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# The Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Talent Acquisition: The Case of Greek Luxury Hotels

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**ABSTRACT**

This study introduces a framework for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven technology to talent acquisition processes in luxury hotels. This qualitative study employed 23 semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions of professionals on AI in luxury hotels in Greece. The findings highlight the benefits of AI-enabled technologies in talent acquisition, including speed, reliability and enhanced candidate communication, however, human interaction remains pivotal at critical stages. The model proposed includes six stages in the AI-Talent Acquisition process, serving as a practical guide for practitioners and researchers. This study contributes to the AI-HRM strategic change field by offering theoretical and practical insights. To the best of the authors' knowledge, it represents one of the initial empirical attempts to develop a comprehensive AI-Talent Acquisition framework, providing valuable implications for ongoing research and implementation in this domain.

## 1 | Introduction

Over time, many duties and tasks traditionally performed by humans have shifted to or been enhanced by technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), which possesses a remarkable ability to categorize, analyse and extract information (Bilkštytė-Skanė and Akstinaite 2024). AI can be defined 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 and Haenlein 2019, 17).

AI-enabled technologies are becoming increasingly common in organisations, enhancing strategic decision-making for business survival, particularly in volatile industries like tourism and hospitality (T&H) (Fowler et al. 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing challenges, such as high staff turnover and poor working conditions, leading to a significant labour shortage in T&H. Unemployment in T&H continues due to layoffs

and hiring freezes resulting from the pandemic, posing significant challenges for the industry to address a long-term war for talent (Baum 2019). The hospitality industry relies heavily on finding the right talent to serve corporate values and provide service excellence; as a result, it is crucial for T&H businesses to continuously working to make their firms attractive to new employees and retain the right mix of talent to ensure resilience and long-term survival (Harte 2019).

While media discourse often fixates on the potential threats posed by AI to employment (El Hajal and Rowson 2020), a nuanced understanding reveals its transformative potential in more effective Human Resource Management (HRM) as well as in enhancing productivity and service quality (Li et al. 2021). This recognition has prompted Human Resource (HR) professionals in the hospitality sector to embrace AI across various facets of people management, including recruitment and selection, training and development and

**Summary**

- This study introduces a model for the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven technology to talent acquisition process in luxury hotels.

- AI-Augmented HRM has assumed strategic importance for achieving HRM-related and organisational outcomes for talent acquisition as a sustainable competitive advantage for businesses.

- The benefits of AI-enabled technologies in talent acquisition, including speed, reliability and enhanced candidate communication, help preserve the human element in HRM and sustain recruitment practices.

- A six stages model in AI-Talent Acquisition is proposed including talent acquisition and recruitment, AI technology evaluation and compatibility, decision on development, staff training, implementation and AI-driven talent acquisition system evaluation and updates.

- We propose that AI-enabled technologies are becoming increasingly common in organisations, enhancing strategic decision-making for business survival, particularly in volatile industries like tourism and hospitality.

performance management (Verma 2024; Upadhyay and Khandelwal 2018). From the widespread adoption of chatbots to the integration of HR virtual assistants, major multinational hotel chains are harnessing AI to optimise HR processes and functions (Ruel and Njoku 2020). Studies on the use of AI in HRM practices are limited and fragmented (Verma 2024; Budhwar et al. 2022; Sheila et al. 2018), mainly literature-based, with a lack of studies presenting empirical findings on how hotels diffuse innovation with the use of AI in talent acquisition process.

According to Prikshat et al. (2023) AI-Augmented HRM has assumed strategic importance for achieving HRM-related and organisational outcomes for a sustainable competitive advantage. In addition, AI has a profound impact on implementing HRM practices, and in so doing, it is transforming the nature of hospitality work, workers and workplaces (Malik, Budhwar, and Kazmi 2023). Our study seeks to delve deeper into the implications of AI-powered technologies, particularly in the context of talent acquisition practices or processes within the luxury hotel sector (Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski 2020). Baum (2019, 3826) confirms other studies that propose 'talent, in the context of hospitality and tourism does not necessarily mean the same thing as it might in other sectors of the economy'. The working conditions and employment culture challenge the acquisition of talent in T&H. Studies propose that there is a difference between graduates and hospitality managers perception of skills requirements to enter the industry; students prioritise the development of organisational/managerial skills, whereas employers require customer service skills (Jiang and Alexakis 2017). Moreover, challenges related to job quality and remuneration, as well as the standardization of service across all roles—including creative and managerial work (Leslie and Rantisi 2017), along with structural changes—hinder the

