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THE SILENT COWORKER: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF AGENTIC AI ON TEAM DYNAMICS AND PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract:

The emergence of Agentic Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping organizational work by introducing autonomous and adaptive systems capable of participating in collaborative activities traditionally performed by human employees. Although human-AI research addresses trust, control, and teamwork, the mechanisms linking background AI activity to collective productivity require further specification. Using human-AI teaming as its main theoretical foundation, with Role Theory and socio-technical reasoning as supporting perspectives, this conceptual paper proposes the "Silent Coworker Perspective" to conceptualize AI that operates autonomously in the background, influencing coordination, decisions, communication, and task allocation without conventional human team membership. Through a synthesis of recent literature on human-AI collaboration, autonomy, trust, and team cognition, this study develops a conceptual

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framework illustrating how Agentic AI characteristics, including autonomy, adaptability, learning capability, and generativity, may shape human-AI relationship quality, which may subsequently affect team dynamics and team productivity. The framework extends human-AI teaming by distinguishing functional participation from explicit recognition as a teammate and proposing relationship quality and team dynamics as sequential mediators of productivity. The quasi-team member is a conceptual positioning, and the proposed relationships require empirical testing. The study concludes by offering theoretical implications, managerial recommendations, and future research directions for organizations integrating Agentic AI into collaborative work environments.

Keyword:

Agentic AI, Human-AI Collaboration, Human-AI Teaming, Silent Coworker Perspective, Team Dynamics, Team Productivity

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Introduction

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), particularly the rise of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) and autonomous agents, have introduced entirely new paradigms for AI use. While initially conceived as computational tools for automating repetitive tasks, modern AI technologies now play active roles in supporting complex cognitive and collaborative activity. Current GAI applications demonstrate how AI can participate directly in generating content, performing reasoning, adapting to dynamic contexts, and engaging in interactive problem-solving (Banh & Strobel, 2023).

This increasing integration of AI into organizational work processes represents a major shift in both technology implementation and management considerations. As AI-enabled systems become ever more ubiquitous in organizational operations and knowledge intensive activities, their influence on human machine interaction patterns continues to evolve accordingly. This paper discusses this development while highlighting emerging challenges in balancing AI's autonomy, learning capability, and system transparency to create effective organizational decision making and collaboration environments (Berente et al., 2021).

The extensive deployment of various AI technologies has naturally garnered substantial academic interest within several information systems, management, and human computer interaction fields of study. Existing literature discusses AI's potential to support decision making, automation, and individual productivity (Banh & Strobel, 2023). Moreover, much

research effort has been directed towards identifying key factors such as trust and explainability that facilitate positive outcomes through human-AI collaborations (Westphal et al., 2023).

Concurrently, investigations of AI enabled tools reveal how AI performance positively influences employee engagement, service performance, and general job performance (Prentice et al., 2023). Thus, collectively these studies underline the increasing influence of AI on organizational work environments as it transitions away from being considered simply a technological artefact to one which plays an influential role within organizations (Siemon, 2022).

A parallel trend evident in the development of human autonomy teams sees the involvement of autonomous agents increasingly playing greater roles in collaborative settings. Rather than serving only as passive tools, autonomous agents have been shown to actively engage in coordination and communication activities aiming for the realization of interdependent tasks (O'Neill et al., 2023). Accordingly, proponents argue that machines need to be perceived as teammates given their ability to perform collaborative problem solving and task participation together with humans (Seeber et al., 2020). Emerging concepts in role-based perspectives posit that AI systems could assume specific roles when working collaboratively within a team setting. Such roles range from acting as coordinator, creator, perfectionist, to doer similar to those played by human team members (Siemon, 2022).

Existing research on explainability and decision control explains individual users' perceptions and compliance with AI recommendations (Westphal et al., 2023). Human-autonomy team research already addresses shared cognition, coordination, and social acceptance (O'Neill et al., 2023). The remaining problem is therefore to explain how background AI activity affects interdependent relationships among several human team members, and how these changes translate into collective productivity.

Studies of generative AI explain its content-generation capabilities and innovation potential (Banh & Strobel, 2023). In contrast, we argue for considering Agentic AI as an implicit 'silent coworker', who might take part in many aspects of teamwork without being visible as a social actor.

Tool- and substitution-oriented accounts do not fully explain how Agentic AI could participate in shared routines without being recognized as a teammate. Research on human–autonomy teamwork reveals the importance of shared cognition, social acceptance, and mutual understanding between teammates (O'Neill et al. 2023). Similarly, studies focusing on human–AI interaction confirm positive user responses if people feel their own decision-making power is preserved and believe that the recommendations provided by an AI system are easily interpretable and trustworthy (Westphal et al. 2023). Hence, our assumption is that AI systems influence team processes far beyond mere automatization and substitutive concepts.

To address these gaps, this study proposes the "Silent Coworker Perspective" (SCP) to understand how Agentic AI may impact team dynamics and productivity of human-AI teams. Using insights drawn from the literature on human-AI collaboration, human-autonomy teams, employee performance, and generative AI, we develop an integrative conceptual framework that explains how Agentic AI's features shape the quality of human-AI relationships, which then affect team dynamics and team productivity.

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Our conceptual arguments contribute to theory and practice by (1) extending the current literature on human–AI collaboration beyond focus on the individual level, (2) introducing the "Silent Coworker Perspective," offering a novel lens to see Agentic AI as a quasi-team member instead of just a technological artifact, and (3) developing a conceptual framework explaining the mechanisms by which Agentic AI might influence team dynamics and productivity. These developments provide theoretical foundation and direction for further empirical investigations about integrating autonomous AI systems into organizations' collaborative work environments.

Literature Review

From Tools to Teammates: The Evolution of AI in Organizations

AI has traditionally been conceptualized as an artifact whose goal was to assist individuals' decisions, automate routine operations, and boost productivity. Early development efforts sought to augment individual capacities for making predictions, recommendations, etc. Recent developments in deep learning, large language models, and generative AI have vastly increased what can be done with artificial intelligence – now systems are able to generate content, adapt to contextual input, and engage with people in ever more sophisticated ways (Banh & Strobel, 2023).

As such, AI systems are undergoing a transition from passive technologies to active participants within organizational work processes. This transformation has spurred shifts in scholars' thinking about the potential of AI in organizations; where they once perceived them as mere tools, many researchers argue we must start treating machine intelligence as teammates who actively participate in our collaborative endeavors (Seeber et al., 2020).

Studies focusing on human-autonomy team dynamics consider autonomous agents as valid team members, engaging in cooperative behaviors with humans toward completing interdependent activities with shared objectives (O'Neill et al., 2023). Such systems are no longer just assisting tools for humans – they're becoming entities that coordinate among each other, assign tasks autonomously, and continuously interact with both humans and other autonomous agents. In short, AI systems are moving toward integration within organizational structures akin to participation of human coworkers.

