



AI-Augmented Social Work, Community Resilience, and Ethical Practice: Perceptions and Readiness among Social Work Practitioners and Community Organisations in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Background: Artificial intelligence is transforming professional practices, offering significant potential to enhance case management and community resilience in social work. however, adoption in Pakistan remains underexplored, raising critical ethical concerns regarding privacy and algorithmic bias.

Objective: This study aimed to examine perceptions, readiness, ethical concerns, and potential applications of ai among social work practitioners and community organizations in Pakistan, exploring factors influencing adoption and views on community resilience.

Methods: A mixed-methods cross-sectional study surveyed 356 practitioners and community organization staff, complemented by 24 qualitative interviews. data were collected via structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, utilizing purposive and snowball sampling, and evaluated through descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and thematic coding.

Results: Participants showed positive perceptions of ai for case management and needs assessment, with an overall usefulness score of 3.82 ± 0.74 out of 5. direct professional experience remained low at 17.1%. major ethical concerns included data privacy (80.3%), misuse of sensitive information (78.1%), and algorithmic bias (72.8%). regression indicated previous ai exposure, digital skills, education, and experience significantly predicted readiness, while ethical concerns negatively impacted adoption. qualitative insights emphasized that ai must support, not replace, human empathy and judgment.

Conclusion: AI offers promising opportunities for social work in Pakistan, but responsible integration demands targeted digital capacity-building, robust ethical frameworks, and a human-centered approach.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most transformative technologies of the twenty-first century, influencing healthcare, education, governance, business, and social service systems (Rawas, 2024; Mhlanga, 2022). The increasing availability of machine learning algorithms, predictive analytics, natural language processing, and automated decision-support tools has created new opportunities for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of professional services (Taherdoost, 2023; Rosário & Boechat, 2024). Within the field of social work, AI technologies are increasingly being explored as tools to support case management, identify vulnerable populations, analyze community needs, improve service coordination, and enhance evidence-based decision-making (Garkisch & Goldkind, 2025; Djatmiko et al., 2025). However, the integration of AI into social work practice also raises significant ethical and professional concerns, particularly regarding privacy, algorithmic bias, accountability, and the preservation of human-centered approaches.

Social work is fundamentally based on human relationships, empathy, cultural understanding, and advocacy for vulnerable populations (Anis & Turtiainen, 2021; Androff & Mathis, 2022). Unlike purely technical fields, social work involves complex decisions influenced by individual experiences, social contexts, and ethical considerations. Therefore, the introduction of AI into social services requires careful consideration of how technology can complement rather than replace professional judgment (Vogl et al., 2020; Zafar, 2024). Previous research has emphasized that AI should be viewed as a

supportive mechanism that enhances practitioners' capabilities while maintaining human oversight and ethical responsibility (Holzinger et al., 2025). Understanding the perceptions and readiness of social work professionals is therefore essential for developing responsible AI implementation strategies.

Globally, social service organizations are increasingly adopting digital technologies to improve service delivery and respond to growing social challenges (Eom & Lee, 2022; Latupeirissa et al., 2024). AI-based systems can assist practitioners by organizing large volumes of client information, predicting social risks, identifying patterns of vulnerability, and supporting resource allocation decisions. For example, predictive analytics have been used in child protection,

HIGHLIGHTS	
Research insights	The study reveals that stronger informal social control, mutual trust, and cohesive neighborhood networks significantly reduce crime rates in low-income urban communities facing social disintegration.
Practical insights	Encouraging resident participation, rebuilding neighborhood trust, and addressing socio-economic barriers can strengthen informal social control mechanisms and effectively prevent crime in marginalized urban areas.
Industry insights	Urban planners and policymakers should integrate community-based safety programs emphasizing social cohesion to enhance sustainable crime prevention strategies in marginalized areas.



healthcare support, and poverty interventions to identify individuals and communities requiring additional assistance. Similarly, AI and digital platforms may also improve access to services and outreach in rural and underserved communities (Perez et al., 2025). These applications suggest that AI has considerable potential to strengthen social protection systems and contribute to community resilience.