hospitality sector's ability to attract talent. Structural changes such as job insecurity (Robinson et al. 2019), work-life imbalance, inequalities (i.e., gender, age, ethnicity, disability) (Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou 2019), unethical employer practices and lack of social respect (Baum 2019) create significant barriers to talent attraction and retention. Addressing these challenges necessitates action supported by technology, including AI. Through an in-depth review of the existing literature and a qualitative exploration of the practitioners' perspectives, this research endeavours to elucidate the potential of AI as a catalyst for strategic change in talent acquisition process in the luxury hotel sector. The purpose of this study is to offer valuable insights and implications for both scholars and practitioners alike. By elucidating these facets, luxury hotels can effectively navigate the incorporation of AI-enabled technologies into their talent acquisition processes, ultimately fostering a more dynamic and proficient workforce. While AI-enabled talent acquisition presents a transformative potential for streamlining processes and broadening talent acquisition in the hospitality sector, mitigating biases and ensuring ethical practices remain critical considerations for HR practitioners and hospitality leaders alike. In view of these, the research objectives for this study are to:

- Explore the current state of the use of AI in HRM in hospitality;

- Critically analyse the use of AI-enabled technology use in talent acquisition in luxury hospitality;

- Provide recommendations on the most effective use of AI technology in talent acquisition in luxury hospitality.

## 2 | Literature Review

### 2.1 | The AI Integration in Human Resources Management

Recent studies, that is, Budhwar et al. (2022) and Doborjeh et al. (2022) suggest that AI significantly contributes to time and productivity savings while enhancing employee experience levels. Charlwood and Guenole (2022) further highlight the positive outcomes AI bring to HR Departments, particularly in labour-intensive industries like the luxury hospitality sector. The integration of AI systems has propelled businesses in this sector to higher levels of efficiency and productivity (Koo et al. 2021). AI's support for HR professionals extends to staying abreast of industry trends and understanding employee sentiments (Vrontis et al. 2022). Chowdhury et al. (2023) point out AI's role in improving understanding of employee sentiments and facilitating the acquisition of skilled personnel. Furthermore, Malik et al. (2023) emphasize AI's capacity to identify and address employee-related issues, fostering harmonious employer-employee relationships through digital transformation. Integrating AI in key HR functions can enhance decision-making, mitigate biases and boost productivity (Chowdhury et al. 2023), improve operational efficiency by saving time and enhancing reliability (Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski 2020). This enables HR professionals to concentrate more on strategic decision-making tasks in talent acquisition (Pierrakis and Bhimireddy 2024).

An illustrative case in point is the implementation of chatbots to support HR functions, for example to promptly address any inquiries or concerns that may arise among potential employees regarding organisational policies or regulations (Pillai et al. 2024).

## 2.2 | The Use of AI in Talent Acquisition in Tourism and Hospitality

AI-powered platforms help hospitality organisations with effective talent acquisition and retention strategies (Gonzalez et al. 2019; Gao, Liang, and Huang 2019). AI-powered talent management tools enhance career development opportunities and improve workforce satisfaction and performance (Ruel and Njoku 2020; Charlwood 2021). Integrating HRM with AI technologies can boost employee support services and retention rates (Lim 2023). HR professionals in luxury hotels can then focus on talent acquisition, talent management, organisational development instead of training challenges (Verma 2024; Morsy and El Demerdash 2017). Talent management plays a vital role in today's organisations for sustaining success and the competitive advantage. In T&H organisations rely on people, hence effective attraction, recruitment, development and retention of talent are important to the business resilience and survival (Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou 2019). Talent management further benefits organisations in building a pool of capable leaders, nurture a culture of continuous learning and demonstrate resilience and adaptability in evolving market demands. Resource allocation is optimized, productivity is increased, employee satisfaction is enhanced, skills gaps and talent shortages can be addressed; hence enabling T&H businesses to survive in the war for talent with their reputation and HR branding (Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou 2019).

The process of recruiting talented employees plays a strategic role in determining organisational success, shaping the work environment, and fostering a greater pool of talent with high number of high-performing hospitality employees (Chung and D'Annunzio-Green 2018; Torres and Mejia 2017). Talent acquisition is a vital HR function and involves huge funds for getting the right talent onboard. Evaluating a candidate's potential is paramount to ensuring that an organisation possesses a top-tier talent pool capable of effectively managing hospitality operations (Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou 2019). AI-enabled technology aids in aligning employees' skill sets with organisational requirements, thereby enhancing recruitment quality. AI has revolutionised talent acquisition by streamlining various stages of the talent acquisition process.