From this perspective, several studies have explored different role-based aspects of how human beings collaborate with AI. For instance, Siemon (2022) suggests AI teammates may occupy multiple function roles within teams: e.g., as coordinator, creator, perfectionist, and/or doer. These proposed roles suggest that AI may influence team dynamics beyond computational capabilities; it may also affect distribution of labor amongst members of the group as well as their overall interactions.

Moreover, the proliferation of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) with its capacity to create content such as texts, imagery, software codes and more, combined with adaptability through interaction with users' expectations and contextuality (Banh & Strobel, 2023), may support AI systems in engaging in knowledge intensive tasks and collaboratively solving problems.

Consequently, we observe that organizations are moving towards an unprecedented age where AI systems contribute significantly not just to operational effectiveness, but to fostering creativity, coordination, and decision-making. These developments leave open how background AI activity influences team relationships when its contribution is not explicitly recognized.

More specifically, existing studies have also examined factors related to the adoption of AI technologies, automation and effects on individuals' productive output. Yet, there remains a need to specify how autonomous AI systems influence team-level dynamics and collective outputs. Therefore, a re-evaluation of the role of Agentic AI from a team-centered lens becomes essential as it acknowledges their increasing participatory roles in organizational functioning.

Human-AI Relationship Quality: Trust, Explainability, and Control

The increased reliance on AI technologies in organizational settings raises crucial questions about trust, explainability, and the extent to which organizations should cede control over decision-making to machines. Successful human-AI collaboration hinges not only on technical considerations such as data inputs, algorithmic design, and model training processes, but also on fundamental issues such as how people perceive and engage with these novel systems (Westphal et al., 2023). Studies of human-AI collaboration have revealed that perceptions of trust and understanding significantly impact on individuals' propensity to embrace and follow the suggestions made by AI-based systems (Westphal et al., 2023).

Research into interactions involving intelligent personal assistants shows that users' perception of AI system's competence and warmth is influenced by its level of autonomy and that this affects whether or not users are willing to engage and collaborate with AI systems (Hu et al., 2021). Prior studies highlight the importance of explainability in improving trust and facilitating collaboration through enhanced understanding (Westphal et al., 2023). While providing explanations helps people grasp how AI systems generate recommendations, previous studies show that simply explaining things doesn't always result in improved collaboration because too much explanation can create unnecessary task complexity and mental workload that detracts from positive perceptions (Westphal et al., 2023).

Other factors influencing successful collaborations involve giving people a sense of control over AI assisted decisions. It appears that users want to be able to exert a certain amount of control over decisions aided by artificial intelligence (Westphal et al., 2023). In consumer voice shopping, Hu et al. (2022) examine the fit between perceived power over AI and consumers' desire for power. Granting the opportunity to customize and alter AI generated suggestions improves levels of trust, comprehension, and adherence to guidance proposed by the machine learning algorithms used (Westphal et al., 2023). That consumer context should be distinguished from the proposed effects of human control in organizational teams. This indicates that optimal human–AI interaction requires AI to serve as a complement to human discernment rather than usurping it entirely.

Research examining human-autonomy teams has identified similar findings regarding the critical role of social acceptance toward autonomous teammates (O'Neill et al., 2023). Effective teamwork involves developing shared expectations and understanding of each other's capabilities beyond simply possessing technical competences. Hence, while trust in AI can be regarded as an important dimension of such relationships, its multifaceted nature suggests we

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need to consider factors including explainability, control, acceptance and understanding within this conceptualization.

Recent empirical research has provided additional insight into this area. Haupt et al. (2025) examine consumer responses to AI-generated company content and find that disclosing human control over AI authorship can mitigate negative credibility evaluations. Their evidence concerns consumer judgments of content, rather than employee trust or team performance.

Overall then what is clear from existing literature is that to achieve successful collaborations involving humans and artificial intelligence more needs to be considered about 'relationship quality. But much current scholarship focuses upon the nature of individual relationships rather than looking at how specific facets of those relationships impact overall team processes and results.

Shared Cognition and Team Dynamics in Human-Autonomy Teams

In terms of team effectiveness, shared cognition along with other factors including communication, coordination and mutual understanding remains a key driver for team success. For instance, there exists a consensus in human autonomy team research that for agents to effectively work together collectively, they need to engage in some sort of collective cognitive process instead of being standalone technologies (O'Neill et al., 2023).

Furthermore, through the development of shared cognition team members can create shared understandings about their tasks, roles and environmental situations which help them coordinate and perform collaboratively. A qualitative study found differences in reported team processes and cognitive states when participants were led to believe that human teammates were autonomous agents (Musick et al., 2021).

More recently, several papers argue for more attention being paid to the relationship between expectations held by people towards autonomous agents and the behavior those agents actually demonstrate (O'Neill et al., 2023). It is suggested that deviations from expected behaviors could hinder human perception of collaborative effectiveness and therefore lead to decreased levels of trust. However, if appropriate explanations are offered then this effect could be mitigated. Similarly, it has been noted that developing a shared understanding with autonomous agents leads to greater degrees of coordination and better outcomes at a team level (O'Neill et al., 2023).

It should come as no surprise given all we know about the impact of technology use in general but given our growing reliance upon artificial intelligence systems, it makes sense to pay extra attention to what happens at an individual team member level where human and technology interact directly. Noting the increased use of AI in task execution and decision making it is possible to see the huge potential implications such integration might have gone forward. Through analysis of current trends, it becomes clear that future team composition will likely include individuals working alongside both people who take specific roles in order to accomplish goals as well as AI systems that can carry out certain tasks autonomously without direct input from human team members (Siemon, 2022). Therefore, it is plausible that in many workplaces we will find ourselves having to deal with team members taking different types of roles depending largely on whether they are coordinating efforts amongst themselves, creating plans or executing orders received from above.

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Research into the social dimension of collaboration underscores the necessity of achieving social acceptance of autonomous agents through their perceived legitimacy as teammates (O'Neill et al., 2023). The development of trust and social perception fosters effective collaboration that allows teams to harness all potential benefits offered by autonomous capacities. Therefore, the success of team activities hinges upon both cognitive and social integration achieved between people and intelligent agents.

While some previous work recognizes the significance of shared cognition and coordination, most investigations have mainly concentrated on factors such as trust and technical aspects of performance. Comparative lack of focus concerning how Agentic AI impacts other facets of team dynamics – ranging from nature of communication quality and knowledge-sharing to roles structure - signals an urgent demand for developing a more integrative lens able to shed light on ways in which artificial intelligence reshapes collective interactions within groups.

