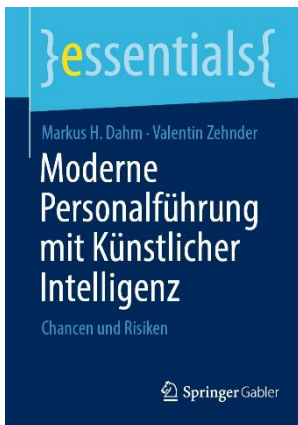


KÖNYVISMERTETÉS / BOOK REVIEW

**Artificial Intelligence in Personal Leadership:
A Theoretical and Practical Perspective**
(Book Review)

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[Dahm, M. H., Zehnder, V., 2023. *Moderne Personalführung mit Künstlicher Intelligenz : Chancen und Risiken*. [Essentials], Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, ISBN (Softcover) 978-3-658-43137-2 | ISBN (eBook) 978-3-658-43138-9 | ISSN (Series) 2197-6708 | eISSN (Series) 2197-6716 | DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-43138-9]



The book „*Moderne Personalführung mit Künstlicher Intelligenz – Chancen und Risiken*” by Markus H. Dahm and Valentin Zehnder, part of the Essential series by Springer Gabler Verlag, explores the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on personnel leadership. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the opportunities and risks associated with the use of AI in this field and investigates the extent to which AI modifies or complements existing leadership theories, models, and tasks.

The book consists of five chapters and comprises 70 pages. It begins by presenting the theoretical underpinnings of AI, explaining its fields of application, and examining regulatory aspects, opportunities, and risks. This is followed by an introduction to the fundamentals of leadership theories, outlining relevant leadership models and clarifying the core responsibilities of a leader. Based on these theoretical foundations, the authors examine how AI alters or expands existing leadership models. For this purpose, practical use cases are analyzed and exploratory expert interviews are conducted to gain deeper insights. The aim of this analysis is to identify the opportunities and risks associated with the use of

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AI in personnel leadership. The insights gained are then applied to core leadership tasks before concluding with actionable recommendations for the sustainable and strategic integration of AI into existing leadership models.

The theoretical and empirical analysis forms the basis for the authors' key arguments and conclusions, which focus particularly on the opportunities and risks of using AI in personnel leadership. It is stated that AI redefines leadership models by taking over repetitive tasks and shifting leaders' focus toward strategic and interpersonal aspects. Through the use of AI, subjective human assessments can be reduced and decisions made more objective. Although AI increases efficiency in personnel leadership, human interaction remains essential for effective leadership. Emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, and ethical considerations are of critical importance, as AI cannot replace these human competencies. The transformative potential of AI requires an adaptation of leadership competencies. In addition to a stronger emphasis on qualitative leadership, technological and data-related skills are becoming increasingly important in order to confidently manage and critically evaluate AI-supported processes.

However, the use of AI also entails risks and may lead to emotional distance and a diminished sense of appreciation due to reduced personal interaction. For this reason, a conscious balance between technological efficiency and human leadership is vital to avoid alienation. Moreover, data protection and security risks must be taken into account in the context of AI use in personnel management, as the processing of personal data constitutes an intrusion into privacy. This requires ethical reflection to ensure fairness, transparency, and non-discriminatory use. Legal uncertainties also persist due to unclear regulations. Furthermore, the successful introduction of AI into personnel leadership depends significantly on the acceptance of both employees and managers. A lack of understanding of the technological possibilities exacerbates concerns and intensifies fears of job loss due to automation.

The academic contextualization of the book considers current practical and scientific developments, as well as relevant debates surrounding AI-supported leadership in human resource management. Furthermore, it draws comparative connections to thematically related academic publications.