However, AI adoption in social work also presents substantial ethical challenges (Al-Kfairy et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2025). Social workers frequently handle sensitive personal information related to health, poverty, family circumstances, violence, and social vulnerability. The use of AI systems involving personal data creates concerns regarding confidentiality, informed consent, and data security (Moulai et al., 2025; Yadav et al., 2023; Murdoch, 2021; Williamson & Prybutok, 2024). Additionally, algorithmic decision-making may reproduce existing social inequalities if AI systems are trained on biased or incomplete datasets. Research has demonstrated that automated systems can unintentionally disadvantage marginalized groups when historical patterns of inequality are incorporated into algorithmic models (Cossette-Lefebvre & Maclure, 2023). Therefore, ethical governance frameworks, transparency mechanisms, and accountability structures are necessary to ensure that AI applications promote fairness and social justice (Islam et al., 2025). The issue of professional readiness is another critical factor influencing AI integration within social work. Although digital technologies are becoming increasingly common, many social workers have limited exposure to AI-based applications and may lack the skills required for effective utilization. Technology acceptance research suggests that perceived usefulness, digital competence, organizational support, and previous experience significantly influence professionals' willingness to adopt new technologies (Molino et al., 2020). In developing countries such as Pakistan, additional challenges may include limited digital infrastructure, insufficient training opportunities, financial constraints, and differences in technological access between organizations (Nadeem et al., 2024). These factors may influence the extent to which social service institutions can successfully adopt AI tools.

Pakistan represents an important context for examining AI integration in social work due to its diverse and complex social challenges. Community-based organizations in Pakistan play an important role in disaster risk reduction, community participation, and resilience-building, particularly in vulnerable regions (Ali et al., 2021). Increasing demands on social services require innovative approaches capable of improving efficiency and reaching vulnerable populations more effectively. AI technologies may provide valuable opportunities for strengthening these systems; however, successful adoption depends on understanding practitioners' perceptions, organizational readiness, and ethical considerations within the local context (Sánchez et al., 2025).

Despite growing international discussions regarding AI and social services, limited empirical research has examined AI readiness and ethical perceptions among social work practitioners in Pakistan (Tariq et al., 2025). Existing literature has primarily focused on technological development, healthcare applications, or general AI ethics, with comparatively less attention given to social workers who directly interact with vulnerable communities. Understanding practitioners' perspectives is essential because social workers are key stakeholders responsible for implementing, evaluating, and ethically managing AI-supported interventions.

This study aims to address this research gap by investigating AI-Augmented Social Work, Community Resilience, and Ethical Practice: Perceptions and Readiness among Social Work Practitioners and Community Organizations in Pakistan. Specifically, the study examines perceptions of AI usefulness in case management, needs assessment, and outreach; evaluates ethical concerns related to privacy, bias, and accountability; identifies factors influencing organizational readiness; and explores beliefs regarding AI's contribution to community resilience. By combining quantitative

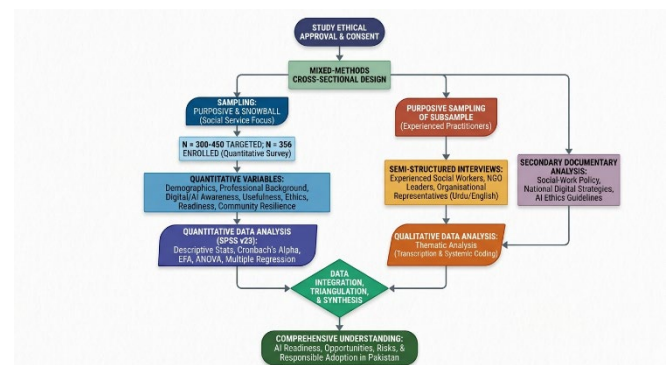
surveys with qualitative interviews, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of opportunities and challenges associated with AI adoption in Pakistan's social work sector.