Productivity Implications of Agentic AI

AI Integration Impacts: Existing studies show positive impacts of AI technologies on productivity and organizational performance. Studies indicate that AI technologies increase the level of efficiency by supporting decision making while at the same time enhancing the capabilities of human beings across different scenarios (Banh & Strobel, 2023).

Specifically, generative AI provides an enhancement in terms of creating texts, codes, and many more supporting knowledge-intensive works hence impacting positively on the nature of knowledge works (Banh & Strobel, 2023). Brynjolfsson et al. (2025) report productivity improvements following the introduction of a generative AI assistant in customer support, with larger gains among less experienced workers. This evidence concerns AI assistance at the individual level; it does not directly test autonomous AI participation in team processes. Empirically, results have shown that AI performance is associated with employee outcomes (Prentice et al., 2023). Recent research carried out by researchers showed how AI powered tools influence the behavior of employees resulting in better services and finally leading to enhanced overall job performance (Prentice et al., 2023). From this research, it was established that AI plays a critical role in the transfer of technological capability to human performance.

A similar observation was made by some previous studies, which noted how AI technologies have helped in boosting efficiency through augmentation of employees' capabilities (Prentice et al., 2023). Additionally, Westphal et al. (2023) examine how the design of human-AI collaboration affects user perceptions and compliance. Some studies indicate that if done right, human-AI collaboration will result in better employee performance thus contributing to the organization's objectives.

In addition, autonomous agents collaborate by allocating tasks, coordinating work and engaging in various forms of information processing, thus contributing to the overall effectiveness of collaborative activities (O'Neill et al., 2023). From the perspective of roles played by different types of AI within groups, some have proposed that AI systems could take the roles of 'coordinators', creators', perfectionists' or even 'executors' within groups depending on their specific applications. Therefore, AI-related improvements in productivity will emerge from interactions among humans and artificial intelligence, instead of stemming solely from the efforts of individuals (Siemon, 2022).

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From these discussions about teaming between humans and intelligent machines, it becomes evident that the productivity effects attributed to AI involve a combination of both collective and personal components that rely on integrating human and AI capabilities into effective work teams. However, despite the numerous advantages provided by AI systems for improving productivity levels, the application of such technology can also lead to negative consequences if used excessively due to overdependence on automated operations. For instance, recent studies focusing on human-AI collaboration point out that balancing issues involving trust and explainability against potential increases in cognitive demand is essential for ensuring positive outcomes (Westphal et al., 2023).

Similarly, there exist serious concerns related to job security and social acceptance, all of which could impede users' attitudes towards collaborating with artificially intelligent assistants, thus limiting its benefits (Prentice et al., 2023). Overall, these insights highlight the need to consider how people engage socially around AI implementations since they impact the development of successful teamwork behaviors necessary to achieve high-quality outputs collectively.

While prior investigations have demonstrated many ways in which the utilization of AI technologies promotes enhanced productivity results, most literature primarily focuses on understanding individual-level impacts ranging from improved engagement levels amongst staff members to better performance assessments concerning individual employees as well as higher degrees of user compliance levels when interacting directly with AI constructs. In contrast, far fewer studies attempt to understand more fully what factors contribute positively toward enhancing team-based productivity levels resulting from greater interactivity created via increased reliance upon AI-driven decision-making structures. This conceptual paper therefore examines the proposed mechanisms connecting Agentic AI, team processes, and collective productivity, while acknowledging that their relevance may vary across organizational contexts.

Research Gaps and the Need for the Silent Coworker Perspective

Contemporary literature suggests considerable advancements in understanding human-AI interactions, autonomous teams, and AI enabled productivity. Research highlights the growing capacity of intelligent systems to serve as teammates instead of being just technological tools (Seeber et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2023). Furthermore, the extant knowledge emphasizes the significance of factors such as trust, explainability, decision control, and social acceptance in enabling successful collaboration between humans and AIs (Westphal et al., 2023).

Moreover, studies adopting a role-based perspective reveal that AI systems can take over certain functional roles traditionally assigned to humans involved in teams (Siemon, 2022). In addition, investigations into the impact of AI on employee performance suggest positive effects on engagement and other job-related outcomes (Prentice et al., 2023). Despite all these developments, the current literature is still fragmented. For instance, most of the studies still focus on analyzing AI through a technological or individual lens concentrating mainly on adoption, trust, explainability and users' acceptance. Also, many papers discussing productivity pay major attention towards individual level impacts.

Research on human-autonomy teams already recognizes shared cognition, coordination, and role differentiation, and calls for closer examination of mechanisms connecting team inputs to outcomes (O'Neill et al., 2022; Siemon, 2022). What remains to be specified in the present

framework is how an agent's background actions become consequential for relationships among human team members. Individual acceptance or performance measures alone cannot establish whether team members share AI-generated information, revise responsibilities consistently, or coordinate dependent tasks. The SCP addresses this explanatory gap by linking Agentic AI characteristics to human-AI relationship quality, then to team dynamics and collective productivity.

These considerations motivate a more specific account of Agentic AI's indirect participation in collaborative work. This need also raises methodological questions about how to investigate human-AI teams in realistic settings (Schecter et al., 2023).

The significance of this constraint lies in the unique attributes of Agentic AI relative to conventional technological applications. Here, Agentic AI denotes systems capable of pursuing delegated goals through autonomous action and adjustment to task context, consistent with the broader account of autonomous agents in human-autonomy teaming (O'Neill et al., 2022). Generativity may support these systems, but content generation alone does not establish agentic behavior. Such characteristics enable these artificial intelligences to influence interactions among individuals on several levels, spanning from communication styles to distribution tasks amongst members, although they may not bear a visible social persona themselves. As such, impacts attributable to Agentic AI transcend individual experiences by manifesting throughout the overarching social milieu of teams more broadly.

Given the above considerations, we require a novel approach to unify disparate perspectives concerning human-AI teamwork, human-autonomy teams, employee performance, and generative AI studies. In particular, this viewpoint must articulate ways whereby Agentic AI functions within groups of people while simultaneously delineating mechanisms via which features inherent to such artificial intelligence impact team operations and overall outcomes thereof. To fill this void within current scholarly discourse regarding the role of artificial intelligence within group contexts, the present investigation puts forth the Silent Coworker Perspective.

