HR field. The rapid advancement of technology frequently surpasses the capacity of scientific research, resulting in a delay in thorough investigations. Because generative AI is such a new concept there have only been some initial studies on generative AI and the potential for deploying generative AI within HR. Since these insights are only the initial insights, there is still some research missing on the deployment of generative AI within the HR field.

This research contributes to literature on technological innovations within the HR field, specified on the use of generative AI, as described by Budhwar et al. (2023) and Silva and Costa (2023), by providing information on the use of generative AI for various HR activities. In addition, by focusing on the changes that occur in the work of HR generalists, this research

extends the work of Budhwar et al. (2023), Tambe et al. (2019), and Kasneci et al. (2023) by including a balanced viewpoint on the positive and negative changes that occur in the work of HR generalist with the deployment of generative AI. Moreover, this research contributes to the literature on HR and Work Design because it explains the changes in the work of HR generalists by using the Work Design Theory (Parker & Grote, 2020). This research addresses an extension of Work Design Theory concerning generative AI, since Work Design Theory provides a framework for understanding how technologies can reshape work and work environments, and this has not been applied to generative AI specifically before. So, Work Design Theory is extended in the area of HR and generative AI, by providing new insights on how Work Design related to the HR generalist will change by the use of generative AI. Because Work Design has not previously been applied to the work of HR and generative AI, this is a new angle to highlight the Work Design Theory. Finally, this research contributes to existing studies of Budhwar et al. (2023) and Shet and Pereira (2021) on the distinctiveness of generative AI in comparison to other technological innovations by examining how distinctive generative AI really is.

This research contributes to practice by providing insights on the various HR practices for which generative AI can be used most effectively. In addition, this research contributes to practise by examining what changes occur in the work of HR professionals by using generative AI. These insights are valuable to HR professionals and organizations by showing the benefits of using generative AI in the work of HR professionals and the challenges that are involved. The insights regarding the changes on the components of Work design are valuable for practitioners because the components of Work Design needs to be well designed for maximizing employee satisfaction, performance, and well-being. Moreover, as generative AI technologies become more prevalent in the workplace, understanding their impact on HR roles and responsibilities becomes crucial for professional development. Research findings can inform training programs and educational initiatives, helping HR professionals acquire the skills and knowledge needed to effectively navigate the evolving technological landscape. Finally, by examining how HR generalists experience the deployment of generative AI and as a result the changes in their work, this research is valuable for organizations because they can use these insights to optimize the experiences of their employees.

In the following section, there is a more depth explanation of what generative AI is, what HR generalists are and what work they do, how generative AI might be used within the HR field, what Work Design Theory is, and how this theory is used within this research. In addition, the research model is shown and explained. The next section elaborates on the research method, including the research design, data collection and sample and data analysis.

In the results section the results of the interviews are elaborated and there is an visualisation of the results. The final parts of this report include the discussion and the conclusion.

2. Theoretical background

In this theory section, first there is an explanation of what generative AI is. After that, there is an explanation of what an HR generalist is and what work HR generalists perform. Next, there is an elaboration on how generative AI might be used within the HR field. Additionally, Work Design Theory is elaborated because it is used to identify the changes in the work of HR generalists and how the HR generalists experience these changes. Finally, the research model is elaborated.

2.1 Generative AI

Generative AI is a new technological innovation, which is a newer form of the original AI. Systems based on generative AI, such as ChatGPT, have become incredibly popular due to their capacity to produce engrossing, human-like responses to nearly any question asked (Budhwar et al., 2023). Generative AI refers to the integration of machine learning models to produce new human-like content, based on sizable datasets for model training (Budhwar et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2023). Machine learning is a technique that helps systems to learn without being explicitly programmed (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). Although the earlier forms of AI usually depend on preset responses, generative AI can produce new responses in addition to its explicit programming (Lim et al., 2023).

The technology behind generative AI systems is large language models (LLMs). LLMs are trained on huge numbers of text data derived from articles, books and other internet-based content and can generate human-like data as in, for example, answering questions or writing text for various purposes (Kasneci et al., 2023; Thirunavukarasu et al., 2023). The usage of transformer architectures and the underlying attention mechanism is an important development in the field that has significantly enhanced language models' capacity to manage long-range dependencies in natural-language texts (Kasneci et al., 2023). So, transformer architectures are models that use self-attention mechanisms to effectively handle long-range dependencies in sequential data, particularly excelling in natural language processing tasks. The transformer architecture uses these self-attention mechanisms to determine how relevant different pieces of input are. This allows the model to gain a deeper understanding of the connections between words in a phrase, regardless of where they are located. The use of pre-training, in which a language model is trained on a sizable dataset initially before being refined on a particular task, is another significant advancement (Kasneci et al., 2023). This method is successful in improving performance on a variety of language-related tasks (Kasneci et al., 2023). After many years of development, LLMs are now able to recognize, interpret and generate text with little to no additional fine-tuning (Thirunavukarasu et al., 2023). LLMs can help develop skills such as report writing, problem-solving, document development and

decision-making, so the use of generative AI can be beneficial in many domains (Kasneci et al., 2023).

2.2 HR generalists and the work they perform

One of the domains where the deployment of generative AI may be useful is the HR domain. There are several different types of HR professionals working in the HR domain, such as HR managers, HR advisors, HR generalists, recruiters, Chief Human Resources Officers (CHRO) and reintegration experts. These are all specialists in the field of HR and perform various administrative tasks but also focus on important personnel oriented tasks within an organization such as hiring, firing, managing and training (Cowan, 2012; Kryscynski et al., 2017). Technological innovations can cause changes in the different tasks of the various HR professionals. For this research the focus is on the HR generalist. The HR generalist has a wide range of both operational and strategic tasks such as designing business processes and modifying organizational structures as well as organizing training and educational opportunities and performance management (Martin & Latham, 2010). HR generalists have responsibilities across the whole HR domain and the function of HR generalist is often the first/only position within a company, depending on staff size (Burnett, 2023).

These responsibilities include providing HR support to the organization by being the first contact for all personal-related matters and by having a deep understanding of organizational policies, procedures, and HR practices, as well as proficiency in diverse HR skills (Burnett, 2023; Martin & Latham, 2010). In Addition, HR generalists act as the conduit between the HR department and the rest of the company to help improve operations. The HR generalist may also be involved in all facets of corporate HR, from strategy and higher-level planning to day-to-day HR operations, depending on the nature and size of the organization (Burnett, 2023). These different responsibilities involve different tasks, some of the varied tasks of an HR generalist include talent acquisition and management, performance management, employee training, contract management, and HR technology (Burnett, 2023; Deweer, 2020). It can be concluded that the work of an HR generalist is very diverse and that an HR generalist works closely with the business and is involved in all HR aspects from beginning to end (Harris, 2000). An HR generalist has the authority to be involved in important decisions about who gets hired, how much employees get paid, and who gets fired (Martin & Latham, 2010).

2.3 The use of generative AI in the HR domain

The deployment of generative AI can be useful for HR generalists. Prior studies show that generative AI can be used in the HR domain for creating policy documents, hiring and selection, onboarding procedures, developing training programs, background checks on candidates and applications, and creating job descriptions (Budhwar et al., 2023; Silva & Costa, 2023). Additionally, ChatGPT can streamline HR procedures, such as improved cost-effective solutions, simpler HR data administration and analytics, greater employee satisfaction based on survey responses, and easier hiring and onboarding (Budhwar et al., 2023). Therefore, through more effective processing and decision-making in a variety of HR practices, the HR function can leverage generative AI to enhance its procedures and results as well as contribute to organizational effectiveness.

Although generative AI has many benefits for HR generalists, there are also risks involved. First, the risk in terms of context. Systems based on generative AI can overlook the context which may cause a lack of contextual understanding and, may result in negative consequences for decision-making (Budhwar et al., 2023). In addition, there is a risk of discrimination in certain activities such as candidate selection. When systems based on generative AI are used to select candidates, it can discriminate when the system is trained on a biased dataset (Budhwar et al., 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023). Moreover, because AI-based systems cannot be transparent about how certain decisions and choices are made, the lack of transparency raises questions about fair decision-making (Tambe et al., 2019). Lastly, there are risks related to privacy and data protection. The HR department has information about the employees which, when working with generative AI-based systems, is shared with these systems and could potentially be disclosed to unauthorized parties, leading to data breaches or privacy violations (Budhwar et al., 2023).

So, the work of HR generalists may change due to the deployment of generative AI, and to gain insight into these changes and the work experiences of HR generalists due to these changes, Work Design Theory is used. Work Design refers to “the content and organization of one's work tasks, activities, relationships, and responsibilities“ (Parker, 2014, p. 662). Work Design Theory is applied because there is a need to better understand the work experiences of the HR generalists when deploying generative AI in their work. As generative AI technologies become integrated into HR workflows, HR generalists should expect changes in terms of their responsibilities, tasks, and work procedures. Understanding the work experiences of HR generalists is crucial for successfully navigating these changes and guaranteeing the successful integration of generative AI into HR practices.

In their paper, Parker and Grote (2020) explain how (the use of) technology can affect Work Design, according to five broad categories of work characteristics. Work Design can help identify the changes and is appropriate for this research because it provides a comprehensive framework and encompasses various dimensions that are relevant to identify the changes that occur in the work of the HR generalists and the consequences of these changes for the HR generalists. By using Work Design Theory to identify this, Work Design is highlighted from a new angle.

2.4 Work Design explained

Work is changing as a result of technological advancements like AI (Parker & Grote, 2020). Research shows that certain tasks will be automated, but not entire jobs, which means that people and self-learning technology, such as generative AI, will interact intensely (Frey & Osborne, 2017; Parker & Grote, 2020). Smart Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, and Algorithms are transforming how workers collaborate by for example interacting with technological systems more, where they work in for example cafes or at home, the information workers have access to and people's work designs (Parker & Grote, 2020). Parker and Grote (2022) also describe that digital transformation and automatization have been accelerated by the COVID pandemic and therefore the importance of looking at how to achieve high-quality work in a technology-changing environment has grown.

Parker and Grote (2020) explain how technology can affect Work Design, both positively and negatively, according to five broad categories of work characteristics. Work Design is an appropriate approach for this research because it examines various components of work that are important for effective job design. This research focuses on identifying changes that occur in the work of HR generalists, by deploying generative AI. By looking at the Work Design of HR generalists, it examines all the essential components of their work to identify changes, resulting from the use of generative AI technologies. So, these components help to identify specific changes in the work of HR generalists. Additionally, this research aims to understand how HR generalists experience these changes in their work. The Work Design approach provides a framework to explore how changes in work affect work experiences and well-being. After all, the various components of Work Design must be well designed to optimise employee satisfaction, performance and well-being.

The Work Design Theory from Parker and Grote (2020) is particularly appropriate for investigating the impact of generative AI on the work of HR generalists because their theory explicitly addresses the role of technology in shaping Work Design. Parker and Grote (2020) examine how new technologies, including algorithms and other smart technologies such as AI, reshape work processes, roles, and the broader organizational context. This is directly

applicable to understanding how HR generalists' Work Design change with the deployment of generative AI. This is exceptional compared to other articles that do focus on Work Design but not on the changes in Work Design by deploying new technologies. For instance, whereas the foundational work on the Job characteristics Model by Hackman and Oldham (1976) provides insightful information on how job characteristics influence employee motivation and satisfaction, it does not specifically examine the influence of technologies. Similarly, Morgeson and Humphrey's (2006) Work Design Questionnaire offers a thorough instrument for evaluating work characteristics in a variety of professions. Although it provides a wide assessment of work characteristics, it does not provide an examination of how changes brought about by technology impact these characteristics. Another interesting paradigm for researching Work Design is the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). While it can be applied to various contexts, it does not specifically emphasize the role of technology in Work Design, which is so important for this research. Finally, the research by Wang et al. (2020) focuses on how the use of information and communication technology (ICT) influences individuals' work design. They adopt a work design perspective, considering how ICT alters job design and work characteristics, whereas Parker and Grote specifically focus on new, smart technologies, where generative AI fits better.

The five work characteristic categories, which draw from a variety of theories, including the widely used Job Characteristics Model that emphasizes the motivational elements of work, encapsulate the essential elements of Work Design (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The theory of Parker and Grote (2020) is used to elaborate on what changes occur in the work of HR generalists while deploying generative AI. The first four categories are job autonomy and control, skill variety and use, job feedback and related work characteristics, and social and relational aspects of work (Parker & Grote, 2020). All four of those categories are job resources which means that these are aspects of work that support the accomplishment of goals connected to the job, enable one to meet demands, or foster learning and development. The fifth category is about the effect of technology on job demands (Parker & Grote, 2020). Below, each category is discussed.

Job autonomy and control

First, there is the effect of technology on job autonomy and control. This category can be divided into two types. The first type consists of making decisions about the work process itself. This includes having control over general decisions, having the freedom to decide when to complete tasks and having the freedom to select your working methods (Parker & Grote, 2020). Flexible working belongs to the second category of autonomy, which is about having control over your own time schedule and place of employment (Parker & Grote, 2020).

Not much is yet known about generative AI related to the first subcategory of autonomy and control. However, Parker and Grote (2022) do point out that algorithmic management such as leaving performance reviews to algorithms or selecting candidates causes employees to lose control. Because the algorithm has the power to make certain choices or select certain candidates, the employee loses a bit of control here. HR generalists are also tasked with selecting candidates and managing performance (Cowan, 2012). When systems based on generative AI are used to support the selection of candidates or to support in performance management, it will affect the autonomy and control of the HR generalist. On average, when technologies perform management functions as performance management, the work tends to be intensified and job autonomy is reduced (Parker & Grote, 2022). Nevertheless, research also shows that when systems based on generative AI can make decisions, the HR generalist saves time to focus on other, more complex tasks which could be perceived as positive and more autonomy of the work (Budhwar et al., 2023).

Moreover, the second subcategory of job autonomy and control focuses on autonomy and control related to when and where to work. Generative AI is not expected to directly change autonomy and control over where and when HR generalists work because working from home was made possible much earlier (Parker & Grote, 2022).

Skill variety and use

A good job involves doing varied tasks and using the qualities and skills of employees (Parker & Grote, 2020). This includes task variety, skill variety, job complexity, job challenge, task identity (completing a group of tasks that constitute a whole), task significance (completing work that feels meaningful), and problem-solving demands (Parker & Grote, 2020). Parker and Grote (2020) describe this as skill variety and use.

When technology replaces repetitive or unpleasant tasks, it can have a positive impact on skill variety and use (Parker & Grote, 2020). Stated is that the work of lower-skilled people will be supported or taken over by technologies whereas the higher-skilled occupations cannot yet be supported (Parker & Grote, 2020). There is not much known about what exactly changes in the work of HR generalists when it comes to skill variety and use. However, some first research has shown that, unlike previous technological developments, generative AI can not only contribute to the work of lower-skilled people but also support the work of higher-educated people (Budhwar et al., 2023). Generative AI has unique characteristics, can learn from big amounts of data and can generate content and responses that match what humans can do, making it distinct from other technological innovations (Budhwar et al., 2023; Shet & Pereira, 2020). This means that generative AI can support the administrative tasks of the HR generalists and also other tasks such as selecting candidates, giving feedback, or developing training programs (Budhwar et al., 2023).

Job feedback and related work characteristics

Technology can facilitate job feedback which can increase learning and mastery (Parker & Grote, 2020). Because of technology, big amounts of data can be distributed at once which can for example be information for employees which can make the employees more knowledgeable for making decisions and understanding their tasks (Parker & Grote, 2020). There is not much knowledge yet about generative AI related to this part of Work Design. What did emerge in previous research is that employees are more receptive to and trusting of computer-generated feedback than that from managers, partly because they receive feedback from a system more objective than from a manager (Canedo et al., 2017). This will also be the case for feedback generated by systems based on generative AI. In contrast, technological changes can also reduce feedback or make feedback more difficult to perceive (Parker & Grote, 2020). The lack of transparency in generative AI systems makes it difficult for employees to understand why AI systems make certain choices which can result in rejection of the perceived feedback (Tambe et al., 2019).