The findings of this study can contribute to the development of responsible AI strategies for social services by highlighting the importance of professional training, ethical safeguards, organizational preparedness, and human-centered implementation. As AI continues to reshape professional practices worldwide, ensuring that technological advancement aligns with social work values is essential for creating equitable, transparent, and resilient social support systems.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods cross-sectional research design to investigate perceptions, readiness, ethical concerns, and potential applications of artificial intelligence (AI) among social work practitioners and community organizations in Pakistan. The study aimed to examine how social workers and community-based organizations perceive the usefulness of AI-assisted tools in improving case management, community outreach, needs assessment, and resilience-building practices while also exploring concerns related to privacy, algorithmic bias, accountability, and the potential loss of human-centered social work values.

The study was conducted among social work practitioners, NGO staff, and community organizers working in different social service settings across selected urban and semi-urban areas of Pakistan. Participants were recruited through professional social work associations, non-governmental organization offices, community-based organizations, social development networks, and training workshops related to social services and digital technologies. The inclusion of participants from diverse organizational backgrounds allowed assessment of differences in AI readiness between government institutions, NGOs, and community-based organizations.



A total sample of 300–450 social work practitioners were targeted for the quantitative component of the study. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques to reach individuals with direct experience in social service delivery. The sample included professional social workers, NGO employees, community development officers, and outreach workers involved in areas such as poverty reduction, child protection, women's empowerment, healthcare support, youth development, and disaster response. For the qualitative component, a subsample of 15–25 experienced practitioners and organizational leaders was selected through purposive sampling for detailed face-to-face interviews regarding AI adoption opportunities, ethical challenges, and institutional preparedness.

Quantitative data were collected through a structured paper-based or tablet-assisted questionnaire administered at workplaces, organizational offices, professional meetings, and training sessions. The questionnaire was developed in English and Urdu and consisted of multiple sections covering demographic characteristics,

professional background, digital experience, AI awareness, perceived usefulness, ethical concerns, organizational readiness, and perceived effects of AI on community resilience. Demographic and independent variables included age, gender, educational level, years of professional experience, organizational type (government, NGO, or community-based organization), prior exposure to digital technologies or AI applications, and the primary client populations served.

The main independent variables included professional experience, educational background, organizational characteristics, previous exposure to digital tools, and level of AI awareness. The dependent variables included perceived usefulness of AI applications in social work practice, perceived risks and ethical concerns, organizational readiness for AI integration, training requirements, and beliefs regarding the contribution of AI to community resilience. AI usefulness was assessed through participants' perceptions regarding applications in case management, client assessment, resource allocation, monitoring, and community outreach. Ethical concerns were measured through items related to data privacy, confidentiality, algorithmic bias, accountability, transparency, and concerns regarding reduced human interaction in social work practice.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews with experienced social workers, NGO representatives, and organizational leaders. Interview questions explored participants' experiences with digital technologies, expectations regarding AI-supported social services, perceived benefits and challenges of AI adoption, ethical considerations, and organizational requirements for responsible implementation. Interviews were conducted in Urdu or English according to participant preference, audio-recorded with informed consent, and supplemented with researcher field notes. Additionally, secondary analysis was performed using publicly available social-work policy documents, national digital transformation strategies, and international AI ethics guidelines to contextualize findings.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 23. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize participant characteristics and overall perceptions of AI integration. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha was performed to evaluate the internal consistency of AI acceptance, ethical concern, and organizational readiness scales. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to identify underlying dimensions of AI perception and ethical attitudes among participants. Independent-samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA were used to examine differences in AI readiness and perceptions across demographic groups, professional experience levels, and organizational types.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify significant predictors of AI acceptance, organizational readiness, and perceived community resilience impacts. Predictor variables included professional experience, digital exposure, education level, organizational type, and AI training exposure. Statistical significance was determined at $p < 0.05$.

Qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were coded systematically to identify recurring themes related to AI opportunities, ethical challenges, professional adaptation, privacy concerns, and future training needs. The qualitative findings were integrated with quantitative results to provide a comprehensive understanding of AI readiness and responsible adoption within Pakistan's social work sector.

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional ethics committee before commencement of the study. All participants provided informed consent prior to participation and were informed about the voluntary nature of their involvement. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout data collection and analysis. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all data were used exclusively for academic research purposes. The study

followed ethical principles for research involving human participants and aligned with international recommendations for responsible and human-centered AI implementation in social services.

RESULTS

A total of 418 social work practitioners and community organization staff participated in the study. Among them, 356 participants completed the quantitative survey, while 24 experienced practitioners and organizational leaders participated in face-to-face qualitative interviews. Participants represented government social welfare departments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations working in areas including poverty reduction, women empowerment, child protection, youth development, healthcare support, and disaster response.

The mean age of participants was 36.8 ± 9.7 years, with an average professional experience of 8.6 ± 5.4 years in social service delivery. Most respondents had previous exposure to digital technologies, although direct experience with artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications remained limited.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 356)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	191	53.7
	Female	165	46.3
Age Group	20–35 years	174	48.9
	36–50 years	132	37.1
	>50 years	50	14.0
Education Level	Bachelor's degree	146	41.0
	Master's degree	184	51.7
	PhD/Professional qualification	26	7.3
Organization Type	NGO	174	48.9
	Government sector	96	27.0
	Community-based organization	86	24.2
Years of Practice	<5 years	121	34.0
	5–10 years	143	40.2
	>10 years	92	25.8

The majority of participants were employed in NGOs and had postgraduate-level education, indicating a professionally trained sample.

Table 2. Digital and AI Exposure among Participants

Indicator	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Regular use of digital case-management systems	146	41.0
Use of online databases/resources	231	64.9
Awareness of AI applications	188	52.8
Previous AI training received	74	20.8
Used AI-based tools in professional work	61	17.1

Although more than half of participants reported awareness of AI technologies, only a small proportion had direct experience using AI tools in social work practice.

Participants generally expressed positive attitudes toward AI-assisted social work applications.

Table 3. Perceived Benefits of AI Integration

AI Application	Mean $\pm$ SD
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Case management support	3.94 ± 0.78
Client needs assessment	3.82 ± 0.81
Community outreach planning	3.76 ± 0.85
Resource allocation and monitoring	3.71 ± 0.88
Early identification of vulnerable groups	3.89 ± 0.79
Overall AI usefulness score	3.82 ± 0.74

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree)

Participants showed the highest acceptance of AI for improving case management and identifying vulnerable populations.

Table 4. Ethical Concerns Reported by Social Workers

Ethical Issue	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Client data privacy concerns	286	80.3
Algorithmic bias risk	259	72.8
Lack of accountability	241	67.7
Reduced human interaction	226	63.5
Misuse of sensitive information	278	78.1

Privacy and confidentiality were the most frequently reported ethical concerns among participants.

Table 5. Organizational Preparedness Indicators

Indicator	Mean ± SD
Availability of digital infrastructure	3.12 ± 0.91
Staff digital skills	3.27 ± 0.86
Organizational support for AI adoption	3.04 ± 0.89
Availability of AI training opportunities	2.71 ± 0.94
Overall readiness score	3.03 ± 0.82

The findings indicate moderate organizational readiness but limited availability of formal AI training programs.

Table 6. Comparison of AI Readiness Across Experience Groups

Experience Level	Mean AI Readiness Score
<5 years	3.21 ± 0.76
5–10 years	3.45 ± 0.79
>10 years	3.62 ± 0.83

ANOVA: $F = 8.46$, $p < 0.001$

Participants with longer professional experience demonstrated significantly higher AI readiness compared with those with fewer years of practice.