Conceptualizing Agentic AI as an autonomous yet adaptive system woven into team activity has ramifications across multiple facets of organizational life, ranging from coordination strategies employed by teams to methods involving cognitive processing enacted during interpersonal exchanges amongst members thereof. By portraying Agentic AI as "silent coworkers," researchers can elevate past explorations into domains previously considered exclusively germane to technology diffusion theory alongside models centering around mechanistic forms of automation implementation. Ultimately then, employing the Silent Coworker Perspective establishes a robust paradigm capable of elucidating nuances linked toward AI's potential transformational impact upon productivity rates realized by various types of human collectives. The subsequent segment explicates this proposed lens while concurrently introducing an integrated framework expounding upon routes utilized by Agentic AI when exerting influence over team dynamics and resultant outputs achieved thereby.

The Silent Coworker Perspective: Reconsidering Agentic AI in Organizational Teams

Rapid advancements in artificial intelligence challenge our traditional understandings about the place of technology within organizations. Prior literature has focused on AI systems being technological artifacts supporting decisions and automating tasks (Banh & Strobel, 2023).

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However, more recent studies highlight that autonomous agents can engage in collaborative activity and function as teammates (Seeber et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2023).

Studies using role-based approaches even claim that AI systems perform different functions when working together with humans, ranging from coordinating group interactions to perfecting specific actions (Siemon, 2022). Overall, we see that AI takes up roles traditionally performed by their human coworker counterparts.

Although progress has been made, current perspectives are still unable to adequately address the organizational consequences of Agentic AI. On one hand, considering Agentic AI as a mere tool downplays its autonomy and ability to adapt. On the other hand, viewing AI as an explicitly recognized teammate does not, by itself, explain cases in which its contributions remain socially unrecognized.

Consequently, it does not shed light on the complex way intelligent agents get involved within teams, affecting their communication, shared cognition, and role allocations without necessarily having a visible social identity. Therefore, it seems necessary to develop a more integrative perspective aiming at explaining the subtleties of the impact that Agentic AI exerts on collaborative work environments.

Inspired by prior works discussing human-autonomy teams (O'Neill et al., 2023), machine teammates (Seeber et al., 2020) and AI's role structures (Siemon, 2022), we propose the Silent Coworker Perspective (SCP) which explains how Agentic AI should be interpreted. By doing so, we aim at providing insights into the ways these technologies can interact with teams and contribute to teamwork. This paper outlines the main principles underlying the SCP perspective.

Definition of the Silent Coworker Perspective

In the proposed "Silent Coworker" perspective, Agentic AI is conceptualized as an autonomous and adaptive entity located within team processes that helps achieve coordination, cognition, communication, and task execution but remains largely invisible as a social actor.

It should be noted that the word "silent" implies neither passivity nor inaction on behalf of the Agentic AI system, which influences team functioning in ways similar to those of human coworkers (e.g., by influencing information processing, task allocation, and decision making). The term refers to the limited social recognition of AI's contributions; it does not imply that AI possesses human judgment, responsibility, or organizational membership.

The term "quasi-team member" is an analytical designation within the SCP. It applies when an AI system exercise delegated discretion, contributes to interdependent work, and influences how human members coordinate or allocate responsibilities. A tool used only to produce an isolated output on demand would not meet these criteria. The distinction concerns the system's role in a work arrangement, rather than a fixed category of technology. "Silent" describes limited recognition of this participation, not an absence of activity or communication.

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Distinguishing the Silent Coworker from Existing Perspectives

Several differences distinguish these perspectives on the silent coworker concept from more conventional conceptions of artificial intelligence. One key distinction involves how traditionally tools have been conceptualized within AI research literature, with their primary purpose being enhanced efficiency and decision-support capabilities (Banh & Strobel, 2023). Another difference relates to how different concepts conceive of AI's role vis-a-vis human interactions. For example, many assistant perspectives highlight AI's supportive capacities complementing human actions (Westphal et al., 2023). However, these often also stress human agency over AI technologies.

Teammate Perspectives: The teammate perspective recognizes autonomous agents as collaborating partners who can contribute toward shared objectives (Seeber et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2023). This viewpoint has been considered an important advancement given its recognition of the active participation of intelligent systems in teamwork activities. The SCP builds on this foundation by focusing on cases in which those contributions are embedded in routines but are not explicitly attributed to an AI teammate.

Silent Coworker Perspective: The SCP approach expands upon prior understandings of Agentic AI by placing particular emphasis on the indirect ways in which AI impacts team functioning, such as via their entanglement with organizational routines. For example, they may influence patterns of communication, shared cognition, and coordination, yet remain unrecognized as social actors. As a result, AI's effect on team outcomes will depend not just on their technical prowess but also their integration into team collaboration processes.

Fundamental Characteristics of the Silent Coworker

The Silent Coworker Perspective highlights two technical attributes, autonomy and adaptability, and two aspects of organizational positioning, embeddedness and indirect social influence. Learning capability and generativity are specified in the framework below; proactivity is treated as an expression of goal-directed autonomy.

Autonomy

Agentic AI is conceptualized here as having delegated discretion to select and initiate actions toward team goals, within organizationally defined limits. Proactivity refers to initiating relevant actions without requiring a separate human prompt for every step.

Research on human-autonomy teams suggests that autonomous agents have the potential for coordination of various activities and partaking in various interdependent activities alongside humans (O'Neill et al., 2023).

Adaptability

Within this framework, adaptability means adjusting actions or responses to task context and user input. Learning capability, by contrast, refers to persistent changes in learned behavior through an implemented learning or update mechanism. The framework does not assume that every contextual adjustment constitutes learning or that every agent learns continuously during use.

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Embeddedness

The rise of AI in these collaborative environments involves their operation alongside existing work practices, and integration into communication processes, decision making and knowledge sharing.

Thus, AI can influence how teams' function at different organizational levels while being situated in roles that may not be explicitly "organizational" such as with many forms of traditionally used supportive technology (Agentic AI).

Indirect Social Influence

The SCP does not assume human consciousness or emotions in AI; however, previous studies indicate that users build up various perceptions related to trust, understanding, and social acceptance toward intelligent systems (Westphal et al., 2023; O'Neill et al., 2023).

These processes allow Agentic AI to influence team members' behavior and ultimately shape team interactions, communication quality, and collaborative effectiveness.

Theoretical Foundations of the Silent Coworker Perspective

Human-AI teaming provides the main theoretical foundation for the Silent Coworker Perspective by examining interdependent collaboration between humans and autonomous agents toward shared goals (Seeber et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2022). Here, Human-AI Teaming Theory refers to this body of teaming research rather than a single settled theory. Role Theory and socio-technical reasoning provide supporting explanations for the mechanisms within the framework.

A team-centered approach also allows us to explore how human-AI teaming requires AI systems that have capacities to achieve shared goals, engage in adaptive communication, coordinate decisions, and be responsive during collaborative processes (Hagemann et al., 2023). Therefore, it highlights the shift from technology usage towards human–AI collaboration.