Social and relational aspects of work

According to Parker and Grote (2020), the Work Design Theory emphasizes the significance of relational work qualities such as social contact, social support, interdependence, and communication with beneficiaries. Depending on the circumstances, technology can have different effects on the interpersonal and social components of work.

For example, communication through technology has fewer limitations which means it can foster social connections. However, when almost all contact is mediated through online platforms there is only little opportunity for interaction with colleagues or supervisors (Parker & Grote, 2020). There is not much knowledge about the changes that occur in this category of Work Design by using generative AI. What can be said is that when generative AI systems support HR generalists in activities such as performance management, conducting training programs, or selecting candidates, the HR professionals have more time for the social aspect (Canedo et al., 2017). So, for interaction with employees from other departments, colleagues, or supervisors.

Job demands

Job demand is about the various demands associated with a job and any changes in these demands due to the deployment of technology (Parker & Grote, 2020). This can include cognitive demands, physical demands, performance monitoring demands, and workloads. Most of the effects of generative AI on job demands for HR generalists have already been mentioned in the previous paragraphs. Cognitive demands can change as a result of new technologies. Parker & Grote (2020) state that "Sometimes automation results in more

stimulating work (when low-skill components of jobs get automated) and sometimes it results in less stimulating work (when workers become stop gaps for tasks that are difficult to automate)“. Moreover, technological systems that save time often result in increased workloads due to unworkable processes and constant problems having to be solved as a consequence of poor system design (Parker & Grote, 2020). In addition, HR generalists need to adjust to working alongside these new AI systems, requiring them to acquire new skills and knowledge to effectively collaborate with these technologies (Fenwick et al., 2024).

Since these are only initial insights on how the deployment of generative AI can bring about changes in the work of HR generalists, related to the 5 categories of work design, they are not yet conclusive. Because of this reason, this research is focussed on what changes occur in the work of HR generalists, when making use of generative AI, and how the HR generalists experience these changes, focusing on the different components of Work Design.

2.5 Initial research model

Figure 2.1 shows the initial research model that guides the empirical exploration. The model shows that research is conducted on the use of generative AI within the work of HR generalist. The research explores what changes occur in the work of HR generalists and how HR generalists experience these changes, as a result of using generative AI. The framework of Work Design is used to guide the analysis. The framework of Work Design focuses on designing different components (autonomy and control of work, skill use and variety, job feedback and related work characteristics, social and relational aspects of work and job demands) within jobs to maximize employee satisfaction, performance, and well-being (Parker & Grote, 2020). It is explored what changes occur in the work of the HR generalist and how these may affect the different components of Work Design and as a result the experiences of the HR generalists. For example, it is explored what changes occur in the work of the HR generalists with the deployment of generative AI in selecting candidates and how, for instance autonomy and control play a role in this, which are together with the other components of Work Design important to be well designed for maximizing employee satisfaction, performance, and well-being.

These changes result in certain outcomes, however, this will not be further explored in this study. The outcomes could be work outcomes for the HR generalists such as job satisfaction, motivation, and stress. For example, more autonomy may increase job satisfaction while higher work demands by integrating generative AI may lead to more stress. It could also be outcomes related to the HR process. By automating tasks and improving decision-making through data-driven insights, generative AI has the potential to increase the efficacy, efficiency, and accuracy of HR processes (Srivastav & Kaur, 2022; Malik et al., 2023).

However, it is important to consider any potential trade-offs, such as the requirement for human oversight to guarantee moral and objective decision-making and the effect of for example, data-driven decision-making on employees' attitudes regarding the HR process and therefore also consequences for the work outcomes of the employees within the organization.

Figure 2.1
Research model



3. Methodology

In this part, the methodology is explained. First of all, the research design is described. After that, there is an explanation of the data collection and the sample. Finally, the analysis of the collected data is elaborated.

3.1 Research design

The data collection method chosen is a qualitative data collection method. Qualitative methods are used to investigate the experiences, behaviours and interests of specific participants (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Because participants' experiences and interests are central and because the intention is to gain in-depth insights into these, conducting interviews is often an appropriate research method (Hammarberg et al., 2016). By conducting interviews, focused questions can be asked to the specific target group and an in-depth understanding of the research topic can be created. Because conducting interviews is time-consuming, the sample size is often relatively small, unlike in quantitative research (Hammarberg et al., 2016). However, because specific questions can be asked, in-depth information is gathered about the experiences and interests of the participants.

The research method that is applied for this study is expert interviews. This research method involves obtaining information from individuals who are experts in a particular field and can provide exclusive insights about this field (Meuser & Nagel, 2009). The experts themselves are part of the field being researched and therefore have specific knowledge and privileged access to information (Meuser & Nagel, 2009). In the case of this research, expert interviews is the appropriate research method because research is being done on changes and experiences in a specific field and because information is gathered by interviewing HR generalists, who are experts in the HR field. Because of their experiences in the HR field, they have exclusive information that can be used as input to answer the research question.

3.2 Data collection and sample

For this study, interviews are conducted because information is collected about the specific experiences and interests of the HR generalist. To obtain in-depth information about the experiences and interests of a specific target group, qualitative research in the form of interviews is the most appropriate (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Semi-structured interviews are conducted, which involve preparing the interview questions in advance, but also having the opportunity to ask questions during the interview in response to what the respondent says (Kallio et al., 2016). Semi-structured interviews are appropriate when the researcher's goal is to better understand the participant's unique perspective (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). In the case of this research, the goal is to get insight into the unique perspective of the HR

generalist, which is why semi-structured interviews are appropriate. A key advantage of semi-structured interviews is that there is focus because of the pre-established interview guide, but the researcher also has the autonomy to respond to ideas that arise during the interview (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

Information is collected from various HR generalists in different sectors to get a broad perspective of what changes occur in the work of HR generalists when making use of generative AI. By gathering information from different types of organizations, the findings of this research are more broadly applicable. In addition, different HR generalists at different organizations will also have different perspectives on the use of generative AI within HR work.

When selecting candidates, various organizations, both large and smaller scaled, and within different sectors are approached to ensure different backgrounds. First of all, some organizations were approached because there are connections due to internships or other assignments completed. They were approached by email. Furthermore, some other organizations were also contacted by e-mail via the personal network. In addition to that, a LinkedIn message was posted to get in touch with other possible respondents willing to cooperate in this research. Snowball sampling was also used by asking the contacted respondents if they knew any potential candidates who would like to participate in this research. In this way, more possible participants for the research were gathered.

The sampling method is a non-probability sampling method indicating that each subject in the population may not have an equal chance of being selected, as a result of the non-systematic process used in selecting the sample (Elfil & Negida, 2017). The respondents are selected by the choice of the researcher by assuming specific characteristics. Several inclusion criteria were created to select the candidates. First, the respondent must hold a position as an HR generalist, as described in the theoretical section. In addition, the respondent must be aware of the existence of generative AI systems, to be able to answer questions about it. Exclusion criteria were also established. First of all, candidates working in sectors from which there are already three other respondents cooperating in this research are excluded to ensure broadly applicable results. Moreover, to preserve the objectivity and impartiality of the data, individuals who have possible conflicts of interest, such as direct involvement in the development or selling of generative AI technologies, are excluded. Potential candidates were approached until 15 respondents want to participate in the study. Initially, 15 respondents were selected because it was expected that after conducting 15 interviews data saturation was reached, which means that enough data has been collected to answer the research questions and further data will not produce any value-added insights. However, while contacting possible respondents, several respondents were interested in participating in the study, eventually resulting in a total of 17 respondents. An overview of the

respondents including the sectors in which the respondents are employed can be found in Appendix I.

In preparing the interview questions, the categories of Work Design were used. First of all, an operationalization table was created to identify the different concepts from the theoretical contribution so that they could be appropriately included in the interview guide. The operationalization table can be found in Appendix II. The interviews consist of three different parts. The first questions are asked to learn more about the respondent's background. By asking these questions, a clear overview of the work of the respondent was provided, which is an input for later in the interview. The next section is about generative AI, here questions were asked about what the respondent already knows about generative AI. The respondent's answers were supplemented so that the respondents have a clear picture of what generative AI is before answering the rest of the questions. The next part of the interview is about the use of generative AI within HR work. In this section, questions were asked about how generative AI is used within the organization and the work of the HR professional. This involves identifying what exactly changes when performing the work compared to how the work was performed without the use of generative AI, and how respondents perceive this. The questions in this section also helped to identify what changes occur in terms of the five concepts of Work Design. By asking these different questions a complete overview was created on what changes occur in the work of HR generalists when making use of generative AI, and on the experiences of the HR generalists.

Because the interviews were conducted with Dutch HR generalists the interviews were conducted in Dutch. The original interview guide can be found in Appendix III and the English translated interview guide can be found in Appendix IV.

3.3 Data analysis

To be able to analyse the data, the interviews are recorded, obviously after permission is obtained from the respondents. To analyse the data, template analysis is done. Template analysis is an in-depth analysis method in which there is greater depth of coding than with other methods (King & Brooks, 2017). Interviews are the most common data source analysed through template analysis because it is such an in-depth analysis method (King & Brooks, 2017).

The first step of template analysis is to become familiar with the data (King & Brooks, 2017). For this research, the recorded interviews were first verbatim transcribed by using the dedicated transcription software Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams can convert a recorded

conversation to the exact spoken text. After the interviews were transcribed by the software the interviews were re-listened and the transcripts were checked for any errors. This ensures that the transcripts match what the respondents said during the interviews. In addition, this re-listening ensures that the researcher becomes more familiar with the data (King & Brooks, 2017). The next step involves preliminary coding in which all data relevant to answering the research question is noted (King & Brooks, 2017). In this stage of the coding process a priori codes have been taken into consideration, these a priori codes consist of the categories from Work Design Theory; Autonomy and control, Skill use and variety, Job feedback and related work characteristics, Social and relational aspects and Job demands. However, these a priori codes do not necessarily have to be preliminary codes, the a priori codes ended up as top-level themes. In addition, there was a possibility for other codes that arose from the collected data. Preliminary coding is done with a part of the complete data set, so five transcripts were used for preliminary coding. The software that is used for the coding process is ATLAS.ti.

The third step is clustering, in which the first-order themes are clustered into meaningful groups, called sub-themes (King & Brooks, 2017). Here, broader themes can consist of different levels. The next step was to create the initial coding template. This is a linear overview that represents the different themes within each cluster (King & Brooks, 2017). The initial coding template can be found in Appendix V. After creating the initial coding template, the next step was to go back to the remaining data and apply the created template to the remaining transcripts. This involved systematically going through the data and marking relevant pieces of text with codes from the initial coding template (King & Brooks, 2017). During this process adjustments, such as adding new codes to make it applicable to the new data, were made to the coding template. Whereas the coding process began with five a priori codes, there was a stage when 105 codes were formulated and this was eventually reduced to 52 codes. The final coding template can be found in Appendix VI. There is also a visualization of the various codes formulated. This visualization can be found in appendix VII.

The template analysis can usually be neither on the strongly deductive nor the strongly inductive side and is therefore often seen as an approach in the middle of this continuum (King & Brooks, 2017). This is also the case within this research. It is deductive because it uses a template of a priori themes based on Work Design Theory. However, on the other hand, inductive reasoning is also utilized because it does stand up for other insights and themes arising from the collected data.

After coding the data, the data was further analysed. To get more insight into the different findings for each respondent, an analysis was done across respondents. The results of this analysis can be found in appendix VIII. First, an overview of the use of generative AI for each respondent was made. In this overview, a distinction was made in terms of degree of

use of generative AI, age and sector, in order to better substantiate the different findings. Next, an overview was made on the changes in the components of Work Design for each respondent. This overview was used together with the previous overview to better explain certain positive or negative changes in Work Design, as the findings from the interviews varied a lot. The following overview made, is an overview of the explanations for why certain changes in Work Design are positive or negative. The last overview created for the analysis of the respondents concerns an overview of the changes, challenges and experiences. The overviews were created as support for discovering patterns in the findings, as they initially appeared to be very varied.

4. Results

In this section, the results of the qualitative research are elaborated. The results are discussed for each topic covered in the interviews, and relevant to answering the research question. In addition, a visualization of the results is included.

4.1 Description of the results

The description of the results starts with the use of generative AI for HR-specific tasks, then continues with the changes regarding the different components of work design, then the negative outcomes, the positive outcomes, the challenges that arise with the deployment of generative AI, and the experiences related to the use of generative AI, differentiated by generation.

4.1.1 The use of generative AI for HR-specific tasks

First of all, the use of generative AI for HR-specific tasks is discussed. HR generalists already use generative AI for some HR-specific tasks they perform. Appendix VIII includes an overview of the use of generative AI specified for each respondent. This overview shows that HR generalists use generative AI to various degrees. What is most striking is that except for one HR generalist, all HR generalists use generative AI during their work. There is one HR generalist who does not use generative AI at all. It is mentioned that nobody in that HR department uses generative AI because the work in the HR department is performed satisfactorily without the use of generative AI. However, it was mentioned that the goal is to discover more about the use of generative AI in the near future. What is also remarkable is that generative AI is especially used to a high degree in the consultancy sector, and more limited in the care sector. In addition, the HR generalists who make relatively little use of generative AI are mostly at the age of 35+. This is the age limit because a clear pattern can be seen in the use of generative AI for the 35+ age group. The results show that in this group, the use of generative AI is relatively low. Furthermore, one of the HR generalists who makes little use of generative AI is 36 years old, since this HR generalist belongs to the low user group, the age limit has been drawn at 35.

Generative AI is used for writing and administrative work. HR generalists use generative AI systems such as ChatGPT or Assembly for writing text, including creating emails, writing policy documents, writing intranet messages, creating presentations, writing messages for LinkedIn, and advising clients. In addition, ChatGPT is used for translating complicated material to the employee. The HR generalists find this very useful because certain HR material is quite complicated. ChatGPT can be used in these cases to translate

complicated material into a more understandable text for the employee. One of the HR generalists stated the following about this.

“And look I am in the middle of that matter but for employees, some HR things are quite complicated and then I use ChatGPT to make it easier and more understandable. Because HR laws and regulations are just complicated“. - 4

The generative AI-based system Copilot is also used by HR generalists for making presentations and writing Word documents. This application can be opened by the HR generalists along with the required application such as PowerPoint. In that way, Copilot is a kind of assistant on the side of the screen that provides suggestions for creating a PowerPoint presentation.

“Well copilot how we use it, you open PowerPoint and there's just a button with Copilot and if you click on it then you just see a bar on the right of your screen and then a chat conversation starts there and it comes up with suggestions, for example do you want me to make a PowerPoint about this topic specifically“. - 12

As for the use of generative AI for administrative work, ChatGPT and Clever are used by the HR generalists. In ChatGPT, GPTs are created with company-specific information in which employees can ask questions about for instance vacation days. In addition, ChatGPT is also used as a calculator for calculating complex things about absenteeism for example. Clever is used by one of the HR generalists in the same way as ChatGPT, as a system filled with company-specific information in which employees can ask questions. The advantage of this is that the HR generalist saves 1,5 days a week, which can now be used for other, more impactful tasks because the HR generalist does not have to answer that kind of questions anymore.

“We applied Clever completely to our organization, so basically all administrative questions like how many vacation days do I have left, what about my pay check etc. So that all goes into Clever and now it doesn't come to me and that does really save me 1.5 days a week.“ -1

Generative AI is also being used by HR generalists for recruitment and selection. Generative AI is used for writing job listings, creating job profiles and selecting candidates. For example, there is the browser ARC where you can type someone's name, and then all the on internet available information about that person appears. The application Homerun is also

used for the selection of candidates. Homerun is an HR recruitment system in which resumes come in. The system can select the right candidates based on predetermined criteria and forward them to the assessment of the HR generalist. The system can also reject candidates based on criteria, in that case, candidates receive a rejection mail without any action by the HR generalist.