The relevance of the topic is demonstrated by practical insights, such as the one by Markus Köhler, Head of Human Resources at Microsoft Germany, who emphasizes in this context: "*Für den erfolgreichen Umgang mit Künstlicher Intelligenz müssen sie sich neue Fähigkeiten aneignen und die*

*Führungskultur weiterentwickeln*²” (Meisel et al., 2019). This statement shows that AI not only influences existing leadership theories but also changes the way leadership will be shaped in the future. An empirical confirmation of this can be found in a study by IBM (2023): 79% of Leaders surveyed in the UK are already using generative AI or planning to implement it in the near future (IBM, 2023). Considering these developments, a deeper understanding of AI-supported personal leadership is essential and highlights the importance of academic research that takes practically relevant use cases into account. In addition, Prof. Dr. Dirk Stein argues in the *Zukunftsreport 2025* published by the Zukunftsinstitut that the CEO of the future will be an AI (Zukunftsinstitut GmbH, 2024).

This thesis illustrates the urgency of the current debate on the potential transformation of traditional leadership structures through AI. Given the developments outlined above, the book gains particular relevance, as it addresses the exponential progress in the field of AI and demonstrates how existing leadership theories are being transformed by technological innovation.

To further strengthen the academic positioning of the book, the following section provides a comparative review of selected scholarly publications that address similar questions in the context of AI-supported leadership. These include „*Künstliche Intelligenz in der Personalarbeit*”³ (Fink, 2021), „*Artificial Intelligence for HR*” (Eubanks, 2022), and „*KI-Wissen für Führungskräfte*”⁴ (Winkler et al., 2025). In „*Künstliche Intelligenz in der Personalarbeit*”, Fink analyzes the use of AI in human resources from a comprehensive organizational perspective, with a particular focus on operational HR processes such as recruiting and employer branding. The publication offers a practically oriented overview of tools and applications in the HR field, but does not provide an in-depth examination of leadership theories. In contrast, Dahm and Zehnder focus on the practical implications of AI for leadership roles and responsibilities and integrate theoretical models to examine how AI is transforming leadership in human resource management. Despite differences in focus, both works offer valuable guidance for the integration of AI into HR practices, as they present concrete applications as realistic,

² AI is changing leadership. This presents decision-makers with new challenges: to successfully deal with artificial intelligence, they must acquire new skills and further develop the leadership culture.

³ Artificial Intelligence in Human Resource Management.

⁴ AI Knowledge for Executives.

practice-based solutions. A similar level of practical relevance can be found in Eubanks' „*Artificial Intelligence for HR*”, which highlights concrete applications of AI in HR systems. Eubanks places greater emphasis on data-driven automation processes within HR work, such as recruiting and performance management. As such, her publication complements the work of Dahm and Zehnder by offering a more detailed analysis of the methods and procedures of AI in personnel management. The publication „*KI-Wissen für Führungskräfte*” focuses on the strategic and technological dimensions of AI and examines its role as a transformative factor for organizations. Winkler et al. provide a theoretical foundation that prepares leaders for the strategic integration of AI into corporate leadership. In contrast, Dahm and Zehnder explore the immediate, day-to-day benefits of AI for leaders in their daily work. It can be concluded that Winkler et al. provide the theoretical foundation for long-term planning, while Dahm and Zehnder translate these strategic considerations into the practical implementation of AI-supported leadership. In summary, Dahm and Zehnder make a significant contribution to the academic discussion by analyzing the direct operational impact of AI on personal leadership, whereas other publications tend to focus more on overarching organizational or strategic aspects.

The research findings of the publication “*Moderne Personalführung mit Künstlicher Intelligenz – Chancen und Risiken*” provide key implications for leadership practice. The results show that AI has a direct impact on existing leadership theories, which are outlined in the following section.