Hunkenschroer and Luetge (2022, 977) define AI-enabled recruitment as any procedure employing AI to aid organisations in recruiting and selecting job candidates. Verma (2024) explains that AI-based talent acquisition differs from traditional HRIS and e-HR systems by incorporating augmented intelligence, which combines human insights with AI-driven initiatives and decision-making. Numerous studies have explored the use of AI in talent acquisition process, but a few have focused on T&H (Verma 2024, 137). Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski (2020) studied the use of e-HRM and AI in recruitment in T&H

organisations and proposed that they help increase retention rates. Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski (2020) further propose that AI-based performance management enhances employee satisfaction and increases retention, helps setting meaningful goals, foster a culture of continuous feedback and growth leading to increased employee engagement and loyalty. Albert (2019) identified 11 specific areas in recruitment and selection where AI applications can be implemented, enabling recruiters to concentrate more on strategic issues. Meanwhile, Dillon (2020) examined talent development and proposed leveraging AI for personalization, impact analysis and gamification in HR. These technologies can enhance employee competencies, foster leadership development and provide targeted training in areas like health and safety.

Talent intelligence platforms use machine learning methods like deep neural networks, simple algorithms with regression analyses, natural language processing and voice recognition (Majumder and Mondal 2021). They help job seekers find suitable roles, streamline virtual recruitment, reduce biases, aid career planning and new employee onboarding (Vedapradha, Hariharan, and Shivakami 2019; Gao, Liang, and Huang 2019). Additionally, e-recruitment offers access to a broader pool of applicants who align well with the organisation's culture (Budhwar et al. 2022). AI-enabled e-recruitment can streamline the process, aid in monitoring productivity and retention, and optimize talent acquisition efforts (Lim 2023; Kallmuenzer et al. 2023). Moreover, studies propose that AI-enabled workforce planning can shift businesses from reactive to proactive hiring practices (Gonzalez et al. 2019), and pre-emptively identify potential candidates (Cruz 2023).

## 2.3 | Challenges of AI-Enabled Talent Acquisition Process in T&H

While AI holds the potential to enhance human performance, streamline operations and reduce costs, it is not without its flaws. Employee recruitment remains a considerable challenge for T&H businesses, despite the allure of technological advancements. Furthermore, the competition for highly skilled talent in the hospitality sector has intensified in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, further exacerbating the global staffing crisis (Giousmpasoglou and Marinakou 2024; Giousmpasoglou, Ladkin, and Marinakou 2024; Williams et al. 2024). The employment of AI-enabled practices raises ethical concerns such as unconscious biases and discrimination in the recruitment process (Hunkenschroer and Luetge 2022). However, careful examination is needed to mitigate biases. The reliance on algorithms and machine learning models may inadvertently perpetuate prejudices and stereotypes, posing significant challenges to fair and equitable hiring practices (Packin and Lev-Aretz 2018). If bias avoidance is not considered when using AI in recruitment and training, then the customer experience and service are jeopardised (Trihas, Panagiotaki, and Kyriakaki 2020). To capitalise on the innovative benefits that AI has to offer and mitigate discriminatory concerns, proper scholarly awareness, industry cooperation and regulatory attention must accompany the introduction of AI-enabled technologies in T&H talent acquisition process (Ivanov and Umbrello 2021; Albert 2019).

## 3 | Methodology

The qualitative approach was found to be an appropriate approach as real-life settings can be explored and theory may be developed (Clark 2019), the inductive approach may strengthen the development of themes from raw data resulting to a proposed model or theory (Thomas 2006). To explore the perspectives of managers in luxury hotels regarding the use and effectiveness of AI in HRM and talent acquisition, semi-structured interviews were identified as the most suitable method (Stelmaszak and Parry 2023; Söldner 2023), they offered greater flexibility, allowing the researchers to delve deeper into topics and adapt their questioning based on participants' responses (Roulston and Choi 2018). The interview questions were designed based on the study's aim and research questions; however, they were open to allow other topics relevant to the study objectives to be discussed to collect rich in-depth data. The interview guide used was structured in two parts: the first section gathered information about the participants' backgrounds, while the second focused on the application of AI-enabled technology in talent acquisition. The primary aim was to gain insights into the organisations' perspective on AI.

The study focused on luxury hotels in Greece, and thanks to the researchers' network, access to participants was readily achievable. The tourism industry is crucial to Greece's economy, accounting for over 19% of its GDP (WTTC 2023), with the luxury accommodation sector playing a vital role in this landscape with a forecast to reach $2.7 billion by 2030, with a 11.5% annual growth rate (SETE 2023). The country has attracted foreign and domestic capital with significant investment in boutique and luxury hotels (Statista. 2024). Despite the full recovery from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic the sector faces an unprecedented staffing crisis, which makes talent acquisition and retention a top priority for luxury hotels (Medova, Mackova, and Harmacek 2021). The use of AI in the hotel industry is reshaping the employment landscape as they bring a need for shift in the skill sets required by the workforce (Baum 2019). The essence of luxury hospitality lies in creating memorable experiences via personal interactions making the sector more reliant on finding and retaining the right talent. Although luxury hotels focus on exclusivity and provide exceptional customer service which can be achieved by hiring and developing their human capital, the use of AI technology in recruitment in the sector is under-researched (Verma 2024). Emerging opportunities exist in the luxury hotel sector to play a part in testing the use of AI in recruitment as they have the economic power to invest in such technologies. They also have experience in the use of the transformative power of AI to redefine service excellence (Trihas, Panagiotaki, and Kyriakaki 2020).