Moreover, Role Theory suggests that the effectiveness of a team depends on the allocation and performances of various roles. According to Siemon's role-based framework (Siemon, 2022), AI systems can perform multiple functions within a team ranging from being coordinators to creators, perfectionists and doers. It indicates that AI participates in teams structurally instead of just playing an external role to provide support.

In this section, we discuss how socio-technical perspectives reflect the interplay between technological capabilities and their impact on humans as they seek to achieve specific organizational goals. We find some empirical evidence supporting our argument about the effects of AI performance on employee engagement and service performance (Prentice et al., 2023).

Furthermore, we propose that organizational outcomes may be shaped by the complex interactions between technological and social subsystems. Another stream of research exploring socio-technical concepts derives from 'human-autonomy team' research which

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highlights the role of shared understanding, trust and social acceptance for effective teamwork (O'Neill et al., 2023). According to such work, developing shared cognition and fostering mutual understanding among teammates is key to effective collaboration.

Role Theory helps explain changes in role allocation, role clarity, and responsibility boundaries. Socio-technical reasoning explains why technical capabilities must be considered together with work arrangements and human interaction. These supporting perspectives elaborate the mechanisms within the human-AI teaming foundation rather than serving as separate, equally weighted theories.

Therefore, the influence of Agentic AI should go beyond simply completing tasks towards considering the implications for both cognitive and social aspects of working together. In summing up this analysis, we suggest that the theoretical underpinnings provided above substantiate the central tenet of our Silent Coworker Perspective – that Agentic AI can affect organizational outcomes due to its involvement in various types of team process.

Conceptual Logic of the Silent Coworker Perspective

Based on the above discussion, the Silent Coworker Perspective posits that the impacts of Agentic AI features on productivity would be indirect. These characteristics will affect the relationship quality between humans and artificial intelligence systems via their influences on trust, explainability, control, and social acceptance factors (Westphal et al., 2023).

Such a concept could translate into the enhancement of team dynamics such as communication quality, coordination, shared cognitions, knowledge-sharing, and role clarifications (O'Neill et al., 2023), which may, in turn, support collective productivity. Therefore, we focus on an indirect pathway through team-level collaboration processes; this does not rule out direct technical effects on productivity.

As such, the subsequent section presents a conceptual framework together with a set of propositions delineating various ways that Agentic AI may impact team dynamics and productivity.

Conceptual Framework

Building upon the Silent Coworker Perspective, this study proposes that the influence of Agentic AI on team productivity may be mediated through human-AI relationship quality and team dynamics. Existing studies have demonstrated that intelligent systems increasingly possess autonomy and adaptability relevant to teamwork (Hagemann et al., 2023), alongside generative capabilities (Banh & Strobel, 2023), while successful collaboration with AI depends upon trust, understanding, explainability, and decision control (Westphal et al., 2023). Simultaneously, human-autonomy team research highlights the importance of shared cognition, social acceptance, and coordination for team effectiveness (O'Neill et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies suggest that productivity improvements emerge from interactions between technological characteristics and social processes rather than from technological capabilities alone.

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Accordingly, this study proposes a conceptual framework comprising four major components. First, Agentic AI characteristics represent the foundational attributes of intelligent systems, including autonomy, adaptability, learning capability, and generativity. Second, these characteristics influence human-AI relationship quality, which encompasses trust, explainability, perceived control, and social acceptance. Third, relationship quality shapes team dynamics, including shared cognition, communication quality, coordination, knowledge sharing, and role clarity. Finally, effective team dynamics contribute to enhanced team productivity and performance.

Autonomy refers to delegated discretion to select and initiate actions; proactivity is its goal-directed expression. Adaptability concerns adjustment to current task conditions. Learning capability concerns persistent changes in learned behavior and is contingent on an implemented learning or update mechanism. Generativity concerns producing new content or candidate solutions (Banh & Strobel, 2023). These capabilities may vary across systems, and greater capability does not by itself guarantee better collaboration.

The framework further recognizes that contextual factors may strengthen or weaken these relationships. Human control, task complexity, and job security are proposed moderators. AI literacy is retained as a possible boundary condition for future research, without a separate proposition in this paper.