“That’s just our recruitment system, but it picks candidates out by match, so I don’t have to go through every CV. Some are also just automatically rejected immediately, for example from abroad.” - 1

Another system used is the HR system SAP. One of the HR generalists mentioned that generative AI is already incorporated into SAP which as a result can support in writing job listings. When HR generalists are in the recruitment module the system gives suggestions on how to improve the job listing.

“So for example, I have seen that when you are in the recruitment module and you write a job listing you get all kinds of suggestions, like if you add this then the job listing will be better. So, that’s super easy for making job listings.” - 12

Finally, generative AI is used by HR generalists to obtain input. It is often mentioned that generative AI systems such as ChatGPT are seen as sparring partners. This means that HR generalists use ChatGPT to ask for possible ideas, to present possible ideas, or to ask for a different perspective. The latter is especially perceived as positive by HR generalists who do not have direct HR generalist colleagues. Since they do not have the opportunity to present things to a colleague, they use ChatGPT to be able to present these matters anyway.

“And since I am the only HR generalist, I don’t have sparring partners internally here, so I use ChatGPT as a resource to get me started.” - 4

In addition to all the above mentioned, ChatGPT is used to prepare for meetings by requesting information on certain topics. By asking ChatGPT for text and explanation on a particular topic, an overview is created that HR generalists can use, allowing them to be better prepared for a meeting. This also results in more meaningful conversations.

“And also that you can have better meaningful conversations with people because you can so easily prepare and read up on a topic with the help of AI.” – 8

4.1.2 Changes regarding the various components of Work Design

In this part, the changes regarding the various components of Work Design (job autonomy and control, skill variety and use, job feedback and related work characteristics, social and relational aspects of work and job demands) that may occur due to the deployment of generative AI in the HR work are discussed.

Job autonomy and control

The first component of Work Design, in which changes may occur because of the deployment of generative AI, is job autonomy and control. When looking at the autonomy and control over decisions about the work process itself, the results show that for some HR generalists, there is more autonomy and control over general decisions whereas for others there is no change in autonomy and control at all. HR generalists who feel more autonomy and control attribute this to knowing that generative AI does only what you ask of it, giving them full control over outcomes. Additionally, AI can highlight overlooked aspects, enhancing decision-making. Appendix VIII includes an overview of the changes in the components of Work Design for each respondent.

“It just gives me more control because an AI system only does what you ask of it so if you put the right things in, then you get exactly what you want. Also if I'm looking at resumes on a Wednesday morning or a Friday afternoon yes on Friday afternoon I might be less sharp so that is exactly where AI helps because that bias is not the case for a system.” - 8

However, some HR generalists experience no change in autonomy and control, as they always have the final decision, regardless the use of generative AI.

“No, that hasn't changed. [...] I see it more as an advisor or assistant but I make the decision myself.” -7

Regarding autonomy and control over working methods, the results show mixed experiences among the HR generalists. Some see no change in their autonomy, as they can choose whether or not to use generative AI. Others feel less autonomy and control because using generative AI necessitates different working methods. For example, due to the knowledge that generative AI can write texts, HR generalists are expected to use generative AI in writing texts. This changes their working method because instead of writing a text themselves, they have to give the right prompts to ChatGPT and analyse the text written by

ChatGPT. This is a different way of working which requires collaboration with the generative AI system.

“I think less autonomy and control in your working method because a lot can be done for you by AI and this will demand a different way of working.” - 2

The results regarding autonomy and control over time schedule and place of employment unanimously show that using generative AI does not result in changes regarding the time and place of employment. According to the HR generalists, this has nothing to do with the deployment of generative AI but rather with the company you work for.

“And in terms of workplace and time, I don't think that has anything to do with AI but more with the organization you work in.” - 3

The varied results show no clear pattern in changes regarding autonomy and control for HR generalists, since some HR generalists experience positive changes whereas others experience negative changes. To identify any patterns in why positive or negative changes are experienced, several other factors such as the degree of use of generative AI, age, and differences in industries are explored. An overview of these factors can be found in Appendix VIII. The degree of use of generative AI seems to play a role in the differences. The analysis suggests that HR generalists who use generative AI extensively experience more autonomy and control however, many HR generalists, regardless of their AI usage, report no changes in their autonomy and control over working methods. Those experiencing less autonomy and control tend to use generative AI relatively less.

Considering age and industry, the results show no clear pattern. Nevertheless, the amount of pressure the HR generalists feel for using generative AI seems to play a role in the differences. The HR generalists who still experience all freedom in whether or not to use generative AI mainly experience positive changes or no change. The HR generalists who experience negative changes feel the pressure of having to use generative AI systems and having to collaborate with the systems. Appendix VIII includes an overview of the reasons for different experiences in the components of Work Design.

Skill variety and use

The second component of Work Design for HR generalists is skill variety and use. Generative AI contributes positively to task variety and skills because it can support less enjoyable, administrative work, resulting in more time for valuable tasks. In addition, systems

like ChatGPT can be used as a tool for knowledge and skills and to contribute to task significance. According to some of the HR generalists their work has become more worthwhile because they experience that AI can support many tasks, but cannot replace the human factor, such as recognizing emotions. Consequently, tasks where the human factor is crucial have become more worthwhile for HR generalists, as they realize their unique impact on employees in here.

“And the valuable thing about our work is just what the system can't take over, so AI does show how valuable our work as humans is in terms of emotions and things that a system can't do.” - 15

However, several HR generalists experienced that their work has not become more or less worthwhile since the deployment of generative AI. They just have not experienced any changes in this regard.

“And I don't find that my work is more or less valuable now no that's just not the case.” – 13

The results suggest that using generative AI, besides a few HR generalists who experience no change at all, only leads to positive changes in terms of skill variety and use. Regardless of differences in the use, age, and industry the results show that generative AI can support less enjoyable work, is seen as a tool for knowledge and skills, and makes some tasks feel more worthwhile.

Job feedback and related work characteristics

The next component of work design is job feedback and related work characteristics. It was explored whether using generative AI during HR work affects the degree of feedback received by HR generalists. The results show that for all of the HR generalists, it does not affect the degree of feedback received since generative AI is not being used at all in feedback conversations or performance monitoring.

“And in terms of the degree of feedback, nothing has changed there because no generative AI is used on this “ - 14

In addition to that the results show that according to the HR generalists, feedback conversations need to be with a person and not with a generative AI system since a feedback conversation is a very personal conversation and the human touch is truly necessary there.

So, the HR generalists are fine with the current situation where generative AI is not being used for giving feedback. In contrast, generative AI systems could be used to help monitor performances and collect data as input for feedback conversations. When the data is immediately visible to the HR generalists, they can get valuable insights out of it and as a result improve their work. The HR generalists see possibilities here, however, none of the organizations are using generative AI for this right now.

“If it helps with insights that I would not see myself, then that would only make me happy. It still keeps you in good hands. So I would embrace it.” – 10

A subset of the HR generalists do not like the use of generative AI to monitor performances because they do not like the idea of being monitored, which results in the experience of less freedom.

“Because then I immediately have the idea that everything is being monitored. No, that doesn't seem like a nice way of working to me.” - 9

The results on job feedback and related work characteristics show that all 17 HR generalists experience no changes because generative AI is not being used for giving feedback in the current situation. The HR generalists are satisfied with this because according to them feedback conversations need to be with a person and cannot be replaced by generative AI. However, according to a subset of HR generalists, generative AI could be used for monitoring performances. This subset uses generative AI relatively much, however, there is no pattern visible in age and industry. While some would see this as valuable, one of the HR generalists sees it as an infringement of freedom.

Social and relational aspects of work

The next component of Work Design is the social and relational aspect of work. This concerns social contact and communication with colleagues and employees and the independence of the HR generalists. Deploying generative AI results in positive changes in terms of social and relational aspects because generative AI systems can support the work of HR generalists which results in more time and focus on people.

“No, at the moment I have more time for that. Because there are things that you can let the system do, so it gives me more time to spend with colleagues.” - 5

On the other hand, it also results in negative changes in terms of social and relational aspects because where HR generalists used to go to colleagues with questions they had, many questions can now be answered by generative AI, resulting in less contact with colleagues. As a result, some HR generalists are afraid of losing social contact when also HR-related matters and questions will be arranged via generative AI systems.

“Yes, and I think that's the only thing that scares me a little bit. Of course, you already have quite a generation that prefers not to call anymore but to arrange everything through the app and then I'm afraid that the human, social contact also goes away, and I think that would be a waste.” - 2

The results also reveal that all HR generalists experience more interdependence because they can use generative AI. This may result in fewer conversations with colleagues about the HR work. However, it is experienced positively in terms of work efficiency and quality.

“Yes all the information just helps enormously, you are much less dependent because there is much more information available in the system.” - 13

What is remarkable here is that the positive changes are combined with the negative changes. So, the HR generalists experience more time and focus on people, and at the same time less social contact because many questions can be asked to generative AI systems instead of colleagues. Another remarkable finding is that the HR generalists who fear losing social contact, so who experience additional negative changes regarding the social and relational aspects, are HR generalists who make relatively little use of generative AI. These are HR generalists from both the 35- and 35+ age groups and different sectors.

Job demands

The final component of Work Design which is explored is Job demands, this includes technological demands, cognitive demands and possible changes in workload. The technological demands are, according to a subset of HR generalists, not changing because it cannot yet be expected of everyone to be able to work well with generative AI systems. In addition, there are some negative changes in the sense of more technological demands for HR generalists. The HR generalists who indicate that it is becoming more important to be able to work well with systems based on generative AI, experience this as a similar requirement as expectations for HR generalists to be able to work well with Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and HR

systems like AFAS. To this extent, HR generalists are also increasingly expected to be able to work well with systems such as ChatGPT.

“I believe that in the future you can also just put on your CV that you are good with AI. So more like a skill, like you can also be good with Microsoft now you can also have as a skill that you can be good with AI.” – 7

On the cognitive demands, it is argued that demands such as problem-solving ability, communication, and analytical thinking are becoming more important with the deployment of generative AI. However, at the same time, these HR generalists experience that cognitive demands such as linguistic competence are becoming less important or even redundant with the rise of generative AI. So where demands are added, demands also disappear. Yet another group of HR generalists states that there is no change in terms of cognitive demands because you always need a sufficient basic level. So, a generative AI system can write professional texts, but according to this group, you have to be able to do this well yourself, because you cannot rely on the qualities of the system.

“Well maybe in 10 years that will be different but I think you should just expect basic standards from your colleagues. Because otherwise, you can outsource everything. You should just keep the basics and just have a certain basic level.” - 6

As a final part of the job demands, the results show that for some of the HR generalists there is no change in the workload since either generative AI does not yet help in such a way that time is saved, or the time saved will be filled with other tasks anyway. Nevertheless, some HR generalists still experience less workload due to the deployment of generative AI since the use of generative AI makes the work tasks easier to perform.

“And in terms of workload, I think that has become less because a lot of tasks are just made easier because you can use AI.” - 3

The differences in experiences on changes in job demands can be explained since the HR generalists who do not experience any change do not yet experience the need and obligation to use generative AI. As a result, unlike the other group, they also do not feel pressure to work well with the systems.

Regarding the cognitive demands, it is remarkable that where there are demands added, there are also demands that disappear, so here the HR generalists experience both positive and negative changes at the same time. However, there are also HR generalists who

do not experience any changes because this group does indicate that everyone needs to have a sufficient base level of cognitive skills. What is noteworthy, is that the first group consists mainly of the 35- HR generalists and that the HR generalists in the last-named group are mainly the 35+ HR generalists. In addition, all three HR generalists in the care industry agree that there is no change in terms of cognitive demands because everyone just needs to have a good basic level of all cognitive skills.

The degree of use of generative AI seems to play a role in the different experiences in terms of workload. The results suggest that the group that experiences less workload makes frequent use of generative AI. This means that although the time they save, because of the support of generative AI, may have been filled with other tasks, performing the work tasks has been made more easily which for them results in a reduction of the workload. In addition, they are both in the age of 35-, however, they operate in different industries.

4.1.3 Positive and negative changes in the work of HR generalists due to the deployment of generative AI

With the deployment of generative AI during HR work, different changes arise. These changes consist of both negative- and positive changes for the work of the HR generalist. An overview of these changes for each respondent is included in Appendix VIII.

Negative changes due to the deployment of generative AI

First of all, the negative changes are changes with a negative impact on skill development and learning for the HR generalists. The results show that according to a subset of HR generalists, using generative AI may result in losing skills. The reason for that is that the generative AI system will take over certain tasks that you as an HR generalist do not need to perform anymore, resulting in losing skills. The results also show that the use of generative AI makes HR generalists a bit lazy because they no longer have to figure out everything themselves and a system like ChatGPT can support many tasks.

“The only downside is that you do get a little lazy. I have quite an inquisitive attitude so I'm quite willing to figure things out, however, because you know you can ask ChatGPT you use that and that's why you might become a little lazier to figure things out yourself.” - 2

Moreover, the deployment of generative AI may also result in negative changes in terms of job security. The results revealed that there is some discussion about the fear of losing tasks. This involves the fact that generative AI systems can take over certain tasks from

HR generalists. Although this is very valuable for some, there is also some discussion by HR generalists about the fear of becoming redundant.

“But that's again the question, not everybody gets happy about the support of AI because if it takes work away from you, that's stressful.” - 5

The negative outcomes due to the deployment of generative AI are experienced by the various HR generalists. These include both HR generalists who use generative AI extensively and HR generalists who use generative AI infrequently. Also, these HR generalists belong to both age groups and operate in different industries. However, the HR generalists who specifically mentioned that losing skills is a result of the deployment of generative AI, are the younger HR generalists who use generative AI relatively little.

Positive changes due to the deployment of generative AI

The positive changes for HR generalists are about the use of generative AI to enhance HR practices, the support of generative AI in taking over tasks, and the use of generative AI to make the work of the HR professionals more enjoyable and successful. When focusing on the use of generative AI to enhance HR practices, first of all, it results in more innovation and diversity because systems based on generative AI can make written text like job listings more diverse and inclusive.

“We are working on the themes diversity and inclusion, well then you can ask ChatGPT to create a job description that is focused on that. Or you can ask for tips to make a job description more diverse and inclusive.” - 9

Furthermore, the results show that the deployment of generative AI results in more efficiency and productivity. This is because systems such as ChatGPT and Copilot can support the work of the HR generalist. Texts can be written faster, questions can be answered more quickly, reading about certain topics can be done faster, and ideas can be generated more quickly. So, working with generative AI systems results in finishing certain tasks much faster.

“It just saves a lot of time, it's easier, it's more transparent, you don't have to think about everything yourself, it's less brain crunching. I work 40 hours, I have 200 employees and 7 managers, so I have a lot of tasks and now I can just finish certain work much faster.” - 4

In addition to that, the deployment of generative AI results in more quality and professionalism. Especially in written text because the HR generalist can ask the generative AI systems to review the text and improve it, which results in more professional advice or written piece of text for clients.

“What I see a lot is that we have a text reviewed by AI before we deliver it to the client and then it becomes even more professional.” - 12

Finally, the use of generative AI also leads to more objectivity. This involves objectivity in selecting candidates, when the initial selection is done by a generative AI system, the selection is made objectively based on requirements and cannot, for example, discriminate by name. Also, when giving feedback or evaluating, a system can provide more objectivity because it has no biases. It could just give feedback based on for example data of the performances, and this will not consist of an biased opinion such as with humans.