Purposive and snowball sampling were adopted to ensure trustworthiness and rigor relying on the researchers' expertise to sample participants (Campbell et al. 2020). The criteria required participants who held a general manager or HR position in a luxury hotel that already had been using AI in recruitment, they had at least 2 years of experience in the position and the hotel (see Table 1 for participants profile). In total 50 personalised invitations were sent by email and 16 responded. As the number of initial responses was found

to be limited, we employed snowball convenience sampling (Saunders et al. 2018). This resulted in a total of 23 one-to-one online semi-structured interviews conducted from March to June 2023. Each interview lasted on average 45 min; all were recorded upon receiving participants' consent and were conducted in English. Saturation occurred when 21 interviews were completed as no additional issues or insights were mentioned (Sebele-Mpofu 2020; Saunders et al. 2018); however, another two were done to ensure rigour and quality in providing transparency in the sample size selection and ensuring that there were no new aspects, dimensions or relevant information (Saunders et al. 2018; Sebele-Mpofu 2020). Finally, all data were transcribed from the interview recordings on Teams and participants were then anonymised.

The hotels were chosen from the list available at the website of SETE, and the focus was mainly on those 5* were the researchers had access to managers. All managers involved with the study held jobs such as HR Manager/Director, Talent Acquisition Manager or were involved with talent acquisition (General Managers, GMs). Nineteen participants were employed in multinational or national/local hotel chains, and 4 were in independent hotels. In all cases the hotels in the study were luxury representing 5* customer service, which typically implement more advanced talent acquisition strategies compared to local chains and independent hotels (Budhwar et al. 2022). The participants were highly experienced, boasting an average of 22 years in their respective positions or roles.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse a set of themes that emerged from the data set. These themes were established through coding which aided in the systematic categorisation of data (Sebele-Mpofu 2020). We allocated the generated codes to each interview and computed the frequency of codes within each theme for every participant. This procedure facilitated the determination of the predominant theme within each category. To ensure the reliability and validity of the results, two of the researchers examined the data independently and rigorously according to multiple encoding approach. The counting of codes and code frequency confirmed that saturation was reached, as new codes diminished. In addition, the homogeneity of the sample contributed to saturation at this sample size (Saunders et al. 2018).

## 4 | Findings

### 4.1 | Traditional Talent Acquisition Approaches

Traditional talent acquisition and recruitment practices were often criticised by the participants for their time-consuming nature, posing challenges for both applicants and HR professionals alike '*A waste of time and old-fashioned practices are two factors that characterise traditional recruitment*' (P4). Candidates frequently navigated through complex and lengthy processes, leading to extended waiting periods and a lack of timely communication. HR professionals, constrained by time limitations, contend that it is difficult to provide updates to applicants regarding their application status. According to P1 '*...it is an obsolete way which also demands a lot of time...candidates have to go over many complicated stages sometimes*'. Participants highlighted the inefficiencies of traditional recruitment methods,

**TABLE 1** | Participants' profiles.

| Participant coding | Position/Role | Gender | Experience on this role | Hotel location | Hotel type | Hotel ownership[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P1 | HR Manager | Female | 10–20 years | Athens | City | MNC |
| P2 | Recruitment Mgr. | Female | 5–10 years | Athens | City | MNC |
| P3 | Talent Acquisition Mgr. | Male | 10–20 years | Athens | Mixed | MNC |
| P4 | HR Manager | Male | 20–30 years | Athens | Mixed | Nat. chain |
| P5 | HR Manager | Female | 10–20 years | Athens | City | Nat. chain |
| P6 | General Manager | Male | < 30 years | Athens | City | Independent |
| P7 | Talent Acquisition Mgr. | Female | 10–20 years | Crete | Resort | MNC |
| P8 | HR Manager | Male | 10–20 years | Crete | Resort | Nat. chain |
| P9 | HR Manager | Male | 20–30 years | Crete | Resort | Nat. chain |
| P10 | General Manager | Female | 20–30 years | Crete | Resort | Local chain |
| P11 | General Manager | Male | < 30 years | Crete | Resort | Independent |
| P12 | General Manager | Male | 10–20 years | Crete | Resort | Independent |
| P13 | HR Manager | Female | 20–30 years | Crete | City | Local chain |
| P14 | General Manager | Male | 20–30 years | Crete | City | Local chain |
| P15 | Recruitment Mgr. | Female | 5–10 years | Rhodes | Resort | MNC |
| P16 | Talent Acquisition Mgr. | Male | 20–30 years | Rhodes | Resort | MNC |
| P17 | HR Manager | Male | 10–20 years | Rhodes | Resort | Nat. chain |
| P18 | HR Manager | Female | 20–30 years | Rhodes | Resort | Nat. chain |
| P19 | HR Manager | Male | 10–20 years | Rhodes | Resort | Local chain |
| P20 | General Manager | Male | 20–30 years | Rhodes | Resort | Local chain |
| P21 | HR Manager | Male | 10–20 years | Rhodes | City | Local chain |
| P22 | HR Manager | Male | 20–30 years | Rhodes | City | Local chain |
| P23 | General Manager | Male | 20–30 years | Rhodes | City | Independent |