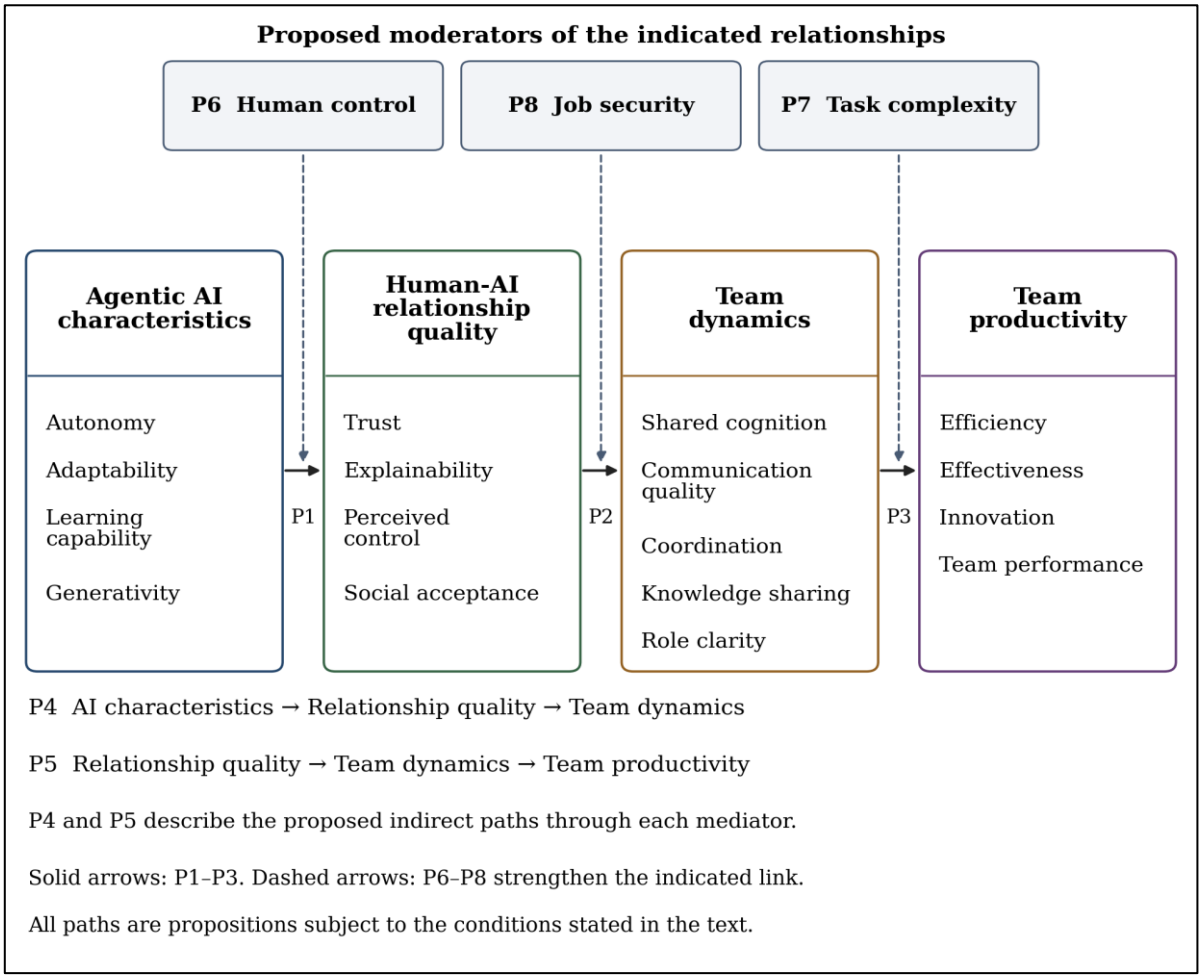


Figure 1: Proposed Silent Coworker Framework

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Human-AI relationship quality refers to team members' trust, understanding of AI explanations, perceived control, and acceptance of AI participation. The proposed link to team dynamics arises when these perceptions affect how members share information, coordinate dependencies, and clarify responsibilities. The framework does not assume identical perceptions across members. Perceived control is a subjective judgment; human control in P6 concerns actual authority to approve, override, or stop AI actions. Team productivity concerns collective output in relation to resources used, with effectiveness and innovation representing related performance outcomes.

Propositions Development

Agentic AI Characteristics and Human-AI Relationship Quality

The framework focuses on Agentic AI systems with autonomy, adaptability, learning capability, and generativity. These attributes are treated as capacities whose relevance depends on task requirements and system design.

However, there are limitations to just relying on technological capabilities for achieving success at collaboration. In addition to this, past studies have highlighted the relevance of factors such as trust, understanding, and users' perception towards ensuring the effectiveness of their interaction with AI systems (Westphal et al., 2023).

For instance, when researching human-autonomy teams, it was found that for autonomous agents to facilitate effective teamwork they had to gain social acceptance and establish themselves as being legitimate collaborators (O'Neill et al., 2023). Thus, users who perceive AI systems as understandable, trustworthy, and socially accepted would be able to collaboratively work well with intelligent systems. As such, characteristics of Agentic AI can be expected to influence the quality of relationships between humans and AI systems. Greater autonomy does not necessarily improve relationship quality: unexpected or poorly understood actions may undermine trust. P1 therefore concerns capabilities that are suited to team goals and deployed with understandable behavior and meaningful human oversight.

Proposition 1 (P1)

Agentic AI characteristics positively influence human-AI relationship quality when those capabilities are suited to team goals and deployed with understandable behavior and meaningful human oversight.

Human-AI Relationship Quality and Team Dynamics

Previous studies have identified several factors related to relationship quality that can enhance successful interaction between humans and AI agents (Westphal et al., 2023).

For example, they have shown how trust and decision control are associated with increased levels of understanding and compliance with AI recommendations. In addition, existing research on human-autonomy team highlights the importance of fostering social acceptance and shared expectations among collaborators (O'Neill et al., 2023).

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Together, these results underline the significance of cultivating positive human-AI relationships for achieving more efficient interactions and collective functioning. Within a team, maintaining high-quality relationships among members promotes open communication, coordinated efforts, and enhanced knowledge sharing.

When integrating AI technologies into various business contexts, this means building up sufficient trust and ensuring that all involved parties understand what each other knows about their tasks, which enables them to incorporate AI-generated insights into collaborative endeavors while simultaneously developing shared cognition and clarity regarding roles performed by every individual member.

Proposition 2 (P2)

Human-AI relationship quality positively influences team dynamics.

Team Dynamics and Team Productivity

From human-autonomy team studies we know that teams' shared cognition and coordination play an important role in ensuring effective functioning and success of team collaborations (O'Neill et al., 2023). Also, from a perspective focused on roles research identifies possible AI functions that could support coordination between individuals and completion of team tasks (Siemon, 2022). Research focusing on employees' performance shows that working in an AI-supported environment is associated with engagement and performance outcomes (Prentice et al., 2023). Taken together, this research informs the proposition that productivity may depend on interactions between human and intelligent systems as well as their technical capabilities. Quality of communication, coordination, knowledge-sharing and understanding of roles allow team members to utilize full potential of AI.

Proposition 3 (P3)

Positive team dynamics positively influence team productivity.

Mediating Role of Human-AI Relationship Quality

Nevertheless, given the capacities offered by Agentic AI, prior research points out that effective cooperation relies significantly upon elements such as trust, understanding, and explainability (Westphal et al., 2023); human autonomy teams necessitate certain levels of social acceptability and mutual comprehension for being productive (O'Neill et al., 2023). Thus, we propose that Agentic AI characteristics influence team dynamics partly through human-AI relationship quality.

Moreover, relationship quality serves as an intermediary process for integration of intelligent technologies into collaborative processes since positive attitude towards AI encourages trust and social acceptance, hence fostering communication and coordination among teams.

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Proposition 4 (P4)

Human-AI relationship quality mediates the relationship between Agentic AI characteristics and team dynamics.

Mediating Role of Team Dynamics

Prior work suggests that the ways in which AI capabilities affect employee performance arise via engagement and service performance, instead of more directly (Prentice et al., 2023). Human-autonomy team studies emphasize how factors such as shared cognition and coordination serve as critical determinants of team effectiveness (O'Neill et al., 2023). Together these findings imply that team dynamics emerge as an important mechanism by which collaboration quality links to collective outcomes.

Taken together, this indicates that we expect changes in relationship quality to have indirect influences over time on productivity given their impacts on communications, coordination, and shared understandings.

Proposition 5 (P5)

Team dynamics mediate the relationship between human-AI relationship quality and team productivity.

Moderating Role of Human Control

Studies have repeatedly shown that people tend to maintain their position on retaining at least some amount of authority for managing AI systems (Westphal et al., 2023).
This preference can be attributed to the fact that having control over decisions fosters higher levels of trust, comprehension, and adherence to AI suggestions (Westphal et al., 2023). Therefore, human control is critical as one of several crucial boundary conditions in human-AI interactions. Individuals who retain such power will likely hold a positive perception of these technologies, thus integrating them seamlessly into their teams' endeavors. Conversely, too much independence might reduce confidence and increase resistance.