Table 7. Factor Structure of AI Perception Measures

Factor	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)
Perceived usefulness	4.21	35.1
Ethical concerns	2.74	22.8
Organizational readiness	1.86	15.5

Total variance explained = 73.4%

Factor analysis supported three major dimensions influencing AI adoption attitudes.

Table 8. Predictors of AI Readiness among Social Work Practitioners

Predictor Variable	β	t-value	p-value
Previous AI exposure	0.34	7.62	<0.001
Digital skills level	0.29	6.51	<0.001
Educational level	0.18	4.02	<0.001
Years of professional experience	0.16	3.68	0.001
Ethical concerns	-0.21	-4.91	<0.001

The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 39.74$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.47$). Previous AI exposure and digital skills were the strongest predictors of AI readiness, while higher ethical concerns reduced willingness to adopt AI technologies.

Table 9. AI Contribution to Community Resilience

Outcome	Mean ± SD
Faster identification of community needs	3.91 ± 0.82
Improved resource targeting	3.78 ± 0.85
Better disaster response planning	3.74 ± 0.87
Improved vulnerable population monitoring	3.86 ± 0.80
Overall resilience impact score	3.82 ± 0.76

Most participants believed that responsible AI adoption could strengthen community resilience by improving identification and response to social vulnerabilities.

Thematic analysis of the 24 semi-structured interviews revealed several interconnected themes regarding the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into social work practice. Participants consistently perceived AI as a supportive tool that could enhance, but not replace, professional judgment, emphasizing that empathy, contextual understanding, and emotional intelligence remain uniquely human competencies. Respondents highlighted AI's potential to improve case management by organizing client records, identifying vulnerable populations, and streamlining service delivery. However, concerns regarding privacy, confidentiality, and the ethical handling of sensitive client information were frequently expressed, particularly when working with vulnerable communities. Participants also emphasized the need for comprehensive AI literacy training, professional capacity building, and clear ethical guidelines before widespread implementation. Overall, interviewees agreed that successful AI adoption should complement rather than diminish the human-centered values of social work, ensuring that trust, cultural sensitivity, and compassionate client relationships remain central to professional practice.

The results indicate that social work practitioners in Pakistan demonstrate moderately high acceptance of AI technologies but limited practical exposure and organizational preparedness. AI was perceived as valuable for improving case management, community assessment, and resilience-building; however, ethical concerns related to privacy, bias, and accountability remain significant barriers. Previous AI exposure, digital skills, education, and professional experience were key predictors of readiness for AI adoption. Qualitative findings further emphasized that successful AI integration requires human-centered approaches, ethical safeguards, and comprehensive training programs to ensure that technology enhances rather than replaces social work practice.

DISCUSSION

This study explored perceptions, readiness, ethical concerns, and potential applications of artificial intelligence (AI) among social work practitioners and community organizations in Pakistan. The findings demonstrate that social workers generally recognize the potential value of AI-assisted technologies for improving case management, community needs assessment, outreach planning, and resilience-building activities. AI has increasingly been discussed as a tool capable of supporting professional decision-making and service delivery, particularly through data analysis and intelligent decision-support systems (Taherdoost, 2023). However, adoption readiness remains moderate due to limited practical exposure, insufficient organizational infrastructure, and concerns regarding privacy, algorithmic bias, and the preservation of human-centered social work values (Garkisch & Goldkind, 2025). These findings contribute to the emerging literature on responsible AI adoption in social services, particularly within low- and middle-income country contexts where digital transformation is developing alongside resource constraints. A major finding of this study was that participants showed positive perceptions regarding the usefulness of AI in social work practice. Respondents identified case management support, identification of vulnerable populations, and improved resource allocation as key areas where AI could enhance professional effectiveness. Previous

research indicates that AI and automated analytical systems can improve decision-making by processing complex datasets and identifying patterns that may be difficult to detect through conventional approaches. In social work settings, AI technologies have the potential to assist practitioners in managing complex client information, identifying patterns of vulnerability, and allocating limited resources more efficiently. However, the findings also reinforce the argument that AI should function as a supportive tool rather than replace professional judgment and interpersonal engagement, an approach consistent with human-centered AI principles (Mhlanga, 2022).