“Because everywhere it's always said we want to judge objectively, but we can't because we're humans so by definition you're not able to be objective and an AI system is.” - 8

When focusing on the tasks generative AI can take over, the results show that according to a subset of the HR generalists, when generative AI will be more and more deployed in the work field less FTE is needed and this will support the labour market tightness problem. Manual and administrative tasks in particular can be supported or taken over, reducing the need for staff. On the other hand, some HR generalists argue that taking over administrative tasks can allow them to focus more on the tasks that make a difference, such as thinking about improvements in work processes or political themes. So this group does not think that the support of generative AI will simply reduce the need for personnel because there will always be additional tasks.

“So I do think that AI can take over a lot and that doesn't have to be a negative thing because then we can focus again on sustainable employability, job happiness, political themes, that kind of things.” - 7

Moreover, the deployment of generative AI makes the work of HR generalists more enjoyable and successful because HR generalists like to work with AI. The HR generalists mention that they like to play with the generative AI systems and that they do learn from it.

“Yeah, That's definitely a positive thing, but it's also kind of because I like to play around with it myself and see like hey, how can we improve on that a little bit.” - 8

Finally, some HR generalists believe you need generative AI to remain successful in the future. This has to do with the fact that some organizations are already gaining real benefits from working with AI such as efficiency, for example. When you don't use generative AI you are left behind. So in the near future, everyone will have to embrace that AI is a thing if you don't want to fall behind your competitors.

“And I also think that if you don't apply AI you are no longer good enough at some point. You do have to really collaborate with AI to remain successful.” - 1

The results show that all HR generalists experience some kind of positive changes due to the deployment of generative AI, no matter the use of generative AI, their age, or the industry they work. Also, when focusing on the tasks generative AI can take over, the results show that both HR generalists who make extensive use of generative AI during their work as well as HR generalists who do not are included in the group that experiences generative AI can support the labour market shortage problem and in the group that experiences that the time saved by using generative AI can be spent on other more valuable work tasks. These HR generalists consist of both age groups and work in various industries.

4.1.4 Challenges that arise with the deployment of generative AI

The next part that is discussed is about the challenges that arise with the deployment of generative AI. These challenges consist of adaption and implementation challenges and quality challenges. First of all, there is still some resistance by HR generalists to working with generative AI. The reason for this is that people do not yet see the benefits of using generative AI and that people are afraid to take the first step because they do not know how it works and they are afraid that they will use it incorrectly. In addition, there is no policy or support from the organizations about using generative AI. So, HR generalists do not know how to use generative AI most effectively and they also don't know what are the best AI applications in which data can be handled securely. This may result in generative AI not being used at all.

“So there is mission work in there for the organization, facilitating more things about how to use AI and also giving tips on data security.” - 10

In contrast to organizations that have no policy regarding the use of generative AI, in one of the organizations the advice is not to use generative AI at all. The reason for this is that

the organization is afraid of what will happen with the information they provide to the generative AI system. This advice makes it a challenge for HR generalists in that company to use generative AI.

“No, The ... is generally reluctant to the use of AI they also advise not to use generative AI because there is a lot of secrecy on our data.” - 13

In contrast to organizations that advise against using generative AI, there are also HR generalists who by their own choice do not use generative AI that much. The reason for this is that it is not in the system of the HR generalists to use generative AI systems because they have always had to do and could do without AI. This is also a reason for some HR generalists to not use generative AI since they do not yet see the added value of using generative AI because they are doing fine without it.

“But actually it's not so in my system yet that I immediately think oh wait a minute I'm going to see what ChatGPT produces. So I've used it a few times now but not really beyond that. I can see using it as input but it's just not in my system to do it that way.” - 15

Moreover, the results also show that in one of the organizations generative AI is not being used in the HR department at all. The reason for not using generative AI at all is that everyone is just still doing their work without AI. They know that it can bring benefits but they are not yet at the point where someone is curious enough to start discovering it.

“No so when it comes to generative AI well maybe there are some people privately working on it and doing something with it but for the HR work we really don't do anything with it.” -16

When focusing on the quality challenges, first of all, as an HR generalist you have to be careful when using generative AI for writing, that it does not become a general text. Some HR generalists experience that when everyone uses generative AI, all texts such as job postings, advice letters, and application letters will look identical. So, this will come at the expense of people's creativity. Moreover, HR generalists have to be careful because generative AI systems can make mistakes. The results show that many HR generalists believe it is the job of humans to always stay alert to the system. The danger is in people thinking that generative AI systems know everything and don't make mistakes.

“Some people see ChatGPT as the oracle that knows everything better and always gives good answers, while there really are some things that don't always work right. So you can't

always assume the information is correct so that's something you do have to take into account and not everyone does that. - 12

When focusing on the challenges that exist with the deployment of generative AI, the results show that the challenges exist among both heavy and small users of AI, both 35- and 35+ aged HR generalists, and all various industries. For example, for a subset of the HR generalists with all different characteristics, there is little support from their organizations about the correct use of generative AI, similar to the subset where the results show that there is still some resistance. What is notable, is that the HR generalist who addresses that you have to be careful when deploying generative AI systems during the work because AI can make mistakes, include all HR generalists from the care industry and exclude the high users of the HR consultancy industry. However, these HR generalists do have various ages.

4.1.5 Various experiences due to differences in generation

The HR generalists experience the changes in their work in different ways, what is particularly remarkable is that the experiences differ by generation. The results show that the HR generalists indicated that the younger generation of HR generalists around them see the benefits of working with generative AI whereas the older generation of HR generalists see some barriers to working with generative AI. One of the interviewed HR generalists indicated that she sees that the younger generation around her knows exactly how to work with generative AI systems and that they are especially embracing the fast work method.

“Younger people think using generative AI is ideal because you don't need anyone it's especially easy and fast.” - 2

Moreover, the interviewed HR generalists mentioned that the younger HR generalists around them enjoy working with AI and that they in particular use it a lot during their work.

“Yes within our organization when I look at the team P&O, we are both 33 and we use generative AI the most.” - 6

When focusing on the older generation, the results show that the HR generalists noticed that especially the older generation of HR generalists around them indicated that they needed to learn more about AI before they would use it. This has to do with the fact that they first want to be knowledgeable and confident enough before working with such a generative AI system. They did not grow up with these technologies so they are not familiar with working with them.

“Yes I do really notice that the older ones are still a bit more cautious and also just need to learn a lot about it before they are confident enough to use it.” - 15

Finally, according a subset of HR generalists, the older generation of HR generalists is not used to working with technologies since they have often been in a position for a long time and have always worked without using generative AI. Because of this, they show some resistance since they see the change in their working method as an obstacle. One of the HR generalist stated the following about this.

“But if you're 35 plus, you're not very good at technology and you didn't actually grow up with it, it can also be perceived as an obstacle, so much so that people say, I'm just not going to work with it I'm going to stick with my current working method.” – 3

4.2 Visualization of the changes, challenges, and experiences that occur in the work of the HR generalist

Figure 4.1 shows the visualization of the results. The figure shows that generative AI is used by HR generalists during their work tasks. Generative AI is used for writing all kinds of texts and for administrative work. Generative AI is also widely used for recruitment and selection. Finally, generative AI is used for gathering information.

The findings show what changes occur in the work of HR generalists with the deployment of generative AI. These changes consist of both positive and negative changes, which result in changes in terms of the components of Work Design. The positive changes consist of the fact that using generative AI can improve HR practices. In addition, generative AI can also take some work off the hands of the HR generalist, and using generative AI results in more enjoyable and successful work according to the HR generalist. Besides positive changes, the use of generative AI also results in negative changes. These are negative changes in terms of skill development and learning and negative changes in terms of job security.

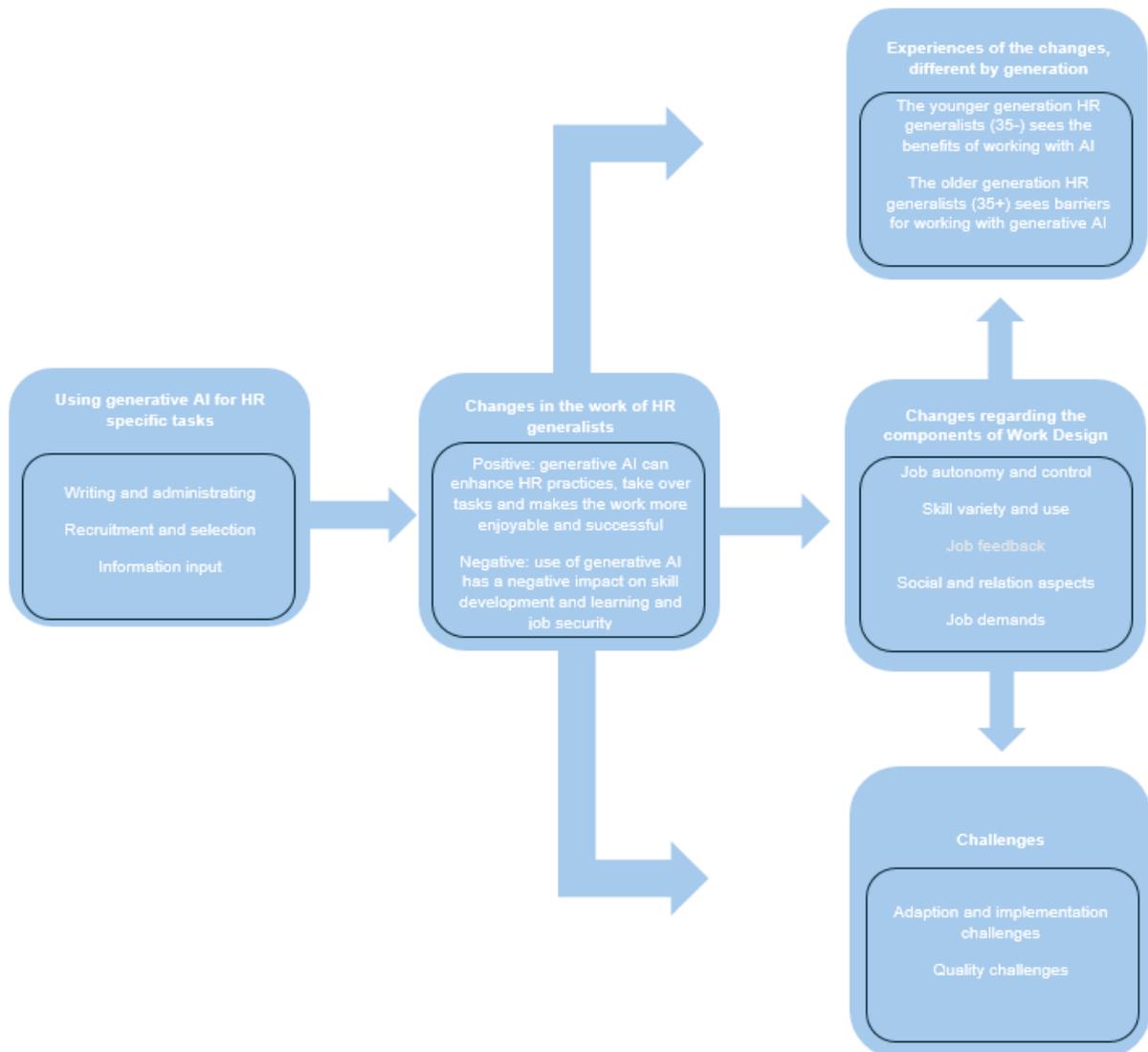
The deployment of generative AI also leads to changes in the components of Work Design. It leads to changes in autonomy and control, skill variety and use, social and relational aspects of work, and job demands. Remarkable is that the deployment of generative AI does not result in any changes regarding job feedback and related work characteristics. In addition, the changes in the components of Work Design also occurred because of the positive and negative changes, as described before. For instance, with the enhancement of HR practices and the fact that generative AI can take over tasks and make the work more enjoyable, positive changes occur in skill variety and use. In addition, positive changes occur regarding the social and relational aspects of work, namely more time to focus on people, because generative AI systems can take over tasks. Furthermore, this may be a reason for less job demands because AI can support the work tasks of the HR generalist which can reduce the cognitive demands and the workload. In addition, also the negative changes may be a reason for the changes regarding the components of Work Design. With the negative impact on skill development and learning, changes occur in skill variety and use, because, according to the HR generalist in this research, they may lose skills and become lazy.

The deployment of generative AI and the changes involved lead to different experiences and challenges. The younger generation of HR generalists see the benefits of working with generative AI and also enjoy discovering the possibilities of a generative AI system. The older generation of HR generalists is more cautious and sees some obstacles to overcome before generative AI will be used more and more. Furthermore, the visualization

shows that some challenges emerge in terms of adapting and implementing generative AI, as well as challenges in terms of quality of work output.

Figure 4.1

Visualization of the results



5. Discussion

In this section the key findings of the research are discussed. Additionally, this section contains a discussion on the theoretical and practical implications. Finally, the limitations of the research and the recommendations for future research are elaborated.

5.1 Key findings

This section presents and discusses the key findings of this research. The purpose of this research was to explore what specific changes occur in the work of HR generalists with the deployment of generative AI, and how the HR generalists experience these changes.

First of all, the results show that generative AI is deployed, although to varying degrees, by HR generalists. HR generalists deploy systems based on generative AI such as ChatGPT and Copilot during their work for writing texts, processing administration, recruiting and selecting candidates and obtaining information. This is in line with previous research on the use of generative AI in the HR field (Budhwar et al., 2023; Silva & Costa, 2023). Contrary to what is reported in these previous studies, the findings of this research show that generative AI is not yet used to develop training programmes (Budhwar et al., 2023; Silva & Costa, 2023).

By adopting the Work Design approach, this research shows that the deployment of generative AI changes the various Work Design components. As Parker and Grote (2020) note, technology impacts the components of Work Design in varied ways, both positive and negative. For example, some HR generalists see no change in their autonomy and control, while others experience increased or decreased control. This is in line with research by Wang et al. (2020) where the results show that the deployment of technology can lead to enhanced autonomy and control but also to a reduction in autonomy and control. As Parker and Grote (2020) describe, this may be caused by individual differences in for example age, ability, or exposure to technology.

Regarding social and relational aspects, generative AI can both increase time for colleague interactions by handling tasks and reduce social contact as more queries are directed to AI rather than colleagues. This reflects Parker and Grote's (2020) view that technology can support or disrupt social connections. Moreover, some HR generalists fear losing social contact. This fear can be understood in the context of Grant's (2007) work which suggests that the shift to a service economy has caused an increase in the relational nature of work activities. Grant (2007) indicates that relational work design will only become more important. Because this relational aspect is so important, the fear of losing out on this is quite understandable.

The results on job demands are also varied. Some HR generalists face increased demands for technological skills, while others do not. Cognitive demands like communication, problem-solving, and analytical thinking are growing, which is in line with research from Cascio and Montealegre (2016). They state that new cognitive demands will be added due to the introduction of new technologies, in order to be able to interact with these algorithms and AI-based systems. In the article of Parker and Grote (2020), this is viewed as positive, whereas the HR generalists see this as additional burdens. Conversely, some cognitive demands, like linguistic skills, are becoming redundant.

Additionally, while some HR generalists experience a reduction in workload due to generative AI, others do not see a shift. This supports Parker and Grote's (2020) finding that technology can reduce workload due to labour-saving aspects of technologies. Overall, changes in skill variety and task significance are positive, with AI assisting in less enjoyable tasks and providing positive changes in task significance by making certain tasks more worthwhile.

What is especially remarkable is that, in contrast with the results of the research of Parker and Grote (2020), the use of generative AI does not result in changes in autonomy and control over time and place of employment in this research. This may be because autonomy over work time and place was established during the COVID pandemic, with Bick et al. (2021) noting that remote work arrangements continued after the pandemic. So, workers have already had autonomy and control over where and when to work since the COVID pandemic, and this may explain why the deployment of generative AI does not bring any changes in this area. In addition, the degree of feedback is also one of the components of Work Design that does not change. This is consistent with the results of the study by Wegman et al. (2018) in which also no significant changes were found in the feedback component of Work Design. The reason for this may be that generative AI is not yet used to provide feedback. This may be explained by the lack of transparency in generative AI systems, which makes it difficult for employees to understand why AI systems make certain choices which can result in rejection of the perceived feedback (Tambe et al., 2019).