Proposition 6 (P6)

Human control positively moderates the relationship between Agentic AI characteristics and human-AI relationship quality.

Moderating Role of Task Complexity

Human-AI collaboration studies suggest that explanations may increase cognitive burden under complex conditions (Westphal et al., 2023). Similarly, coordination requirements become more demanding in dynamic and uncertain environments (O'Neill et al., 2023). Consequently, we assume that task complexities will impact the effect of team dynamics on performance as well. When dealing with complex tasks, successful communication and shared cognition may become more important for productivity gains. This proposed strengthening effect assumes that teams have sufficient resources to manage the complexity; excessive demands may instead outweigh the benefits.

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Proposition 7 (P7)

Task complexity positively moderates the relationship between team dynamics and team productivity when teams have sufficient resources to manage the associated coordination demands.

Moderating Role of Job Security

Despite these considerable gains offered by AI technologies, there exist worries about one's employment which can be impactful for an organization's workers' perceptions.
Prentice et al. (2023) examine job security as a moderator of relationships involving AI performance and employee outcomes. Extending this employee-level argument to teams, we propose that perceived employment stability may make members more willing to share and use AI-supported contributions.

Proposition 8 (P8)

Job security positively moderates the relationship between human-AI relationship quality and team dynamics.

Taken together, these propositions lay a conceptual basis to understand how Agentic AI operates as a silent coworker that indirectly affects productivity via relationship quality and team processes without excluding direct technical effects.

This section explores theoretical and practical implications from this proposal of a framework with potential directions for further research.

Discussion

Theoretical Contributions

We make two contributions. First, we provide a more nuanced understanding of how AI can be integrated into human work. By providing a team-centered perspective, our analysis addresses several shortcomings of past research. Prior studies examining AI through the lens of human-AI interaction have primarily investigated its use for purposes such as decision-making and automation (Westphal et al., 2023) or considered factors influencing human users' perception of AI (Siemon, 2022), including trust (Westphal et al., 2023), autonomy levels, or even perceived intelligence. Research investigating the composition and dynamic characteristics of human–autonomy teams have mainly focused on topics such as coordination (O'Neill et al., 2023), trust, or shared cognitions. Finally, studies concerning machine teammates and their organizational roles typically examine capabilities that allow intelligent systems to engage in collaborative endeavors and take over specific roles and functions in a team context (Siemon, 2022).

Despite these insights, existing perspectives often consider the integration of AI into human work from very different angles. This results in somewhat fragmentary theories about how exactly AI impacts collaborative human tasks, which we believe could benefit from being brought together under one conceptual roof. To address this gap, the present study integrates prior literature streams by addressing individual perceptions of Agentic AI and collective

processes at the team level. To this end, our framework considers the effects of Agentic AI on productivity outcomes as emerging indirectly via the quality of the relationship between human team members and AI, which subsequently manifests itself in particular team dynamics. Given past empirical evidence showing the relevance of trust, control, and social acceptance when working with AI (Westphal et al. 2023), we thus extend this perspective by also considering other aspects of human-AI interaction, such as communication, coordination, and knowledge sharing.

In addition, we introduce a novel theoretical perspective called 'Silent Coworker Perspective'. While increasing numbers of recent publications discuss AI's potential role as a collaborator, colleague, or teammate (Seeber et al., 2020, O'Neill et al., 2023), these accounts already address several dimensions of collaboration. The SCP focuses specifically on the possibility that AI's contributions affect teamwork without being explicitly recognized by human members. We propose that Agentic AI operates as an embedded, albeit largely invisible organizational actor which exerts influence across multiple facets of teamwork. Thus, we go a step further and consider AI's role as going far beyond simple automation or enhancement tasks towards a richer engagement where social and structural elements of teamwork come into play. This study contributes to the knowledge base concerning productivity within AI enabled environments. Previous conducted investigations revealed that the implementation of AI technologies improves employees' engagement and performance level (Prentice et al., 2023), while research addressing human-AI collaboration suggested that trust and control impact both compliance and effectiveness of collaboration (Westphal et al., 2023).

However, the majority of these studies investigated individual results, whereas our framework indicates that productivity must be considered as a collective phenomenon emerging due to mutual relations between Agentic AI and the processes at the team level, which necessitates analyzing the influence of AI on the development of team dynamic factors, aside from its consideration as a technological component.

Implications for Human-AI Teaming Theory

Human-AI teaming research examines how intelligent systems may function as teammates rather than passive tools (Seeber et al., 2020). Human-autonomy team research further emphasizes that autonomous agents should be considered legitimate members participating in interdependent activities directed toward common goals (O'Neill et al., 2023). The findings synthesized in this paper support these arguments while extending them.

Specifically, the Silent Coworker Perspective suggests that the impact of AI on teams may be more pervasive than previously recognized. Rather than participating solely through explicit coordination and task execution, Agentic AI may influence communication quality, shared cognition, and role structures indirectly. Thus, the contribution of AI to team performance may not always be visible or formally recognized. The framework extends human-AI teaming by separating participation in interdependent work from explicit recognition as a teammate, then specifying relationship quality and team dynamics as sequential mediators of the proposed productivity effect.

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Implications for Role Theory

As Role Theory suggests, the efficacy of a team hinges on allocating and enacting diverse responsibilities. Thus far, role-based research has identified various types of roles that AI could take on, for example, a coordinator (Siemon, 2022). In other words, AI fulfils some tasks in addition to providing technical assistance to people working in teams.

Accordingly, we propose examining the impact of introducing AI roles on overall work processes through the lens of the Silent Coworker perspective. According to this perspective, the introduction of AI roles may result in their increasing embedding into standard activities at workplaces. This means that, given that intelligent systems will undertake functions connected with information processing, coordination, and performance execution, boundary lines between conventional roles could be blurred out. Hence, organizations would have to revisit responsibility distribution patterns between human participants and intelligent agents. One possible way forward might involve investigating potential shifts in terms of role ambiguity, role conflict, and role complementarity.

Managerial Implications

Synthesizing these findings indicates several implications for organizational practice when deploying Agentic AI. First, organizations must ensure they do not approach Agentic AI implementation purely from a cost saving or automation perspective. Trust, control, and explainability are critical enablers of effective human-AI collaboration (Westphal et al., 2023), so managers need to focus on implementing AI with an emphasis on complementarity over replacement.

Similarly, based on our review of studies about human-autonomy teams, we found that successful AI implementation necessitates an understanding and investment into team processes such as shared cognition, social acceptance, and coordination (O'Neill et al., 2023). Thus, alongside investment in AI technologies, companies also have to pay attention to how they can help their employees improve communication between themselves and foster collaborative norms among team members.