[a]Ownership explained: (a) MNC: multinational hotel chain; (b) Nat. chain: national hotel chain; (c) Local chain: local hotel chains; and (d) Independent: independent and/or family business.

emphasising the need for more streamlined and effective processes. Efficiency, in this context, referred to the ability of recruitment processes to become more efficient and cost-effective through the integration of AI technology. Participants acknowledged the substantial investment of resources necessary for recruitment and stressed the importance of minimising hiring time for the mutual benefit of the hotel and the candidate. For example. P14 stated, '*the recruitment process must be straightforward… if they (candidates) are required to go through many interviews, they may decide not to apply*'.

## 4.2 | The Application of AI-Driven Technology in Talent Acquisition, Evaluation and Compatibility

The integration of AI-enabled technology in Talent Acquisition practices was predominantly observed in multinational and national hotel chains. P16 provided some useful insights into this process:

> The process is centralised and controlled by the country's head office… we can monitor the (recruitment and selection) process in real-time through our HR (online) platform… for entry-level jobs, we actively engage from the early stages whereas for managerial and senior roles in the final stages only.

Conversely, participants (P13, P14, P21, P22) engaged in local hotel chains or independent establishments reported minimal or negligible utilisation of AI-enabled tools in their recruitment campaigns. However, they did express awareness of the available tools and their functionalities currently accessible in the market. For example, an indirect utilisation of AI-enabled technologies was identified; P12 reported '*We use external recruiters, and we participate in the final stages of the candidate selection process… they use different AI technologies depending on the stage and it is really impressive*!'

Participants suggested that AI technology plays a pivotal role in the pre-selection and pre-screening stages of the recruitment process, for example P3 stated '*AI software tools work best when applied in early stages of the hiring activity, where there is more administrative work and no need for people*'. This software is adept at phrasing job descriptions, applying specific keywords and screening potential job candidates, '*AI can recover application forms with required standards... the important is that there is no need to read again every application... AI can evaluate instantly the appropriateness of a candidate based on the criteria established*' (P14). Participants also recognised the evolving nature of AI implementation in talent acquisition, acknowledging that there is a learning curve associated with its adoption, '*...we are testing out the ability to rank job candidates... and recognise the top-scoring candidates. Even though the usage of AI is relatively new in recruitment the results are good until now, and we are satisfied*' (P2).

P9 asserted that hotels benefit from access to comprehensive candidate data using AI-enabled applications, facilitating informed decision-making regarding the selection of the most suitable candidates. Others suggested that during the pre-screening phase, AI software can also administer personality tests, providing candidates with insights into their suitability for the role. According to P3:

> To screen all the applicants AI is applied. Checking CVs and personality characteristics we can say: this is a great profile that will fit the job description perfectly and we can also determine how well it meets the job expectations.

Participants also argued that AI technology allows applicants to showcase their competencies and personal attributes more effectively, offering a modern approach compared to traditional CV submissions:

> Candidates can apply online by giving more information, instead of the traditional CV approach... they can show their personality traits, film themselves and be judged not only for the person they are on their CV but also for the person they are. (P1)

In terms of communication with applicants, AI technology is increasingly employed to streamline interactions (P2). As per P16 '*AI can replace standard HR duties related to recruitment and selection... AI can communicate with the applicants and receive their primary data and offer job information*'. Furthermore, the use of chatbots equipped with AI capabilities was praised by most of the participants employed in multinational hotel chains. P2 postulated that chatbots gather rich information regarding the candidates' background and maintain communication with candidates who are kept informed about their application status and upcoming interviews. Similarly, P16 emphasised the importance of uninterrupted communication with candidates:

> What it would mean for a candidate to have someone, no matter who they are (human or software), to check

on you, like '*in 10 days is your interview, would you like to ask something?*'

AI technology can do this!