The study revealed that despite relatively high awareness of AI, only a small proportion of participants had direct experience using AI-based applications in their professional activities. This gap between awareness and practical adoption reflects broader challenges associated with digital transformation in developing countries. Research on digital transformation has emphasized that successful technological implementation requires institutional capacity alongside access to digital technologies (Eom & Lee, 2022). Previous studies have also highlighted the importance of organizational support, training, and digital capabilities when introducing new technologies into professional environments (Molino et al., 2020). The limited AI exposure observed among Pakistani social workers suggests that many organizations remain at an early stage of digital maturity. Without targeted capacity-building initiatives, AI adoption may remain theoretical rather than becoming integrated into routine social work practice.

Digital skills and previous AI exposure emerged as the strongest predictors of AI readiness in this study. Participants with greater familiarity with digital technologies demonstrated higher confidence and willingness to adopt AI tools. This finding is consistent with technology acceptance research, which identifies individual resources and training as important factors in successful technology adoption. In addition, research on digitalization in Pakistan has identified technological and organizational barriers that can constrain the adoption of emerging digital technologies (Nadeem et al., 2024). Social workers who understand digital systems are more likely to recognize AI's benefits and less likely to perceive it as a threat. Therefore, improving digital literacy among social service professionals should be considered a fundamental step toward responsible AI integration.

Ethical concerns represented one of the most significant barriers identified in this study. Privacy and confidentiality were the most frequently reported concerns, followed by algorithmic bias, accountability, and potential misuse of sensitive client information. These findings are consistent with broader research identifying privacy, security, and ethical oversight as major challenges in AI implementation (Williamson & Prybutok, 2024). Social work involves working with highly vulnerable populations, including children, women experiencing violence, low-income families, and marginalized communities; therefore, improper use of personal data may create serious risks. Research on AI and health information similarly emphasizes that the increasing use of AI creates important challenges for protecting sensitive personal information (Murdoch, 2021). Strong data protection mechanisms, transparent algorithms, and clear accountability frameworks are essential before AI systems are introduced into social work environments.

The concern regarding algorithmic bias is particularly important because AI systems learn from existing datasets that may contain historical inequalities. If training data reflect social, economic, or cultural biases, AI recommendations may unintentionally reproduce discriminatory outcomes. Research on AI fairness has specifically highlighted how automated decision-making can generate wrongful discrimination when algorithmic systems reproduce problematic patterns within underlying data (Cossette-Lefebvre & Maclure, 2023). This issue is especially relevant to social work because decisions may directly affect access to services and support for

vulnerable populations. In Pakistan, where social vulnerabilities are influenced by gender, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and access to resources, ethical oversight is necessary to ensure that AI tools support equitable service delivery.

The findings also indicated that participants believed AI could contribute positively to community resilience. Respondents highlighted AI's potential role in early identification of vulnerable groups, disaster response planning, resource coordination, and monitoring community needs. AI and digital technologies have increasingly been considered relevant to improving the capacity of public and community services to respond to complex social challenges (Latupeirissa et al., 2024). This finding is particularly relevant in Pakistan, where social workers frequently respond to challenges such as poverty, displacement, natural disasters, and public health emergencies. Community-based approaches to disaster risk reduction in Pakistan have similarly emphasized the importance of local participation and resilience-building (Ali et al., 2021). AI-supported data analysis could therefore strengthen community-level interventions by enabling faster identification of risks and more targeted responses.