In addition to changes in the components of work to design, some other changes occurred in the work of HR professionals by making use of generative AI. There are positive changes, such as increased efficiency, productivity, quality, professionalism, objectivity, innovation, and diversity. This is in line with the findings of previous studies that indicate that the adoption of generative AI can have positive outcomes in the domain of productivity, innovation, efficiency, and decision-making (Srivastav & Kaur, 2022; Malik et al., 2023). Moreover, organizations that make use of generative AI are, according to the HR generalists of this research, expected to be more successful because of these benefits. In addition, they

state that organizations need to make use of generative AI techniques to stay successful in the future. This is in line with previous research which indicates that organizations must adopt new technological innovations to remain relevant and maintain or gain competitive advantage (Kaushal et al., 2021).

Another change in the work of HR generalists is that systems based on generative AI can take over certain tasks, resulting in disappearances in the job responsibilities of HR generalists. This can be experienced positively, because there will be more time for other, valuable tasks. This is in line with research by Budhwar et al. (2023) who indicate that with the use of generative AI systems such as ChatGPT, HR professionals can focus on the more complex organizational issues and things that really matter, instead of the daily, manual, administrative tasks such as writing manuals or job listings. However, it is also experienced negatively by some HR generalists in this research, since tasks disappear from the HR generalist's responsibilities, causing HR generalists to fear becoming redundant. Previous studies have shown that this fear of becoming redundant and losing jobs is prevalent among HR professionals (Chowdhury et al., 2023; Maurer, 2024). An additional finding in this research is that according to the HR generalists, when tasks will be taken over by the generative AI system this may result in a loss of skills, and HR generalists becoming a bit more lazy.

The use of generative AI results in both positive and negative changes and therefore also both positive and negative experiences of these changes. It can be concluded that the younger generation of HR generalists in particular experience these changes in their work and working with generative AI as positive. They enjoy experimenting with generative AI systems and see the benefits emerging. The older generation of HR generalists still see some obstacles, such as learning to make use of generative AI properly and the need to change their working methods. Although research has been published on the use of generative AI with its benefits, challenges, and experiences, it did not include generational differences (Budhwar et al., 2023; Rane, 2023; Srivastav & Kaur, 2022; Malik et al., 2023).

5.2 Theoretical implications

The results of this research have several implications for theory. First, the findings contribute to the theory of technological innovations within the HR field, specifying the use of generative AI as described by Budhwar et al. (2023) and Silva and Costa (2023). This includes the use of generative AI for various activities such as writing documents, recruitment and selection and administrative tasks. What generative AI is not yet used for, contrary to the expectations from the literature, is the development of training programs (Budhwar et al., 2023; Silva & Costa, 2023). In line with the expectations from the literature, through more effective

processing in a variety of HR practices, generative AI helps to enhance HR procedures and organizational effectiveness (Budhwar et al, 2023).

Secondly, this research is an extension of the Work Design Theory by Parker and Grote (2020) in the area of HR and generative AI, by showing what the deployment of generative AI within HR work does to the different components of Work Design. As in the article by Parker and Grote (2020), deploying technology has both positive and negative effects on the components of Work Design. Yet, contrary to the expectations as described by Parker and Grote (2020), deploying generative AI does not change all the components of Work Design. What is remarkable is that for autonomy and control over where and when to work, the results show no positive or negative change. So, according to the HR generalist in this research, the deployment of generative AI does not change anything in terms of autonomy and control over where and when to work. As more autonomy and control over where and when to work was made possible much earlier, namely during the COVID pandemic, this part may no longer be relevant for exploring changes in Work Design (Bick et al.,2021). What is also remarkable, is that contrary to expectations from Parker and Grote (2020), the job feedback and related work characteristics component is also not changed in any way. No changes are experienced in this component of Work Design because generative AI is not yet being deployed in the area of giving feedback. When more research is done on how generative AI can support giving feedback and in what way this should be performed to get positive experiences for the HR generalists, generative AI systems may also support in giving feedback. So, once generative AI is used for giving feedback, this component of Work Design may also change. At this point, additional research and attention is needed, so the feedback component definitely need to remain a part of Work Design.

In addition, the findings of this research include theoretical implications on the specific changes that generative AI brings to the work of an HR generalist. The findings of this research provide a balanced viewpoint on the benefits and drawbacks of deploying generative AI, which extends the work of Budhwar et al. (2023), Tambe et al. (2019), and Kasneci et al. (2023) in which they describe the benefits and the risks of using generative AI. Remarkably, the benefits found in this study are consistent with those identified in the previous studies. However, what does not correspond is that in this current research, deploying generative AI in HR work is seen as beneficial against bias and discrimination while in the earlier studies, deploying generative AI was seen as a risk because generative AI systems can discriminate when trained on a biased dataset (Budhwar et al., 2023; Kasneci et al., 2023). One reason for these different perspectives could be insights of the fact that a generative AI system gives output based on information a human puts into the system. So, the HR generalists in this study are very aware of the control humans have over a generative AI system. With this knowledge, they know that an AI system does not discriminate as long as you do not train the system to

do so. For example, when you ask a generative AI system to write an evaluation based on actual performance data, an AI system arguments only on the basis of that actual data and has no bias. Whereas with a human, that might happen because a manager might be blind to the negative performance of a good employee. So, referring to the results of this research, researchers must see generative AI as beneficial against bias and discrimination.

Additionally, the findings of this research align with previous research on the distinctiveness of generative AI, in comparison to other technological innovations such as the regular forms of AI (Budhwar et al., 2023; Shet & Pereira, 2021). Where the regular forms of AI could only answer standard questions, systems based on generative AI can really support the work of the HR professional. Especially the ability of generative AI to generate texts based on given prompts is very valuable for the work of HR generalists. Systems like ChatGPT can support in writing job listings, creating job profiles, writing texts for advice, and requesting relevant information in preparation for meetings. In addition, according to the HR generalists of this research, systems based on generative AI are seen as a sparring partner, someone you can ask anything and who gives high-quality answers. This is in line with expectations from previous studies where it is described that systems based on generative AI can generate content and responses that match what the most inventive, intelligent, and well-paid individuals humans can do (Eloundou et al., 2023; Budhwar et al., 2023). Moreover, generative AI shows its distinctiveness as it can not only take over administrative tasks but also support more challenging work such as making decisions or selecting candidates. So, the results of this research challenge the idea that generative AI is nothing new and show that generative AI is really something different. Therefore, researchers should treat it as a new specific technology.

5.3 Practical implications

Besides theoretical implications, the findings of this research also have implications for practice. First, the results of this study show the different HR practices for which generative AI can be used. This is valuable information for HR professionals who are interested in applying generative AI in their work or organizations that want to increase their use of generative AI, because it helps them to know for which practices generative AI can be used most effectively.

In addition, the findings show what changes occur in the work of HR generalists by deploying generative AI. These findings, which consist of both positive and negative changes, are valuable for HR practitioners and organizations. The findings regarding the components of Work Design are valuable for practitioners because the components of Work Design need to be well-designed to maximize employee satisfaction, performance, and well-being. In addition, the results in terms of the challenges that arise when deploying generative AI in HR

work are also valuable for HR practitioners as well as organizations because they provide critical insights into potential obstacles and issues that need to be addressed with the deployment of generative AI.

The changes in the work of HR generalists affect the role and responsibilities of HR generalists. For instance, the results show that some administrative tasks will disappear, however some task demands such as analytical thinking will be added. As generative AI technologies are increasingly used, these insights are crucial for the professional development of HR generalists. The insights on the changes in the work of HR generalists also serve to inform training programs and education initiatives so that HR professionals can acquire the skills and knowledge needed to effectively navigate the changing technological landscape.

Moreover, the results in terms of the HR generalists' experiences of deploying generative AI and the changes involved, are also valuable for HR professionals and organizations. The results show that experiences vary by generation and can be both positive and somewhat negative for different reasons. Organizations can use these insights to ensure positive experiences for their own HR generalists.

5.4 Limitation and future research

This research also has some limitations and, based on them, recommendations for future research. The first limitation concerns the selection of candidates. The method used for sample selection in this research is a non-probability method, which means that not every subject in the population of HR generalists had an equal chance of participating in the study. The candidates were acquired mainly using the researchers' network, which meant that no systematic process was used to select the candidates. To give all subjects in the population equal opportunities to participate in the research and to draw strong conclusions for the entire population, a probability sampling method could be used for future research.

Another important consideration in this study is the potential for researcher bias in the analysis and interpretation of the results. In qualitative research, where data analysis involves subjective interpretation, the risk of researcher bias is often present. For instance, coding the data may be influenced by the researcher's expectations and experiences. Similarly, when analysing the results, the researcher may unintentionally draw more attention to the elements of the results that seemed important from the beginning. Future research could further minimize researcher bias by employing additional strategies such as the engagement of colleagues not directly involved in the research to review and critique the study's, analysis, and interpretations. Their perspective can help identify potential biases and suggest alternative explanations.

The last recommendation for future research has to do with the rapid development of technological innovations. The fast development of AI technologies means that findings might quickly become outdated as new tools and features are introduced. Examining the most recent AI tools and their unique characteristics may offer current perspectives on how they affect the work of HR generalists.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore what changes occur in the work of HR generalists due to the deployment of generative AI, and how the HR generalists experience this. The Work Design Theory of Parker and Grote (2020) was used in this study to identify the changes in the work of the HR generalists. It emerged that as in the article by Parker and Grote (2020), the impact of technology on Work Design is both positive and negative. What was striking, however, was that contrary to the findings of Parker and Grote (2020), the deployment of generative AI has no impact on the autonomy of time and place of employment nor on the degree of feedback received. These components emerge as irrelevant in this research on the deployment of generative AI in the HR field.

Furthermore, the results show positive changes such as increased efficiency, productivity, quality, professionalism, objectivity, innovation, and diversity. In addition, systems based on generative AI can take over certain tasks, potentially leading to the disappearance of some job responsibilities. This was seen positively, as it allows more time for other valuable tasks, but it was also experienced negatively, as it may cause HR generalists to fear becoming redundant.

As with all the results of this study, the experiences regarding the use of generative AI and the changes in work are both positive and negative. What is notable here is that the younger generation of HR generalists is especially positive. They enjoy experimenting with generative AI systems and see the benefits emerging. However, the older generation still sees some obstacles, such as learning to use generative AI properly and the need to change their working methods.

Acknowledgment

To write this thesis, I used ChatGPT. I used ChatGPT primarily to gain initial insights. For example, when naming technological innovations within HR, I first asked ChatGPT what innovations are already being used within HR and then I searched the literature for information about these technological innovations. This also applies to other information such as risks and benefits of using generative AI. So, I used ChatGPT mainly for coming up with initial ideas. I also used ChatGPT to prepare my interview guide. First, I explained a bit about my research and since I had already asked several questions, ChatGPT already knew a bit about my research. I also provided the research question and data collection method and based on that, ChatGPT generated an interview guide. I used some of ChatGPT's suggestions and modified them slightly in terms of language and then I supplemented this with my own generated questions. ChatGPT was used in a similar way for the other parts of this research. When describing implications, for example, information about the research was shared with ChatGPT and suggestions were asked for implications and limitations. This was used in addition to the implications already formulated. Overall, ChatGPT was mainly used to come up with some initial ideas.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Overview of respondents

Respondent #	Function	Industry	Online/face to face	Age category 35-/35+
#1	HR generalist	Marketing	Online	35-
#2	HR generalist	Education	Online	35-
#3	HR generalist	HR consultancy	Online	35-
#4	HR generalist	Technic	Face to face	35-
#5	HR generalist	Government	Online	35-
#6	HR generalist	Government	Online	35-
#7	HR generalist	Childcare/education	Online	35-
#8	HR generalist	HR consultancy	Online	35-
#9	HR generalist	HR consultancy	Online	35-
#10	HR generalist	Government	Face to face	35+
#11	HR generalist	Logistics and supplies	Online	35+
#12	HR generalist	Service sector	Online	35-
#13	HR generalist	Security services	Online	35+
#14	HR generalist	IT	Online	35+
#15	HR generalist	Care	Online	35+
#16	HR generalist	Care	Face to face	35+
#17	HR generalist	Cosmetics	Online	35+

Appendix II: Operationalization table

Concept	Operationalization	Key words
Generative AI	Systems that can generate human-like content such as text, images or audio.	Generative AI, ChatGPT, Bard, DALL-E, System.
HR generalist	Someone with various responsibilities across the whole HR domain. An HR generalist offers HR support to the organization, acts as a conduit between HR department and the rest of the organization, and has responsibilities in strategy and execution.	HR generalist, HR professional.
Job autonomy and control	Having control over general decisions, having the freedom to decide when to complete tasks, having the freedom to select one's working methods, and having control over one's schedule and place of employment.	Autonomy, control, making decisions, working methods, making choices.
Skill variety and use	Doing varied tasks, use various skills, have job complexity and challenge, doing a set of tasks that make up a whole and task significance.	Skills, varied tasks, job complexity, challenging tasks.
Job feedback and related work characteristics	The degree to which you receive feedback on the work you perform.	Feedback, performance evaluation, job performance, performance management.
Social and relational aspects of work	Social contact within the organization, for example with employees from other departments, colleagues or supervisors. Interdependence, do you depend on each other.	Social contact, collaboration, interdependence, relations, interaction.
Job demands	About the various demands associated with a job including cognitive demands (mental processes and resources such as perception, attention, memory, language, problem-solving, decision-making) , physical demands, performance monitoring demands, work overload, demands for working with new technologies.	Cognitive demands, physical demands, performance monitoring, work pressure, workload, technological demands.

Appendix III: Interview guide in Dutch language

Introductie

- Mezelf voorstellen
- Het doel van het onderzoek uitleggen: Onderzoeken wat er precies verandert binnen de werkzaamheden van HR generalisten door het gebruik maken van generatieve AI, identificeren van deze veranderingen.
- Aangeven dat alle informatie die tijdens het interview wordt gedeeld vertrouwelijk zal worden behandeld.
- Structuur van het interview toelichten
- Vragen of het interview opgenomen mag worden; opname starten.

Achtergrond informatie

- Kunt u wat vertellen over uw professionele achtergrond en uw ervaringen in het HR werkveld?
- Wat is de huidige functie die u vervult en binnen welke organisatie vervult u deze functie?
- Welke werkzaamheden horen bij uw functie?
 - Compleet beeld schetsen

Generatieve AI

- Zou u aan mij kunnen uitleggen hoe u generatieve AI zou beschrijven?
 - Systemen gebaseerd op generatieve AI kunnen nieuwe content genereren zoals tekst en afbeeldingen. En deze gegenereerde content matcht met wat mensen zouden kunnen produceren. Dus je kan zo'n systeem bijvoorbeeld vragen om een stuk te schrijven over belangrijke trends en ontwikkelingen in de HR branche, en dan genereert het systeem een stuk tekst wat precies lijkt op wat een mens zou kunnen schrijven.
- Welke systemen gebaseerd op generatieve AI kent u?
 - Voorbeelden zijn: ChatGPT, Midjourney (afbeeldingen), DALLE (afbeeldingen), Gemini (heette eerst Bard, soort ChatGPT maar dan van google)
- Wat is uw ervaring met het werken met generatieve AI-technologieën zoals ChatGPT? Kunt u dit toelichten?