AI's ability to evaluate candidate information and rank applicants according to job requirements was highlighted as a significant advantage. By automating tedious administrative tasks, AI frees up HR professionals' time, allowing them to focus on strategic decision-making and candidate engagement. Despite some challenges related to evaluating AI-enabled results, participants expressed their confidence in the overall effectiveness and precision of AI in talent acquisition, '*We do believe that AI can simplify our work, making the recruitment activity more effective and precise*' (P11).

### 4.3 | Benefits of AI in Talent Acquisition—Outsourcing or In-House?

The utilisation of AI in talent acquisition brings numerous benefits, as highlighted by most of the participants. P7 suggested that AI technologies '*are time-efficient and therefore, recruiters may focus on the candidates' personalities*'. In addition, participants argued that AI streamlines the evaluation, ranking and qualification processes of job applicants, enabling HR professionals to promptly proceed with interviewing suitable talent-candidates. Several participants argued (i.e., P4, P8, P17) that AI expedites the staffing process significantly, allowing HR professionals to focus more intently on identifying top talent within the candidate pool. This was affirmed by HR managers who noted AI's role in accelerating recruitment procedures, '*AI significantly reduces the time when it comes to checking through candidates and making shortlists*' (P3).

Communication channels between job seekers and HR professionals are also enhanced using AI and chatbots; P21 contented that '*the phases, where AI is helpful, are to classifying the best candidates and helping in communication*'. A communication-related challenge that can be resolved with the use of AI-enabled applications was identified by P5 '*Thanks to AI, CVs can now be read in several languages, so is possible to have the CV in English but the job can be in Greek or French*'.

Talent rediscovery emerged as a notable benefit of AI adoption, enabling luxury hotels to tap into previously overlooked candidates or former employees who may be suitable for current vacancies, '*AI can enable talent rediscovery... I believe this is crucial for any hotel as they can be very nice candidates for a job*' (P7). One significant advantage emphasised by most participants was the efficiency of AI technologies, which enables HR professionals to delve deeper into candidates' personalities:

> ...the use of personality and psychometric tests was not possible before the introduction of AI technology for most family hotels mainly due to high costs. (P9)

The findings also suggested that AI-enabled talent acquisition and recruitment solutions not only reduce the hiring workload but also foster a positive applicant experience and cost savings; according to P19 '*...an important role of AI is to interact*

*with applicants preparing them to succeed in the interviews*'. Additionally, AI significantly contributes to the identification of talented candidates, and "*helps managers to find extra time to concentrate on the greatest matches and is also possible to find silent candidates*" (P4). For example, P5 suggested that the optimisation of the talent acquisition process can help hotels establish '*a better image of talent from your competitors and therefore advance the hotel's effectiveness*'. While AI offers transformative potential in recruitment, it is imperative to acknowledge and address the associated challenges to harness its benefits fully, P5 recommended that '...*the advantages are there, but hotels need time to make those advantages shine!*'.

## 4.4 | Challenges of AI in Talent Acquisition and Recruitment—Staff Involvement

Despite AI's potential to enhance recruitment outcomes, the lack of certain skills and capabilities in AI systems necessitates human intervention for tasks such as '*building rapport with candidates*' (P12, P19), '*cultural assessment*' (P3, P11, P15) and '*negotiation*' (P7). The findings suggested that AI's struggle with cultural diversity and linguistic nuances underscores the importance of addressing these limitations to ensure fair and effective recruitment practices. The following statement illustrates the above:

> ...cultural understanding and linguistic biases are also tricky for AI to capture... it may be difficult to recognise and understand cultural barriers, terminology, and how information is offered in a specific culture or country. (P3)

P6 also alluded that '*poor AI application is the same as bias*'. In a similar vein, P10 suggested that "*unconscious discrimination*" remains a concern in AI recruitment, highlighting the need for '*tailor-made training to reduce biases in both machines and humans*'. Some participants (i.e., P4, P7, P18) argued that the prevalence of falsified CVs, recommendations, and cover letters posed a significant hurdle even for AI-powered applications, requiring robust mechanisms to verify applicant credentials accurately.

Another challenge according to P21, lies in the traditional recruitment approach's '*tendency to overlook previously rejected candidates*', perpetuating a cycle of sourcing new talent rather than rediscovering qualified individuals. In addition, P4 raised a significant question '*How easy is it for AI to realise the hotel's beliefs or recognise what kind of applicants the hotel is looking for*?'. While AI offers unparalleled efficiency, maintaining human interaction in the recruitment process remains crucial. Participants emphasised the importance of preserving human involvement to ensure personalised attention and address aspects of recruitment that AI cannot replace, such as cultural nuances and relationship-building:

> HRM is about people, which also needs talents that AI cannot replace. Some actions need to be handled by humans. (P23)

> Talking only about efficiency and oversimplifying the job, we are eliminating the impact that they (HR professionals) have and their ability to make sure that we are receiving the best talents. (P17)

Despite the evident advantages, concerns regarding the real necessity and efficacy of AI in the hospitality sector were raised by some participants (i.e., P6, P11, P19). For example, P6 stated, '...*discovering aspects of the perspective employees' personality will be subject to procedures implemented by humans, not machines*'. It was further proposed that using a *hybrid mode* in making recruitment and selection decisions was found to be more effective.