The trait theory of leadership, which focuses on human characteristics of successful leaders, is expanded by AI, which increasingly takes over cognitive and analytical tasks. However, social intelligence and motivation remain the exclusive domain of humans as leaders. The skills approach, which emphasizes learnable abilities, is complemented by AI. AI can learn rapidly and adapt to new conditions. However, its social judgment depends on available data and the current state of technological advancement. In behavioral theory, a distinction is made between task-oriented and people-oriented leadership. In this context, AI optimizes task-related processes, thereby supporting transactional leadership. This enables human leaders to increasingly focus on people-oriented approaches, such as transformational leadership to enhance motivation, or servant leadership to support employees. Situational theories emphasize the adaptation of leadership styles to different contexts. Here, AI can act in a supportive or controlling role, function as a regulatory mechanism, and structure leadership processes through task delegation or targeted instructions. Additionally, in the spirit of lean leadership, AI identifies

inefficiencies, analyzes processes, and promotes continuous improvement. The Leader-Member Exchange theory, which describes relationship-building between leaders and employees by distinguishing between in-group (closer leadership) and out-group (formal leadership), is also influenced by AI. It supports this process by analyzing interactions, reducing bias, and enabling a more objective classification.

Beyond the theoretical impact of AI on leadership models, Dahm and Zehnder also present concrete practical use cases that make the transformation through AI tangible. The following section introduces exemplary systems that illustrate the practical implications for leadership processes. The AI tool IBM Watson analyzes competencies and skills, uses historical performance and attrition data, and derives optimized measures for personnel selection and employee satisfaction. The system PriOS automates HR decisions and leadership tasks by mimicking established behavior patterns, though this raises questions about adaptivity and ethical responsibility. In addition, the system analyzes disagreements and based on prior decisions and corporate values, derives actionable recommendations for conflict resolution. The application iCEO, in contrast, organizes management tasks, distributes them autonomously, and automates their coordination. The tool Tang Yu, which operates as an AI-supported CEO at NetDragon Websoft, optimizes strategic decisions, business processes, and risk evaluation, yet it does not replace traditional human leadership. In conclusion, the publication is characterized by a high degree of practical relevance, reflected in its detailed examination of the impact of AI on contemporary leadership theories as well as its concrete presentation of AI-based tools for a variety of leadership tasks.

The book combines academic theories with practical applications and highlights opportunities and challenges that are of central importance in the age of AI. In contrast to many other academic publications, it provides an in-depth focus on operational aspects of personal leadership, thereby offering a distinct added value. It is recommended for executives, HR professionals, AI experts, organizational psychologists, and academic researchers.

From an academic perspective, alongside its substantive strengths, the book also presents critical aspects, contextual developments, and impulses for future research. With regard to the presentation of the expert interviews, the methodological approach is described as exploratory, yet limited details are provided concerning the sample size, selection criteria, and data analysis procedure. It is only mentioned that the interviewees were executives from middle and top management. As a result, the methodological transparency

remains restricted, which reduces the ability to assess the reliability and academic robustness of the findings. Nevertheless, the exploratory approach contributes valuable initial insights into how AI may transform leadership responsibilities and perceptions within organizations.

The book already refers to the EU AI Act, which was still in draft form at the time of publication, thereby acknowledging the emerging importance of a European regulatory framework for the use of AI in leadership and human resource management. However, it does not provide an in-depth analysis of its specific requirements, as the final legal framework was only adopted in 2024. Since then, the EU AI Act, in conjunction with the General Data Protection Regulation, has defined key principles such as transparency, accountability, and human-centered oversight of AI systems (European Parliament, 2024). As a result, the issue of regulatory responsibility, which is only briefly addressed in the book, has gained even greater significance for both academic inquiry and managerial practice.

The topics covered in the book hold significant potential for further empirical investigation, particularly concerning the acceptance of AI supported leadership and the ethical and regulatory conditions under which such systems are adopted. Future research should aim to evaluate the long-term impact of AI applications on leadership effectiveness, employee trust, and organizational culture. In doing so, it will be essential to integrate interdisciplinary perspectives that combine technological, ethical, and psychological dimensions in order to advance a sustainable and responsible understanding of AI in leadership contexts.

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