Generatieve AI in HR werkzaamheden

- Op welke manier wordt generatieve AI gebruikt binnen deze organisatie?
- Kijkend naar de werkzaamheden die u binnen uw functie uitvoert, maakt u hierbij gebruik van generatieve AI? Hoe gaat dit in zijn werk? Bijvoorbeeld:
 - Besluitvorming

- Werving en selectie van werknemers
 - Performance management
 - Ontwikkelen van trainingsprogramma's
 - Administratieve taken
 - Creëren van beleidsdocumenten
 - Alles wat bij de introvraag is benoemd
- Wat verandert er precies ten opzichte van hoe de werkzaamheden werden uitgevoerd voordat er gebruik gemaakt kon worden van generatieve AI? Hoe ervaart u deze veranderingen?
- Positieve ervaringen? Successen die behaald zijn?
 - Negatieve ervaringen, uitdagingen die bij het gebruik van generatieve AI ontstaan?
- Kunt u mij nog meer vertellen over hoe generatieve AI gebruikt kan worden binnen de werkzaamheden van een HR generalist? (Het hoeft niet zo te zijn dat u dit zelf ook toepast)
- In hoeverre vindt u het gebruiken van AI binnen de HR werkzaamheden van belang?
- Dan heb ik nog wat vragen over een vijftal aspecten van werk en hoe dit eruit zag voordat generatieve AI gebruikt werd tijdens de werkzaamheden en hoe dit veranderd is of zou kunnen veranderen na het inzetten van generatieve AI tijdens de HR werkzaamheden. Zou u dit kunnen toelichten met voorbeelden?
- **Autonomie en controle** (over controle hebben over algemene beslissingen, autonomie om kandidaten te selecteren, vrijheid hebben om te beslissen waar en wanneer je je werkzaamheden uitvoert, vrijheid hebben om je eigen werkmethode te kiezen)
 - **Gebruik van vaardigheden en afwisseling in de werkzaamheden** (gevarieerde taken uitvoeren; kan generatieve AI bijvoorbeeld de minder leuke taken overnemen of zorgt het juist voor minder afwisseling, gebruik van verschillende vaardigheden; helpt generatieve AI je door een soort hulpmiddel qua vaardigheden, genoeg uitdaging in het werk, werkzaamheden uitvoeren die voelen als waardevol; wat is de rol van generatieve AI hierbij)
 - **De mate van feedback op uw werk** (wat is de invloed van het gebruik van generatieve AI op de mate waarop u feedback ontvangt op de werkzaamheden die u uitvoert, feedback gegeven door generatieve AI systemen)
 - **Sociale en relationele aspecten** (Sociale contacten binnen de organisatie; meer tijd voor contact met medewerkers bijvoorbeeld of juist minder sociale contacten omdat systemen taken overnemen, verandering in communicatie en samenwerking binnen het team, hoe kan generatieve AI onderlinge afhankelijkheid beïnvloeden)
 - **Taak eisen** (Eisen die aan een baan worden gesteld. Cognitieve eisen; geheugen, taalkundigheid, intelligentie, probleemoplossing. Maar ook fysieke eisen, overbelasting van het werk, eisen voor prestatiecontrole, eisen om met AI systemen te kunnen werken)

Afronding

- Dit waren mijn vragen, heeft u zelf nog wat toe te voegen over dit onderwerp of heeft u nog vragen aan mij?
- Als u later nog vragen heeft kunt u altijd contact met mij opnemen.
- Heel erg bedankt voor uw tijd en medewerking aan mijn onderzoek.
- Heeft u interesse in de resultaten van dit onderzoek?

Appendix IV: Interview guide in English language

Introduction

- Introduce myself
- Explain the purpose of the research: To investigate what changes occur within the work of HR generalists when making use of generative AI, identify these changes.
- Indicating that all information shared during the interview will be kept confidential.
- Explain the structure of the interview.
- Asking if the interview can be recorded; start recording.

Background information

- Can you tell me about your professional background and your experiences in the HR field?
- What is the current position you hold and within which organization do you hold this position?
- What activities are associated with your position?
 - Complete picture

Generative AI

- Could you explain to me how you would describe generative AI?
 - Systems based on generative AI can generate new content such as text or images. And this generated content matches what humans could produce. So for example, you could ask such a system to write a piece of text about important trends and developments in the HR industry, and then the system would generate a piece of text that looks exactly like what a human could have written.
- On what systems, based on generative AI are you aware?
 - Examples are: ChatGPT, Midjourney (images), DALLE (images), Gemini (named Bard before, kind of ChatGPT but from google)
- What experiences do you have with generative AI technologies such as ChatGPT? Could you please explain?

Generative AI in the HR work

- In what ways is generative AI used within this organization?
- Looking at the tasks you perform within your position, do you make use of generative AI within this tasks? How does this work? For example:
 - Decision-making
 - Recruitment and selection of employees
 - Performance management

- Development of training programs
 - Administrative tasks
 - Creation of policy documents
 - Everything named at the intro question
- What exactly changes from how the work was done before generative AI could be used? How do you experience these changes?
- Positive experiences? Successes that have been achieved?
 - Negative experiences? Challenges that arise when using generative AI?
- Can you tell me more about how generative AI can be used within the work of an HR generalist? (It does not have to be the case that you apply it yourself)
- To what extent do you think using AI within HR work is important?
- I have some questions about five aspects of work and what this looked like before generative AI was used during work and how this has changed or might change after generative AI was used during HR work. Could you explain this with examples?
- **Autonomy and control** (about having control over general decisions, having autonomy to select candidates, having freedom to decide where and when to do your work, having freedom to choose your own working method)
 - **Skill variety and use** (performing varied tasks; for example, can generative AI take over the less enjoyable tasks or does it actually provide less variety, use of different skills; does generative AI help you by being some kind of tool, enough challenge in work, performing work that feels valuable; what is the role of generative AI in this)
 - **The degree of feedback on your work** (how does the use of generative AI affect the degree to which you receive feedback on the work you perform, feedback given by generative AI systems)
 - **Social and relational aspects** (Social contacts within the organization; more time for contact with colleagues or fewer social contacts as systems take over tasks, change in communication and cooperation within the team, how can generative AI affect interdependence)
 - **Job demands** (Job demands, cognitive demands; memory, language skills, intelligence, problem solving. But also physical requirements, work overload, performance monitoring requirements, new job demands to work with AI systems)

Closing

- These are the questions I wanted to ask, do you have anything to add on this topic or do you have any questions for me?
- If you have any questions later you can always contact me.
- Thank you for your time and cooperation in my research.
- Are you interested in the results of this study?

Appendix V: Initial coding template

1. Job autonomy and control

- Decisions about the working process itself
 - No change in control for HR generalists about general decisions because of using generative AI
 - No change in control for HR generalists about working methods because of using generative AI
 - Change in control for HR generalists about working methods because of using generative AI
- Having control over your own time schedule and place of employment
 - No change in control for HR generalists about place of employment because of using generative AI

2. Skill variety and use

- Task variety
 - Generative AI can make certain HR tasks a routine
 - Generative AI can support the less enjoyable HR work
- Generative AI as a tool
 - HR generalists describe generative AI as a tool for knowledge
 - HR generalists describe generative AI as a tool for hard skills
- Tasks that feel worthwhile
 - HR work is not more or less valuable because of the deployment of generative AI
 - HR work is more valuable because AI support the work and you can now focus on people and development
 - HR work is more valuable because we save time and lower costs by using generative AI
 - HR work is more valuable because the generative AI systems helps in delivering more valuable advise
 - HR work is more valuable because you can focus on the tasks a generative AI system is not able to do

3. Job feedback and related work characteristics

- Degree of feedback
 - Generative AI has no influence on the degree of feedback HR generalists receive
- Don't use generative AI for feedback conversations
 - Feedback conversations needs to be with a person not with an AI system
- Use generative AI for data driven feedback
 - Generative AI systems can help monitor performances for giving feedback to the HR generalist

4. Social and relational aspects of work

- Social contact
 - More time and focus on people because the generative AI system support the work of the HR generalist
 - Less contact with colleagues because HR generalists can ask the generative AI system
 - HR generalists are afraid of losing the social contact with employees and colleagues
 - HR generalists think that the need for social contact will always stay

- Communication and teamwork
 - Teamwork in the company will change because the AI system can answer questions and support tasks
 - Teamwork won't change because the AI system can answer questions and support tasks
 - Independence
 - Support of generative AI systems results in more independence for the HR generalist
- 5. Job demands**
- System demands
 - Be able to work with AI systems becomes more important for HR generalists
 - Be able to work with generative AI systems remains equally important for HR generalists
 - Cognitive demands
 - With the deployment of generative AI, communication competence becomes less important for HR generalists
 - With the deployment of generative AI, dealing with changes competence becomes more important for HR generalists
 - With the deployment of generative AI, decision-making competence becomes more important for HR generalists
 - With the deployment of generative AI, decision-making competence remains equally important for HR generalists
 - With the deployment of generative AI, information processing competence becomes more important for HR generalists
 - With the deployment of generative AI, language competence becomes less important for HR generalists
 - With the deployment of generative AI, language competence remains equally important for HR generalists
 - With the deployment of generative AI, writing competence remains equally important for HR generalists
 - With the deployment of generative AI, writing competence will disappear for HR generalists
 - Workload
 - Workload for HR generalist is still the same despite the support of the generative AI system
 - Less workload for HR generalists because of the support of the generative AI system
- 6. Using generative AI for HR specific tasks**
- Use of generative AI for writing
 - HR generalists use generative AI for writing mails
 - HR generalists use generative AI for writing text
 - HR generalists use generative AI for writing policy
 - HR generalists use generative AI for LinkedIn
 - HR generalists use generative AI to translate complicated material for the employee
 - Using generative AI to answer company specific questions
 - HR generalists use company-specific chatbots
 - Using generative AI for administration
 - HR generalists use generative AI for administrative questions
 - HR generalists use generative AI for salary administration

- Using generative AI for recruiting
 - HR generalists use generative AI for preparing interview questions
 - HR generalists use generative AI for candidate selection
 - HR generalists use generative AI for creating job listings
 - HR generalists use generative AI for onboarding
 - Using generative AI for HR analytics
 - HR generalists use generative AI for data predictions
 - Use of generative AI for information input
 - HR generalists use generative AI for making presentations
 - HR generalists use generative AI to prepare meetings
 - HR generalists use generative AI as sparring partner
- 7. Data privacy**
- Data privacy is a risk
 - As a HR generalist you need to be careful with data you share with the generative AI system
 - You don't know what will happen with the information you put into the system
 - Data privacy isn't a risk
 - As an HR generalist I don't see data sharing as a risk
- 8. Limitations of generative AI systems**
- Understanding and interpretation limitations
 - Generative AI systems can't see the reason behind actions/performance of employees
 - Generative AI systems don't have and don't recognise emotions
 - ChatGPT is not able to understand the person behind the CV
 - Personalisation and customization limitations
 - HR generalists don't use generative AI when developing training because that is more customization
 - HR generalists don't use ChatGPT for mails because then it is not personal
- 9. Negative outcomes of working with generative AI for HR generalists**
- Negative impact on skill development and learning
 - Generative AI makes you lose skills as an HR generalist
 - Generative AI makes that you learn less as an HR generalist
 - Negative impact on motivation and work ethic
 - Generative AI makes you a more lazy HR generalist
 - AI makes that HR generalists fear of losing some tasks
- 10. Positive outcomes of working with generative AI**
- Use of generative AI for more innovation and diversity
 - Using generative AI results in a different perspective besides the perspective of the HR generalist itself
 - Using generative AI results in more diversity in the organization
 - Use of generative AI for more efficiency and productivity
 - Using generative AI results in more efficiency in the work of the HR generalist
 - Using generative AI results in time saving for the HR generalist
 - Use of generative AI for more quality and professionalism
 - Using generative AI by HR generalists results in more professionalism and quality in written text

- Using generative AI by HR generalists results in reduced mistakes in written text
- HR generalists mention that ChatGPT output is of a very good quality
- Generative AI to support labour market tightness problem
 - Generative AI will reduce FTE that is necessary in HR
 - Generative AI can help with HR staff shortage problem
- Generative AI can take over tasks
 - Generative AI as an HR generalist assistant to make work easier
 - Generative AI can take over administrative tasks so the HR generalists can focus on tasks that really make a difference
 - Generative AI can take over the manual HR tasks
- Generative AI makes working enjoyable
 - HR generalists like to work with AI
- Use of generative AI for more objectivity
 - Generative AI systems do not have prejudice in giving feedback to the HR generalists
 - Generative AI systems do not have prejudice in selecting candidates
 - Generative AI systems do not have prejudice in making choices that HR generalist make in their daily work

11. Necessity of using generative AI

- See the necessity of using generative AI
 - HR generalists that mention that we need generative AI to be successful in the future
 - HR generalist mentioning that we need to embrace that AI is a thing
 - HR generalists mention the importance of the development of generative AI in the HR field
- Don't see the necessity of using generative AI
 - HR generalists that don't use generative AI that much
 - HR generalists that still write text by themselves

12. Challenges that arise when deploying generative AI

- Adaption and implementation challenges
 - HR generalists don't have it in their system to use generative AI
 - Still some resistance by HR colleagues in working with generative AI
 - It takes time and energy to implement changes such as the use of generative AI in the HR work
 - No policy or support about using AI in the HR work from the company
- Quality challenges
 - As an HR generalist you have to be careful when using generative AI for writing that it doesn't become a general text
 - As an HR generalist have to be careful when deploying generative AI systems during the work because AI can make mistakes

13. Generation differences

- Younger generation sees the benefits of working with AI
 - Younger HR generalists like the fast work method of AI
- Barriers for working with AI for the older generation

- The older generation HR professionals needs to learn more about AI before they will use it
- The older generation HR professionals is not used to work with technologies and won't like to change their working method

Appendix VI: Final coding template

1. Job autonomy and control

- Decisions about the working process itself
 - More autonomy and control for HR generalists about general decisions because of the deployment of generative AI
 - No change in autonomy and control for HR generalists about general decisions because of the deployment of generative AI
 - Less autonomy and control for HR generalists about working methods because of the deployment of generative AI
 - No change in autonomy and control for HR generalists about working methods because of the deployment of generative AI
- Having control over your own time schedule and place of employment
 - No change in autonomy and control for HR generalists about time and place of employment because of the deployment of generative AI

2. Skill variety and use

- Generative AI for task variety and as a tool
 - Generative AI can support the less enjoyable HR work
 - HR generalists describe generative AI as a tool to support their work
- The influence of generative AI on task significance
 - HR work is not more or less worthwhile because of the deployment of generative AI
 - HR work is more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks a generative AI system is not able to do

3. Job feedback and related work characteristics

- Influence of generative AI on degree of feedback
 - Generative AI has no influence on the degree of feedback HR generalists receive
- The use of generative AI for feedback conversations
 - According to HR generalists, feedback conversations needs to be with a person not with an AI system
- Use generative AI for data driven feedback
 - Generative AI systems can help monitor performances for giving feedback to the HR generalist
 - HR generalists don't like the idea of being monitored in their performance

4. Social and relational aspects of work

- Social contact with colleagues and employees
 - More time and focus on people because the generative AI system support the work of the HR generalist
 - Less contact with colleagues because HR generalists can ask the generative AI system
 - HR generalists are afraid of losing the social contact with employees and colleagues
- Interdependence of the HR generalists
 - Support of generative AI systems results in more interdependence for the HR generalist