## 5 | Discussion

Our study confirms that luxury hotels possess the requisite resources and expertise to leverage advanced tools across various HRM functions (Giousmpasoglou and Marinakou 2024). We shed light on how AI-enabled HRM practices can optimise talent acquisition, as it can streamline processes, enhance candidate engagement and attract top talent. However, confirming other studies (i.e., Albert 2019; Gao, Liang, and Huang 2019) we propose that luxury hotel businesses need to conduct a thorough assessment of their needs and objectives to determine the optimal level of AI integration in their recruitment and talent acquisition practices. In agreement to other studies, that is, Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski (2020) we confirm that lack of technological knowledge, the need for key performance metrics and the monitoring of return on investment are challenges that must be addressed from the outset of implementing AI-enabled technology in talent acquisition. Addressing these issues is essential for ensuring the effective use of resources (Charlwood and Guenole 2022). In agreement with Charlwood (2021) we suggest that AI-enabled talent acquisition should align with the hotel's strategic objectives, budgetary constraints and long-term growth plans.

As proposed by participants in this study luxury hotels benefit from access to comprehensive candidate data using AI-enabled applications, facilitating informed decision-making regarding the selection of the most suitable candidates. Our study also confirms propositions that "AI assists in HR planning by determining future employee needs and making effective recruitment decisions" as similarly proposed by Budhwar et al. (2022, 1074). This personalised approach to communication not only enhances the candidate experience but also improves efficiency in the recruitment process (Pillai et al. 2024). Moreover, we validate the proposition by Torres and Mejia (2017) that AI-enabled recruitment and selection practices enhance the company's brand image in attracting the most talented workforce. However, we acknowledge that while AI treats all applicants equally, there remains a risk of unintended biases related to age, gender, or ethnicity being inadvertently embedded in the algorithms (Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski 2020; Packin and Lev-Aretz 2018). We suggest that AI technology may use algorithms to enhance the recruitment and acquisition process by eliminating biases, hence we corroborate the use of hybrid decision-making (Pessach et al. 2020) in talent acquisition in hospitality.

Open and effective communication channels play vital roles in fostering the recruitment and selection process (Darawong 2024), with AI serving as a valuable tool in facilitating clear and timely interactions, thus enhancing the overall candidate experience. We reinforce the view that AI enables swift processing of applicant data, enabling candidates to express their interest in job opportunities promptly (Budhwar et al. 2022). Although AI technology can perform '*cognitive and analytical tasks, which require low emotional or social complexity, services (such as talent acquisition) connected with high emotional or social complexity require emotional authenticity, which a human can only display*' (Budhwar et al. 2022, 1083). This streamlines the recruitment process, reduces the volume of applicants and allows recruiters to focus on a smaller pool of qualified candidates, thereby saving time and resources.

## 6 | Conclusion and Future Research

### 6.1 | Conclusion and Implications

This study proposes that the use of AI technology in the luxury hotel sector in Greece has become a crucial factor in improving talent acquisition processes. By leveraging the capabilities of AI, businesses in the hospitality industry can effectively address challenges, create a conducive work environment for employees and ensure customer satisfaction. The sector goes through a pivotal phase of digital evolution in the use of intelligent automation in managing human capital and talent acquisition (Baum 2019; Ancarani, Di Mauro, and Mascali 2019; Gao, Liang, and Huang 2019). In an industry where human relationships are fundamental, it is crucial to preserve the human element in talent acquisition to ensure sustainable recruitment practices. However, as AI-enabled technology becomes more integrated and advanced in talent acquisition practices, hospitality leaders must carefully consider the roles of HR professionals and AI virtual assistants (Ancarani, Di Mauro, and Mascali 2019; Gao, Liang, and Huang 2019), to ensure a balance between AI-driven automation and the human element in talent acquisition. They should also foster a workplace culture that values adaptability and openness to change to prevent bias in the process (Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski 2020; Vedapradha, Hariharan, and Shivakami 2019). Our key finding is that, in the context of luxury hospitality, a hybrid model should be adopted in the talent acquisition process. This service-oriented sector requires a strategic integration of AI to unlock its full potential, but also the involvement of humans in the process to ensure alignment with organisational objectives.