However, the study also demonstrated that organizational readiness remains a major challenge. Although participants expressed interest in AI adoption, many organizations lacked sufficient infrastructure, funding, and formal training opportunities. This finding reflects a common challenge in developing countries, where technological innovation often advances faster than institutional capacity. Evidence from Pakistan indicates that barriers to digitalization include technological, organizational, and economic constraints (Nadeem et al., 2024). Effective AI integration therefore requires investment not only in software and digital systems but also in workforce development, ethical governance structures, and organizational change management. Research on digital government transformation likewise emphasizes that successful technological transformation requires organizational adaptation rather than simply the introduction of new technologies.

The qualitative findings further emphasized that social workers view AI as an assistant rather than a replacement for human interaction. Participants highlighted that empathy, cultural understanding, trust-building, and emotional support remain central components of effective social work. Human-centered AI approaches similarly emphasize that technological systems should augment human capabilities while retaining meaningful human involvement in decision-making. Previous research concerning AI and human oversight has also raised important questions about maintaining meaningful human control over increasingly autonomous systems (Holzinger et al., 2025). While AI can improve administrative efficiency and analytical capacity, it cannot fully replicate the relational aspects of social work practice. Therefore, future AI systems should be designed to enhance human decision-making rather than automate complex social judgments.

The study findings have important implications for policy and practice. First, social work institutions and professional organizations should develop AI literacy and ethical training programs for practitioners. Technology acceptance research suggests that training and individual technological resources can facilitate more effective engagement with emerging technologies (Molino et al., 2020). Second, organizations should establish clear guidelines regarding data protection, transparency, and accountability before implementing AI-based systems, particularly because AI applications involving sensitive information raise substantial privacy and governance concerns (Williamson & Prybutok, 2024). Third, policymakers should encourage collaboration between social workers, technology experts, and community organizations to ensure that AI solutions are culturally appropriate and socially responsible. Finally, AI adoption strategies should prioritize vulnerable populations and focus on improving accessibility and equity in social services. Several limitations should be considered. The cross-sectional

design limits the ability to determine changes in AI perceptions over time. Additionally, purposive and snowball sampling may reduce the generalizability of findings beyond the participating organizations. These methodological considerations mean that the reported perceptions should be interpreted within the context of the participating social work practitioners and community organizations rather than assumed to represent all social workers in Pakistan. Future longitudinal studies should examine how AI adoption evolves as organizations gain experience with digital tools, particularly as digital transformation progresses. Comparative studies across different countries and social service systems would also provide valuable insights into global patterns of AI integration in social work. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that AI represents a promising opportunity for strengthening social work practice and community resilience in Pakistan, but successful adoption requires careful attention to ethical, organizational, and human factors. Social workers recognize the potential benefits of AI but emphasize the importance of maintaining privacy, accountability, and human-centered approaches. As research on AI-enhanced social work continues to develop, human oversight and professional responsibility remain important considerations. A responsible AI framework that combines technological innovation with professional values can support more effective, equitable, and resilient social service systems.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that artificial intelligence has significant potential to enhance social work practice and strengthen community resilience in Pakistan by improving case management, needs assessment, outreach, and resource allocation. Social work practitioners generally recognize AI as a valuable supportive tool; however, successful adoption requires addressing major challenges related to digital skills, organizational preparedness, data privacy, algorithmic bias, and professional accountability. The findings emphasize that AI should complement rather than replace human-centered social work approaches based on empathy, trust, and ethical decision-making. Developing AI training programs, ethical guidelines, and secure digital infrastructures is essential for responsible implementation. As Pakistan's social service sector faces increasingly complex challenges, integrating AI through a balanced approach that combines technological innovation with social justice principles can improve service delivery, promote equity, and build more resilient communities.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in accordance with relevant ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study.

Data Availability

Data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Author Contributions

Shagufta Sattar: Study design, data collection, statistical analysis, and drafting and writing of the manuscript.

Faisal Hameed: Study conception, methodological design, data analysis, interpretation of results, and critical revision of the manuscript.

Ahsan Balal Shaker: Literature review, interpretation of findings, manuscript revision, and final approval of the version to be published.

All authors accept responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the research and its findings.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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