5. Job demands

- Technological demands

- Be able to work with AI systems becomes more important for HR generalists
 - Be able to work with generative AI systems remains equally important for HR generalists
 - Cognitive demands
 - Cognitive demands that with the deployment of generative AI becomes less important for HR generalists
 - Cognitive demands that with the deployment of generative AI becomes more important for HR generalists
 - Cognitive demands that with the deployment of generative AI remains equally important for HR generalists
 - Workload
 - Workload for HR generalist is still the same despite the support of the generative AI system
 - Less workload for HR generalists because of the support of the generative AI system
- 6. Using generative AI for HR specific tasks**
- Use of generative AI for writing and administering
 - HR generalists use generative AI for writing text
 - HR generalists use generative AI for administrative questions
 - Using generative AI for recruitment and selection
 - HR generalists use generative AI for recruitment and selection
 - Use of generative AI for information input
 - HR generalists use generative AI to prepare meetings
 - HR generalists use generative AI as sparring partner
- 8. Negative outcomes of working with generative AI for HR generalists**
- Negative impact on skill development and learning
 - Generative AI makes you lose skills as an HR generalist
 - Generative AI makes you a more lazy HR generalist
 - Negative impact on Job security
 - AI makes that HR generalists fear of losing tasks
- 9. Positive outcomes of working with generative AI for HR generalists**
- Use of generative AI to enhance HR practices
 - Use of generative AI for more innovation and diversity
 - Use of generative AI for more efficiency and productivity
 - Use of generative AI for more quality and professionalism
 - Use of generative AI for more objectivity
 - Generative AI can take over tasks of the HR generalist
 - Generative AI can take over tasks to support the labour market tightness problem
 - Generative AI can take over administrative tasks so the HR generalists can focus on tasks that really make a difference
 - Generative AI makes work of HR generalists more enjoyable and successful
 - HR generalists like to work with AI
 - HR generalists mentioning that we need generative AI to be successful in the future
 - HR generalist mentioning that we need to embrace that AI is a thing
- 10. Challenges that arise when deploying generative AI**
- Adaption and implementation challenges

- Still some resistance by HR generalists in working with generative AI
- No policy or support from the organization about using AI in the HR work
- Organizations advising employees not to use generative AI while performing their work
- HR generalists that don't use generative AI that much
- No single HR professional within the organization uses generative AI during their work
- Quality challenges
 - As an HR generalist you have to be careful when using generative AI for writing that it doesn't become a general text
 - As an HR generalist have to be careful when deploying generative AI systems during the work because AI can make mistakes

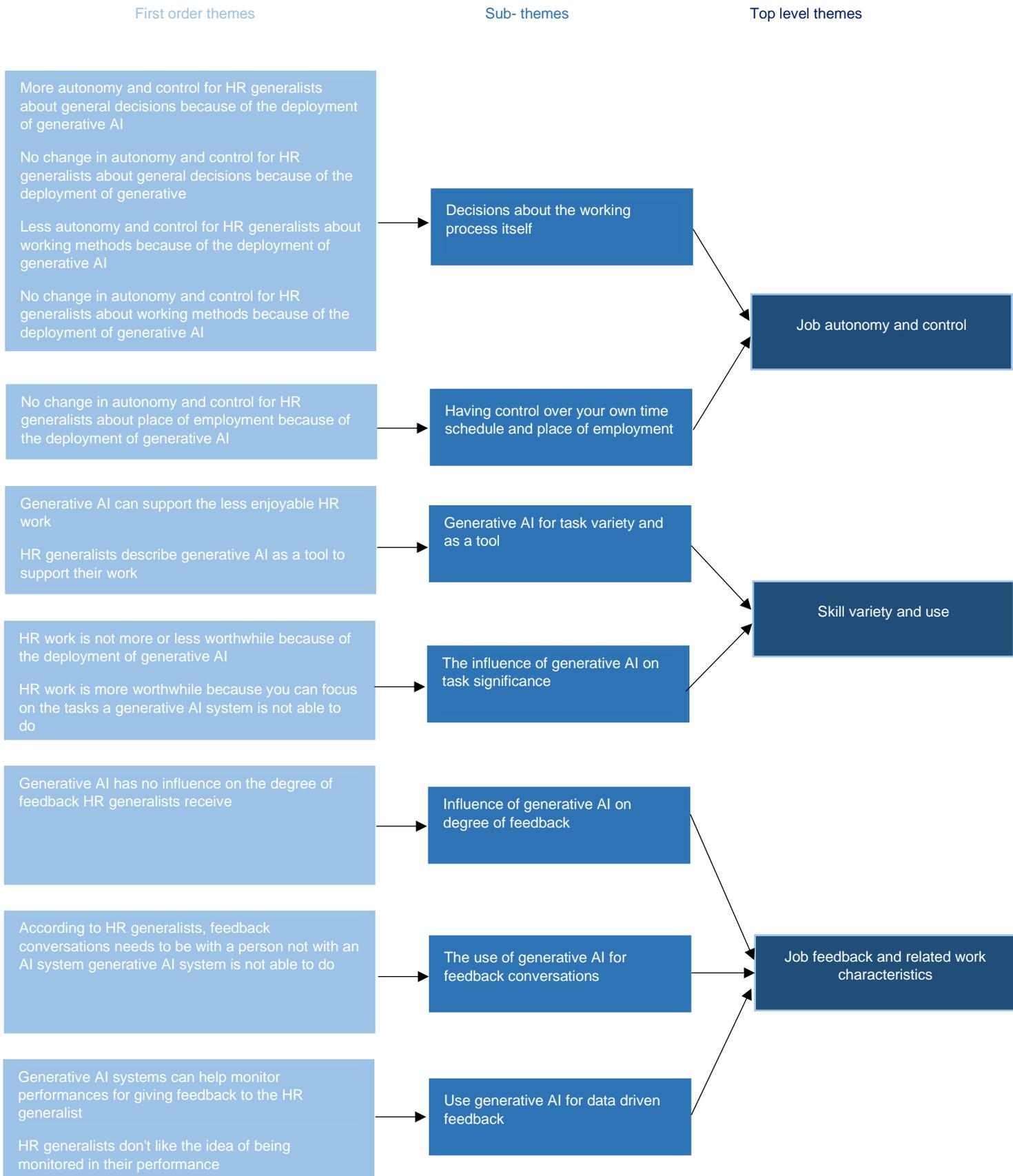
11. Generation differences

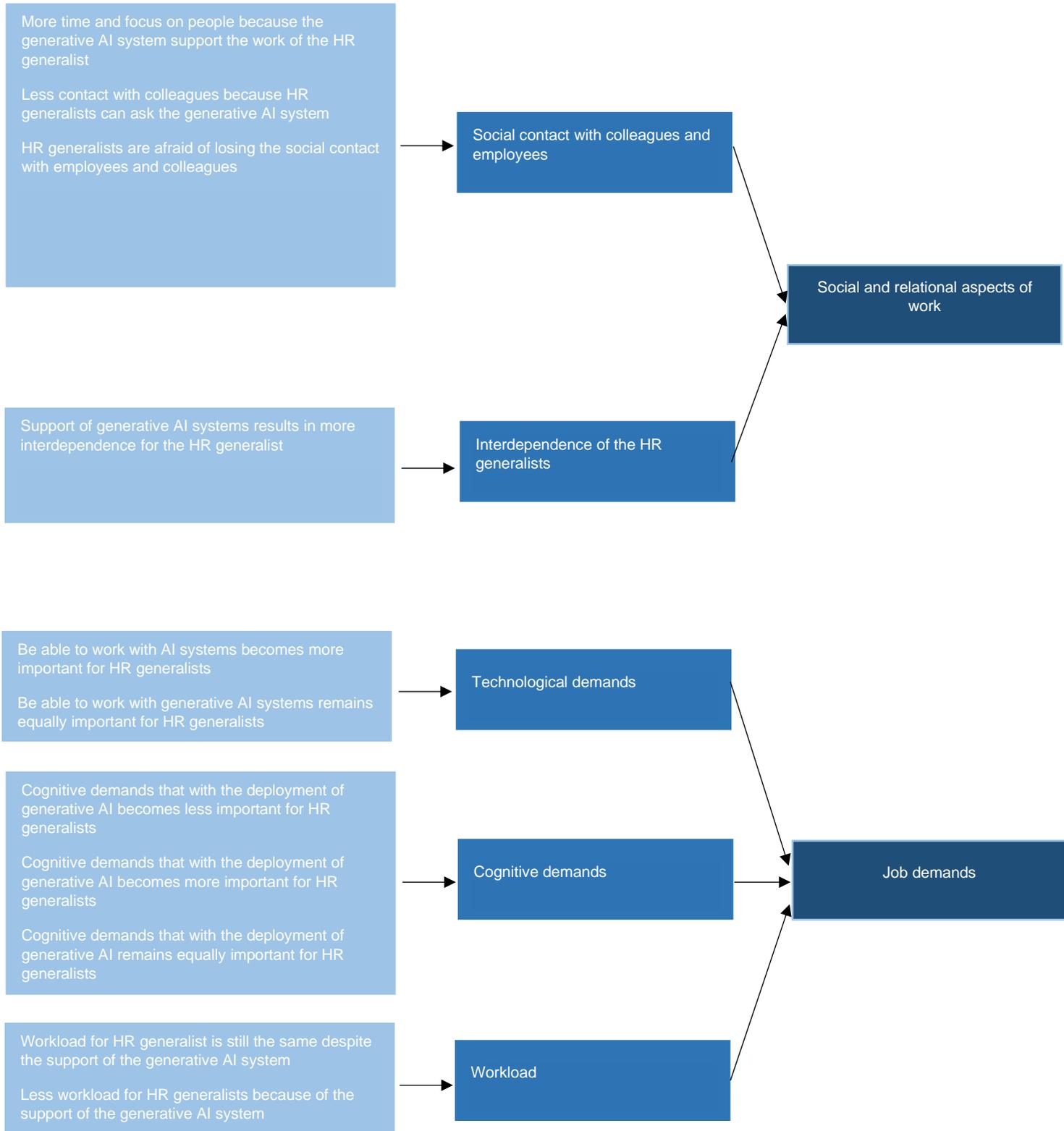
- The younger generation HR generalists sees the benefits of working with generative AI
 - Younger HR generalists like the fast work method of generative AI
 - Younger HR generalists like to explore working with generative AI and use it often in their work
- The older generation HR generalists sees some barriers for working with generative AI
 - The older generation HR professionals needs to learn more about AI before they will use it
 - The older generation HR professionals is not used to work with technologies and won't like to change their working method