### 6.2 | Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our findings based on managers perceptions and views contribute to theory by proposing a *model* that illustrates a recommended AI-Talent Acquisition process within luxury hotels in *six stages* (Figure 1). The discussion provided includes *practical implications* for professionals in luxury hospitality. The *first stage* investigates the need to adopt sophisticated technology or maintain the existing talent acquisition practices.
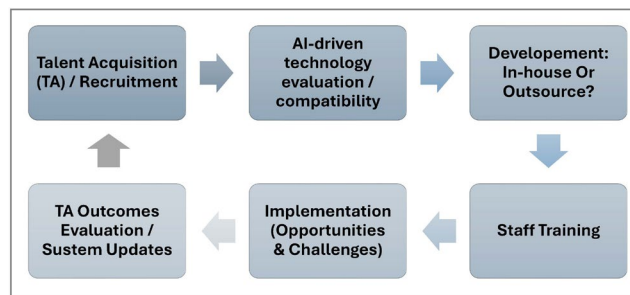


**FIGURE 1** | Model—The AI-talent acquisition process. [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

During the *second stage* (and after a positive outcome in stage one) a comprehensive assessment of AI-enabled technologies is conducted, focusing on their compatibility with the organisation, their performance and their impact on the existing talent acquisition practices before implementation. HR managers should identify the advanced AI algorithms that align with the hotel's strategic goals facilitate the process, and enrich the information flow between employees, candidates and managers. The *third stage* is focused on the decision to develop AI-enabled talent acquisition internally or outsource; this depends on the hotel's resources, size and expertise. Larger hotel chains (national and multinational) can afford in-house development for all HR functions, while smaller operators may opt to outsource to specialised providers. When organisations grow to a certain size, their resource allocation and talent attraction improve (Bai et al. 2024; Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski 2020). While in-house development offers greater control and customisation, outsourcing provides scalability, cost-efficiency and access to specialised expertise (Budhwar et al. 2022; Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski 2020). By carefully evaluating their options and considering their unique circumstances, hotels can determine the most suitable approach to leverage AI in talent acquisition effectively. The subsequent *fourth stage* involves end-user training. A key consideration when making such a strategic decision (before the implementation phase), is to ensure trust in AI-enabled HR systems and equip HR professionals with the necessary skills through training, to leverage AI effectively. Moreover, it provides candidates with assurance that the process is fair, and ethical as AI-enabled technology creates an open and transparent communication channel, preventing several racist and sexist biases (Budhwar et al. 2022; Gao, Liang, and Huang 2019). During the implementation *fifth stage*, a balanced approach that combines AI automation with human involvement (HR professionals) enables luxury hotels to optimise the talent acquisition processes, promote diversity and inclusion and secure top talent for sustained growth. Effective talent acquisition practices play a vital role in maintaining a positive employer brand and attracting top talent (Marinakou and Giousmpasoglou 2019). Leveraging AI to enhance the candidate experience and instil confidence in applicants regarding the recruitment process is imperative to mitigate any negative impacts on the hotel's reputation. A *hybrid decision-making* approach may support HR managers in reducing the challenges faced by AI. The final *sixth stage* evaluates the AI-enabled Talent Acquisition process outcomes. Although AI provides many benefits, luxury hotels should evaluate its relevance and effectiveness in their unique context, post-implementation

(Johnson, Stone, and Lukaszewski 2020). Not all hotels need the same level of AI integration, so it is essential to align AI adoption with goals and objectives. Efficiency should be viewed holistically, considering factors such as multilingual support and reduced HR processing time.

## 6.3 | Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The study concentrated on the use of AI-enable technology in talent acquisition process within the luxury hotel sector in Greece. This focus highlights the need for future research to explore AI applications in different countries and hotel types to identify potential similarities or differences. Moreover, the lack of empirical research on trust issues related to AI from a talent perspective (Budhwar et al. 2022; Hunkenschroer and Luetge 2022; Trihas, Panagiotaki, and Kyriakaki 2020) underscores the importance of addressing ethics and trust in various settings, such as international hotel chains and boutique hotels. Additionally, future studies should investigate the fairness of AI systems used in talent acquisition within the hospitality and tourism industry.

The issue of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is essential for uncovering biases against marginalized groups in talent acquisition, particularly concerning women (Baum 2019). To gain a deeper understanding of the new challenges and crises facing the tourism and hospitality sector, future studies should analyse the impact of emerging technology and its impact on environmental changes and the implications of AI outcomes. This may involve examining the growing use of AI in talent acquisition and recruitment. It is also crucial to strike a balance between digital and non-digital elements while approaching development strategically (Charlwood 2021). This entails distinguishing between actions that are best suited for digital implementation and those that necessitate in-person interactions. Evaluating this hybrid approach will be essential to assess its effectiveness (Patrício and Ferreira 2024, 104) in talent acquisition.

**Ethics Statement**

The authors have nothing to report.

**Consent**

The authors have nothing to report.

**Conflicts of Interest**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

**Data Availability Statement**

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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