Lastly, we highlight important considerations for managers concerning employees' perception of job security issues related to AI usage. Prentice et al. (2023) examine job security in relation to AI performance, job engagement, service performance, and job performance.

Therefore, organizations must prioritize reskilling efforts and promote open communication channels with all stakeholders involved while introducing AI technologies into organizational processes. Moreover, they must strive towards fostering an environment where employees can actively engage themselves in collaborative ventures involving these emerging technologies through increased transparency about how exactly such tools contribute to overall business objectives.

For knowledge-intensive teams, a practical implication is to make background AI contributions visible in work routines. Managers can clarify which tasks AI may initiate, who checks its output, and who retains responsibility for decisions. These recommendations follow from the proposed framework and require evaluation in organizational settings.

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Future Research Directions

Finally, we offer some potential avenues for future research. First, further empirical work will allow us to test and validate the theoretical construct developed here. A combination of survey-based research and structural equation modeling approaches would provide researchers with valuable insights into the nature of the linkages among key constructs such as Agentic AI's unique characteristics, human–AI relationship quality, team dynamics, and ultimately team productivity.

Second, there is an opportunity for further exploration of how critical aspects of relationship quality relate to each other, for instance, to explore whether trust has greater implications than explainability or vice versa. Existing studies related to human–AI collaboration suggest that certain types of qualities have significant impact on users' perception about AI technologies and subsequent behavior (Westphal et al., 2023). But overall, little attention has been paid to the combined effect of various attributes influencing collaborative human–AI processes.

Future research could investigate contextual variables that might affect the performance of human–AI teams. For instance, while human control, task complexity, AI literacy, and job security emerge as possible moderators, there could be other variables at play, including organizational culture, leadership styles, and industry characteristics, which can potentially influence collaborative outcomes.

Longitudinal studies would help us grasp how these connections between humans and Agentic AI will change as their relationship evolves. Research on human-autonomy teams shows that trust and shared cognition arise via continuous interaction with one's teammate (O'Neill et al., 2023).

As such, studying the temporal aspects might yield interesting insights about the long-term effects of integrating AI systems. Finally, exploring emerging team compositions that feature multiple intelligent agents working alongside human members might pave ways for exciting discoveries regarding the nature of collaboration between humans and artificial beings alike.

Given the possibilities discussed in human-AI teaming research (Hagemann et al., 2023), we anticipate seeing an emergence of hybrid teams comprising both people and several different kinds of specialized AI agents within organizations in the near future.

Conclusion

Intelligent systems such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) play a critical role in contemporary workplaces, with their roles evolving rapidly to include more autonomous tasks. However, existing studies have explored some factors, including trust, explainability, control, and shared cognition, that could facilitate successful human-AI interaction (Westphal et al., 2023; O'Neill et al., 2023), while recent research has also examined the extent to which intelligent systems assume traditional roles typically assigned to human members when working together with machines (Seeber et al., 2020; Siemon, 2022).

Despite significant progress in these areas, the literature remains fragmented with most empirical studies examining the impacts at either individual level only or specific elements of the human-AI collaboration process. Therefore, we introduce a novel theoretical perspective

termed ‘Silent Coworker Perspective’ for conceptualizing Agentic AI as an autonomous and adaptive entity that participates in collaborative work settings without being immediately perceptible to others involved.

By synthesizing literature regarding human-AI collaboration, human-autonomy teams, employee performance, and generative AI, we propose an integrative framework outlining how certain characteristics of Agentic AI can affect the quality of the human-AI relationship, thereby impacting subsequent dynamics between individuals on a team and ultimately influencing overall team productivity levels across various organizational domains.

The synthesis develops an explanatory argument rather than reporting empirical findings. It proposes that the effects of Agentic AI on productivity may depend on how human team members interpret, share, and coordinate its contributions. The direction, magnitude, and causal ordering of these relationships remain to be tested.

The Silent Coworker Perspective extends human-AI teaming by distinguishing an AI system’s functional participation in interdependent work from its explicit recognition as a teammate. Its main contribution is a proposed sequence in which Agentic AI characteristics shape human-AI relationship quality, relationship quality influences team dynamics, and team dynamics affect collective productivity. This formulation treats the quasi-team member as a conceptual position and specifies mechanisms for empirical investigation; it does not claim to have established a new category of organizational membership.

Understanding how AI impacts collaborative work is paramount as companies continue implementing generative and autonomous AI technologies. Future workplaces may contain a combination of human employees and intelligent agents with different levels of autonomy and adaptability, i.e., hybrid teams. Organizations considering such systems therefore need to assess whether and how they support collaborative work. In this conceptual sense, Agentic AI may function as a silent coworker within team routines.

Limitations

As a conceptual paper, this study does not provide empirical evidence validating the proposed relationships. The framework synthesizes the literature discussed here, and its propositions require testing using research designs suited to team-level processes and causal inference.

Secondly, the conceptualization of Agentic AI as a silent coworker draws mainly from literature about human-AI collaboration, human-autonomy teams, generative AI, and employee performance. Given the rapid pace at which the Agentic AI domain is evolving, new features and types of cooperation could appear that go beyond what this framework proposes.

Lastly, the current study focuses largely on the positive aspects of Agentic AI while acknowledging challenges around job security and trust (Prentice et al., 2023; Westphal et al., 2023). However, further discussion of potential complications resulting from integrating Agentic AI systems into work processes including things like ethical considerations, algorithmic bias, over-reliance, and power dynamics – would enhance understanding of how companies might use Agentic AI technology.

The current proposal presumes an operational context characterized by collaboration, wherein relationship quality and team dynamics play significant roles.

However, the nature and importance of these constructs may differ considerably between various industries, organizational cultures, and task environments. Thus, there exists room for incorporating contextual factors into future empirical investigations.

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research propositions, integrated the theoretical perspectives, supervised the overall development of the manuscript, and critically revised the paper for important intellectual content.

Noor Adibah Ismail contributed to the development of the conceptual framework, coordinated the preparation of the manuscript, conducted the literature synthesis, and contributed to the theoretical development and writing of the manuscript.

Mohamad Alif Azmiezal Mohd Azmi conducted the literature review, synthesized relevant scholarly evidence, contributed to the interpretation of the literature, and critically reviewed the manuscript for intellectual content.

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Tasnimul Islam contributed to the critical evaluation of the conceptual arguments, reviewed the theoretical coherence of the proposed framework, and provided constructive feedback to strengthen the academic quality of the manuscript.

All authors made substantial intellectual contributions to this study, participated in the preparation and revision of the manuscript, approved the final version for publication, and agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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