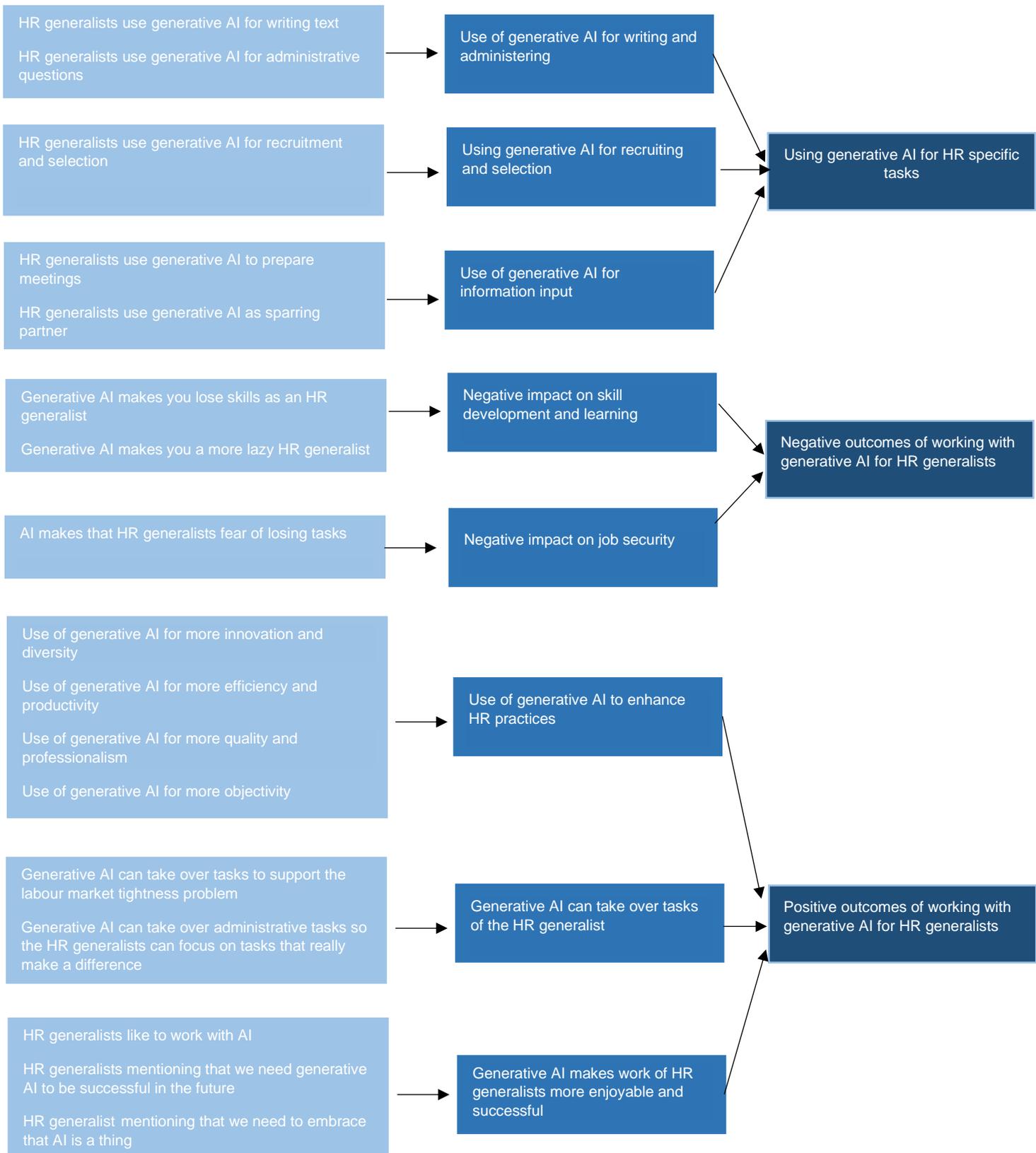
Appendix VII: Figure of data structure

Figure 1

Comprehensive figure of data structure







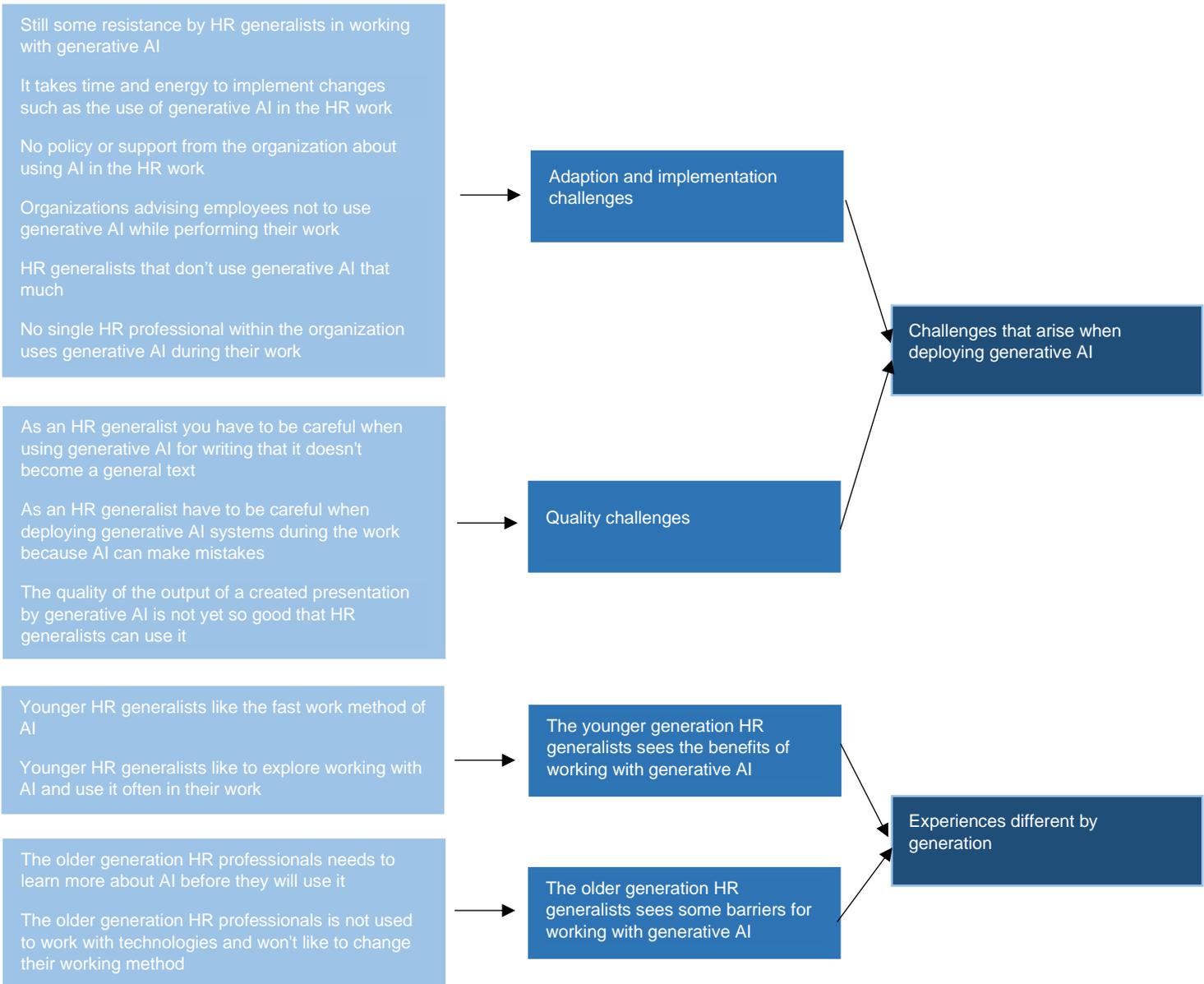
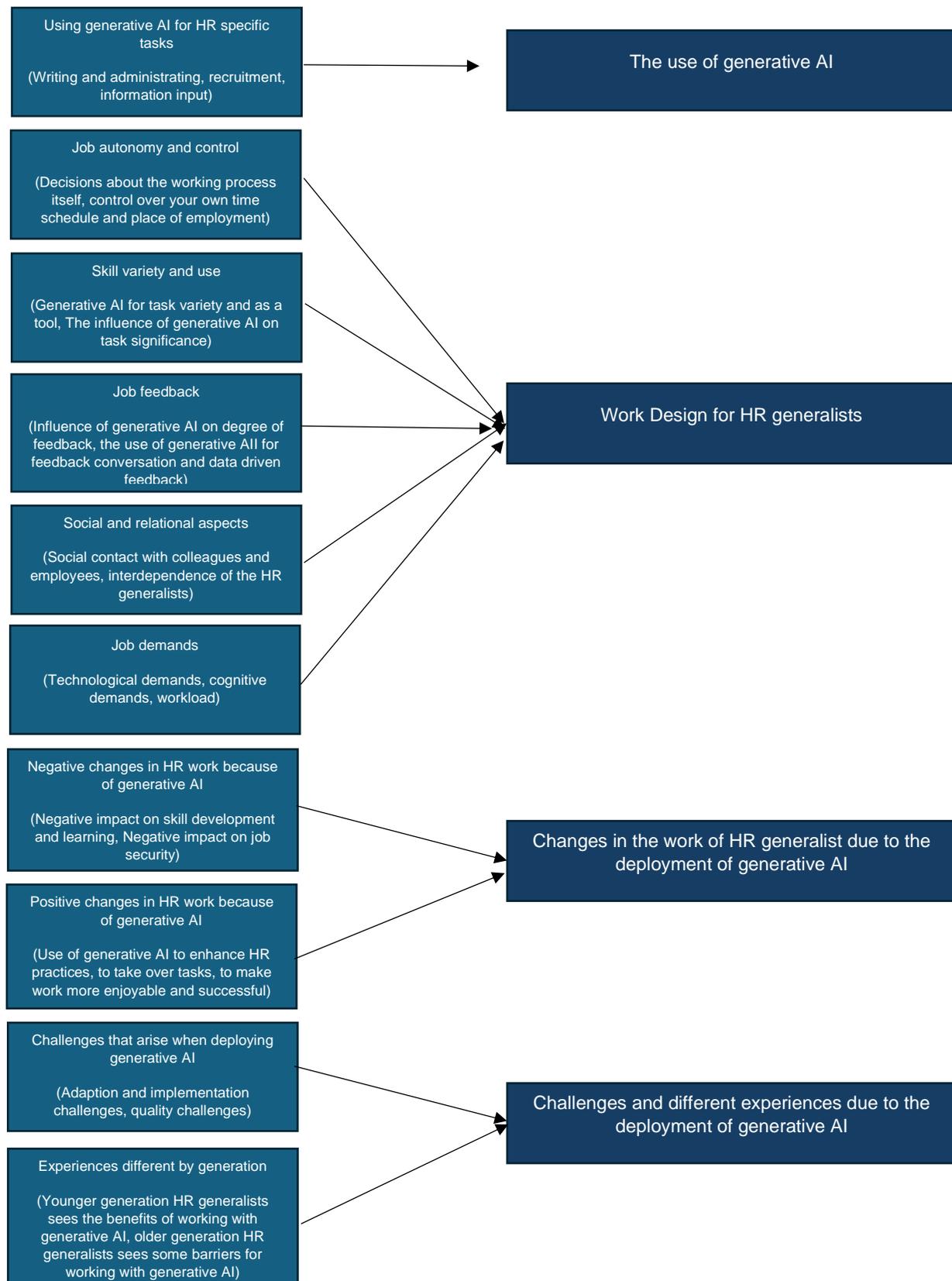


Figure 2

More specific figure of the data structure



Appendix VIII: Overview of the results of the interviews

Table 1

Overview of the use of generative AI for each respondent

Respondent, age and industry	Administrative tasks	Writing text	Sparrings partner	Creating job profiles	Selecting candidates	Prepare meetings	Job listings	Which AI system
#1 35- Marketing	++	++			++		++	ChatGPT Homerun Clever
#2 35- Education		+					+	ChatGPT
#3 35- Consultancy	++	++	++				++	ChatGPT
#4 35- Technic		++	++				++	ChatGPT
#5 35- Government		+		+			+	ChatGPT
#6 35- Government		++	++			++	++	ChatGPT
#7 35- Childcare/ education	++	++	++				++	ChatGPT
#8 35- HR Consultancy	++	++		++			++	ChatGPT ARC
#9 35- HR Consultancy		++	++		++	++	++	ChatGPT Copilot
#10 35+ Government		++	+					ChatGPT
#11 35+ Logistics and supplies		++	++				++	ChatGPT
#12 35- Service sector		++					++	ChatGPT Copilot SAP
#13 35+ Security services		+	+					ChatGPT
#14 35+ IT		+	+			+	+	ChatGPT
#15 35+ Care		+					+	ChatGPT
#16 35+ Care								
#17 35+ Cosmetics							++	ChatGPT

+ Occasional use of AI during HR work

++ Regular use of AI during HR work

Table 2

Overview of the changes in the components of Work Design for each respondent

Respondent #	Autonomy and control	Skill variety and use	Feedback	Social and relational aspects	Job demands
#1	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p> <p>AI systems can help monitor performances which may lead to valuable information for feedback conversations.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>Negative effect on job demands because there will be more cognitive demands like analysing and problem solving.</p> <p>Also there will be more technological demands like being able to work with AI systems.</p> <p>Positive effect because AI can reduce workload demands because it can take over tasks.</p>
#2	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>Negative effect on autonomy and control about working method because AI will demands a new working method.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>Negative effect because you ask the AI system and have less contact with colleagues.</p> <p>Also because I am afraid of losing the social contact.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>Cognitive demands like language and writing will become less important but things like analysing will be more important,</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because AI don't save that much work and time.</p>
#3	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>No change in task significance/work that feels worthwhile.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>Cognitive demands like language and writing will become less important but things like analysing will be more important,</p> <p>No change in technological demands because you do not need to use AI yet.</p> <p>Positive effect because AI can reduce workload demands because it support in work tasks.</p>
#4	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p>	<p>Cognitive demands like language and writing will become less important but things like analysing</p>

	<p>the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Also because I am afraid of losing the social contact.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>will be more important,</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because the time you save will be filled with other tasks.</p>
#5	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>Negative effect on autonomy and control about working method because AI will demands a new working method.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative and manual work.</p> <p>No change in task significance/work that feels worthwhile.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>Cognitive demands like language and writing will become less important but things like analysing will be more important.</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because AI don't save that much work and time.</p>
#6	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>No change in task significance/work that feels worthwhile.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p> <p>AI systems can help monitor performances which may lead to valuable information for feedback conversations.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>Cognitive demands like language and writing will become less important but things like analysing will be more important,</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because the time you save will be filled with other tasks.</p>
#7	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>No change in task significance/work that feels worthwhile.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p> <p>AI systems can help monitor performances which may lead to valuable information for</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p>

	No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.		feedback conversations.		No change in workload demands because the time you save will be filled with other tasks.
#8	<p>Positive effect on autonomy and control about general decisions because an AI system only does what you ask of it so you have all the autonomy and control and it may also see things that I have overlooked.</p> <p>Negative effect on autonomy and control about working method because AI will demands a new working method.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>Negative effect on job demands because there will be more cognitive demands like analysing and communication. Also there will be more technological demands like being able to work with AI systems.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because the time you save will be filled with other tasks.</p>
#9	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p> <p>Do not like the idea of being monitored in my performances.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>Negative effect on job demands because there will be more cognitive demands like analysing and communication. Also there will be more technological demands like being able to work with AI systems.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because the time you save will be filled with other tasks.</p>
#10	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p> <p>AI systems can help monitor performances which may lead to valuable information for feedback conversations.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because the time you save will be filled with other tasks.</p>
#11	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable</p>	<p>No change in No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the</p>

	<p>the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has noting do to with AI.</p>	<p>administrative work.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person. However, in addition to that weekly meeting with an AI avatar will be useful.</p> <p>AI systems can help monitor performances which may lead to valuable information for feedback conversations.</p>	<p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because the time you save will be filled with other tasks.</p>
#12	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has noting do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>No change in task significance/work that feels worthwhile.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>Negative effect because you ask the AI system and have less contact with colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>No change in technological demands because you do not need to use AI yet.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because AI don't save that much work and time.</p>
#13	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has noting do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>No change in task significance/work that feels worthwhile.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p> <p>AI systems can help monitor performances which may lead to valuable information for feedback conversations.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>No change in technological demands because you do not need to use AI yet.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because the time you save will be filled with other tasks.</p>
#14	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has noting do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>No change in task significance/work that feels worthwhile.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Positive effect because you save time and have more time for colleagues.</p> <p>Also because I am afraid of losing the social contact.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>No change in technological demands because you do not need to use AI yet.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because AI don't save that much work and time.</p>

#15	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Negative effect because you ask the AI system and have less contact with colleagues.</p> <p>There is less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because AI don't save that much work and time.</p>
#16	<p>No change in autonomy and control because we do not use AI. But when you use AI there will be more autonomy and control about general decisions because you have the control over the system.</p>	<p>For now no changes however, when we use it:</p> <p>Positive effect because AI takesover the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>No change in task significance/work that feels worthwhile.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p> <p>AI systems can help monitor performances which may lead to valuable information for feedback conversations.</p>	<p>No changes yet</p> <p>Also because I am afraid of losing the social contact.</p> <p>However, when AI is used there is less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because AI is not used and if it is used the time that you save will be filled with other tasks.</p>
#17	<p>No change in autonomy and control about general decisions because I have the power over the AI system and the final decision.</p> <p>No change in autonomy and control about working method, you are still free to use the work method of your choice.</p> <p>No change in time and place of employment, this has nothing do to with AI.</p>	<p>Positive effect because AI takes over the less enjoyable administrative work.</p> <p>And because it is a tool in skills and knowledge.</p> <p>And because the work feels more worthwhile because you can focus on the tasks that really make a difference and a generative AI system is not able to do.</p>	<p>No change in degree of feedback because AI is not used in giving feedback.</p> <p>Feedback conversation needs to be with a person.</p>	<p>Negative effect because you ask the AI system and have less contact with colleagues.</p> <p>There is also less interdependence because you can ask the AI system which result in less social and relational contact.</p>	<p>No change in cognitive demands because you just need to have the basic level of cognitive skills.</p> <p>Negative effect on technological demands because the importance of being able to work with AI systems will grow.</p> <p>No change in workload demands because AI don't save that much work and time.</p>

Table 4*Different experiences in changes in the components of Work Design*

Component of Work Design	Explanation of differences in experiences
Job autonomy and control	<p>HR generalists who experience positive changes in autonomy and control use generative AI to a high degree, while those experiencing negative changes use it relatively less. No pattern in age or industry.</p> <p>The HR generalists who experience all freedom in whether or not to use generative AI mainly experience the positive changes (or no change). The HR generalists who feel the pressure of having to use generative AI systems and having to collaborate with the systems who experience negative changes</p>
Skill variety and use	No negative changes, only positive changes, so no differences in experiences.
Job feedback and related work characteristics	<p>Everyone experiences no change in degree of feedback so no differences in experiences.</p> <p>However, high generative AI users sees possibilities in using generative AI for monitoring performances. No pattern in age or industry.</p>
Social and relational aspects of work	<p>HR generalists who experience more time and focus on people, at the same time experience less social contact because many questions can be asked to generative AI systems instead of colleagues.</p> <p>HR generalist who in addition experience negative changes because they fear of losing the social contact are HR generalists who make relatively little use of generative AI. No pattern in age or industry.</p>
Job demands	<p>HR generalist who feel that working with AI is an obligation experience a raise in technological demands.</p> <p>According to the 35- HR generalist cognitive demands do change, however, where there are demands added, there are also demands that disappear. However, the 35+ group indicate no change in term of cognitive demands because everyone needs to have a sufficient basic level. This group includes all HR generalists who work in the care industry.</p> <p>Changes regarding workload can be explained by the fact that only high users of the 35- aged generative AI experience a reduction of the workload. No pattern in industry.</p>

Table 5 Overview of de changes, challenges and experiences of the respondents

What is said in the interview	By which respondent
Generative AI makes you lazy	2,6,8
Generative AI makes you lose skills	2,5
The fear of losing tasks	5,11
Use of generative AI for more innovation and diversity	2,9
Use of generative AI for more efficiency and productivity	1 tm 17
Use of generative AI for more quality and professionalism	2,4,5,6,8 tm 17
Use of generative AI for more objectivity	1,2,5tm8, 10,13,tm15
Generative AI can take over tasks to support the labour market tightness problem	1,5,8,10,11,13,15
Generative AI can take over administrative tasks so the HR generalists can focus on tasks that really make a difference	1tm 3, 7,8,11,12,16
HR generalists like to work with AI	1, 3tm6, 8, 12
HR generalists mentioning that we need generative AI to be successful in the future	1,3,5,8,11,14,16
HR generalist mentioning that we need to embrace that AI is a thing	1,2,4tm7, 10,12,13,14,16
Still some resistance by HR generalists in working with generative AI	1,3,5,6,10,16
No policy or support from the organization about using AI in the HR work	3,5,7,8,10,14,16
Organizations advising employees not to use generative AI while performing their work	13
HR generalists that don't use generative AI that much	2,5,13tm17
No single HR professional within the organization uses generative AI during their work	16
As an HR generalist you have to be careful when using generative AI for writing that it doesn't become a general text	2,8,17
As an HR generalist have to be careful when deploying generative AI systems during the work because AI can make mistakes	6,7,9,12,15,16
Younger HR generalists like the fast work method of generative AI	2
Younger HR generalists like to explore working with generative AI and use it often in their work	3,4,6,8,11,13,15,16
The older generation HR professionals needs to learn more about AI before they will use it	1,2,4,6,8,13,15,16
The older generation HR professionals is not used to work with technologies and won't like to change their working method	2,3